



Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
New Facility

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding New Facility - Nominee



Outstanding New Facility - Nominee

Criteria: Honors excellence in design and planning of newly constructed public park facilities. Demonstrates high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

Nominee: CORE Recreation Center

District: Cosumnes Community Services District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

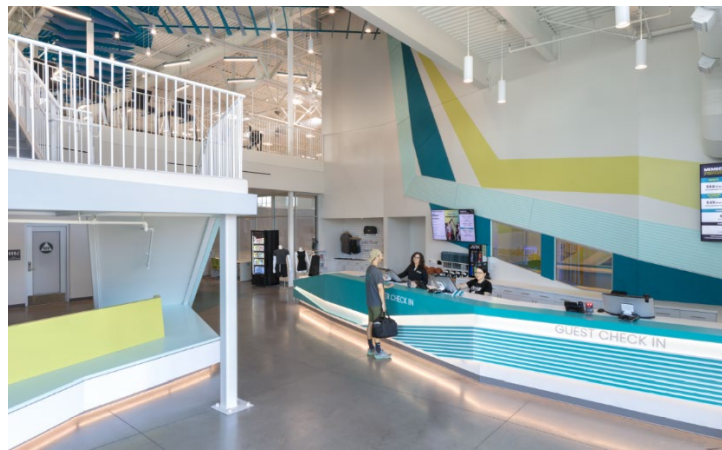
Opened in July 2025, the CORE Recreation Center is a 54,621-square-foot, multi-generational recreation and fitness facility serving 214,000 residents of the Cosumnes Community Services District. Developed to address a critical shortage of indoor recreation space, CORE has eliminated youth sports waitlists, expanded access to fitness and programming, and significantly increased service capacity for a rapidly growing community.

The facility features two full-size gymnasiums, flexible fitness studios, youth and teen programming spaces, and integrated digital membership systems that modernize access and improve the customer experience. Designed for high utilization, CORE supports simultaneous programming across multiple user groups, maximizing community benefit within a single, efficient footprint.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding New Facility - Nominee



CORE's distinction as an outstanding facility lies in its intentional alignment of design, operations, and long-term performance. The building layout prioritizes flexibility and adaptability, allowing spaces to be reconfigured for seasonal programming, evolving community needs, and diverse revenue-generating uses without requiring future capital expansion. Clear sightlines and intuitive circulation enhance safety while improving staff efficiency.



Strategically located within Morse Community Park, CORE leverages existing infrastructure, enhances park activation, and avoids the need for new land acquisition. This integrated approach maximizes public investment, increases overall site value, and expands community use without duplicating facilities elsewhere in the District.

The facility also demonstrates exceptional performance and community impact. CORE opened with 1,390 members on day one and reached its Year 3 membership goal of 2,400 within six months, reflecting strong demand and immediate public adoption. Opening Day attendance exceeded 1,000 residents, reinforcing community confidence in the investment. The centralized facility has increased indoor capacity, reduced strain on aging sites, and streamlined service delivery across the District.

CORE was designed to sustain both high service levels and long-term operational efficiency. Its all-electric, high-performance building exceeds California energy standards, while durable materials and energy-efficient systems reduce maintenance demands and lifecycle costs. These features ensure the facility remains adaptable, cost-effective, and resilient over time.

Importantly, CORE expands services without creating an ongoing fiscal burden. Supported by a structured General Fund startup investment with a three-year repayment plan, the facility is already ahead of schedule and requires no ongoing subsidy. This performance reflects a facility model that integrates community benefit with financial responsibility.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding New Facility - Nominee



CORE Recreation Center represents a best-in-class example of modern public facility development, delivering high-quality, accessible recreation space while maximizing efficiency, adaptability, and long-term value. It stands as a model for how communities can invest in infrastructure that meets current demand, anticipates future needs, and sustains itself operationally over time.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding New Facility - Nominee



Outstanding New Facility - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Ashland Roots Center

District: Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Ashland Roots Center represents a transformative investment in equitable access to recreation, learning, and community connection. Developed by the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (HARD) in partnership with Resources for Community Development (RCD), the project integrates recreation, childcare, and affordable housing within a single site to maximize public investment and reduce barriers to participation. Located in the historically park-deficient Ashland community in unincorporated Alameda County, the center was intentionally designed to serve as a welcoming hub for youth, families, and community organizations while strengthening neighborhood vitality.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding New Facility - Nominee



A defining feature of the project is the innovative public-private partnership between HARD and RCD. Through this model, HARD owns and operates the recreation facility while sharing infrastructure, utilities, parking, and maintenance systems with the adjacent affordable housing development. This collaborative approach significantly reduced development and operational costs while accelerating project delivery. By co-locating recreation services with housing and childcare, the project creates daily opportunities for residents and families to access programs and community resources within walking distance.

The project also leveraged multiple funding strategies to bring the vision to life. State and county funding sources were combined with local bond funds, and the project utilized California Senate Bill 330 to expedite entitlements while maintaining strong community engagement. This layered funding approach allowed the District and its partners to deliver a high-quality community facility in a cost-effective and timely manner.



The facility's design emphasizes flexibility, accessibility, and sustainability. Reconfigurable community rooms, multi-use activity spaces, and informal gathering areas allow the building to support a wide variety of programs, including youth enrichment, arts education, STEM programming, and community workshops. A distinctive architectural feature of the building is a central breezeway created by spanning a below-grade stormwater culvert. This design solution improved circulation through the site while creating a welcoming passage that connects indoor spaces with outdoor areas and the future Ashland Grove Park.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding New Facility - Nominee



Sustainability was also a key priority during planning and construction. The facility incorporates solar panels and energy-efficient building systems that reduce long-term operational costs while supporting environmentally responsible infrastructure. These features demonstrate how public recreation facilities can integrate sustainability with fiscal responsibility and long-term community benefit.

Since opening to the public in June, the Ashland Roots Center has already demonstrated measurable impact within the Ashland community. In its first months of operation, the center hosted more than 93 classes serving approximately 425 participants. Over 82 percent of attendees live within three miles of the facility, confirming that locating the center directly within the community has reduced transportation barriers and expanded access to recreation and enrichment opportunities.

Programs have primarily served school-aged youth in grades 1 through 5 through offerings such as wrestling, Mad Science, DJ Academy, coding, and cooking classes. These programs reflect strong demand for youth-focused enrichment and demonstrate the effectiveness of community-informed program planning. Consistent participation across diverse offerings highlights the center's role as an inclusive, accessible, and responsive resource for local residents.

Through innovative partnerships, thoughtful design, and measurable community outcomes, the Ashland Roots Center provides a replicable model for integrated recreation and community development. The project demonstrates how recreation agencies and community development organizations can collaborate to expand access to services, strengthen neighborhoods, and create vibrant community spaces. By combining strategic partnerships, flexible design, and a strong focus on community needs, the Ashland Roots Center exemplifies the type of forward-thinking recreation facility recognized by the CARPD Outstanding New Facility Award.

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Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
Renovated Facility
(Large District)

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee

Criteria: Honors excellence in design and planning of newly renovated public park facilities. Exhibits high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

Nominee: Tennyson Park

District: Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (H.A.R.D.) proudly submits the Tennyson Park Renovation Project for CARPD's Facility Design Award, recognizing excellence in park redevelopment, community engagement, and inclusive recreation.

The grand reopening of Tennyson Park marked a transformative milestone for the South

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



Hayward community. More than a renovated space, this project represents a shared vision brought to life, one rooted in equity, accessibility, and meaningful community connection. Funded through the District's Measure F1 Bond, the \$11.5 million investment revitalized a 10-acre neighborhood park into a vibrant, multi-generational destination that reflects the voices and needs of its residents.

Originally breaking ground in 2023, the project reimagined Tennyson Park as a dynamic and inclusive recreational hub. The renovation introduced a wide range of amenities designed to serve users of all ages and abilities. These include a multi-use grassy field, upgraded skatepark, brand-new pump track, Bankshot and basketball courts, group picnic areas, walking paths, and expanded parking. To enhance environmental sustainability and visitor comfort, more than 40 new trees were planted, providing shade and contributing to the park's natural beauty.

Central to the park's identity is the Mia's Dream Come True All-Abilities Playground, a deeply meaningful feature that exemplifies the District's commitment to inclusive design. Inspired by a local family's vision and supported by an initial \$5,000 gift from Make-A-Wish Greater Bay Area, the playground offers accessible play structures, sensory-rich experiences, and thoughtfully designed spaces that allow children of all abilities to play side by side. By incorporating this treasured community asset into the broader renovation, Tennyson Park has become a regional destination for inclusive recreation.

Community engagement was a cornerstone of the project's success. Residents, families, and youth played an active role in shaping the park's design, providing input that influenced everything from amenities to layout. This collaborative approach ensured that the final outcome reflects the unique character of the Tennyson neighborhood while advancing equity in access to high-quality parks and open spaces.

The Tennyson Park Renovation exemplifies excellence in public park redevelopment. Through innovative design, inclusive features, environmental enhancements, and strong community partnerships, the project has transformed an aging facility into a welcoming and vibrant space for recreation, gathering, and belonging.

Today, Tennyson Park stands as a model for how thoughtful planning and community collaboration can create spaces that truly serve everyone. It is a powerful example of what investing in community looks like, and why parks matter.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee

Criteria: Honors excellence in design and planning of newly renovated public park facilities. Exhibits high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

Nominee: Jurupa Community Center

District: Jurupa Area Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

This project represents a significant investment in the community, transforming a 40-year-old facility into a modern, accessible, and highly functional center that serves residents of all ages and abilities.

The renovation of the Jurupa Community Center was thoughtfully planned and expertly executed to extend the life of the building while meeting the evolving needs of the community. Key improvements included the construction of a **new commercial-grade warming kitchen**, comprehensive **ADA-compliant restroom upgrades**, and the modernization of the **multi-purpose space** to support a wide range of recreation classes, community events, and public activities.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



The addition of the new kitchen has greatly enhanced the facility's ability to host programs, special events, and community gatherings. It now supports meal programs, rentals, and special functions that were previously limited due to outdated infrastructure. This improvement has expanded programming opportunities and increased the Center's value as a true community hub.

ADA restroom improvements were a critical component of the renovation. These upgrades ensure that all community members, including individuals with disabilities, can comfortably and safely access the facility. The improvements reflect a strong commitment to inclusivity, equity, and compliance with current accessibility standards.

The updated multi-purpose facility has been revitalized to support diverse uses, including recreation and enrichment classes, community meetings, private celebrations, and special events. Modern finishes, improved functionality, and flexible design now allow the space to better accommodate the needs of participants, instructors, and event organizers, while creating a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere.

Beyond physical improvements, this renovation has strengthened community engagement and pride. By preserving a long-standing neighborhood facility and investing in its future, the project honors the community's history while positioning the Jurupa Community Center as a cornerstone for recreation, connection, and service for decades to come.

The successful renovation of this aging facility demonstrates a clear vision, effective planning, and a strong commitment to enhancing public spaces. For its positive impact, improved accessibility, and expanded community use, the Jurupa Community Center is truly deserving of recognition as an **Outstanding Renovated Facility**.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee

Criteria: Honors excellence in design and planning of newly renovated public park facilities. Exhibits high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

Nominee: Harada Neighborhood Center Improvements Project

District: Jurupa Community Services District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Harada Neighborhood Center, located within Harada Heritage Park, is a vital community hub supporting youth programs, contract classes, rentals, and recreation services. As one of Jurupa Community Services District's (JCSD) most heavily utilized facilities, maintaining its functionality, accessibility, and overall user experience is essential to delivering high-quality service to the Eastvale community.

Following the recent completion of JCSD's Parks & Recreation Master Plan, a comprehensive, community-driven roadmap shaped directly by resident input, this project was identified as a priority reinvestment. The Master Plan reflected the community's vision for high-quality, well-maintained, and modernized facilities. In essence, these improvements were not just

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



staff-driven, they were designed by the community itself.

In alignment with this vision, JCSJ initiated a comprehensive Capital Improvement Project focused on extending the facility's lifecycle, improving operational efficiency, and elevating the overall customer experience.

Key improvements included:

- Full roof replacement
- Interior and exterior repainting
- Restroom renovations
- New flooring throughout the facility
- Replacement of interior and exterior doors
- Installation of a new reception desk and lobby area

The project was delivered through a competitive public bidding process, reinforcing JCSJ's commitment to fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability. Importantly, the scope was intentionally designed to address long-term infrastructure needs rather than defer maintenance, demonstrating disciplined, proactive asset management.

The Harada Neighborhood Center Improvements Project exemplifies excellence in public stewardship. By aligning capital investment with a community-driven Master Plan, JCSJ transformed an aging facility into a modern, durable, and efficient space that will serve residents for years to come. This project demonstrates that impactful innovation is not only about building new amenities, but also about reinvesting thoughtfully in existing assets to maximize community value. The final result is more than a renovation, it is a strategic reinvestment in a community asset shaped by resident priorities.

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Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
Renovated Facility
(Small District)

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee

Criteria: Honors excellence in design and planning of newly renovated public park facilities. Exhibits high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

Nominee: Nobel Creek Regional Park

District: Beaumont-Cherry Valley Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Beaumont-Cherry Valley Recreation & Park District is proud to submit Noble Creek Regional Park for the 2026 CARPD Award of Distinction for Outstanding Renovated Facility. Originally established in 1972, Noble Creek Regional Park has long served as a cornerstone of the community. Through thoughtful and strategic upgrades, the District has revitalized this historic space while preserving its legacy.

Recent improvements focused on accessibility, usability, and overall visitor experience. The District completed ADA-compliant parking stall upgrades and enhanced sidewalk connectivity, ensuring equitable access for all patrons. New paseos with turf installation have improved circulation and aesthetics throughout the baseball and softball complex, creating a more welcoming and functional environment for players and spectators alike.

Beyond the core athletic facilities, the District has made significant enhancements across the entire park, including upgrades to the dog park, RV facilities, horse arena, RC racetrack, and

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



pickleball courts. These improvements reflect a comprehensive approach to park maintenance and modernization, ensuring that all user groups benefit from a safe, clean, and enjoyable space.

Noble Creek Regional Park now serves over 1,000 visitors weekly, supporting a wide range of recreational activities and community gatherings. The revitalization has not only improved infrastructure but has also elevated the overall atmosphere of the park, reinforcing its role as a central hub for recreation in the Pass Area.



In addition to physical improvements, the District has introduced meaningful community elements that deepen the park's impact. A newly installed Youth Memorial Wall provides a dedicated space to honor children from the community who were lost too soon. Located at the very fields where many of them once played, the memorial offers families a place of remembrance, reflection, and connection. This feature has become a deeply valued part of the park, reinforcing its role not only as a recreational space, but as a place where community, memories, and legacy come together.

Through these efforts, the District has demonstrated its commitment to preserving community assets while adapting them to meet modern needs. Noble Creek Regional Park stands as a model for how thoughtful reinvestment can breathe new life into longstanding public spaces.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee

Criteria: Honors excellence in design and planning of newly renovated public park facilities. Exhibits high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

Nominee: Village Park Renovation Project

District: Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



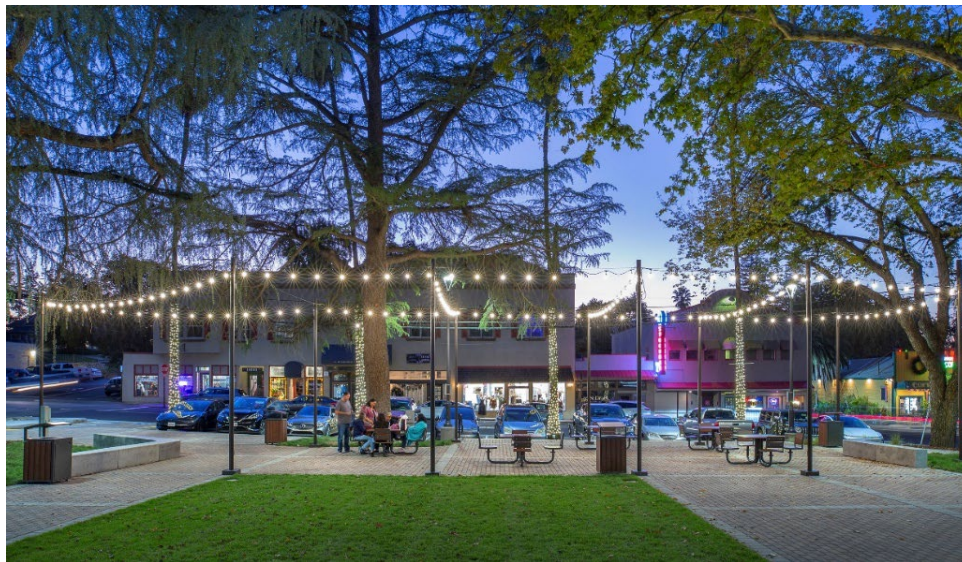
Summary of Nomination

The Village Park Renovation Project is the largest public investment ever made in Fair Oaks and reflects the District's commitment to accessibility, cultural enrichment, and long-term community benefit. Driven by the vision established through Measure J—approved by 68.9% of Fair Oaks voters—the project transforms a historic but aging village core into a fully modern, inclusive, and vibrant public space that now serves as a cultural anchor for the region.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



The \$22 million renovation delivers a reimagined Veterans Memorial Amphitheater with 480 ADA-accessible seats, a flexible Black Box Theater, the renovated Community Clubhouse, an Arts & Crafts Building, and connected outdoor plazas that welcome residents of all ages and abilities. Community engagement guided every step of planning, from the original bond outreach through construction, ensuring that residents' priorities—accessibility, arts engagement, safety, walkability, and family-friendly spaces—were directly reflected in the outcome. The project also strengthens economic vitality in the Village by drawing visitors, supporting local businesses, and expanding year-round programming opportunities.



