



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**

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#### **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](mailto: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:

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- “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**

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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  
**District Contact Phone:** (916) 405-5600  
**District Contact Email:** [timogden@cosumescsd.gov](mailto:timogden@cosumescsd.gov)

## 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**



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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  
**District Contact Phone:** (707) 648-4600  
**District Contact Email:** [glanusse@gvrd.org](mailto: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

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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 Districts central control system for irrigation management. The District originally sought public bids for the upgrade and retrofit of the system, but when bids exceed \$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](mailto: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



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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  
**District Contact Email:** [kfelicich@mcrpd.us](mailto:kfelicich@mcrpd.us)

## 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**



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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](mailto: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.

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