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Michelle Obama kicks off White House holiday season



First Lady Michelle Obama speaks in the Grand Foyer of the White House as she thanks volunteers who decorated the White House for the Christmas holidays on Dec. 2, 2009.

By Saul Loeb, AFP/Getty Images

Michelle Obama unveiled the White House holiday decorations

Michelle Obama unveiled the White House holiday decorations today in a press preview. The theme this year: "Reflect, Rejoice and Renew."

Mrs. O. said that she and her staff have been planning since summer. "And our starting point was a very simple idea: that we include as many people, in as many places, in as many ways as we can," she said. She expects more than 50,000 people to come through the doors during the holiday season.

"So we decided to do something just a little different. We took about 800 ornaments left over from previous administrations, we sent them to 60 local community groups

throughout the country, and asked them to decorate them to pay tribute to a favorite local landmark and then send them back to us for display here at the White House."

Did she say anything about White House state dinner crashers? No, but she did say, "For many people, a visit to the White House is a once-in-a-lifetime experience ... "