The design introduces multiple innovative elements, including universal-access pathways throughout the park, integrated performance lighting and sound systems, multi-use gathering spaces that transition seamlessly from daytime recreation to evening arts programming, and sustainable infrastructure improvements such as EV-charging integration and energy-efficient facility systems. New outdoor stages, flexible plaza layouts, and upgraded circulation routes further enhance the campus's ability to support concerts, festivals, educational programs, and community celebrations.

This project renews a cherished public space, expands access for all, and positions Fair Oaks as a regional destination for arts, recreation, and community connection. The Village Park Renovation stands as a model of thoughtful public investment, creative placemaking, and community-driven design—embodying the spirit of the CARPD Outstanding Renovated Facility Award.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee

Criteria: Honors excellence in design and planning of newly renovated public park facilities. Exhibits high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

Nominee: Pardall Gardens Renovation

District: Isla Vista Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Completed in 2025, the Pardall Gardens Renovation transformed a small, underutilized parcel in the heart of Isla Vista into a vibrant and welcoming community gathering space. Located at 6514 Pardall Road within Isla Vista’s bustling business corridor, the 7,840 square-foot park sits along a busy pedestrian route near the bike tunnel connecting Isla Vista to the University of California, Santa Barbara. Once an unimproved lot lacking amenities, infrastructure, or a clear park identity, Pardall Gardens has been reimagined as “Peaceful Pardall”, a thoughtfully designed public space that reflects the character and needs of the Isla Vista community.

The renovation was guided by extensive community engagement and careful planning. In 2021, the Isla Vista Recreation & Park District conducted a three-month community survey to establish priorities for Measure O capital improvement funding. Based on strong public input, the IVRPD Board of Directors identified Pardall Gardens as the District’s top park

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



renovation priority. IVRPD partnered with Pacific Coast Land Design to develop conceptual designs informed by stakeholder meetings, community workshops, onsite voting boards, and an online survey that gathered over 100 votes. The community selected the “Peaceful Pardall” concept, with an emphasis on natural landscaping, flexible seating, and a calm gathering environment within Isla Vista’s busy downtown.



The completed renovation demonstrates excellence in design, accessibility, and versatility. The project introduced accessible decomposed granite pathways and a footbridge to ensure ADA-compliant circulation throughout the park. New amenities include four benches, a picnic table, three bar-top seating areas, and a dedicated gathering space designed to accommodate both quiet use and small community events. Site lighting and electrical infrastructure, including three light poles and electrical outlets, support evening activity and programming.

A defining feature of Pardall Gardens is its connection to Isla Vista’s culture and environment. The park includes a small stage area with electrical access that supports Isla Vista’s vibrant music and performance culture, allowing the space to host live performances and community gatherings. The landscape design incorporates six trees and more than 580 native, drought-tolerant plants, creating a self-sustaining environment that relies exclusively on natural water sources, eliminating the need for artificial irrigation, supported by stormwater green infrastructure and xeriscape principles suited to California’s climate.

The project was made possible through a combination of funding sources, including the State of California’s Recreational Revenue Infrastructure Enhancement (RIRE) Grant, the Per Capita Program funded by Proposition 68, support from the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, and local Measure O funds approved by Isla Vista voters. With a total cost of \$787,747, these investments ensured that the community’s vision could become a reality.

Pardall Gardens officially opened on January 29, 2026, with a community celebration

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Renovated Facility - Nominee



attended by more than 200 residents, students, and local leaders. The event featured live music, activities, and local treats, highlighting the park's role as a welcoming public space for gathering and connection. Since opening, Pardall Gardens has quickly become a peaceful hub where students study between classes and community members gather.

The Pardall Gardens Renovation demonstrates how even a small park can make a significant impact. The project has transformed an overlooked space into a beloved community asset.

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Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
Activity, Program, or
Event
(Large District)

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Festival De Los Muertos

District: Conejo Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD) has a rich history of hosting engaging community events that bring residents together from the Conejo Valley and greater Ventura County area. In November 2023, CRPD introduced El Festival de los Muertos, a vibrant one-day celebration held at Borchard Community Park in Newbury Park, honoring the traditional Mexican holiday, Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). The idea derived from part-time staff who participated in an organizational run, professional growth training program, tasked with a group project to design a new special event.

Designed as a free, family-friendly special event, El Festival de los Muertos provides a welcoming space where individuals of all backgrounds can gather to celebrate, learn, and experience this meaningful tradition. Now in its third year, the festival has quickly grown into a highly anticipated event, attracting approximately 3,000 attendees this past November.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



The festival highlights art, culture, and community partnerships. Local organizations, artists, and volunteers contribute by creating colorful artistic displays, providing traditional Calavera (skull) face painting, hosting children’s activities, and operating artisan craft booths. A vendor marketplace features local merchants and artists selling handcrafted goods such as themed jewelry, garments, artwork, and Día de los Muertos staples, decorative sugar skulls.

Live entertainment further enriches the experience, with performances from mariachi musicians, folklórico and Aztec dancers, and vocal performers who showcase the music and dances associated with the holiday. A variety of food trucks serving Mexican food and desserts adds flavor to the event.

A centerpiece of the festival is the community ofrenda (altar) display. Created in partnership with local cultural groups, artists, and residents, the altars honor loved ones who have passed while educating attendees about the history and symbolism of Día de los Muertos, creating a meaningful space for remembrance, reflection, and celebration of life. The event brings people from all cultural backgrounds together to experience and participate in this popular Mexican holiday.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Community Memorial for Cupcake

District: Cordova Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Cordova Recreation & Park District's (District) Community Memorial for Cupcake the Donkey was a thoughtfully planned and deeply meaningful event that honored a beloved animal who had become an enduring symbol of Hagan Community Park. For years, Cupcake served as an unofficial ambassador of the park, creating personal connections with visitors through daily interactions that became cherished traditions for many families.

Following Cupcake's passing, the District recognized the significant emotional impact on the community, as hundreds of residents shared memories and condolences both in person and across social media. In response, the District quickly developed and implemented a memorial event that provided a welcoming space for collective remembrance, reflection and celebration of Cupcake's life.

The event demonstrated exceptional program planning and community-centered design. Held at the Hagan Community Barn, where Cupcake had resided before his passing, the memorial featured live music, interactive craft activities, a memory board inside Cupcake's

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



stall and a curated slideshow that included a special video message from “Parks and Recreation” actor Jim O’Heir (better known as his character, Gary). Each element was intentionally designed to encourage participation, storytelling and shared experiences among attendees of all ages. The combination of structured programming and open-ended opportunities for reflection allowed the event to feel both organized and deeply personal.

A key strength of the event was its ability to translate community sentiment into a meaningful and inclusive experience. The District effectively engaged residents by honoring the stories and traditions associated with Cupcake, including families who had visited him for generations and individuals who associated him with significant personal memories. By centering the event around these shared connections, the District created an atmosphere that fostered unity, comfort and community pride.

The implementation of the memorial was both timely and impactful, demonstrating the District’s ability to respond quickly to community needs while maintaining a high level of quality and intention in event delivery. Attendance and participation reflected the strong emotional connection residents had with Cupcake, and the event successfully transformed collective grief into a positive, shared experience.

Through thoughtful planning, creative programming and meaningful community engagement, Cupcake’s Community Memorial exemplified excellence in special event development and execution. The event not only honored a unique and cherished part of the District’s identity, but also strengthened community bonds and reinforced the role of parks and recreation in bringing people together during moments that matter most.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Veterans Town Hall

District: Desert Recreation District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Desert Recreation District's Veterans Town Hall stands out as a meaningful and highly effective community driven initiative because it was built on a simple but powerful principle: listen first. At the time of the event, DRD did not offer veteran specific programming, so rather than making assumptions, the District created a welcoming public forum where veterans and their families could directly share their needs, barriers, and ideas for future services. The event was intentionally designed as a listening focused open house and town hall, with facilitated discussion, resource connections, and family friendly activities that made participation accessible and inviting.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Held on Saturday, January 31, 2026, the Veterans Town Hall combined ceremony, community discussion, and one on one engagement in a format that honored veterans while also producing real, actionable outcomes. The program included a ceremonial opening, remarks from community leaders, a featured presentation, and an open discussion period designed to capture veteran priorities and guide next steps. DRD structured the event to gather direct feedback on recreation, wellness, social connection, family programming, accessibility, transportation, and partnership opportunities, creating a clear roadmap for both immediate action and long term planning.



What makes this program especially deserving of recognition is that it did not end when the event concluded. The Veterans Town Hall immediately led to implementation. DRD has already launched several veteran centered efforts, including Veterans Guitar Lessons, Ruck Walks, and a chili cookoff fundraiser supporting local athletes attending the Veteran Disability Games in Chicago later this year. The District also implemented Veterans Parking signs at DRD locations across the Coachella Valley, a visible and lasting sign of recognition and respect. These early outcomes reflect the event's success not only in planning and outreach, but in translating community voice into real services and meaningful districtwide change.

The Town Hall also demonstrated excellence in implementation. DRD thoughtfully planned the event to ensure comfort, accessibility, and meaningful engagement for attendees, including veterans with mobility needs, hearing limitations, and those who may be sensitive to crowded indoor spaces. Instead of a lecture style meeting, we created opportunities for both public discussion and private one on one conversations, and brought in veteran resource organizations to connect attendees with existing services. This intentional design helped build trust and created the foundation for an ongoing relationship between DRD and the veteran community.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



The Veterans Town Hall is an outstanding example of how a parks and recreation district can identify a community need, respond with care and creativity, and quickly turn input into action.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Bands & Brews Summer Concert Series

District: Greater Vallejo Recreation District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Introduction & Overview

The Bands & Brews Summer Concert Series is an annual community event presented by the Greater Vallejo Recreation District that celebrates local culture by bringing together residents and visitors for live music, craft beverages, and family-friendly entertainment throughout the summer season. Over multiple weeks, the series features a diverse lineup of regional musicians, support for local breweries, and a welcoming atmosphere that fosters community pride and social connection.

Program Planning & Development

The concert series was thoughtfully designed to expand GVRD's cultural offerings, encourage community interaction in public spaces, and support local creative industries. Strategic partnerships with regional breweries and artists have elevated the event's profile and reinforced its place as a signature summer experience in Vallejo. Logistics, safety measures, and accessibility were prioritized in planning each event, ensuring an environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all ages.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Community Impact & Engagement

Bands & Brews has become a highly anticipated program that consistently draws significant attendance from Vallejo and neighboring communities. The series supports local musicians by providing performance opportunities, showcases craft brewing partners to a broad audience, and generates positive economic impact for downtown businesses during concert evenings. Attendees consistently share feedback about the event's role in strengthening community identity and enhancing Vallejo's cultural vibrancy.



Innovation & Excellence

The series blends entertainment and community celebration in a unique way that elevates GVRD's programming portfolio. By combining quality live music with curated beverage experiences, GVRD has created an engaging, memorable event that goes beyond traditional recreation programming. Efforts to incorporate diverse musical genres and local talent demonstrate GVRD's commitment to inclusivity and creativity.

Conclusion

The Bands & Brews Summer Concert Series exemplifies excellence in activity and special event programming through thoughtful planning, strong community partnerships, cultural relevance, and measurable positive impact. It is a distinguished example of how recreation and park districts can enrich community life and foster public engagement through innovative and accessible programming.

District Contact Name: Gabriel Lanusse
District Contact Phone: (707) 648-4600
District Contact Email: glanusse@gvrd.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Outstanding Activity/Program/Special Event - Nominee



CARPD Outstanding Activity/Program/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors programming or planning that supports environmental sustainability in the operation and management of District facilities.

Nominee: GVRD Recreation Expo

District: Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD)

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The GVRD Recreation Expo is an annual community engagement event designed to connect residents directly with recreation programs, services, and opportunities offered by the Greater Vallejo Recreation District. Now in its fourth year, the Expo has grown into a signature outreach event that removes barriers to participation while building awareness, access, and excitement around district programs.

Held as a high-energy, one-day, three-hour event, the Expo brings together program staff, instructors, community partners (last year we had 24 community partners), and families in an interactive environment where attendees can explore offerings, meet staff, and register on the spot.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Outstanding Activity/Program/Special Event - Nominee



Planning, Development & Purpose

The Recreation Expo was created to address a key challenge: many families were unaware of the full range of GVRD programs or needed in-person assistance to navigate registration and scholarship opportunities. Staff developed the Expo as a centralized, welcoming, and hands-on way to:

- Increase awareness of district programs
- Provide real-time registration support
- Expand access to scholarships and financial assistance
- Build stronger relationships with the community

Each year, the event has evolved based on participant feedback, with improved layout, clearer program pathways, and more direct access to staff who can answer questions and assist with enrollment.



Community Impact

The Recreation Expo has demonstrated measurable and meaningful impact:

- Over 500 patrons attended the most recent event in 2025.
- The Expo generated the highest on-site summer registrations of the season

Staff approved over 112 youth summer camp registrations during the event through on-site scholarship support

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Outstanding Activity/Program/Special Event - Nominee



In just a three-hour window, the Expo significantly increased youth access to recreation opportunities, particularly for families who benefit from financial assistance. By combining outreach, enrollment, and scholarship processing in one location, GVRD reduced barriers that often prevent participation.

Innovation & Excellence

What sets the Recreation Expo apart is its access-first model. Rather than simply promoting programs, the event is structured to convert interest into participation immediately. Families leave not just informed, but successfully enrolled.

The Expo reflects GVRD's commitment to:

- Equity in recreation access
- Proactive community engagement
- Customer-centered service delivery
- Continuous program improvement

The year-over-year growth in attendance and registrations demonstrates the event's success and its increasing value to the community.

Conclusion

The GVRD Recreation Expo is more than a promotional event, it is a strategic, high-impact initiative that expands access to recreation, strengthens community trust, and connects hundreds of residents with life-enriching programs. Its measurable outcomes, innovative approach, and growing community reach make it a distinguished example of excellence in recreation programming.

District Contact Name: Gabriel Lanusse
District Contact Phone: (707) 648-4600
District Contact Email: glanusse@gvrd.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Camp Create

District: Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Camp Create is an innovative youth arts and enrichment program developed by the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District that provides a welcoming, creative environment where young people can explore artistic expression, build confidence, and develop new skills. Designed to encourage imagination and hands-on learning, Camp Create blends visual arts, crafts, creative exploration, and collaborative projects into a dynamic program that celebrates creativity while supporting youth development.

The program was intentionally designed to provide a unique recreation experience that differs from traditional camps. Rather than focusing on a single activity, Camp Create introduces participants to a variety of artistic mediums and creative experiences that encourage experimentation and self-expression. Campers engage in projects such as painting, sculpture, mixed media art, design challenges, and collaborative installations. These activities not only build artistic skills but also foster problem-solving, teamwork, and confidence in young participants.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Camp Create also reflects the District's commitment to accessibility and inclusive recreation. The program is structured to welcome participants of varying skill levels and backgrounds, ensuring that all children feel comfortable exploring creativity in a supportive environment. By emphasizing participation and discovery rather than competition, the camp helps build self-esteem and encourages youth to view creativity as a lifelong outlet for expression.

