



2022

Awards of
Distinction

NOMINATIONS



Awards of Distinction

Category:

Outstanding
Activity, Program,
or Event

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: Arden Park Children’s Theater Program

District: Arden Park Recreation & Park District



CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



District Submission:

Julia Steudle was a member the internationally known Missoula Children’s Theater program that was performing in Sacramento when the COVID lockdowns hit. She chose to stay in the area, and she picked up a nanny job with the grandchildren of an Arden Park Board member. During the summer of 2021, she put together a few “backyard theater” productions with the children she was watching, along with a few neighbors. Videos from those productions were sent to the District staff and an idea was born.

We met with Julia and soon after that, and the Arden Park Children’s Theater Program was born. The first production began in October with eight weeks of rehearsals. The program’s inaugural performance of *The Lion King Jr.* musical was held in December. The cast included thirteen children, aged 8-13years, and included stage managers and set designers. Julia hand painted the backdrops for the stage.

The Lion King Jr. was a 90-minute production with over 20 musical numbers. The performance was staged in our Community Center with two sold out performances. The response to the performance and the program was outstanding.

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Because of that, we are currently in rehearsal for our spring production of *We Will Rock You* which is described as, "Through the music of Queen, two rebels take on the iPlanet corporation to bring back the magic of rock 'n roll. With hit songs like 'We Will Rock You,' 'Somebody to Love,' 'Killer Queen,' and more, this 70-minute adaptation of the West End show is a fist-pumping, foot-stomping anthem to individuality!" We have 15 cast members for this performance which will premiere in May. In addition, we also have "Camp Julia" which will consist of four, week-long camps where the children will rehearse and perform a play by the end of each week.

We are excited about and proud of the Arden Park Children's Theater Program. It allows us to reach a segment of our young population that was not being served while encouraging participation in the Arts. And besides, who doesn't love a good musical?!

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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: H.A.R.D. Holiday Lights

District: Hayward Are Recreation & Park District



CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



District Submission:

After of two years of covid, the community was longing to gather with family and friends for the holidays and to connect with others throughout their community. To meet this challenge, H.A.R.D. created the Holiday Lights event, a festive, nondenominational event embracing the seasonal holidays. The event provides opportunities for the community to gather in a safe space and enjoy an evening at their local park with music, art, refreshments, and a holiday light ceremony.

Most agencies have a traditional tree lighting in one location, but H.A.R.D.'s boundaries encompass a 100-square mile area and over 309,000 residents, so picking one location did not adequately reach our community. H.A.R.D. has three historical mansions throughout the District, and each one is attached to a park and located in under resourced neighborhoods. It was decided to hang lights on the mansions and turn those lights on with

CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



a lighting ceremony three consecutive nights prior to the holidays. The goal was to create a historical connection and identify the local treasure for the community, complete with a celebratory feel.

During the event, each mansion had art activities for the families, cookie and a hot chocolate station served by H.A.R.D.'s Foundation and a few words of welcome from the President of the Board of Directors prior to the countdown to flip the giant light switch.

In addition, over 1,200 community members toured the three mansions over three evenings. Tours were provided by staff from the Hayward Area Historical Society (HAHS). Our volunteers, community groups, faith-based groups, community leaders, the H.A.R.D. Board of Directors, the H.A.R.D. Foundation board members and HAHS, helped promote event, provided and distribute refreshments and the historical society's engaging tours added extra draw to these community events.

The Holiday Lights events allowed the H.A.R.D. Board of Directors and the Foundation Board to communicate directly with the community they serve. In addition, holding this event at these three locations in low income, highly populated, under-resourced neighborhoods, demonstrated H.A.R.D.'s commitment to equity.

Community members expressed their appreciation for this event because it was fun, festive, close to their homes and safe to be outside together after another rough year of Covid. Many did not know the mansions are historical facilities or what they looked like on the inside. Partnering with historical society provided an opportunity for guests to learn more about the families that heavily influenced their community, the number of tours led helped the historical society reach their annual goal for outreach numbers in one night.

