



2022

Awards of
Distinction

NOMINATIONS



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: Tom Hare

District: Conejo Recreation & Park District



District Submission:

Tom Hare leads a team of 55 public service professionals. He and his team are responsible for improving, maintaining, and protecting **64 different improved parks and facilities** covering more than 1,000 acres along with 15,000 acres of open space and 150 miles of multi-use trails.

Tom joined CRPD in 2006 and over **the past 15 years has spent over \$64,000,000** (or approximately \$4.3 million/year) on **over 800 capital improvement projects** ranging from small “repair” jobs to new buildings, parks and a pool.

During the past 15 years, CPRD has completed 6 new parks (including a large community park), a public pool, expansion of 2 community centers, a grounds maintenance workshop, a historic ranch Visitor’s Center and replaced 35 playgrounds. In addition, CRPD added a variety of amenities onto existing public parks including: bridges, bikeways, disc golf courses (2), solar carports, large picnic pavilions, pickleball courts a bike jump park, inclusive playgrounds, an “ant hill, “a healing garden, outdoor fitness nodes, futsal courts

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and acquisition of an equestrian center among many other things.

Fiscal Year 21/22 is one of Tom's biggest years ever . . . Under Tom's leadership, CRPD is working on a new 14-acre park (\$5.5 million), substantial renovation of 2 community centers (\$3 million), 4 playground renovations (\$1.5 million), dog park parking lot, restroom and shade structures (\$1.3 million), an outdoor nature classroom (\$0.6 million), Equestrian Center rehabilitation (\$.6 million), new Community Center planning & design (\$.6 million), plus dozens of smaller capital projects totaling another \$3 million . . . for a substantial **capital improvement budget of over \$16 million!**

Beyond the very long list of capital projects Tom oversees he takes the time to work alongside each one of his employees. He spends one day each month in the field, repairing irrigation, cleaning a restroom, operating equipment, building trail, riding along with Rangers and listens and appreciates what they need to do their jobs. **He takes the time to know his staff, helps them succeed,** and is both well-respected and liked by his employees and colleagues.

Tom is a leader and trusted voice in the community and during the last drought steered the District through the painful process of converting 70 acres (affecting nearly every park) from irrigated grass turf into mulch and drought tolerant plantings saving water and over \$500,000/year.

Tom created a **capital improvement grant program** in 2010 which has served as a great way to manage desires and needs among dozens of user groups. To date, the CIP Grant program has allocated over \$1,000,000 for projects on park property which means the community has also raised \$1,000,000 to match the District's contribution and help fund improvements in the parks.

Tom has been a reliable leader on the park district's non-profit arm, "Play Conejo" serving as a board President or officer nearly every year since its inception in 2012. To date, Play Conejo has raised \$1.1 million which is spent on playground renovation and recreation program scholarships for kids who may not otherwise have the means to participate.

Tom is a US Naval Academy graduate and Veteran having served at Seal Beach, Long Beach and El Toro. He holds an MBA from Cal. State Fullerton. Tom is married to Lori Hare. They have 3 adult children all of whom are employed and live out of the house! **Tom is an absolutely OUTSTANDING employee.**

District Contact Name: Jim Friedl
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Outstanding District Employee - Nominee

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

Nominee: Jill Nunes

District: Cordova Recreation & Park District



District Submission:

“COVID did not slow us down, we continued to thrive through these unprecedented times. This shows me how powerful our Parks and Recreation department really is!” – Jill Nunes

This quote demonstrates the leadership mindset I greatly appreciate and value in Jill as the Director of Parks & Recreation. Jill consistently demonstrates strong leadership skills, teamwork and her approach to coaching her staff and addressing issues and processes is thorough, thoughtful, respectful and professional. She has been instrumental in addressing challenges during COVID restrictions regarding concerns with CRPD systems and staff and looking for ways to improve the conditions. She is very passionate about the parks and recreation field which is demonstrated through her numerous accomplishments.

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Jill has been a champion for change management which has been a key for success. She has led staff through numerous COVID restrictions and protected staff from potential lay-offs due to limited to no programs by having the full time Recreation staff be direct service providers, creating new programs and producing a Virtual Recreation Guide. She created a work team that communicates well through diverse and challenging work assignments. Jill is excellent at providing tools and resources to her staff for them to work efficiently, smarter and to achieve their goals. Specifically, she has trained staff on expectations to evaluate existing programs and to add new programs to fill service gaps, especially during the challenging years of the pandemic. She is also connecting staff from multiple departments to make cohesive decisions so there is a District-wide point of view on critical capital improvement projects.

In addition, Jill has been the leader of the District Fee Schedule and updates to the CRPD Board of Directors (Board). She developed and presented the District Fee Schedule program to the Board for their approval, which demonstrated her ability to initiate a process and see it to completion. Jill also presents monthly reports to the Board to discuss department highlights and great services provided by staff. The Cordova Golf Course is one of these highlights. The improvements at the golf course, along with new leadership, has yielded remarkable results. "An exceptional leader, Jill perseveres under pressure and articulates a clear vision for success – going above and beyond in service to the District. I consider myself fortunate to be a part of her vision to imbue an aging golf course with new life and vitality, for future generations to enjoy," said Cordova Golf Course Manager Chase Michelotti. "Daily, Jill works to empower CRPD's vision, and embraces the mission to serve the needs of a diverse and growing community." Due to the new management approach and practices, revenue is at an all-time high and customers are feeling a sense of belonging and care.