A key strength of Camp Create is its thoughtful program planning and implementation. District staff developed a curriculum that balances structure with creative freedom, allowing participants to learn new techniques while still exploring their own ideas. Staff members serve as mentors and facilitators, guiding campers through projects while encouraging independent thinking and collaboration. The result is a highly engaging program that consistently generates enthusiasm from participants and families alike.



The program has produced meaningful outcomes for both participants and the District. Camp Create has become a highly sought-after seasonal offering, drawing strong enrollment and positive feedback from families. Participants leave the program with tangible creations as well as strengthened confidence, creativity, and social connections. The success of the program has also expanded opportunities for the District to deliver arts-based recreation programming that enriches the community without requiring specialized facilities or costly equipment.

Camp Create's model is easily adaptable and demonstrates a best practice approach for recreation agencies seeking to expand creative programming. The program's flexible structure allows it to be implemented in a variety of community spaces and scaled based on available resources. By combining thoughtful curriculum design, passionate staff leadership, and a welcoming creative environment, Camp Create provides a replicable framework for arts-based youth programming.

Through its originality, strong program design, and meaningful impact on youth participants, Camp Create exemplifies excellence in recreation programming. The program not only enriches the lives of young people but also strengthens community connections through shared creative experiences. Camp Create stands as a model of how innovative recreation

CARPD Awards of Distinction
Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



programming can inspire creativity, encourage personal growth, and provide memorable experiences for youth and families.

District Contact Name: James Wheeler
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Grinchmas

District: Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District has long offered annual Christmas-themed activities for the 275,000 residents of our district. There is our annual Tree Lighting and Breakfast With Santa at our regional park in San Jacinto and Gingerbread House building nights in French Valley, Menifee and Valle Vista.

When Robert Byers, the Recreation Supervisor at Winchester Domenigoni Park, was looking for a unique holiday event for the Francis Domenigoni Community Center, he thought outside of the box and created Grinchmas, a fun activity centered around Dr. Seuss' beloved book, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!"

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Children gather for the reading of the popular Christmas story. They also are opportunities to play games, eat snacks and have their photograph taken with the Grinch.

The highlight of the evening is the prize drawing. Every child and adult are given a raffle ticket for the opportunity to win toys and other great prizes. The entire event is free thanks to generous community donors. The Dedicated Volunteers of Winchester Bingo group donates prizes and cash to buy gifts as a thank you for allowing them to use the community center for its weekly games. Another generous donation came from the Winchester-Homeland Homeowners Association, ensuring that almost every child who participated went home with a gift.

Grinchmas is a wonderful way to take a Christmas tradition and turn it into something unique for our residents. It also highlights how community partnerships benefit Valley-Wide and our visitors.

District Contact Name: Dean Wetter
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District Contact Email: Dean@Gorecreation.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Pat O'Brien Community Center Book Exchange

District: Southgate Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

This Book Exchange was created to make reading more accessible in a way that is free, easy to use, and part of everyday community life. Built on a “take a book, leave a book” model, it removes common barriers that often stand between people and books. There is no membership, no checkout process, and no cost. Residents can stop by, browse, take a book home, or leave one behind. That simple approach has made the Book Exchange more than a place to find reading material. It has become a shared community resource that supports literacy, trust, and connection.

The program was made possible through the County of Sacramento Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Grant Program. The District partnered with the County and neighborhood leader Lee Miller. As the County determined that funding for a library in the growing community was unlikely soon, Lee Miller advocated for the Bookmobile to make visits to Pat O'Brien Community Center to help address the gap in service. While that effort was successful, it was clear that the community needed a more consistent and readily available source of access to books than the Bookmobile could provide. In response, the District is offering books onsite at Pat O'Brien Community Center, helping establish the foundation for what would become the Book Exchange.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



The program grew from a clear community purpose: to place books within easy reach and create another welcoming point of access for residents of all ages. By locating the exchange at Pat O'Brien Community Center, the District placed a literacy resource in a familiar public space already used by families, youth, adults, and senior communities.

The collection is designed to serve a wide range of readers and interests. Donations include children's books, early readers, chapter books, young adult titles, adult fiction, non-fiction, classics, and books of local interest. The program encourages gently used or new books that reflect the diversity of the community. Just as important, it gives residents a direct role in sustaining the program. Community members are not only visitors to the Book Exchange. They help build it each time they contribute a book, discover a new one, and return again. That shared participation has helped create a strong sense of neighborhood pride and ownership.

A mural by local artist Madelyne Templeton adds a warm and inviting presence to the site and helps the Book Exchange stand out as a cared-for public resource. Open year-round with seasonal hours and accessible during daily routines, whether someone is on a morning walk, stopping by after work, or visiting the community center for another reason. It keeps books present in a shared public space and makes reading feel close at hand.

The Pat O'Brien Community Center Book Exchange demonstrates that an outstanding program does not need to be large to have strong community impact. By expanding access to reading, reducing barriers, encouraging community participation, and strengthening neighborhood pride, Southgate Recreation & Park District has created a program that is clear in purpose, inclusive in practice, and rooted in public service. It is a strong example of how local agencies can strengthen community life one shared book at a time.

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Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
Renovated Facility
(Small District)

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Pass Area Youth Baseball & Softball League Transition

District: Beaumont-Cherry Valley Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Beaumont-Cherry Valley Recreation & Park District proudly submits the Pass Area Youth Baseball & Softball (PAYBS) League Transition for the 2026 CARPD Outstanding Activity, Program, or Special Event Award.

On January 9, 2026, with just one week's notice, the District assumed full responsibility for a youth baseball and softball program serving over 1,000 participants. Due to the previous organization's inability to fulfill its facility use agreement, the District acted immediately to ensure that the community would not lose one of its most vital recreational programs.

Within days, District staff mobilized to rebuild the league from the ground up. Evaluations were successfully conducted on January 17, followed by the rapid development of team rosters, practice schedules, and game calendars. Simultaneously, staff coordinated uniform orders, secured volunteers, and planned major community events including Opening Day, Picture Day, a Pancake Breakfast, and a community Clean-Up Day.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



All of this was accomplished while maintaining the District’s regular operations and service levels. The success of this transition is a direct reflection of the dedication, adaptability, and teamwork demonstrated by District staff.

Beyond logistics, the District used this opportunity to establish a renewed vision for youth sports—one centered on inclusivity, skill development, and positive character building. The community response has been overwhelmingly positive, with families expressing appreciation for the District’s leadership and commitment to providing quality programming.

The PAYBS transition represents more than an operational success—it is a testament to the District’s ability to respond to urgent community needs, build programs from the ground up, and create meaningful recreational opportunities that will have a lasting impact on local youth.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination.

District Contact Name: Mickey Valdivia
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Forward Ever, Backward Never

District: Isla Vista Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Isla Vista Recreation & Park District's annual "Forward Ever, Backward Never" celebration has become a cornerstone cultural event in the Isla Vista community. Now in its fifth year, this special event honors Black history and culture while creating meaningful connections between students, residents, artists, and community leaders. Through thoughtful planning and partnerships, the event has grown into a highly anticipated annual tradition that reflects IVRPD's commitment to inclusive and impactful community programming.

In 2020, the idea for IVRPD's "Forward Ever, Backward Never" event was developed in response to the national movement following the murder of George Floyd and the Isla Vista community's immediate response, which consisted of a peaceful vigil and a mural. In a region where less than 2% of the population identifies as Black, the event was intentionally created to provide a safe, inclusive space to celebrate Black culture and foster community connection. IVRPD General Manager Kimberly Kiefer initiated the program in collaboration with local artist Alla McKeon, alongside partnerships with the UCSB Office of Black Student Development, then led by the late Elroy Pinks, and poet Sojourner Kincaid Rolle. The first celebration was held in Little Acorn Park, and quickly evolved into the signature event it is today.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Now hosted annually at the Isla Vista Community Center, the free event is designed as a multigenerational gathering where local musicians, art, soul food, and storytelling bring people together to celebrate heritage. With steadily increasing attendance and visibility, “Forward Ever, Backward Never” has become a beloved annual tradition within Isla Vista and the greater Santa Barbara area, and remains the only and longest-running Black History Month celebration in the community.

The program is uniquely shaped through strong partnerships with community and campus organizations. IVRPD collaborates closely with the University of California, Santa Barbara’s Office of Black Student Development and the UCSB Black Student Union to ensure the event reflects and uplifts the voices and experiences of the Black community.

The 2026 celebration marked the program’s five-year anniversary and featured a diverse lineup of performances and activities. Highlights included a reggae performance by Santa Barbara based band Alla McKeon & The Rahkas, spoken word poetry presentations, an interactive drumming workshop, and a DJ performance. Community members also participated in trivia and cultural activities throughout the evening. The program also serves as a platform to honor the legacies of influential community leaders such as Elroy Pinks and poet Sojourner Kincaid Rolle, whose work helped uplift and support the Black community in Isla Vista.

Additionally, the event highlights local businesses and community partners. Guests enjoyed complimentary soul food prepared by locally owned Black business Leylany’s Sweet Treats, demonstrating IVRPD’s commitment to supporting local entrepreneurs.

The event’s impact has also been recognized through regional media coverage that noted the event’s interactive programming, encouraging attendees to engage directly with the celebration. Participants have described the experience as “moving” and “uplifting”, reflecting the meaningful role the event plays in cultivating connection and cultural pride within Isla Vista. The continued growth of “Forward Ever, Backward Never” demonstrates the power of culturally responsive programming in building stronger communities. By honoring history, uplifting artists and community leaders, and creating a welcoming space for dialogue and celebration, the Isla Vista Recreation & Park District has developed a program that celebrates Black culture and strengthens the sense of community in Isla Vista.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Trunk or Treat

District: Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District host a number of Special Events annually. What we have witnessed during the past two years is a large increase in Community participation and attendance. This has been most prevalent with our Trunk or Treat (hosted the Friday prior to Halloween) and our Breakfast with Santa (hosted on the 2nd Saturday of December).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic the annual Trunk or Treat has become more popular in the community. The event has expanded from 18 community members displaying trunks to a full parking lot with 35 trunks decorated in 2025. The groups who work on their trunks to display have also become more inventive with their decorations. All participants chase after the coveted "Best Decorated Trunk" award annually. In 2025 we saw a full mockup of Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory, complete with Oompa Loompas; a scene from Wicked; the Scooby Doo Mystery Van; and much more, including our local FFA group recreating a barn scene to tie into their farming theme.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



What has been more impressive is the growth of the program from our Community. In the past our Recreation staff was ecstatic when we had around 500 children show up for the event. After years of steady increases in attendance, we are proud to say that there were more than 1,750 children in attendance with their families. We also had more than 1,000 people visit our haunted house located just beside the Trunk or Treat parking lot.



The haunted house is decorated by our local high school drama club. The students with one of their teachers also act as the cast of zombies and ghosts in the facility. The haunted house is in its third year of existence and has gotten more elaborate each year.

This event has become a cornerstone event for the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District. When we have staff out in the community, we hear people comment all the time that “this is the same group that hosts the trunk or treat.” People talk about the fun they had for months on end and exclaim that they cannot wait to see the next year’s version.

Special Events are a key component of any Recreationally based program. In the Rio Linda and Elverta communities, we are witnessing that these events are wanted and needed by a very tight knit community and we are proud to produce them and watch their growth throughout the years.

District Contact Name: Mike Heller
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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee

Criteria: Honors outstanding and unique achievements in program planning, development, and implementation of a District activity or special event.

Nominee: Full STEAM Ahead Summer Program

District: West Side Recreation Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Full STEAM Ahead Summer Program represents what we believe youth programming should look like when a community comes together with purpose, hands-on, and built around creating real opportunity for kids.

At the West Side Recreation and Park District, we serve a rural community where access to enrichment programs is limited for many families. Full STEAM Ahead was created to meet that need, and over the past two years, it has grown into a program that now serves over 400 students each summer across multiple school sites.

What makes this program truly special is how it continues to evolve. We have intentionally expanded beyond traditional programming to incorporate hands-on STEM experiences that expose students to new possibilities. Students are working with drones, learning coding fundamentals, exploring journalism and media, and engaging in creative problem-solving activities that make learning exciting and relevant.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



At the same time, we never lose sight of the importance of community. Over the past two years, we have incorporated back-to-school backpack giveaways into the program, ensuring that students not only leave with new knowledge and confidence, but also with the tools they need to succeed when the school year begins.

A major strength of Full STEAM Ahead is our team. We have made a commitment to building a strong staffing model by hiring young adults from our community, including local athletes, high school students, aspiring teachers, and college students, alongside experienced and certificated educators. This creates a powerful environment where students are supported by mentors they can relate to, while also benefiting from structured, high-quality instruction.

More than anything, this program is something we are proud of. It reflects our belief that every child deserves the chance to learn, grow, and feel supported. It reflects our commitment to doing the work the right way. And it reflects a vision that we will continue to build on for years to come.

Full STEAM Ahead is not just a program—it is an investment in our community’s future.

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Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
Innovation

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: Hagan Community Park AED Installation

District: Cordova Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

On November 12, the Cordova Recreation & Park District (District), in partnership with the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (Sac Metro Fire), launched a groundbreaking public safety initiative with the installation of the first automated external defibrillator (AED) cabinet in a District community park, Hagan Community Park. Marked by a ribbon-cutting and hands-on training event, this effort represents a significant advancement in emergency preparedness within outdoor public spaces.

While AEDs have traditionally been limited to indoor recreation facilities, this program reimagines how lifesaving resources can be deployed by extending access directly into park environments where emergencies can occur without warning. Inspired by local cardiac arrest survivor Joe Ellis, the initiative was developed in collaboration with Sac Metro Fire as part of the "Citizen Responders Project," following the HEARTSafe community model. Its core objective is to equip everyday park users with both the tools and confidence to respond during critical moments before first responders arrive.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



What distinguishes this program is its integrated approach to innovation. The District combined infrastructure investment with immediate community education by hosting free, hands-on CPR and AED training alongside the installation event. This ensured not only access to lifesaving equipment, but also community readiness to use it effectively. The program continued to evolve in December 2025 with the addition of NARCAN to AED cabinets, expanding its scope to address opioid-related emergencies. District staff were trained in CPR, AED use and NARCAN administration, further strengthening operational preparedness across parks and facilities.

The measurable impact of this initiative is substantial. Community members and staff have increased their emergency response capabilities through direct training opportunities, while public access to lifesaving equipment has expanded through our strategically placed AED cabinet, findable through the PulsePoint AED mobile app. This allows 911 dispatchers to guide nearby bystanders to the closest device, significantly reducing response time. According to Sac Metro Fire, immediate CPR can increase survival rates to approximately 30 percent, and early AED use can raise survival rates to nearly 50 percent compared to a national average of 8 percent.

By introducing lifesaving infrastructure into outdoor park settings and pairing it with accessible public training, the Cordova Recreation & Park District has established a replicable, forward-thinking model for park operations and community safety. This initiative demonstrates how innovation in recreation services can directly enhance emergency response outcomes and redefine the role of parks as critical assets in public health and safety.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: CORE Recreation Center

District: Cosumnes Community Services District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

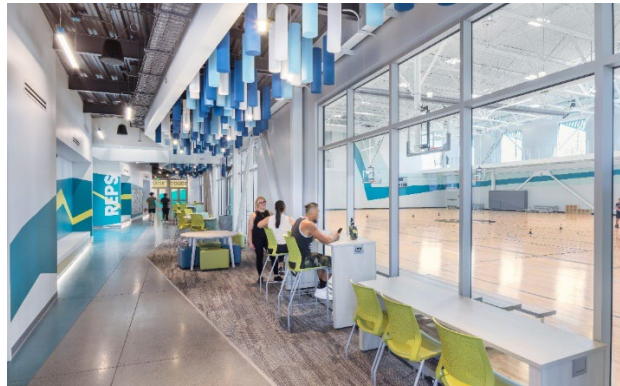
CORE Recreation Center – Outstanding Innovation Award Nomination

Opened in July 2025, the CORE Recreation Center is a 54,621-square-foot, multi-generational facility serving 214,000 residents of the Cosumnes Community Services District. While addressing critical shortages in indoor recreation space, CORE's defining achievement is its innovative integration of facility design, operations, and financial strategy into a unified, self-sustaining model.

Innovative Operations and Financial Strategy CORE departs from traditional subsidy-dependent recreation models by operating as an enterprise system supported by memberships, programs, rentals, and events. Designed to sustain itself, the facility launched with a structured General Fund investment and a three-year repayment plan. CORE is already ahead of schedule with no ongoing subsidy required.

