



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 9, 2025

TO: Parks and Recreation Department Employees

FROM: Andy Field, Director, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2025 Third Quarter Employee of the Quarter Selections

It is my pleasure to announce the winners of the Parks and Recreation Department's Employee of the Quarter (EOQ) winners for the Third Quarter of Fiscal Year 2025.

As you know, winners are nominated by their peers, supervisors, and managers each quarter. Then, each Deputy Director reviews their division's nominations for eligibility, and chooses up to six nominations to forward to the Parks and Recreation Department Rewards and Recognition Selection Committee. Winners are selected by the Rewards and Recognition Selection Committee (see attached roster of committee members) based on some or all the following criteria: exceptional work performance, customer service, professionalism, cooperativeness, work schedule availability and attendance, and dedication.

Each selectee receives one day (8 hours) of Discretionary Leave and a \$300 cash award. Please note that all Discretionary Leave and monetary awards are prorated for part-time and hourly employees, per City policy.

I am excited to recognize the following **Parks and Recreation Department Employees of the Quarter** for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2025:

- **Sarai Aguilar**, Pesticide Applicator, who is a friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable addition to the spray crew, is extremely professional and personable, a self-starter, hard worker with an incredible attention to detail. Her daily duties include spraying herbicides, monitoring park sites for invasive pests, and documentation of pesticide applications. Has been instrumental in the organization of the Pest Mgmt team's supplies, tools, and offices. Over the last few months Sarai has singlehandedly taken on janitorial duties at the Balboa Park Nursery after the contracted out janitorial services abruptly stopped. She has taken on these additional tasks without being prompted. Often times noticing what needs to be done before anyone else. Sarai is a shining example of what it means to be a City of San Diego public servant;
- **Kai Binger**, Recreation Aide, who has taken on the responsibilities in a higher-level position as a Golf Operations Assistant such as working in the pro shop, where he operates the POS system, manages the tee sheet, monitors the pace of play, and handles golf shop equipment. He has an outstanding level of customer service, as he ensures that every customer has a positive experience. He has dedicated himself to the Golf Division by working multiple shifts each week, including extended hours to help cover staffing needs during weekends when it's

the busiest, and has also stepped in to cover shifts during employee call-outs, showcasing his reliability and commitment to the organization;

- **Jose Delgado**, Equipment Operator 1, who with his unwavering dedication and exemplary work ethic throughout 29 years of service has taken it upon himself to mentor and train new employees, sharing his extensive knowledge and tactical skills in equipment operation. Without hesitation, Jose steps up to take on additional tasks when his crew is short-staffed. He took the lead in clearing brush and removing storm debris from Southcrest Trails, an area significantly impacted by last year's storms. His leadership and attention to detail ensured that every section was addressed with care. His efforts go beyond maintenance—they reflect a deep sense of duty and compassion for the communities he serves. Through his leadership, work ethic, and dedication, Jose has proven to be a true asset;
- **Warren Gilliard**, Recreation Leader I, where two and a half years ago, he began running a twice a week, free pickleball class for seniors. The class became so popular mainly through word of mouth, that it became open to all ages. The class is always full, and people are always waiting to sign up. He has now "graduated" almost 400 participants. He also monitors the open pickleball play hours after his class, where the instruction continues. The class has really added to the already family friendly, program focused recreation that is North Clairemont. He's also an exceptional basketball coach. During this quarter Warren led his girls 14u basketball team to a City-Wide Championship for the second year in a row. On top of all his program success he is a reliable, knowledgeable and wonderful employee;
- **John O'Brien**, Asst Recreation Center Director, who on a new assignment at Hourglass Fieldhouse he took on the organization, supervision, and running the center's youth basketball league. This was exceptional work since the league had doubled in size for in-house teams as the site took on more kids with the closure of a sister site. Due to a shortage of coaches, John also took on a team himself for 10u basketball - while continuing with other supervisor duties. With John's help, Hourglass sent a total of 6 teams to Districts and of those six teams, three made it to Citywide. Additionally, John later took on the youth volleyball league. The work he put into the youth sports leagues at the center was a huge undertaking that he did wanting to help the kids in the community as much as possible;
- **Rafael Padilla**, Aging Recreation Specialist, who supported the Annual Department Meeting by providing feedback, assisting with equipment setup, and musical and AV tech support on both days. At the AgeWell Talent Show, he coordinated with the 30 plus performers to ensure they had the equipment and digitized music needed. This made for smooth transitions between performers, and the event a more professional. He presented ideas to the team on how to improve the show and the quality of the music by using multiple speakers, so the performers were able to gauge how they sounded. He also took a lead role in planning and facilitating the Memorial Sr. Center Grand Opening. He coordinated with Community Parks II and AgeWell Services to ensure that everything was carried out successfully;
- **Matthew "Sparky" Peck**, Electrician, who has made a significant impact to CMS Division's operations and the customers. He has completed multiple repairs which have had a direct impact to the public and park site's field and security lighting as well as assisting with irrigation booster pumps and aquatic facilities pool pumps. He works closely with on-site staff to understand the issue(s) and keeps them updated on his progress. Recently he was able to complete emergency repairs within a day for Torrey Pines Golf Course to restore power to an irrigation booster pump a few days prior to the Genesis Invitational. Since

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supporting the irrigation and aquatic maintenance staff, he has greatly reduced repair times making the units more effective in completing repairs quickly to re-establish service;

- **Darlene Smith**, Recreation Leader I, who has planned new programs and special events with new ideas, such as planning Doyle's first ever First Responders Luncheon, recognizing first responders and to celebrate them and their hard work! She puts passion into helping coordinate amazing, unique special events that the community loves while also improving already existing special events offered at the center. She goes above and beyond by seeking out volunteers for events. She is a comforting, kind Rec Leader who is always ready to help and assist. She also takes it upon herself to always find activities for the kids that come to Doyle after school. For example, she quickly plans art projects and crafts for youth. Darlene is a pleasure and has contributed immensely to the Doyle team and community;
- **Viviana Zermeno**, Area Manager, who with her professionalism, and organizational skills has improved Permit Center operations 100%. The Permit Center issues permits from birthday parties and weddings to events such as festivals and marathons with attendance numbers at 15,000+, and specialized permits such as Non-Profit Surf Camps, Beach Bar and Moorings. In the last couple of years, the Permit Center has added 47 new sites for sand volleyball and for luxury picnic activities. She has helped revamp some of the permitting procedures with updates to the Permit Center website, creating new fillable applications, and a maintenance project spreadsheet for supervisors used to avoid conflicts with events. She collaborates with SD Lifeguards to maintain the beach bar and mooring permits current.

My heartfelt appreciation and congratulations to all these employees who are some of our many, many wonderful employees who exemplify the Parks and Recreation “Heart of Service.” I’m proud to say that’s why we’re the best darned department in the City of San Diego!

A huge thank you, as always, to all of you who took the time to recognize and nominate some of our many exceptional employees, and my sincere appreciation goes out to all of you who work so hard, whether nominated and/or selected this time around or not. Our department is truly fortunate to have so many hard-working and dedicated employees with a true Parks and Recreation “Heart of Service”!

Thanks to everyone who was involved in this process: Nominators, nominees, the Rewards and Recognition Selection Committee, and, last, but not least, those who were selected as this quarter’s Employees of the Quarter. My congratulations to all!

Sincerely,



Andy Field
Director, Parks and Recreation Department

Attachment: Fiscal Year 2025 Parks and Recreation Rewards and Recognition Committee Members

cc: Parks and Recreation Department Unclassified Leadership Team
Parks and Recreation Department Rewards and Recognition Committee Members
Payroll Specialists