Jill has proved how valuable building connections and relationships are to the success of CRPD. She has done an exemplary job learning about the parks maintenance, facility maintenance and management needs of CRPD. To gain perspective into the Park Department, Jill worked full days with each division within the Parks Department. The experience was beneficial as she learned about our dedicated staff and how hard they work each day to keep CRPD parks beautiful. Jill enjoyed gaining insight into their needs and obstacles which has helped her give the Parks Department the support they need and deserve. Through this, Jill has earned ample respect and admiration from the Parks staff, leadership team and the Board. She will continue to learn the Parks team needs, look for ways to advocate and support those needs in the budget and help prioritize projects considering limited resources. Jill has also formed strong relationships with partners and stakeholders. Her confidence and professional approach enable her to connect with a diverse, and sometimes challenging, audience. She continues to strengthen her relationships with agencies including counties, cities, tourism agencies, school districts and neighborhood associations. She has written and received Board approval for Joint Use Agreements with multiple school districts. Jill continually strives to be the best listener in the group or meeting while maintaining an openness to the content of the communication.

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I really appreciate Jill's strong work ethic, honesty, real approach to work and support for new directions. She has set the tone with professionalism and openness to change. Jill is an irreplaceable asset and a talented leader. It is my honor to nominate Jill Nunes, Director of Parks & Recreation from Cordova Recreation & Park District as the CARPD 2022 Outstanding District Employee.

"Jill is the consummate professional and cares deeply about her staff and the people in this community. An exceptional leader – she perseveres under pressure and articulates a clear vision for success – going above and beyond in service to the District. She acts with integrity and engages in honest, open communication with both community members and coworkers. A testament to her resilience and ability to motivate, she was an integral part of CRPD's ability to successfully navigate the difficult COVID-19 pandemic, offering innovative resources and unique ideas for continued high-quality recreational opportunities in the community. I consider myself fortunate to be a part of her vision to imbue an aging golf course with new life and vitality, for future generations to enjoy. Daily, Jill works to empower CRPD's vision, and embraces the mission to serve the needs of a diverse and growing community."

- Chase Michelotti, Cordova Golf Course Manager

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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: Jim Sanchez

District: Hesperia Recreation & Park District



District Submission:

The Hesperia Recreation and Park District has the pleasure of managing and running eight large parks and several pocket parks throughout the city. All these parks have provided safe, fun entertainment for community members for years. The District has been able to manage these parks thanks to the dedicated maintenance staff that keep the parks in great condition. Jim Sanchez is part of the team that provides the community with safe and clean parks. He has been with the Hesperia Recreation and Park District for a total of 14 years and has enthusiastically served the community throughout that time.

Jim and his family have lived in Hesperia during his time at District. He and his wife have been together for close to 27 years and have had the pleasure of raising three children together in Hesperia. When Jim Sanchez is not faithfully serving his community, he is either fishing at local fishing spots or barbequing. He enjoys spending time outside with his close

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friends and family. His family and wife are proud of how far he has gone with the Park District and the dedication that he pours into the community.

As a full time Maintenance Worker, Jim has kept up the daily maintenance in Lime Street Park, Hesperia Civic Plaza Park, and all commercial properties that fall under the responsibility of the Hesperia Recreation and Park District. Jim is also responsible for a full team of part time staff that he leads in the mission to keep our parks and other spaces looking great. With his leadership, the maintenance team is able to consistently keep the parks in the best conditions for the various sports teams, local community groups, and regular residents to enjoy. Jim Sanchez has always been the employee who steps up to the call of action when called upon. He does not shy away from helping maintain the upkeep in other parks that fall outside of his assigned area. Jim is called upon regularly to handle any emergencies that occur in all of the District parks.

In addition to the daily upkeep, Jim also leads the required preparations required for special events in our parks. He can always be counted on to leave the Hesperia Civic Plaza Park ready for special events including but not limited to: Movies in the Park, Bobcat's Concert Series, Hot Rod Halloween, and the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. Throughout the year, these events bring hundreds, if not thousands, of local residents to the park, thanks to the dedicated work that Jim puts into the Hesperia Civic Plaza Park.

For these reasons, the Hesperia Recreation and Park District nominates Jim Sanchez for the Outstanding Employee Award.

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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: Nancy Blair

District: Livermore Area Recreation & Park District

District Submission:

I am writing this to nominate Nancy Blair for the Outstanding District Employee. Nancy has been an employee with the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District for over twenty-five years and is a tremendous asset to the District. She is so deserving of this award and recognition.