Market response validated this approach: 1,390 members joined on Opening Day, and the Year 3 goal of 2,400 members was reached within six months, stabilizing revenue and reducing financial risk.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Facility Design as Innovation CORE treats facility design as an operational strategy. Flexible studios, modular program spaces, and dual gymnasiums maximize programming density and allow rapid adaptation to changing community needs without future expansion. Efficient layouts and clear sightlines improve supervision while reducing staffing demands, increasing both service capacity and cost efficiency.

System-Wide Service Innovation By centralizing programming into a single, high-efficiency facility, CORE expanded access, eliminated youth sports waitlists, and reduced strain on aging infrastructure. Digital membership systems modernize service delivery and improve the customer experience.

Strategically located within Morse Community Park, the facility leverages existing infrastructure to expand capacity without new land acquisition, maximizing public investment through system-level planning.

Sustainable and Replicable Model CORE's all-electric, energy-efficient design further supports operational innovation by reducing long-term costs and risk. More broadly, the project provides a replicable framework for special districts, aligning adaptable design, enterprise operations, and fiscal discipline to expand services without increasing long-term burden. The CORE Recreation Center represents a breakthrough in public facility delivery, demonstrating how innovation in design, operations, and financial strategy can work together to expand community services, stabilize revenue, and ensure long-term sustainability.

District Contact Name: Tim Ogden
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District Contact Email: timogden@cosumnescsd.gov

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: Mobile Rec Van

District: Cosumnes Community Services District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

One of our District's Strategic Plan Goals was mobile recreation for free pop-up programming within our community. Funding, however, was always an issue, as well as the debate about whether we should purchase a vehicle or lease one. We then came up with a third alternative. Our Special District is a unique one of Parks, Recreation, and Fire. After talking with our Fire Department, we were able to have them surplus one their ambulances to us. This would be our mobile recreation vehicle moving forward. While it was used, it was still functional.

Not only did we have the benefits of a free vehicle to make use of for one of our strategic goals. There were other added benefits. For instance, ambulances have an abundance of storage both on the exterior and on the interior. This would allow us to keep games, prizes, and equipment neatly stored and secured. Even the seats in the back lift up to provide extra

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



storage capacity. Next, it came with a PA system as a part of unit. This allowed us to provide amplified sound. It had exterior lights along the side so when it got darker, we could still illuminate our immediate area. The seating cab up front has larger, more comfortable captain's chairs. Another benefit is it has power source outlets. Ambulances come equipped with two – 12-volt DC battery ports, and two – 115 VAC ports to plug in standard household items, or as we use it for, a karaoke machine. The last benefit is that ambulances have a large wheelbase that normal vehicle often times have to get in and out various terrain. This makes it perfect for us to get in and out of parks for our events. Ambulances also don't require a specialized license, so any staff who possess a class C license can drive this vehicle.



While I mentioned in the beginning that funding was an issue, we wanted our mobile ambulance (or Rec Force 1 as we've titled it), to look not like an ambulance but more recreation focused. So we had it wrapped with a recreation theme. The cost of this was about \$1800. Rather than putting forth a budget proposal for this funding we worked with our co-sponsored groups who often times want to do some sort of quid pro quo trade for space/rooms we own. Many of them agreed to fund part of the wrap. Others agreed to purchase games, or equipment (e.g. corn hole, karaoke machine, speakers, cones, etc.) This allowed us to fully stock Rec Force 1 at no additional cost to the District. By looking at this new innovative way to offer mobile recreation, we are able offer various pop-up events with only the cost of staff. We also have an ongoing partnership with our Fire Department to surplus more ambulances in the future should we need a new one or others.

District Contact Name: Tim Ogden
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District Contact Email: timogden@cosumnescsd.gov

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: Prom Dress Giveaway

District: Desert Recreation District

District Submission:

Prom Dress Giveaway

Save the Date:
Saturday March 21st & Sunday March 22nd
10:00am - 4:00pm
(by appointment only)

Offering FREE prom dresses in a variety of sizes, colors, & styles!
Open to All High School Juniors & Seniors in the Coachella Valley

To book an appointment, email
avelasquez@drd.us.com or text (760) 701-1043

Thousand Palms Community Center
31-189 Robert Rd. Thousand Palms, CA 92276

Desert Best Friend's Closet

MyRecreationDistrict.com/community-events



Summary of Nomination

Desert Recreation District's Prom Dress Giveaway is an innovative program that removes barriers, builds confidence, and expands access for youth across the Coachella Valley. Open to all high school juniors and seniors, the program provided free prom dresses in a wide variety of sizes, colors, and styles through scheduled appointments at the Districts Thousand Palms Community Center. Students from schools across the Coachella Valley attended, and DRD was also proud to welcome and assist students from outside District boundaries. The program was centered on one simple belief: every junior and senior deserves the opportunity to take part in prom with dignity, excitement, and confidence.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



What makes this program especially innovative is that it goes beyond a basic giveaway. DRD created a personalized and welcoming experience that made students feel celebrated, not just served. By offering appointments, the program gave each participant time to browse, ask questions, and find something that made them feel special and most importantly, made them feel comfortable with no barriers. It transformed a recreation facility into a place of encouragement, self confidence, and community care during an important milestone in a young person's life.

The program also showcased a unique multigenerational community effort. DRD senior groups volunteered their time to support the event and generously provided new jewelry and accessories for the youth. Their involvement added a meaningful personal touch and turned the experience into more than dress selection, it became a full community effort to uplift local students. This connection between older adult volunteers and local youth reflected the very best of community service and highlighted how recreation programs can bring generations together in impactful ways.

The Prom Dress Giveaway demonstrates innovation through compassion, creativity, and partnership. It responded to a real need, supported students from throughout the valley and beyond, and reimagined how a public agency can help young people participate fully in life's milestone moments.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: Data-Driven Park Investment and Operations Model

District: Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Across the United States, public trust in government institutions has declined significantly. Recent research from the Pew Research Center and the Partnership for Public Service shows that 66% of Americans cite government 'incompetence' as a primary concern. Concerns about public agencies' ability to complete projects on time and within budget are also a major community concern. Recognizing this challenge, the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (H.A.R.D.) developed an innovative, data-driven approach to identify park needs, engage the community, and deliver park improvements quickly and transparently. Instead of relying on conventional decision-making models predominantly influenced by public gatherings or the most outspoken stakeholders, H.A.R.D. adopted a systematic framework that incorporates an expanding array of data sources, along with community feedback and engagement, to guide park investment and operational decisions. The model leverages park usage analytics, maintenance assessments, community input, and operational data to determine priority projects and allocate resources effectively.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Key components include: visitation analytics from Placer.ai using anonymized mobile data; Board-approved Park Maintenance Standards for park condition and appearance, with staff regularly assessing parks using a standardized tool; community priorities from a statistically valid Districtwide survey and Needs Assessment; and the Capital Investment Plan, which showed where funds were or will be spent on park improvement. This is complemented by publicly available data, such as the American Community Survey for demographics and population estimates, and Cal EnviroScreen for public health indicators, recognizing the parks' critical health benefits.

The District combined data sources—usage analytics, park condition assessments, community input, and demographic and public health data—to create a transparent, systematic framework for prioritizing projects. This model helps staff and officials identify high-impact investments that reflect community needs and preferences, and promotes equity in public investment by relying on data and broad engagement rather than an ad hoc approach, ensuring decisions are not solely influenced by communities with more resources or greater meeting access. This is especially important for special districts like H.A.R.D., serving both incorporated and unincorporated areas with varying representation and advocacy opportunities.

The effectiveness of this model was demonstrated when the H.A.R.D. received Park Impact Fee funding designated for improvements within a specific unincorporated Census Designated Place. Using the integrated decision-making framework, Meek Park was identified as the optimal site for the funding to yield the greatest benefit. Data revealed relatively low park utilization, an unused portion of the park, and a dilapidated historical building used primarily for storage, all in the park's poor, unincorporated CDP of Cherryland. Additionally, the Needs Assessment Survey underscored that the community's highest-priority investments are in amenities for the community garden and in farm-to-table programming, both of which ranked highly. Based on these findings, the District leveraged multiple funding mechanisms, including Park Impact Fees and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, to build the Alameda County Agricultural History Center at Meek Estate—renovating a carriage house into a history museum, restoring the orchard, creating a demonstration and community garden, and developing farm-to-table programming with the adjacent community center. Using this data and available information, they have turned this park into a community hub that will serve as a gathering place for the entire unincorporated community.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



From the County releasing the Park Impact Fee balances to requesting funds, the process took under 2 months. Staff analyzed the project, presented recommendations to advisory committees, and gained approval from the District's Board. This streamlined timeline shows how a structured, data-driven approach accelerates planning and delivery while maintaining transparency and oversight of public involvement. These innovations form a comprehensive approach to modern public service delivery. By integrating technology, data analytics, and community engagement into a unified decision-making framework, H.A.R.D. has created a system that delivers projects and services more efficiently, equitably, and transparently. This model shows how special districts can evolve from reactive, complaint-driven approaches to structured, data-informed systems that prioritize community needs. Through this approach, H.A.R.D. is restoring trust in local government by delivering high-quality park improvements and services at 'the speed of trust.'

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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: Park Ambassador Program

District: Jurupa Community Services District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

In January 2025, the Jurupa Community Services District (JCSD) Parks & Recreation Department launched the Park Ambassador Program (PAP), a structured, volunteer-driven initiative designed to enhance park stewardship, improve maintenance responsiveness, and deepen community engagement.

JCSD operates and maintains 15 parks and three facilities spanning more than 220 acres and serving approximately 60,000 residents in Eastvale. As park usage increased, so did the need for proactive oversight and timely issue reporting. Rather than relying solely on internal inspections, JCSD developed an innovative model that integrates trained resident volunteers directly into operational workflows.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Unlike traditional volunteer programs focused on one-time events, the PAP embeds community members into structured, bi-weekly park inspections aligned with JCSD maintenance standards. Each Park Ambassador is assigned to a specific park, ensuring consistent, localized oversight across the entire park system, a goal that was achieved within the program's first year.

Ambassadors utilize standardized evaluation tools to document park conditions and submit reports directly into JCSD's service workflow. These submissions are tracked, reviewed, and assigned, transforming community observations into actionable service requests and measurable operational performance. This reliable inspection cadence has shifted JCSD from a reactive maintenance model to a proactive, data-informed approach.

First-year results demonstrate the program's impact:

- 26 active Park Ambassadors
- 360+ park inspections completed
- Approximately 800 service requests generated
- 775+ requests completed (97%+ completion rate)
- 500+ volunteer hours contributed

The PAP expanded operational capacity without increasing staffing levels, representing a cost-effective innovation in public park management. Recurring issues are identified earlier, response times have improved, and overall park conditions have been elevated.

Beyond operational efficiency, the program has strengthened the relationship between JCSD and Eastvale residents. Quarterly Ambassador meetings foster collaboration, shared ownership, and alignment with JCSD priorities. The program has increased civic pride, heightened awareness of JCSD services, and reinforced JCSD's commitment to transparency and accountability.

The PAP represents a forward-thinking model of community-integrated park management. By embedding residents directly into inspection and reporting processes, JCSD has enhanced service responsiveness while cultivating a culture of stewardship and shared responsibility. For these reasons, the Park Ambassador Program is a deserving candidate for the CARPD Award of Distinction for Outstanding Innovation.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: Connecting Neighbors-to-Neighbors to Combat the Epidemic of Loneliness

District: Paradise Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

In 2024 the Paradise Recreation and Park District (PRPD, District) received a \$750,000 Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) grant from California Volunteers Office of the Governor to help address the epidemic of loneliness. PRPD staff coordinated and collaborated with 27 community partners on the N2N project and strengthened social connection and resilience across ridge and valley communities within the 170 square mile District. From June 2024 to March 2026, the initiative addressed the unique challenges of rural, wildfire-impacted communities through inclusive, place-based, and interest-driven programming to help foster a sense of belonging, nurturing communities, and connectivity of residents.

Project snapshot

From the onset, PRPD approached the project to model how an organization can be a “good neighbor” to sister organizations to help deliver a breadth of activities for residents. Working with partner organizations composed of local arts groups, environmental organizations, service providers, educational institutions, and community-based nonprofits, PRPD created diverse and inclusive opportunities for residents across the District. PRPD and partners

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



supported programs that strengthened social ties, promoted resilience, and addressed a wide range of community needs through arts, wellness, environmental action, and disaster preparedness.

Neighbors Engaged	Events Hosted	Volunteer Hours
13,202	671	2126

Needs

The Camp Fire and the Covid pandemic left lasting emotional and social impacts that continue to shape daily life throughout the District. Once deeply rooted and multi-generational, many neighborhoods experienced significant displacement, loss, and isolation. New and returning residents often lacked opportunities to reconnect, build trust, and establish a sense of belonging.

Pre-program survey findings highlighted the importance of supporting community-based organizations already doing meaningful work. Rather than duplicating efforts, the project focused on resourcing and coordinating partners around shared goals. Collaboration across climate action, wildfire preparedness, arts, and wellness organizations helped break down silos and expand program reach. The Good Fire Festival exemplified this approach, bringing multiple partners together to promote beneficial fire, community celebration, ecological learning opportunities, and pyrotherapy to reduce stress and anxiety triggers when seeing fire or smelling smoke.

Connecting Neighbor to Neighbor Project Approach

Very few residents within the District live in traditional, easily defined neighborhood blocks. Rural foothill and valley communities are characterized by large lots, limited pedestrian infrastructure, and numerous privately maintained roads, resulting in dispersed housing patterns and varying degrees of accessibility. To account for these conditions, the District organized the service area into four primary neighborhoods based on unincorporated community names—Butte Creek, Concow/Yankee Hill, Magalia—and the incorporated Town of Paradise. Paradise was further divided into six neighborhoods aligned with major roadways and established emergency evacuation zones to reinforce the “know your zone” preparedness model.

Recognizing that connections in rural communities are not defined by driving distance and extends beyond geography, the District also defined communities by shared interests. For example, residents may identify more with activities (walking, sport, nature exploration, art, kayaking, physical fitness, and others) or life stage (such as parents of young children, or seniors), allowing the nurturing of interest communities that may not live near each other but are bound by common interests.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Incorporating interest-based communities was essential to the program's success, allowing a broader range of partners to host events across the District and expanding opportunities for residents of diverse ages, abilities, and interests to participate.

Key Takeaways: Lessons Learned, Sustainability & Next Steps

The Neighbor-to-Neighbor project demonstrates the transformative impact that intentional community building can have on a community shaped by distance, loss, and resilience. Throughout the program, several themes emerged as essential to strengthening social connection across the District: providing opportunities for residents in welcoming third spaces where people can gather, fostering meaningful collaboration with partners, and offering consistent opportunities for residents to engage with one another. Weekly activities proved especially powerful, enabling relationships to grow steadily over time and cultivating a sense of trust, belonging, and shared interests.

Equally important was the project's commitment to listening—both to community members and to the organizations already serving them. By valuing partner insight, remaining flexible, and centering collaboration, the District modeled good neighbor practices, broadened the project's reach and deepened its impact. Residents repeatedly voiced appreciation for accessible, no-cost programming, underscoring how critical it is to remove financial barriers and ensure that everyone can participate fully in community life.

The partnerships forged during this project are strong, enduring, and full of promise. Many collaborators expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work together and a genuine desire to continue building on this momentum. PRPD is committed to carrying this work forward by embedding intentional connection points into all events and volunteer opportunities, ensuring that community-building remains at the heart of our work.

Looking ahead, sustained funding toward partner collaboration and the continuation of an effective marketing and outreach campaign will be key to amplifying the project's reach and supporting long-term resilience across the District. With continued support, the N2N initiative can keep expanding opportunities for engagement, strengthening relationships, and cultivate a community where every resident feels seen, supported, and connected.

Together, we are rebuilding more than shared spaces we are rebuilding belonging and strong community ties. Here is a quote from a program participant:

"After the Camp Fire, many of us didn't just move back to a place, we rebuilt relationships and trust alongside our homes. Over the past year, I've noticed neighbors making more effort to check in on one another, attend local events, and participate in programs that bring people together. There's a shared understanding that connection matters here, especially in emergencies, and that sense of looking out for one another continues to grow."