This event further demonstrates the importance of parks and how the profession, with community events such as this, develops a sense of connection and belonging within the community, which provides for a better quality of life for individuals and families. As we all know, Parks Make Life Better!

Videos

Mt Eden Mansion - <https://fb.watch/bbXQ4VLr3u/>

McConaghy House - <https://fb.watch/bbXOXUNTuw/>

Meek Estate - <https://fb.watch/bbXPpwi2OZ/>

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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: Hot Rod Halloween

District: Hesperia Recreation & Park District



District Submission:

The Hesperia Recreation and Park District, HRPD, has had the pleasure of providing the community with an annual Halloween event for its residents. The event aims to get the

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Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



community involved in fall festivities in a safe and family friendly environment. At Hesperia Civic Plaza Park community members of all ages are able to enjoy all the Halloween fun! Hot Rod Halloween has a storied past with the Hesperia Recreation and Park District, with it originally starting as a fall festival planned by a local radio station. It was in the seventh year of planning that the radio station was bought out and the Park District suddenly became responsible in solely planning the Hot Rod Halloween event. After taking on the responsibility of planning, HRPD was ready to do it bigger and better in 2020 but unfortunately, due the Covid-19 pandemic, planning was cut short. It was not until 2021 that HRPD could truly achieve the vision of what Hot Rod Halloween could become.

The planning stages of Hot Rod Halloween 2021 started months beforehand when partnerships were created with local groups. Due to the hard work from staff, HRPD was able to secure a financial sponsorship from T-Mobile in order to put on the event. T-Mobile's mission to work and improve local communities aligned with the district's goal of Hot Rod Halloween. The Hesperia Recreation and Park District had the pleasure to partner with local group, High Desert Second Chance, to provide candy to car show participants and other local vendors to hand out during the event. HRPD also partnered with local schools to have their students volunteer. Students helped with handing out candy and running the free fall carnival games. With lines forming before the event started, community members received free candy throughout the entire park. Hot Rod Halloween 2021 was attended by approximately 5,000 community members with lines stretched around the park throughout the entirety of the event! Vendors promoted their business to the community members while also participating in the Halloween festivities. Residents had the chance to visit the car show of approximately 40 classic cars and trick or treat with them, as well as take pictures and just chat with the owners.

During the planning processes of Hot Rod Halloween, the Hesperia Recreation and Park District was excited to bring back a safe and fun event for families in the community. The event turned out to be a much larger than expected, yet due to the planning and quick thinking of staff the event successfully went on. For this reason, the Hesperia Recreation and Park District would like to nominate Hot Rod Halloween for the Outstanding Program distinction.

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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: Science Camp

District: Livermore Area Recreation & Park District



District Submission:

I want to nominate the LARPD science camp for the Outstanding Activity/Program/Special Event. The program started in the Fall of 2020 when distance learning continued throughout the Livermore public schools. When the schools in our community were going

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to be in distance learning for an unspecified amount of time, the LARPD open space staff brainstormed on the best way to get kids hands-on learning in an outdoor environment that would be fun and get them away from their screens. As a result, our Rangers wanted to offer a hands-on outdoor science program for grades kindergarten through 5th grade at LARPD Sycamore Grove Park. An education-based science program designed to engage kids, foster an appreciation for nature, and have FUN! Science camps are held in 4-week sessions, one day a week, with times specific to grade levels. The curriculum is theme-based. Some of the themes include weather, wonderful wetlands, and life underground. Each theme has four hands-on lessons that explore each of the topics.

What began as a small program of about ten participants has turned into a comprehensive science program serving over 300 school-age children. Word spread throughout the community, and we began getting inquiries regarding outdoor educational programs. A homeschool organization contacted us who wanted to include our science camp into their curriculum. Because they were a home school, we could offer programs during the school day and have more participants. Our Junior Ranger program doubled due to the kids having such a great experience, and they wanted more opportunities to learn and be at the park.