Nancy is the Youth Services Administrator. She is directly responsible for eleven school-age year-round before and after-school childcare programs, six preschools, two grant programs serving Title I schools, and is the district liaison for the Livermore Youth Advisory Commission. These programs traditionally serve approximately 1000 youth per day. Nancy's knowledge of child development is unparalleled. Besides her academic background, she has an amazing instinct in her ability to provide the Livermore community with safe, enriching, fun, and quality programs. She is a leader in youth development in both the community and the LARPD. In addition, she works closely with several community agencies, including the Livermore Joint Unified School District, Hively (resource and referral agency), and the City of Livermore- to name a few.

Nancy represented LARPD throughout Livermore as a leader in providing childcare under extreme circumstances. When Covid-19 appeared, like the rest of the world, we did not know when and how we would open again. For the first several weeks, Nancy assisted with the community outreach department, serving at the drive-through lunch program for our Senior community. Approximately four weeks into the shutdown, LARPD was asked by the Alameda County emergency operations center to open childcare for children of essential workers. Nancy led this program by building a relationship with the county health officers and working with State and County mandates. This allowed us to train staff on all safety protocols and work with families to ensure they felt safe bringing their children to our program. In the summer of 2020, LARPD increased its program offerings to provide outdoor camps and activities to children to get them outside and safely socialize with their peers. Due to Nancy's relationships with the county, we were able to open safely in several district areas. She worked with other LARPD supervisors to continue to follow mandates in all program areas. Though things were beginning to open throughout the County, schools

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were still in distance learning. Nancy oversaw all the distance learning for our childcare sites, offering our sites to be opened from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm for essential workers and those parents who were beginning to go back to work. During this time, Nancy secured several grants for safety equipment and supplies to keep our programs clean and safe.

Despite the ever-changing world of the last two years, Nancy consistently finds a way to better our programs, communicate with staff, peers, and the community, and continue to be a mentor to others.

District Contact Name: Mathew Fuzie
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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: Joana Martinez

District: McFarland Recreation & Park District



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DRIVE SAFE BE KIND

Spooktacular

DRIVE-THRU HALLOWEEN

OCTOBER **30** 6 PM - 8 PM

ENTRANCE: CORNER OF SHERWOOD AVE. & S. SECOND ST. MCFARLAND REC. & PARK DIST. 100 S. SECOND ST.

Please Stay In Your Car
NO WALKERS
Wear A Mask &
Enjoy The Treats

Thank You to all our Sponsors & Participants:
City of McFarland, MUSD,
McFarland Police Dept.,
Greater McF Chambers of Commerce, McDonald's, GEO,
Diamond Realty Group,
Munguia Heating & Air,
William Ritchey Ins.

District Submission:

Dear Awards Committee,

Joana Martinez has worked for MRPD for 18 years. She is our Administrative Assistant, but her title is not indicative of her duties and dedication to our organization. Joana oversees our finances and human resources. Since I started in 2015, our audits have been perfect. But it is much more than great audits.

Ms. Martinez is an integral part of our management team. She is a pro at Razo r1 s Edge and works on things even from home and when she is sick. An example is our payroll. She is the staff member who takes care of this task (even when sick she gets staff paid). She is also an idea person although she is always thinking of the bottom line and liability with a focus on getting better.

She is constantly looking for ways we can improve. During Covid, Joana saw a need in the

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community. The Police Department was unable to host their annual Cops and Candy event due to staffing. So, Joana sprang into action and made the event happen (all following Covid protocol). She also made the Veteran's Parade happen when a local veteran said they needed help, or they would not be able to host it. It was amazing. She serves on the Chamber of Commerce and School Site Council at two schools working food and fireworks booths. She is one of the most involved residents of McFarland.

Ms. Martinez mentors staff (and board members) on an ongoing basis. Whenever there is a need, she seems to be there to fill it. That is invaluable to our small district.

I fully endorse Ms. Martinez nomination for the outstanding district employee award.
Sincerely,

Jeff Nickell, MA District Manager.

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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: Keri Price

District: Valley-Wide Recreation & Park District



District Submission:

Whenever Keri Price enters any Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District facility, the room lights up with her smile and infectious personality. A recreational supervisor, Keri has been an outstanding employee for almost 15 years.

She began her career with Valley-Wide in September 2007 as a part-time instructor for the Mom & Me program. The next summer, she started working at the Aquatic Center, and worked both positions part time until she became the lead supervisor for the San Jacinto P.A.L program. When the program ended, Keri moved to Valle Vista Community Center.

While her main responsibility is overseeing the community center, Keri is instrumental in numerous Valley-Wide programs. She is the volleyball director for the Hemet/San Jacinto area and is a key member of the Holiday Committee, planning events to celebrate Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

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She also is the chair of the Oldlympics, a series of athletic competitions for people 50 and older. The Oldlympics involve more than 20 competitions at various venues over a two-week period with more than 800 competitors. It is the largest adult event in the district.

Not only does Keri work with our oldest residents, but she also works with our youngest as the co-leader of the Mom and Me program for preschool-aged children.

Keri has degrees in child development psychology and wanted to be a teacher but fell in love with recreation and parks and Valley-Wide and the community are glad she did.

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