**CARPD Awards of Distinction
Outstanding Innovation - Nominee**



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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: CIMIS Weather Station at WildHawk Golf Club

District: Southgate Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) Weather Station at WildHawk Golf Club is a strong example of innovation that is practical, measurable, and rooted in public service. Installed as California Irrigation Management Information System Station 273, the station brings state-supported, site-specific weather data directly to a major public golf course in South Sacramento. Its purpose is clear: to improve water conservation by providing accurate data for the community to make better irrigation decisions using real conditions at WildHawk Golf Club, not broad regional estimates.

Based on the publicly listed active CIMIS stations and Regional Water Authority meeting records, WildHawk Golf Club is the Sacramento region's only active golf-course-hosted CIMIS station, emphasizing how distinct the WildHawk Golf Club installation is in the region. The station's data is reported online, making it easily accessible to the public and available to

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



support informed irrigation and water management decisions. View the station's data on the CIMIS website at <https://cimis.water.ca.gov>.

CIMIS works by collecting weather data minute by minute, retrieving it hourly, and calculating reference evapotranspiration, which shows how much water a standardized plant surface is losing under actual local conditions. That matters at WildHawk Golf Club, where course operations already use computerized irrigation systems, weather stations, and soil moisture sensors to apply water only where and when it is needed. Together, these tools help staff protect turf quality while using water more responsibly.



The WildHawk Golf Club CIMIS station also serves a broader purpose beyond the course itself. Regional Water Authority selected the site in part because it adds climate data from a hotter, drier part of the county, helping balance older readings from Fair Oaks' more riparian setting. The station supports Spatial CIMIS and outdoor water-budget work tied to conservation regulation, serving many communities in the Sacramento Region. Department of Water Resources has also highlighted that CIMIS stations help urban landscapes such as parks, residential areas, and golf courses maintain healthy vegetation while conserving water.

This installation was not an overnight effort. It was a two-year process, with Sacramento County Water Agency supporting maintenance and a public grand opening by Southgate Recreation & Park District on May 22, 2025. That long lead time reflects the care required to bring a specialized station online and integrate it into public-facing water management.

The CIMIS Weather Station at WildHawk Golf Club demonstrates what outstanding innovation should look like in recreation and parks districts: a smart local investment that improves daily operations, strengthens water stewardship, and creates value beyond a single site. By hosting the region's only active golf-course CIMIS station, Southgate Recreation & Park District has advanced an innovation that is quiet in appearance, but significant in impact. It is a model of what outstanding innovation should be: useful, measurable, forward-looking, and grounded in responsible care for public spaces and resources.

**CARPD Awards of Distinction
Outstanding Innovation - Nominee**



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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Outstanding Innovation - Nominee

Criteria: Honors unique or groundbreaking recreation programs, park maintenance practices, or District operations.

Nominee: EmpowerHER Program

District: West Side Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

EMPOWERHER started with a simple belief that every young girl in our community deserves the opportunity to feel seen, supported, and capable of something greater.

In a small, rural community like ours, those opportunities are not always easy to find. That is why EMPOWERHER means so much to us. It was created to be more than just a program, it is a place where girls can come in as themselves and begin to grow into who they are meant to be.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Innovation - Nominee



Through EMPOWERHER, girls are introduced to hands-on STEAM experiences like coding, creative design, and problem-solving, while also learning entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and how to bring their ideas to life. But what makes this program special is not just what they learn, it is what they begin to believe about themselves.

We have watched girls walk in unsure and leave with confidence. We have seen them find their voice and use it in meaningful ways, like the group who created the *Talk Pretty* podcast to share their thoughts and experiences. We have seen others take pride in building their own clothing brands, turning their creativity into something real. These moments mean everything to us because they show that the girls are not just participating, they are growing. We are also incredibly intentional about surrounding them with strong female mentors from our community, women who take the time to listen, guide, and encourage them. Those relationships matter. They create a sense of belonging and show these girls that they are not alone in their journey.

One of the things we care about most is making sure every girl has access to this opportunity. We do everything we can to remove financial barriers because we believe no one should be left out of something that can truly change how they see themselves and their future.

This program is something we care deeply about. It is something we are proud of, not because of what it looks like on paper, but because of the growth we see in these girls every day.

EMPOWERHER is not just about teaching skills. It is about lifting young girls up, giving them a place where they feel valued, and helping them understand that they are capable of more than they ever imagined.

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Awards of Distinction

Category:

**Environmental
Excellence**

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee



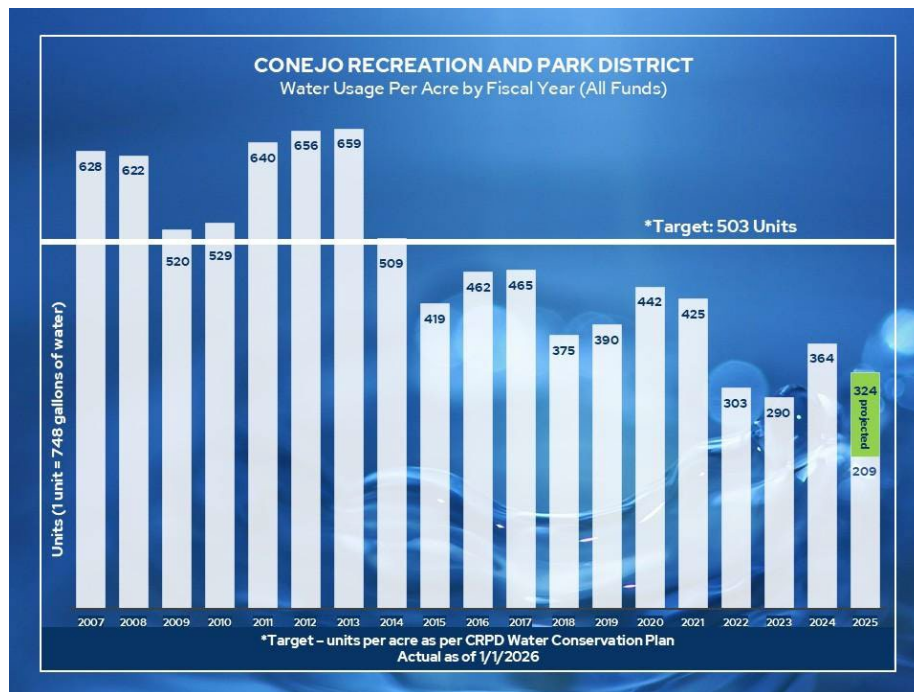
CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee

Criteria: Honors programming or planning that supports environmental sustainability in the operation and management of District facilities.

Nominee: CRPD Water Conservation Plan

District: Conejo Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Long-range climate modeling strongly indicates a hotter and drier southern California in the future. Without a strong commitment by the District to water conservation, the water resources in the Conejo Valley are jeopardized. Since the California legislature passed the Water Conservation Act of 2009, the District has been working to reduce its water consumption. Through the development of its own water conservation policy and annual updates to the, the District has implemented practices and a culture of conservation in its daily operations and long-term planning efforts.

The Water Conservation Plan discusses multiple issues related to water conservation. With each issue, achieving them. Since the implementation of the plan, the District has:

- Converted over **75+ acres of turf** to drought tolerant landscaping.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee



- In 2024/2025 (the most recently completed year), the District was **27.63%** below its water target of 503 units per acre.
- The District has decreased its water use by **34.38%** when comparing water consumption in 2024/2025 (most recently completed year) to 2007/2008 units per acre.
- Since 2007/2008, because of the improvements, the District has saved approximately **1,470,227 units (over 1,099,729,796 gallons of water) and over \$10,020,966.**



Since 2013, CRPD has completed numerous waterwise Capital Projects totaling more than **\$5,500,000**, allocating **at least \$250,000 per year** for landscape resiliency projects. The District looks to continue this financial commitment for the foreseeable future. CRPD is dedicated to building upon its past efforts, moving forward, continuing to do its "fair share", and being a leader in the community with regard to water conservation.

The District's Water Conservation Plan can be found here [Water Conservation - Conejo Recreation and Park District](#).

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CARPD Awards of Distinction CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee



CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee

Criteria: Honors programming or planning that supports environmental sustainability in the operation and management of District facilities.

Nominee: CORE Recreation Center

District: Cosumnes Community Services District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Opened in July 2025, the CORE Recreation Center is a 54,621-square-foot, multi-generational recreation and fitness facility serving 214,000 residents of the Cosumnes Community Services District. While developed to expand access to indoor recreation, CORE stands out for its integrated approach to environmental sustainability, embedding energy efficiency, lifecycle planning, and resource management directly into facility design and operations.

CORE was intentionally designed as an all-electric, high-performance building that exceeds California energy code by 15% under Cal Green Tier 2 standards. By eliminating reliance on fossil fuels, the facility reduces greenhouse gas emissions while insulating operations from long-term energy price volatility and regulatory risk. Sustainability at CORE is not an added feature, but a core operational strategy that supports both environmental and financial resilience.

Key infrastructure investments reinforce this approach. The facility includes 7,280 square feet of solar-ready rooftop capacity, allowing for future photovoltaic installation without costly retrofits. EV charging infrastructure is installed with expansion capability, supporting the transition to clean transportation while avoiding future site disruption. A high-efficiency

CARPD Awards of Distinction

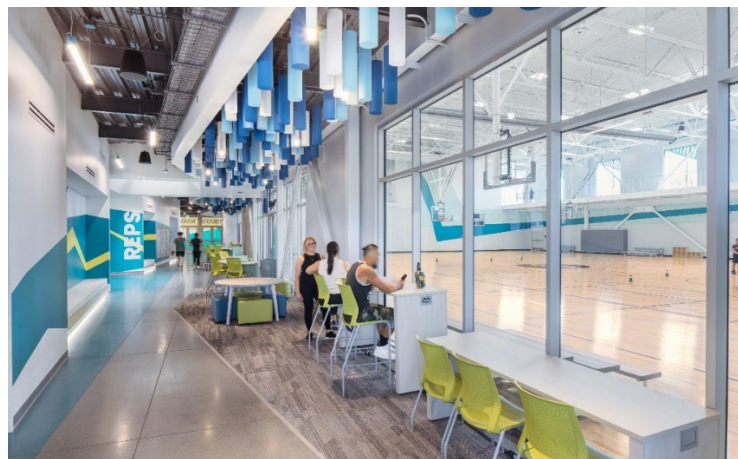
CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee



building envelope and durable construction materials reduce energy demand, lower maintenance requirements, and extend the facility's useful life.

CORE's environmental performance is further strengthened through its operational efficiency. The building was designed to maximize programming density within a single footprint, allowing multiple activities to occur simultaneously. This reduces the need for additional facilities, minimizes land-use impacts, and concentrates energy consumption within a highly efficient structure. Flexible, multi-use spaces adapt to changing program demands without requiring future expansion, reducing long-term material use and capital investment.

Strategic site integration also contributes to sustainability outcomes. Located within Morse Community Park, CORE leverages existing infrastructure, utilities, and parking, avoiding the environmental and financial costs of new land development. This approach enhances the park's overall functionality and value while minimizing additional resource consumption.



Operationally, CORE aligns sustainability with fiscal stewardship. Reduced energy demand, efficient systems, and durable materials lower ongoing operating costs and stabilize long-term budgets. The facility was launched with a structured General Fund investment and is currently ahead of its three-year repayment plan, demonstrating how sustainable design can directly support financial performance.

By integrating environmental considerations into planning, design, and day-to-day operations, CORE reduces lifecycle impacts while maintaining high service levels for the community. Its approach reframes sustainability as a tool for long-term operational efficiency, cost containment, and infrastructure resilience. The CORE Recreation Center represents a best-practice model for environmentally sustainable public facilities.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee



Through all-electric design, energy-efficient systems, adaptable spaces, and strategic site integration, the District has created a facility that reduces environmental impact while strengthening operational performance. CORE demonstrates how sustainability can be embedded into the management and operation of District facilities, delivering measurable environmental benefits alongside long-term community value.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee



CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee

Criteria: Honors programming or planning that supports environmental sustainability in the operation and management of District facilities.

Nominee: Community Camping Trips

District: Desert Recreation District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Desert Recreation District's Community Camping Trips program exemplifies environmental excellence by making outdoor education, stewardship, and recreation accessible to residents who have historically faced barriers to these experiences. Designed for Coachella Valley residents ages 8 and older, with a focus on underserved communities including North Shore, Thermal, Mecca, Oasis, Thousand Palms, and Indio Hills, this barrier free program offers three day, two night immersive camping experiences that connect participants to nature in meaningful and lasting ways.

More than a camping trip, the program is an intergenerational environmental learning experience. Participants engage in hands on activities such as interpretive hikes, nature walks, plant and wildlife observation, journaling, campfire learning, and guided exploration of streams, meadows, trails, and coastal environments. Along the way, they learn about ecosystems, pollination, food chains, and the water cycle while practicing Leave No Trace principles that reinforce respect for the land and responsible outdoor recreation. These experiences help participants build environmental awareness, confidence, and a stronger personal connection to the natural world.

The program's impact is especially powerful because it brings youth, adults, and seniors

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee



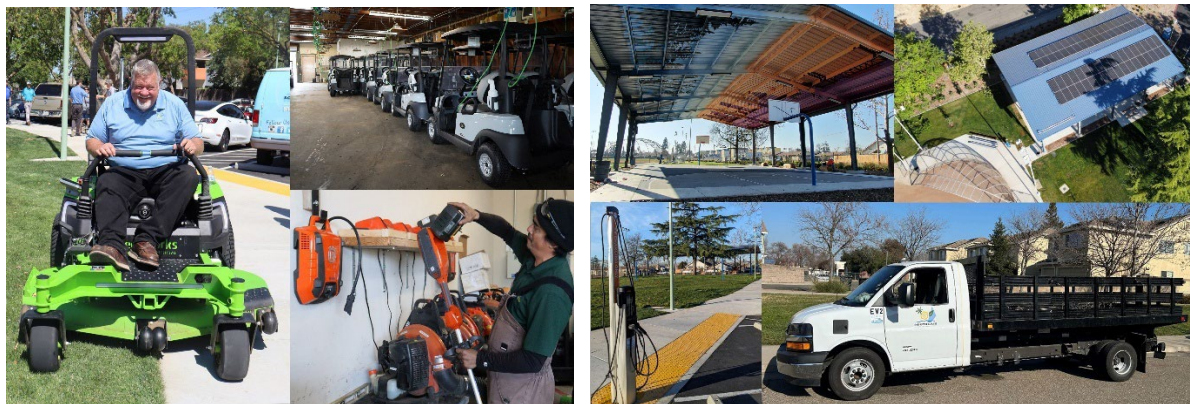
CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee

Criteria: Honors programming or planning that supports environmental sustainability in the operation and management of District facilities.

Nominee: Electronic Vehicle, PhotoVoltaic Panels & Technology

District: Southgate Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Southgate Recreation & Park District's Electronic Vehicle, PhotoVoltaic & Technology (EVPV & Tech) upgrade initiative is a strong example of environmental excellence built through steady, practical action. Rather than treating sustainability as a one-time project, the District has approached it as an ongoing operational commitment across parks, facilities, and fleet planning. Through infrastructure upgrades, photovoltaic solar panels, EV chargers, electric vehicles, and battery-powered maintenance equipment, the District is reducing emissions, lowering noise, and decreasing reliance on fossil fuels. The District expects to save over \$40,000 per year in fuel costs.

The environmental benefits are clear and immediate. The District has identified those benefits are felt where they matter most: residents experience better air quality and less noise in parks, recreation spaces, and community facilities. Staff work with equipment that reduces exposure to harmful emissions and noise. Over time, these changes help create healthier conditions across the District as a whole.

This work is visible across multiple District sites. Nicholas Park has completed 39 kWDC photovoltaic solar panels and 4 EV chargers for the public. Pat O'Brien Community Center has completed 100 kWDC photovoltaic solar with 6 public EV chargers under construction. Fruitridge Park has 17 kWDC photovoltaic solar and 14 EV chargers under construction. The

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Environmental Excellence - Nominee



District Corporation Yards have 8 vehicle chargers and 64 additional outlets for electric hand tools in permitting. Additional EV chargers and related electrical infrastructure are in design at other District facilities. Together, these improvements show a coordinated, district-wide effort to support cleaner operations and long-term environmental care.

Nicholas Park Renovation Project provides a strong example of the District's approach. The project included a \$688,000 investment in infrastructure, EV chargers, and photovoltaic solar panels on a shade structure over a full basketball court. Partners include Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, California State Parks, Sacramento Metropolitan Utility District and \$25,000 in private funding. This is a clear example of environmental responsibility paired with partnerships and sound implementation. The District is not treating sustainability as separate from recreation. It integrated cleaner infrastructure into a public park setting, creating evident environmental benefits in a space residents use every day.