In the Spring of 2021, LARPD was approached by a 5th-grade teacher whose annual overnight outdoor education program in the Santa Cruz mountains was canceled due to Covid-19. Some of his class had been looking forward to this throughout elementary school. We took the curriculum from the science camp and created a similar experience to outdoor education without the overnight component experience.

What was first created to offer an outdoor experience during a tough time turned into a program that became a starting point to open up a whole new outdoor experience for the community.

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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: Tinkers & Thinkers Virtual Innovation Faire 2021

District: Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District



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Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



District Submission:

The Tinkers & Thinkers Innovation Faire (Tinkers & Thinkers) is one of the most exciting and innovative events in the recreation industry. Tinkers & Thinkers is a free Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.)-based event brought to the community through an exemplary partnership between the Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District (District) Special Events and the Pleasant Hill Library. The primary goal of this annual event is to champion S.T.E.M.-based learning, encourage creative thinking, foster effective problem solving, and inspire innovation through a variety of fun “hands-on” projects for people of all ages and abilities. Drawing over 2,000+ people each year, this special event not only serves to promote S.T.E.M. but it also brings families, friends and the community together to engage, connect and share a common positive experience in the local park. These shared experiences help build a stronger, more enlightened, and progressive community. Over the past two pandemic years, the challenge was how to still host this event in a substantive way: keeping the important hands-on activity component and maintaining the special community connection, all while keeping people safe in a world pandemic.

Like a typical science experiment, pivoting in the pandemic took some trial and error to come up with favorable results. The first three annual Tinkers & Thinkers events were held in-person at the District’s Pleasant Hill Park with additional indoor exhibits in the Pleasant Hill Teen Center and Senior Center facilities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, an in-person event for 2020 & 2021 was not an option. In 2020, the team developed an innovative approach that combined virtual event hosting via the Zoom video conference platform with the pre-event distribution of customized, event-branded “Maker” boxes. This combination allowed the event team to maintain the hands-on experience, connect people together for a shared experience and keep them safe at the same time.

In 2021, the event team developed an event-specific website via Wix.com to allow for a self-paced S.T.E.M. exploration. <https://www.phtinkersandthinkers.com/>. Like the 2020 event, the 2021 event included pre-event distribution of the “Maker” boxes. The event team plus local volunteers assembled and filled over 1,000 boxes that held the components to make 6 unique S.T.E.M.-based projects. Instead of hosting the event in a massive live, zoom video conference call, however, the team developed pre-recorded videos for self-paced exploration on an event-specific website. The videos were step-by-step instructions to build each S.T.E.M. project using all the parts and pieces found inside the “Maker” box. On September 18, 2021, the event videos were “released” and published on the website at 8:00 am. Participants were given an event start time but no end-time. The engagement time was left open to allow participants to relax, watch videos at their convenience and enjoy building the S.T.E.M. projects at their own pace with family and friends. The goal was to balance providing enough event structure to retain the value of coming together as a community with minimizing health risks, maximizing access to S.T.E.M., and providing flexibility to participants. The rave reviews proved the event team struck the right balance

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and the 2021 self-directed style virtual event was a huge success. Watch YouTube video here: <https://youtu.be/zvZOe1mIESs>. Photos featured in video were submitted by participants.

In the past two years, the online format in has increased participation well beyond city limits. In 2021, the combination of pre-recorded videos and project kits in-hand has shown to extend S.T.E.M. education and exploration beyond a one-day event as people continue to engage with the website and build the projects or make completely new ones. Pre-recorded videos had 1,800 viewers since event start date and continue to get approximately 20 fresh views every weekday plus more on views on weekends. The event team will work towards preserving this “stickiness” for future events and consider a hybrid in-person/online approach. Tinkers & Thinkers Innovation Fair is now one of the most reputable, highly valued, and popular family events in the community.