The District's approach to this initiative reflects strong resource management and demonstrates that environmental stewardship with grant funding can include support for electric hand tools (such as hedge trimmers, string trimmers, chain saws, pole saws and blowers), electric riding mowers, chargers, utility vehicles and truck purchases. The District has shown how a local agency can move toward cleaner operations in a way that is responsible, realistic, and scalable.

EVPV & Tech demonstrates that environmental excellence is most meaningful when it is built into everyday public service. By expanding infrastructure, solar panels, EV charging capacity, and replacing gas-powered equipment with cleaner alternatives, Southgate Recreation & Park District has taken measurable steps to reduce the use of fossil fuels, improve air quality, and strengthen stewardship of public spaces. It is a thoughtful, district-wide effort that reflects responsible leadership and a clear commitment to a cleaner future.

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Awards of Distinction

Category:

**Community
Landmark**

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee

Criteria: Recognizes public park facilities that have served communities for 30 or more years. Honors those facilities that have been at the core of recreation and park activities for a diverse user base and provided a wide range of experiences and activities to the community.

Nominee: Conejo Community Center & Park

District: Conejo Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Conejo Community Center is a charming, 7,000 square foot wood-framed building that was built in 1965 by local volunteer efforts. Nestled into a neighborhood, bordered by hills, and sprinkled with sprawling oak trees, the 36-acre property, affectionately known by locals as “Dover and Hendrix,” referencing the cross streets, was transferred from the County of Ventura to the Conejo Recreation & Park District (CRPD) in 1972.

For more than 50 years, the Conejo Community Center and Park has served as a beloved destination for recreation programs and informal community use. Although categorized as a community park due to its size and intended service radius, it offers the feel of a neighborhood park, where many visits simply involve leisurely walks through the park’s natural beauty. Often referred to as the “crown jewel” of the Park District, which includes over 60 developed parks and recreation facilities, the site is home to CRPD’s Outdoor Unit, the Conejo Valley Botanic Garden, and Conejo Valley Little League.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



The community center provides a full complement of recreation services, with over 50 scheduled programs each week and serving multiple generations of local families. Popular offerings throughout the years include preschool, parent-and-me classes, archery, fencing, senior fitness, martial arts, yoga, and dance. Small but cherished events such as the Father Daughter Dance, Dino Dig, and Jingle Bell Hike through the Botanic Garden have been center staples for decades.

The rolling hillside park has also hosted the popular Summer Concerts in the Park series for more than 50 years. Held in the park's natural sloped lawn amphitheater, the concerts attract between 2,000 – 7,000 per performance. Picnic areas and indoor rental spaces have provided the setting for countless milestones and community celebrations, including weddings, quinceañeras, baby showers, and birthdays.

Staff based at the facility coordinate district-wide open space hikes, summer day camps serving up to 300 children per week, and youth outreach collaborations with partner groups including the Conejo Valley Unified School District and the Safe Passage Youth Foundation. Through its long history of recreation, community gathering, and natural beauty, the Conejo Community Center and Park continues to serve as a treasured landmark of the Conejo Valley.

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CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



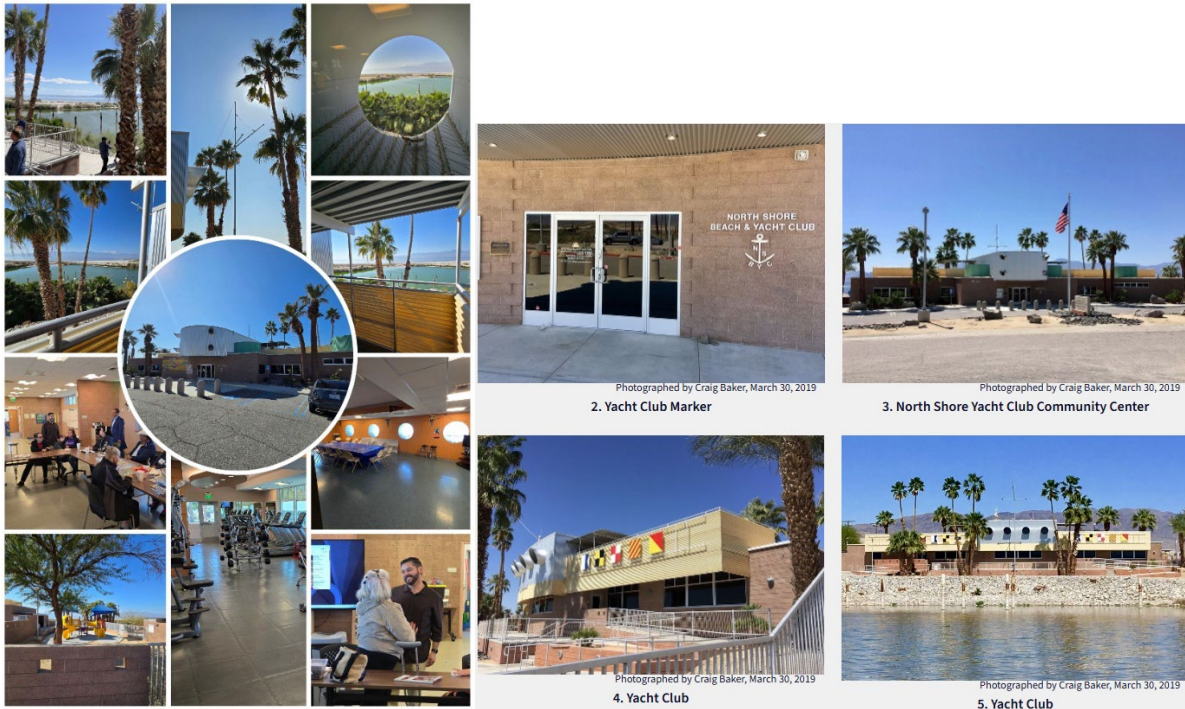
CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee

Criteria: Recognizes public park facilities that have served communities for 30 or more years. Honors those facilities that have been at the core of recreation and park activities for a diverse user base and provided a wide range of experiences and activities to the community.

Nominee: North Shore Beach and Yacht Club

District: Desert Recreation District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

North Shore Beach and Yacht Club is one of Desert Recreation District's most iconic and enduring public facilities, serving the North Shore community and surrounding eastern Coachella Valley for more than 60 years. Opened in 1962 and designed by renowned architect Albert Frey, the facility has long stood as both a historic landmark and an active place for recreation, connection, and public use.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



Originally developed along the northeastern shore of the Salton Sea, the Yacht Club emerged as part of a bold recreation vision for the North Shore area. Over time, it became far more than a destination building. It became a recognizable civic gathering place and a lasting symbol of community pride. Even as the surrounding region changed, the facility remained deeply connected to local identity and public life, helping preserve the story of North Shore while continuing to serve present day residents.

Today, North Shore Beach and Yacht Club continues to provide valuable public benefit under Desert Recreation District's management. The site includes a multi purpose room, conference room, weight room, playground, and flexible community space that supports youth activities, wellness opportunities, afterschool clubhouse, meetings, and neighborhood events. This broad mix of uses reflects the award's emphasis on facilities that have delivered wide ranging experiences for a diverse user base across generations.

The facility's importance is also recognized beyond the district. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, affirming its architectural and cultural significance. Preserving and actively using this Albert Frey designed landmark demonstrates Desert Recreation District's commitment to honoring history while keeping meaningful public spaces relevant, accessible, and useful to the communities they serve.

North Shore Beach and Yacht Club is more than a historic structure. It is a living community landmark that continues to connect residents to recreation, local heritage, and shared community life. For more than six decades, it has remained a place of purpose, pride, and public value, making it highly deserving of the CARPD Community Landmark Award.

District Contact Name: Gabriel Martin
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CARPD Awards of Distinction CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee

Criteria: Recognizes public park facilities that have served communities for 30 or more years. Honors those facilities that have been at the core of recreation and park activities for a diverse user base and provided a wide range of experiences and activities to the community.

Nominee: Douglas Morrisson Theatre

District: Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

For more than three decades, the Douglas Morrisson Theatre has stood as a cultural landmark and a cornerstone of arts and recreation programming within the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District. Since opening its doors, the theatre has provided generations of residents with opportunities to experience high-quality live performances, participate in community productions, and connect through shared cultural experiences. It has become a beloved destination where creativity, storytelling, and community engagement thrive.

Recognized as one of the premier community theatres in the East Bay, the Douglas Morrisson Theatre has earned a reputation for producing professional-quality performances while remaining accessible and welcoming to the public. Its programming has spanned classic dramas and comedies, as well as contemporary plays and musicals, ensuring that audiences of all ages can engage with the performing arts in an inclusive and affordable setting.

CARPD Awards of Distinction CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



Beyond its role as a performance venue, the theatre serves as a vital hub for community involvement and artistic development. Local actors, directors, designers, technicians, and volunteers have found a creative home within its walls, contributing to a vibrant and enduring arts culture. For many emerging artists, the Douglas Morrisson stage has been a place to begin their journey, while loyal patrons return year after year to support and celebrate live theatre.

The theatre's longevity and continued success reflect its deep importance to the community. For over 30 years, it has brought people together through shared cultural experiences that enrich community life. Families, students, seniors, and theatre enthusiasts gather to enjoy performances, celebrate artistic achievement, and experience the unique energy of live theatre, dance or choral performances.

As a facility of the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District, the Douglas Morrisson Theatre exemplifies the District's commitment to providing diverse cultural and recreational opportunities. Its continued operation highlights the essential role that public park and recreation agencies play in sustaining the arts while strengthening social connections and community identity.



Originally constructed in 1977–1978 and officially opened in November 1978 as “The Little Theatre,” the venue hosted its first performance in January 1979. In 1989, it was renamed the Douglas Morrisson Theatre in honor of Douglas Morrisson, a dedicated Hayward civic leader and arts advocate whose contributions significantly advanced local theatre and cultural programming. The renaming stands as a lasting tribute to his impact on the community and the performing arts.

Today, the Douglas Morrisson Theatre remains a cherished community asset and a lasting symbol of the role that arts and culture play in enhancing quality of life. Through decades of performances, creative collaboration, and community participation, it has earned its place as a true landmark in Hayward. Its legacy of artistic excellence and public engagement makes it a deserving recipient of the CARPD Community Landmark Award.

CARPD Awards of Distinction
CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



District Contact Name: James Wheeler
District Contact Phone: (510) 881-6700
District Contact Email: whej@hawyardrec.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee

Criteria: Recognizes public park facilities that have served communities for 30 or more years. Honors those facilities that have been at the core of recreation and park activities for a diverse user base and provided a wide range of experiences and activities to the community.

Nominee: Veterans Memorial Park

District: Jurupa Area Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

It is with great pride that we nominate **Veterans Memorial Park** in Jurupa Valley for the **CARPD Community Landmark Award**. For more than seven decades, this park has stood as a lasting tribute to service, sacrifice, and community, while continuing to evolve as a central gathering place for residents of all ages.

Originally constructed in **1948**, Veterans Memorial Park and its community center are among the earliest public recreational facilities in the area. From its beginning, the park was dedicated not only as a recreation space, but also as a memorial honoring **Veterans for their service to the County and the community**. This purpose has remained at the heart of the park's identity, making it a place of reflection, remembrance, and gratitude.

CARPD Awards of Distinction CARPD Community Landmark - Nominee



Over the years, the park has been thoughtfully expanded to meet the growing and changing needs of Jurupa Valley. Today, Veterans Memorial Park includes **four ball fields**, a **playground**, **multiple picnic shelters**, and a **splash pad**, making it a vibrant, multi-use destination for sports, family recreation, and community events. These enhancements have increased access and usability while preserving the park's original significance.

The community center and memorial elements serve as a powerful reminder of the men and women who have served and sacrificed, while the surrounding recreational amenities bring the community together in meaningful ways. Commemorative events, patriotic gatherings, and everyday use of the park reinforce its role as both a place of honor and a center of community life.



Veterans Memorial Park successfully balances its historic legacy with modern recreational needs. Generations of families have gathered here to play, celebrate milestones, participate in sports, and attend civic events—strengthening community bonds and creating lasting memories, all within a space that pays tribute to those who served.

For its historical significance, continued investment, and enduring role in honoring Veterans while fostering recreation, unity, and civic pride, **Veterans Memorial Park** truly represents the essence of a **Community Landmark**. It is highly deserving of recognition through the **CARPD Community Landmark Award**.

District Contact Name: Colby Diuguid
District Contact Phone: (951) 361-2090
District Contact Email: colby@jarpd.org



Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
District
Employee

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District employee whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their District.

Nominee: Rande Ross

District: Ambrose Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Rande Ross oversees the Teen Center Academy, Youth Development Leadership Core, and Summer Internship Program. He provides guidance and support to the Academy Coordinator, supervises daily Teen Center operations, and ensures the delivery of safe, engaging programs for youth ages 12–19.

Rande is deeply committed to teen leadership development. He oversees the cooking program, creates opportunities for recreation and physical fitness, and supports youth as they transition from high school to college, vocational, and trade pathways. Through mentoring, financial literacy education, goal setting, and individualized action planning, he equips young people with the tools and confidence needed for a successful transition into adulthood.

Rande has been an instrumental contributor to both the District and the Bay Point community. His passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to supporting youth in all aspects of their lives consistently set him apart.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Education

Bachelor of Science in Commercial Recreation/Kinesiology, California State University, Hayward

Professional Experience

- 30+ years of professional experience
- 22 years serving the ARPD Bay Point community

Awards and Recognitions

- California Department of Education Certificate of Recognition
- San Francisco Foundation Fellowship Program Recipient
- California State Assembly Certificate of Recognition
- 2017 Contra Costa Champion of Youth Advocacy, Ambrose Teen Center
- Facility Leadership Award, Interactive Institute for Social Change
- Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Recognition for Leadership and Civic Engagement in Bay Point
- Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition, Ambrose Teen Center

I am honored to nominate Rande Ross for his significant contributions and his consistent willingness to go above and beyond, which have made a lasting impact on the Ambrose Recreation & Park District and the youth in our community and beyond.

Rande exemplifies what it means to be a true team player. Each day, his positive presence and strong relationships with our youth reflect exceptional leadership and dedication. He consistently inspires those around him and truly “hits it out of the park” in everything he does.

District Contact Name: Lori Chalifoux
District Contact Phone: (925) 458-1601
District Contact Email: lchalifoux@ambroserec.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District employee whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their District.

Nominee: Charmayne Monday

District: Arden Manor Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

On behalf of the Arden Manor Recreation & Park District (AMRPD), I am honored to submit this nomination for Charmayne Monday as the CARPD Outstanding District Employee of the Year. Charmayne’s journey with AMRPD is a community-grown success story. In 1986, she joined the district’s Aquacize program as a participant. When the instructor retired in 2000, class members advocated for her to step into the role. She answered that call and, for the past 25 years, has transformed a simple exercise class into a vital lifeline for district residents.

On summer weeknights, the park comes alive the moment Charmayne presses “play” and the soundtrack of Mamma Mia echoes across the pool. In the water, participants are freed from gravity—rediscovering strength, mobility, and confidence that are difficult to access on land. While the class primarily serves older adults, Charmayne fosters a rare intergenerational sense of belonging. As her program participants share:

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



- “I have known Charmayne for over 30 years. She is a part of my life in so many ways.”
- “As a younger queer couple joining Aquacize, we weren’t sure what to expect. Charmayne created a space where we felt welcomed and completely at ease—exactly as we are.”
- “For Charmayne, helping people feel their best is not a job—it is a calling. She becomes your loudest and most genuine champion.”

Charmayne’s impact extends well beyond the pool. She has sustained and expanded Aquacize programming over decades, recognizing its profound physical, emotional, and social benefits. She also leads land-based exercise opportunities, ensuring broader access to movement, connection, and well-being. She weaves prayer blankets and quilt squares for participants who are sick or celebrating life events, plans annual holiday gatherings that deepen connections, and volunteers at district events. She also helped an Aquacize participant launch a community art class, expanding all-ages programming and strengthening our district’s intergenerational engagement.

Charmayne’s culture of care extends to staff as well. During Sacramento’s intense summer heat, she often hand-delivers frozen Otter Pops to maintenance staff. She now works alongside lifeguards she once knew as children - having watched them grow into the capable young adults who now serve and protect our community. On hot summer nights, she invites those same lifeguards to join Aquacize—creating moments where teenagers, young professionals, and retirees move together, bridging generations in a way that feels increasingly rare in today’s world.

Charmayne’s impact is measured not only in years of service, but in the countless, consistent acts of encouragement that shape people’s lives. Her tenure is a masterclass in dedication, compassion, and community-building. It is an honor to nominate her for this CARPD award.

District Contact Name: Kelley Lewellen
District Contact Phone: (916) 487-7851
District Contact Email: kelly@amrpd.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District employee whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their District.

Nominee: Isaiah Padilla

District: Cosumnes Community Services District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

I am pleased to nominate Isaiah Padilla as he is one of our employees who has made significant contributions to our District both in Irrigation Section, as well as the Department overall.

Isiah has already become a cornerstone of our community's parks and recreation department—not just as a talented Irrigation Manager, but as a true innovator, mentor, and community advocate. While starting just over 10 years ago as a part-time employee in the Park Operations Division, he has quickly ascended throughout the ranks by combining a deep technical expertise, a passion for people, and being the definition of a servant leader. As our Irrigation Manager, Isaiah has been at the forefront of modernizing our irrigation systems. He and his team had developed internal tracking mechanisms for water usage, thus showing areas of deficiencies. Through this, he has developed a 5-year strategy to change out all our existing irrigation systems to newer, more efficient models.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



We are currently at the start of year three of this transition where we are already seeing a 10-12% reduction in usage. This decreased usage was not only a cost savings, but the transition will assist us in more efficient sustainable irrigation practices. Isaiah's true superpower in this is being data driven, and taking this approach he has been able to successfully map out and track our usage month over month park by park. Along with his technical expertise in this transition, Isaiah also took the lead role in implementing CityWorks, a computerized maintenance management system that will transform how we track work orders, respond to customer needs, assist in asset lifecycle replacement, and ultimately how we serve our growing community. His role was training all Operations staff in usage; integrating best practices and workflow systems in collaboration with our IT Division; development of work order systems and tracking all the data for future use and decision making. His work in this system has been vital for both real-time decisions as well as future planning. Outside of his typical work duties, he has also spent the last two years serving as a co-chair of our Giant Pumpkin Festival. A nationally recognized festival in the fall that sees over 70,000 participants over a two day period.

Although he is the youngest manager, Isaiah is a mentor to many staff both in the irrigation section as well as all of Park Operations. He has cultivated a culture of learning, acceptance, equity, inclusion, and most importantly accountability. He continues to develop both himself and his staff professionally. Isaiah exemplifies everything the future of parks and recreation should be: community first, forward-thinking; data-driven; and professional. His integration of best practices and future-focused leadership has led to us bridging the gap between fieldwork and innovation.

District Contact Name: Tim Ogden
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District employee whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their District.

Nominee: Salvador Nuno

District: Greater Vallejo Recreation District

District Submission:

To say that Sal has been an employee of Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD) since 2006 is an understatement. He began his career as an entry-level Maintenance I park employee. While he brought valuable horticultural skills from previous work, he expanded his expertise in park operations and personnel management during his tenure with GVRD.

Through dedication and steady growth, he rose to his current role as Parks and Maintenance Director, a position he has held since 2019. Sal's professional accomplishments are numerous. In addition to certifications such as Certified Arborist, Playground Safety Inspector, and Qualified Applicator License, along with other achievements, his leadership and operational knowledge have proven invaluable to the organization. This past year stands out as one in which Sal truly shined, and it is for this reason that we feel compelled to share his accomplishments with CARPD.

When GVRD nearly depleted its reserves last year, Sal led his department through significant cost-cutting efforts. By serving as a role model and treating staff with respect, he guided his team in freezing projects, placing capital improvement projects on hold, and making meaningful budget reductions, helping remain operational until our January apportionment. Sal is exceptionally responsive to community needs. On one occasion, he was called late on a Saturday night to address a ballfield issue so an event could proceed the next day. Some community members even have his personal phone number and have contacted him about ballfield lighting—issues outside his responsibility—and he addresses them without hesitation or complaint. We often joke that he sleeps with his work phone.

During this same period, Sal faced significant staffing challenges and balanced his leadership responsibilities while guiding day-to-day operations. Despite key staff absences, he ensured essential maintenance services continued uninterrupted. His calm leadership style is highly effective—he asks, staff listen, and work gets done. While occasional disagreements or union clarifications arose, he managed them professionally and thoughtfully.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Another notable strength Sal brings to GVRD is his demeanor. He consistently receives positive feedback from partner agencies and contractors who value working with him. Though naturally introverted, Sal engages with others in a manner that builds trust and puts them at ease. Sal was raised in Vallejo, attended Vallejo schools, and continues to live in the community he serves. His family is well known locally, and his commitment to this community is evident in his work.

On a personal note, if Sal were ever to leave GVRD, the GM would be close behind. GVRD and I would be honored for the committee to recognize Sal Nuno as Outstanding District Employee for 2025.

District Contact Name: Gabriel Lanusse
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District Contact Email: glanusse@gvrd.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District employee whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their District.

Nominee: Curt Bentrum

District: Jurupa Area Recreation and Park District

District Submission:

As Maintenance Manager for the Jurupa Area Recreation and Park District, Curt consistently demonstrates exceptional leadership, dedication, and professionalism, significantly enhancing the quality, safety, and appearance of District facilities and parks.

Curt's commitment to excellence is evident in his hands-on management style and his unwavering accountability for all aspects of District maintenance operations. He leads by example, setting high standards while fostering a positive, respectful, and team-oriented work environment. Under his leadership, the maintenance team operates efficiently, collaboratively, and with a strong sense of pride in their work.

One of Curt's greatest strengths is his proactive approach to problem-solving. He anticipates maintenance needs before they become issues, ensuring facilities remain safe, functional, and welcoming to the community. Whether addressing urgent repairs, managing long-term improvement projects, or coordinating preventative maintenance schedules, Curt consistently delivers timely, cost-effective, and high-quality results.

Curt is also an excellent steward of District resources. He carefully balances budgetary considerations with operational demands, finding innovative ways to maximize efficiency without compromising service quality. His attention to detail and strategic planning have contributed to extended asset life, reduced downtime, and improved overall facility standards.

Beyond his technical expertise, Curt is deeply invested in the professional growth and well-being of his team. He provides clear guidance, constructive feedback, and mentorship, empowering staff to develop their skills and succeed in their roles. His approachable leadership style builds trust, morale, and accountability, resulting in a strong, cohesive maintenance department.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Curt's dedication extends beyond daily responsibilities. He consistently goes above and beyond to support District events, respond to after-hours emergencies, and ensure parks and facilities are ready for community use. His reliability and willingness to step in whenever needed reflect his genuine commitment to public service and the mission of the Jurupa Area Recreation and Park District.

This past year, the District acquired the Jurupa Mountains Discovery Center, an 85-acre natural history museum and education center. Shortly after the acquisition, there were two large brush fires that impacted the facility. Curt and his team acted as firefighters in the weeks after the initial blaze, putting out hotspots and spreading the highly flammable mulch that had been previously piled on site. About a month later, another wildfire broke out in the vicinity, but because of the hard work the maintenance department had already put in, the facility survived with little damage.

Over the past few months, Curt has overseen the replacement and upgrade of the District's central control system for irrigation management. The District originally sought public bids for the upgrade and retrofit of the system, but when bids exceeded \$300,000, Curt took on the project and has reduced costs to less than \$100,000.

For his outstanding leadership, tireless work ethic, and meaningful contributions to the District and community, Curt Bentrum exemplifies the qualities of an **Outstanding District Employee**. He is highly deserving of this recognition.

District Contact Name: Colby Diuguid
District Contact Phone: (951) 361-2090
District Contact Email: colby@jarpd.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District employee whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their District.

Nominee: Kassie Hayes

District: Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

For more than **40 years**, Kassie Hayes has been the heart and backbone of the Mendocino Coast Recreation & Park District's Gymnastics program. Her dedication, passion, and tireless commitment have shaped not just a program, but generations of athletes, families, and community members.

Kassie has poured **countless hours** into building what is the District's largest and most beloved program. What began with just a dozen children has grown into a thriving program serving **over 100 participants annually**, thanks in no small part to her vision, consistency, and care. Thousands of kids on the Mendocino Coast have matriculated through Kassie's Gym.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Her impact is truly multigenerational—Kassie has taught gymnastics to many of the **parents of the children she now instructs**, creating a rare and powerful continuity that speaks to her longevity and influence within our community. Three of Kassie’s former students have been MCRPD Instructors!

Beyond her role as an employee, Kassie (along with her husband) Bill Hayes have continually gone above and beyond, **volunteering time, skills, and expertise** to improve both the program and the facilities. She has helped move, rebuild, and improve our gymnastics studio **at least six times** over the years—always adapting, always improving, and always putting the kids first.

Kassie is more than an instructor. She is a mentor, a leader, and an inspiration. Her love for gymnastics and for this community is felt by everyone who walks through our doors. She is deeply respected, widely loved, and absolutely irreplaceable.

We are incredibly grateful for Kassie Hayes and the legacy she continues to build at MCRPD.

District Contact Name: Kylie Felicich
District Contact Phone: (707) 964-9672
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District employee whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their District.

Nominee: Kayla Thayer

District: North Highlands Recreation and Park District

District Submission:

In just four years with North Highlands Recreation and Park District, Kayla Thayer has emerged as a driving force behind the revitalization of programs, events, and community engagement within the district. As Recreation Supervisor, her leadership has redefined special events, expanded youth programming, and elevated specialty classes—creating more meaningful, inclusive, and engaging experiences for families across the community.

During her first two years of employment, Kayla was a key driver in increasing district events by 150%, dramatically expanding opportunities for community connection and participation. She has also introduced innovative approaches to sponsorship partnerships, leveraging relationships to enhance programming while minimizing costs to the public. One standout example includes securing a significantly reduced ice-skating rink through sponsorship support, allowing the community to enjoy free ice skating at the District's annual Tree Lighting event—an experience that would not have been possible otherwise.

Kayla has also expanded youth programming by growing the District's camp offerings from one location to two, increasing accessibility for families and strengthening participation across multiple neighborhoods.

Kayla's most impactful contribution is the creation of the Paint the Parks initiative—a simple yet transformative grassroots program centered on art painted by staff and community volunteers that beautifies parks while actively reducing graffiti and vandalism. The program transforms high-visibility park spaces into colorful, welcoming environments that foster community pride and positive park use. Notably, Paint the Parks is 100% subsidized through sponsorships, made possible by the long-standing partnerships and relationships Kayla has cultivated within the community.

The results have been both visible and measurable. Parks once impacted by graffiti and vandalism have been revitalized through color, creativity, and consistent community presence—leading to a noticeable reduction in damage and an increase in positive use and stewardship.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



The innovation and success of Paint the Parks have earned widespread recognition, receiving four prestigious awards from CPRS District 2, CARPD, CSDA, and CPRS. These honors reflect not only the program’s effectiveness, but Kayla’s ability to lead with vision, collaboration, and purpose.

Kayla’s work demonstrates that meaningful change does not always require large-scale investment—sometimes, it begins with a thoughtful idea, a commitment to community, and the ability to inspire others to take part. Her leadership continues to leave a lasting imprint on the District, creating spaces that are not only improved, but truly cared for by the people they serve.

District Contact Name: Scott Graham
District Contact Phone: (707) 332-7440
District Contact Email: scott@nhrpd.org

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District employee whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their District.

Nominee: Rachel Robertson-Murray

District: North Highlands Recreation and Park District

District Submission:

For nearly four years, Rachel Robertson-Murray has served as Recreation Superintendent with a steady, forward-thinking approach that has strengthened both the recreation division and the organization as a whole. Her leadership has been instrumental in revitalizing operations, improving internal alignment, and building a culture rooted in collaboration, accountability, and innovation.

Rachel successfully restructured and reenergized the recreation division, guiding a largely new team with consistency, clarity, and purpose. Through her approachable leadership style and frequent engagement with staff, she has fostered a strong team atmosphere—one where employees feel supported, empowered, and motivated to succeed.

Her impact extends beyond her division. Rachel has significantly improved communication and coordination between recreation, administration, and maintenance—breaking down barriers and ensuring a more unified, efficient approach to serving the community.

A trusted partner to executive leadership, Rachel provides thoughtful counsel, strong budget support, and clear, effective communication with the Board of Directors. Her verbal presentations and written reports are consistently thorough, transparent, and aligned with organizational goals, helping inform sound decision-making at the highest level.

Rachel also champions creativity and growth within her team, encouraging staff to think beyond traditional approaches to enhance programming and better meet evolving community needs. Her involvement in park renovation efforts further reflects her commitment to long-term planning and continuous improvement across the district.

Rachel Robertson-Murray exemplifies what it means to lead with integrity, vision, and collaboration—setting a standard of excellence that continues to elevate both her team and the organization.

CARPD Awards of Distinction
Outstanding District Employee - Nominee



District Contact Name: Scott Graham
District Contact Phone: (707) 332-7440
District Contact Email: scott@nhrpd.org



Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
General
Manager

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding General Manager - Nominee



Outstanding General Manager - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any District General Manager or District Administrator whose significant contributions have gone above and beyond in service of their district.

Nominee: Gabriel Lanusse

District: Greater Vallejo Recreation District

District Submission:

Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD) is proud to nominate Gabriel Lanusse for General Manager of the Year in recognition of his exceptional leadership, fiscal stewardship, and unwavering commitment to community.

Gabe brings an extraordinary combination of education, certification, and hands-on experience to his role. He holds an A.S. in Horticulture, a B.A. in Communication, and a Master's in Public Administration from USF. He is a Certified Arborist, Playground Safety Inspector, and Pesticide Advisor. His leadership extends beyond the District, having served on the Vallejo Chamber Board, currently serving as President of Leadership Vallejo, and previously leading the Solano Chapter of CSDA. His ability to build bridges, combined with deep operational knowledge and institutional history, has been invaluable.

This past year, Gabe demonstrated truly outstanding leadership. When GVRD faced a financial crisis and came within days of depleting reserves, Gabe responded with calm, decisive action. Rather than resorting to layoffs, he empowered staff to rethink spending, reduce event scope, pause capital projects, and refocus on core services. He fostered accountability without blame, guiding the team with respect and transparency.

Simultaneously, Gabe aggressively pursued long-overdue impact fees held by the City. After years of persistence, nearly \$1 million was recovered to restore reserves. He also provided strategic guidance on surplus property sales, generating nearly \$1 million from one sale and advancing negotiations on another—positioning the District

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding General Manager - Nominee



for long-term financial stability.

In review of reserves, he moved reserves to a different financial institution in order to receive a better rate of interest. The district went from point zero one percent (.01%) to nearly four percent (4%) rate for reserves. This is helping build up the OPEB funding.

Gabe's vision extends well beyond financial recovery. He successfully negotiated a 30-year lease with the School District for gym and field use-an agreement that unlocked a \$7.5 million grant to transform the site into a vibrant, park-like community asset. With designs 60% complete and construction targeted within the next year, this project will serve generations.

Perhaps most importantly, Gabe leads with integrity, optimism, and resilience. Even when faced with criticism, he advocates for long-term community benefits, such as championing playground improvements, pool improvements, and infrastructure improvements that now stand as lasting assets.

He trusts staff to make positive decisions with the public's money, all the while saying "he hates to pay for something twice".

Gabe often says, "We are building memories." Through steady leadership in crisis and bold vision for the future, he is doing exactly that. For these reasons, GVRD enthusiastically recommends Gabe Lanusse for General Manager of the Year.

District Contact Name: Gabriel Lanusse
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District Contact Email: glanusse@gvrd.org



Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
Board
Member

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Outstanding Board Member - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any individual servicing as Board Member for at least one term of office (4 years) whose significant contributions have benefited their District.

Nominee: George Galt

District: Boulder Creek Recreation & Park District

District Submission:

George Galt exemplifies the very best of public service, leadership, and community stewardship. For over **24 years of dedicated service on the Boulder Creek Recreation & Park District (BCRPD) Board**, George has consistently demonstrated integrity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to the community he serves. His presence has shaped not only the direction of the District, but also the culture of respect, collaboration, and gratitude that defines it today.