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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: The Big Egg Hunt

District: Pleasant Valley Recreation & Park District



CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



District Submission:

Dear CARPD Awards Committee,

The Pleasant Valley Recreation & Park District has had a longstanding history of hosting 15,000+ egg hunts for children of all ages as part of our annual Easter Eggstravaganza event. While the COVID-19 pandemic left the early 2021 event season uneasy, the District decided we did not want to cancel the event for yet another year. These past two years, we wanted to give the community an egg hunt, but adapt the activity so participants could socially distance themselves while getting the chance to visit several of the District's parks.

The community was invited to take part in our District-wide "Easter Eggstravaganza's: The Big Egg Hunt," where we had hidden nine giant Easter eggs in parks throughout the District. Nine Community Partners agreed to help us in the endeavor and paint the giant

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Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



eggs. The partners included: The Boys and Girls Club of Camarillo, The Camarillo Family YMCA, kidSTREAM, Ventura County Credit Union, Pleasant Valley Co-op Preschool, The Senior Center Art Group, Studio Channel Islands, Casa Pacifica, and Visit Camarillo.

Community members were instructed to visit our event page and print out the Bingo sheet and map to locate and record their finds. The community had one week to visit one or nine of the Easter egg parks, find the egg using the hints and write the code word from the sign on your Bingo sheet. They were encouraged to visit as many participating parks (up to 9) as they could, and then turn in their Bingo Sheet to the Pleasant Valley Aquatic Center (PVAC) for a prize. Staff collected the Bingo Sheets, administered minor prizes, and entered participants in the raffle drawing scheduled for April 7, 2021.

Raffle tickets were given to participants who completed all open spots on the provided Bingo Sheet. Raffle tickets are limited to one per person for the extent of the event. Staff kept track of the entries via a shared document to prevent multiple raffle ticket entries from the same individual. When the Egg Hunt was over, staff raffled off the prizes on a YouTube Live stream. Raffle prizes were donated by various local businesses and partners to help make this event a success.

For a first-time event, the District was thrilled that over 950 community members submitted bingo sheets, and most were able to be entered in the raffle prize drawing. After such a success in 2021, the District decided to incorporate The Big Egg Hunt into the 2022 Easter Eggstravaganza event. We have been fortunate enough to grow our partnerships to include Home Depot and expand the egg hunt so that this year's hunters can find up to 16 giant eggs and 8 smaller challenge eggs. With a completed Bingo Sheet, hunters will receive a raffle ticket. Finding each challenge egg will give hunters extra chances for a raffle ticket with a maximum of nine raffle tickets per person

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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: 50th Anniversary Community Party

District: Valley-Wide Recreation & Park District



CARPD Awards of Distinction Outstanding Activity/Special Event - Nominee



District Submission:

Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District turns 50 years old in 2022 and is acknowledging the milestone the entire year. The largest event was a 50th Anniversary Community Party on April 2, 2022.

It was the largest event Valley-Wide has ever undertaken. Held at our Diamond Valley Lake Community Park, the free party included two live concerts, a laser show, food trucks, bounce houses, slides and carnival games, face painting, raffles and giveaways.

Planning and executing the party involved the entire staff and months of preparation. Logistics, ADA compliance, parking and traffic flow were among the areas addressed. While a promoter was contracted to hire the bands, set up the stage and laser show and arrange food trucks and children's activities, the rest was done in house.

Social media and banners were used extensively to promote the event. Signs were posted at all Valley-Wide facilities and hung on street corners and even across Hemet's main throughfare. Regular postings on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter highlighted the activities that took place.

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Law enforcement and community groups were offered booth space to share their work with visitors. The Hemet Police and Fire Departments, Riverside County Sheriff's, Department, AMR and Eastern Municipal Water District were among the organizations that brought equipment to the party.

An estimated 3,000 people attended at least part of the event. The Valley-Wide booth was a popular destination, as we gave away T-shirts, mugs, stuffed versions of our bear mascot Bruno, flying discs, beach balls and reusable bags. The grand raffle prize was a \$600 Disney gift card. Valley-Wide staff members worked the booths and other areas of the event, some even dressing as Bruno to interact with the crowd.

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