George is, quite simply, one of the most well-spoken, even-tempered, and thoughtful leaders one could hope to work alongside. As Board Chair, he has an exceptional ability to **keep discussions productive and focused**, while maintaining a light-hearted and welcoming tone. He leads with calm confidence, always finding something kind and constructive to say—even in the most challenging moments. His leadership style invites participation, encourages diverse perspectives, and makes community members feel genuinely heard and respected.

Over his tenure, George has played a critical role in some of the most significant milestones in BCRPD's history. He was instrumental in the **creation of KBCZ Community Radio**, helping guide the vision of a station that now serves as a powerful voice for local connection and creativity. He supported the **purchase of the Bear Creek Community Center district facility**, a decision that helped leverage **over one million dollars in grant funding**, strengthening the District's long-term sustainability and impact. George was also deeply involved in the **development of the District's Master Plan** and the creation of the **BCRPD Foundation 501(c)(3)**—both of which continue to provide structure, vision, and financial support for the community.

Equally important is George's role as a **steady and trusted presence during times of conflict or concern**. When community issues have arisen, he has consistently been the voice of reason and empathy—helping keep the peace, de-escalate tensions, and guide conversations toward solutions rooted in respect and understanding.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Beyond board meetings and policy work, George is someone who **shows up**. He can be found at District events, volunteering alongside staff and neighbors with a smile, a positive attitude, and a willingness to do whatever work is needed. His leadership is not performative—it is hands-on, humble, and deeply genuine.

Perhaps most remarkable is George's steadfast grace through personal hardship. Even through the passing of his wife and many transitions in his own life, he has remained dependable, present, and generous with his time and spirit. Gratitude is not just a value he speaks of—it is something he lives. George leads with quiet wisdom, patience, and compassion, embodying the kind of service that inspires others to be better.

George Galt is the kind of leader who leaves a lasting imprint not through recognition sought, but through trust earned. His contributions to BCRPD and the Boulder Creek community are immeasurable, and his character sets a standard to which others aspire. It is a privilege to know him, to work with him, and to learn from him.

For his 24 years of exemplary service, his transformative impact, and his extraordinary humanity, George Galt is profoundly deserving of recognition as an **Outstanding Board Member**.

District Contact Name: Hallie Greene
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Outstanding Board Member - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any individual servicing as Board Member for at least one term of office (4 years) whose significant contributions have benefited their District.

Nominee: Chuck Huffer

District: Conejo Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

By way of background, Chuck Huffer is a retired Financial Planner, who has been an active, engaged volunteer in the Conejo Valley for decades. Chuck has been an AYSO coach, Board member, and now referee for more than 30 years. He has been a Kiwanian for over 10 years, serving as President in 2018, and has been a volunteer with the Conejo Senior Volunteer Tax Program for almost ten years. For more thorough background.

Sometimes it takes years, or even decades, to see the impact of a decision. Chuck was first elected to the CRPD Board in 2014 and was chosen to be on the Finance and Audit Committee. CRPD had just created its first Financial Reserves Policy and Chuck advocated to deliberately and methodically address PERS unfunded liabilities. Thanks to Chuck's background in finance and his work on CRPD's Finance and Audit Committee and on the Board itself, CRPD created a policy to save any "budget to actual" savings of employee salary and benefits each year and allocate it to a Pension and OPEB reserve fund, eventually transferring funds into IRC 115 Trusts. After ten years of savings, CRPD has 106% of the funds set aside to address its actuarial unfunded liabilities for its CalPERS pension and OPEB liabilities.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Chuck served as Chair during the final three public hearings associated with the transition of "at- large" to "by-division" elections. Of the various new division maps, the most vocal community support was for a map which placed Chuck and another CRPD Director in the same division. And, even though Chuck would likely have to face a friend, colleague, and fellow CRPD Board member should he run in a future CRPD election, Chuck helped guide the Board into unanimously supporting a "by-division" election map.

Director Huffer is a past Board member of AYSO Region 9 and was on the citizens committee to help design and create the Master Plan for the Conejo Creek Park Complex (at Janss/23 Fwy), which includes a variety of park amenities, most notably the large soccer complex known as Conejo Creek South. AYSO Region 9 remains the single largest private sector donor to CRPD park improvements - - - having raised and donated over \$2 million toward improvements at Conejo Creek South. While on the AYSO Board, Chuck was a strong advocate for working cooperatively and collaboratively with CRPD to meet the needs of the community. Chuck volunteers throughout the year as a referee for AYSO - - - including its adult league.

As a Kiwanian, Chuck encouraged Kiwanians to support the TO Police Department and CRPD's efforts to reach out and serve kids living in an at-risk and underserved community. Kiwanians have been big supporters financially and with volunteers of CRPD's "Homework Club" at 850 Warwick and the growing "Safe Passages" program serving low-income and underserved kids and communities throughout the Conejo Valley in a variety of ways.

Chuck was crowned the 2026 Community Conscience Mardi Gras Ball King. Community Conscience wrote the following: *"Chuck is being honored as the King of the Mardi Gras Ball for his extensive volunteer work in the Conejo Valley. Since 1990, he has been involved with the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), the Kiwanis Club of Thousand Oaks, the Conejo Recreation & Park District Board, the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency Board and the Conejo Senior Volunteer Program's Free Income Tax Program."*

For decades, CRPD has had a volunteer program for seniors. Originally, it was a federally supported as the "Retired Senior Volunteer Program." However, about 12 years ago the program dropped the federal support and is now funded by local tax dollars and donations and was rebranded as the "Conejo Senior Volunteer Program.

Chuck shines as a volunteer in the Conejo Senior Volunteer Program. Get this: Chuck volunteers to do taxes. Other people's taxes! CRPD's CSVP Tax Preparation Program is an IRS-supported program. Last year, CSVP volunteers prepared over 2,500 income tax returns for free to those over 60 or anyone earning under \$67,000. Chuck has been doing this for nine years now. His volunteer season starts with 80 hours of IRS volunteer training in January. Then, from February - April, Chuck volunteers multiple days/weeks in virtually all of the volunteer roles ... as a tax preparer, an onsite coordinator, and a tax reviewer. The rest of the year, Chuck is on-call to address any IRS questions regarding particular returns or to offer tax counseling.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Most of this tax volunteer work is done inside the community room at the Conejo Creek South Soccer Fields. Staff has a theory that Chuck is so dedicated to the Conejo Creek South Soccer Fields that he doesn't even realize that AYSO and the IRS are actually two different things; he just thinks he is still just volunteering for soccer.

District Contact Name: Jim Friedl
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Outstanding Board Member - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any individual servicing as Board Member for at least one term of office (4 years) whose significant contributions have benefited their District.

Nominee: Brian Danzl

District: Cordova Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

Brian Danzl has demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication and service as a member of the Cordova Recreation & Park District Board since 2010. Over more than 15 years of continuous service, including three terms as Board Chair (2014, 2020 and 2024), Director Danzl has played a critical role in shaping the District's growth, strategic direction and long-term success.

Director Danzl is a highly engaged and supportive leader who is consistently present at District meetings, programs and community events. His visible involvement reflects a deep commitment to understanding and connecting with the community the District serves. He fosters strong, collaborative relationships with fellow Board members, the General Manager and District staff, creating a positive and effective leadership environment.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



One of Director Danzl's greatest strengths is his ability to think creatively and strategically. He brings fresh ideas and forward-thinking perspectives to Board discussions, continually seeking innovative approaches to enhance programs, services and community experiences. At the same time, his deep institutional knowledge provides valuable context for decision-making. His long tenure allows him to draw on historical insight, ensuring that current and future strategies are grounded in a clear understanding of the District's evolution.

Director Danzl's leadership has directly contributed to significant milestones and achievements. During his time on the Board, the District has opened 14 new parks, expanding access to recreation and open space for the community. He played an important role in advancing key initiatives, including the successful passage of Measure J in 2016, the opening of the Cordova Community Pool in 2021, the adoption of the Municipal Service Review Update in 2023 and the District's Optimized Plan in 2024. These efforts provide a strong foundation for sustainable growth, operational excellence and long-term planning.

In addition to his service at the District level, Director Danzl has contributed to regional leadership through his role on the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD) Board since 2019, serving as Board President for FY23-24, and as the District's representative on the Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission's Special District Advisory Committee for over 5 years. These roles reflect his commitment to advancing parks and recreation beyond the local level.

Director Danzl is also recognized for his strong communication skills and community-minded leadership approach. He connects authentically with residents, listens to community needs and effectively shares the District's vision and accomplishments. His ability to inspire others and articulate a clear path forward has strengthened community trust and engagement.

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Through his adaptability, strategic mindset and unwavering commitment to public service, Brian Danzl has made a lasting and meaningful impact on the Cordova Recreation & Park District. His leadership continues to guide the District toward a strong, innovative and sustainable future, making him exceptionally deserving of the Outstanding Board Member Award.

District Contact Name: Patrick Larkin
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



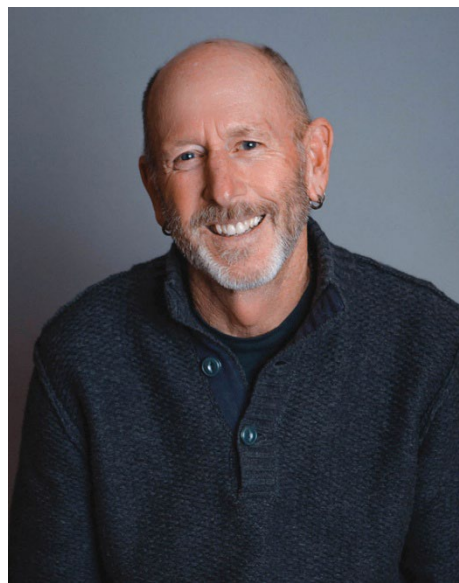
Outstanding Board Member - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any individual servicing as Board Member for at least one term of office (4 years) whose significant contributions have benefited their District.

Nominee: John O'Farrell

District: Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

The Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District proudly nominates John O'Farrell for the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts' 2026 Individual Award for Outstanding Board Member in recognition of his more than 54 years of public service, exceptional leadership, and lasting contributions to the Fair Oaks community.

John has served on the Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District Board of Directors since 2006, including multiple terms as Chairman and Vice Chair. Throughout nearly two decades on the Board, he has provided steady, principled leadership and has played a central role in guiding the District through complex policy decisions, organizational growth, and major capital investments.

Prior to his service with the District, John dedicated 34 years to Sacramento County, retiring in 2004 after serving in senior administrative roles, including County Administrator. He

CARPD Awards of Distinction

Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration, and his career in public service provided him with deep expertise in government operations, public policy, and intergovernmental relations. This experience has been invaluable to a small park district operating within complex county and state regulatory environments.

Following his retirement, John founded John O'Farrell & Associates, a consulting firm specializing in project management, governmental relations, policy development, land use, and entitlement processes. His professional knowledge continues to benefit the District and the broader community, and his insight has been relied upon heavily by District leadership, including the District Administrator, to navigate challenging projects and policy matters.

John has also demonstrated leadership beyond the Board by serving on the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Foundation, including in roles as Chair and Vice Chair, helping advance the Foundation's mission to support District programs and long-term sustainability.

One of John's most impactful contributions was his service on the Measure J Committee, which helped secure 68.9% voter approval for a General Obligation Bond that transformed parks and recreation facilities throughout Fair Oaks.

John O'Farrell's lifelong commitment to public service, thoughtful leadership, and dedication to community stewardship exemplify the highest standards of board governance. He is highly deserving of CARPD's Outstanding Board Member Award.

District Contact Name: Mike Aho
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Outstanding Board Member - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any individual servicing as Board Member for at least one term of office (4 years) whose significant contributions have benefited their District.

Nominee: Crystal Harding-Jenkins

District: North Highlands RPD

District Submission:

Now serving her second board term (2020–2024, 2024–2028), Crystal Harding-Jenkins is a committed ambassador and advocate for the district. She and her family are deeply engaged in district programs, events, and activities, and she actively utilizes social media to strengthen community connections, promoting the district’s pages, website, and scholarship programs.

Crystal has played a key role in building relationships with elected officials, participating in legislative visits with **CPRS in 2024**. During her first term, she served as **board chair, vice chair, and secretary**, showcasing her leadership. She also led the food and vendor subcommittee for **Celebrate North Highlands**, securing participation from over 80 organizations.

A dedicated lifelong learner, Crystal completed the **Special District Leadership Academy** in 2022 and has accumulated over 60 hours of training, sharing valuable insights and resources with the team. She regularly attends the CARPD Annual Conference to broaden her base of knowledge in all things Parks and Recreation Special Districts. She also represented **NHRPD** on **LAFCO’s Special District Advisory Committee** and was featured on the **Institute for Local Government’s (ILG) YouTube platform**, promoting leadership and training programs.

District Contact Name: Scott Graham
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Outstanding Board Member - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any individual servicing as Board Member for at least one term of office (4 years) whose significant contributions have benefited their District.

Nominee: Joanna McVay

District: North Highlands Recreation and Park District

District Submission:

For over a decade, Joanna McVay has been a dedicated board member, demonstrating unwavering commitment to her community. As a successful business owner for nearly 40 years, she has developed impactful programs for children, youth, adults, and seniors—ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all. This year, she proudly celebrates an incredible milestone: 40 years in business!

Beyond her leadership in the district, Joanna’s influence extends across generations. Over the years, she has taught thousands of children in dance and gymnastics, shaping their confidence, discipline, and skills. Her legacy continues as she now teaches the children of her former students, creating a profound sense of continuity and mentorship within the community. She remains a guiding force, supporting and mentoring those she once taught, fostering a lasting impact that spans decades.

Her contributions to the Highlands, Rio Linda, and the greater Sacramento region have made a lasting impact. Joanna’s leadership as a board member, including multiple terms as chair and vice chair, reflects her deep dedication. She also played a pivotal role in Celebrate North Highlands, chairing the entertainment subcommittee and bringing her creativity and vision to the event’s success.

Joanna’s passion for service, mentorship, and leadership continues to shape the community, ensuring a lasting legacy for generations to come.

District Contact Name: Scott Graham
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Outstanding Board Member - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any individual servicing as Board Member for at least one term of office (4 years) whose significant contributions have benefited their District.

Nominee: Patrick Williams

District: North Highlands Recreation and Park District

District Submission:

For the past nine years, Patrick Williams has been a steadfast member of the NHRPD Board, including four years as Board Chairperson, where he has provided strong leadership and unwavering support to the district. His dedication extends far beyond governance—Patrick has consistently contributed resources, attended programs and events, and fostered a spirit of community engagement.

Patrick and his wife, Pam, have brought joy to countless families by volunteering as Mr. and Mrs. Claus at district holiday events, embodying the giving spirit that defines their service. His commitment to the district is matched by his deep roots in the community—a true Highlander, Patrick grew up in the area, graduated locally, raised his family here, and continues to give back in meaningful ways.

A retired Peace Officer, Patrick's service as a Chaplain has had a profound and lasting impact on the region. His compassionate guidance and support bring immense value to those in need, reinforcing his role as a trusted and respected community leader.

Beyond his work with NHRPD, Patrick is also dedicated to youth development, serving on the board for the Antelope Highlands/North Highlands Youth Soccer Club. Through his leadership, mentorship, and community involvement, Patrick continues to shape a stronger, more connected, and thriving district.

District Contact Name: Scott Graham
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CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Outstanding Board Member - Nominee

Criteria: Honors any individual servicing as Board Member for at least one term of office (4 years) whose significant contributions have benefited their District.

Nominee: Al McGreehan

District: Paradise Recreation and Park District

District Submission:



Summary of Nomination

I wanted to nominate on behalf of the Paradise Recreation and Park District, our Board Chair, Al McGreehan, for CARPD's Outstanding Board Member.

Mr. McGreehan began his service as a Board Member in 1993 and has served continuously with outstanding leadership ever since. He has served in numerous board roles multiple times and is our current Chair. Al brings a keen professional understanding of local government and planning, as he served over 35 years in planning and community development in Northern California in Plumas County and the Town of Paradise. Other agencies have benefited from Al's long service including CARPD and Butte County LAFCO.

Al has provided steady leadership and support after the Camp Fire to the district and community in a planning and recovery role. On a personal note, I appreciate his clear-eyed judgement, historical context, scrutiny of details, and commitment to providing a voice for community members.

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Board Member - Nominee



Al is a true supporter of recreation and enjoys several activities such as softball, running, golf and others. He is also an advocate for youth involvement and donates funds that benefit youth sports and swim scholarships.

On behalf of the District, I wanted to honor and acknowledge Al's outstanding service and contribution to our community (both recreation and locally) for over 33 years!

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