



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: August 28, 2025

TO: Parks and Recreation Department Employees

FROM: Andy Field, Parks and Recreation Director, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2025 Parks and Recreation Department Employees of the Year

It is my pleasure to announce our Parks and Recreation Department Fiscal Year 2025 Employees of the Year.

The Parks and Recreation Department selected seven Employees of the Year: five in classifications represented by the Municipal Employees Association (MEA), or classified/unrepresented, and two represented by AFSCME Local 127. These seven Department Employees of the Year (EOY) each receive a \$500 cash award and 24 hours of discretionary leave (prorated for employees in part-time and hourly positions, per Administrative Regulation 95.91, Employee Recognition and Rewards Programs). Like the Employees of the Quarter, the Employees of the Year are nominated by the employees' peers. Nominations are approved by each Division's Deputy Director and forwarded to the department's Rewards and Recognition Committee for selection. All Mayoral Department Employees of the year are automatically considered for Citywide Employee of the Year. The Citywide Employees of the Year have not yet been selected.

With so many outstanding and richly deserving employees, the selection of just seven of our employees for Fiscal Year 2025 Department Employee of the Year was quite difficult. I am well aware that the Parks and Recreation Department is fortunate to have more than its share of hard-working, caring, dedicated and talented employees who ALL deserve recognition and thanks, and not all of these employees are chosen or nominated for this recognition.

I sincerely appreciate those of you who take the time out of your busy schedule to nominate deserving employees, both for Employee of the Quarter and Employee of the Year, and I encourage you to keep it up. Showing our appreciation and recognizing each other for hard work and accomplishments is key to forging a strong and effective department, one where we all feel appreciated and valued for our efforts and contributions.

I certainly value all Parks and Recreation employees. It gives me great pleasure to have a program that encourages you to recognize and value each other. So please keep those wonderful EOQ and EOY nominations coming—they are greatly appreciated not just by me, but by those who are working so hard to keep **Parks and Recreation the Best Department in the City!**

Please join me in congratulating our Parks and Recreation Department's Fiscal Year 2025 Employees of the Year:

Parks and Recreation Employees of the Year represented by AFSCME Local 127:

Sarai Aguilar, Pesticide Applicator, Citywide Pesticide Maintenance Unit:

Sarai has shown teamwork, a strong work ethic, attention to detail and willingness to learn. Immediately upon starting her role as a member of the spray crew, Sarai offered to organize and clean up the shop. The Balboa Park Nursery is a large warehouse where City vehicles, spray equipment, spare parts, and hardware are kept. It also serves as a break room and office area for the spray crew staff. Sarai happily took on this project only making a request of tools and supplies to complete the project. Sarai's willingness to take on this task and continue to perform the upkeep of the common areas, break rooms, offices and restrooms is just a glimpse into what a great City employee she is. Sarai performs these above and beyond duties, always with a smile and a great attitude. In addition, Sarai along with a coworker took a special interest in maintaining the newly redesigned Pershing Bike Path from Upas St to Florida Dr. Not only do they diligently spray weeds along the entire section of both sides of the road, but also spray the fence lines and all planter beds to ensure the aesthetic value of this improvement is maintained for all to appreciate and enjoy. Sarai has proven time and time again what a great City employee should be, for the greater good of her work unit and City as a whole. Thank you, Sarai. You truly make a difference every day and we are thankful to work with you.

Juan Razo Aguilar, Golf Course Greenskeeper, Torrey Pines Golf Course:

Juan sets the standard in the Golf Division. He is extremely dedicated, reliable, has an amazing work ethic and provides daily tournament conditions at Torrey Pines. This year, Torrey Pines hosted two PGA Tour events in the span of three weeks. During a period of three months, Juan showed up on almost every one of his days off to help with preparation projects and daily maintenance to ensure the best possible conditions were created for these events. Given his talent and eye for detail he has become one of our go-to trainers for new employees. He is thorough and makes sure new employees understand the level of conditioning that is expected from staff. During renovation periods, he always stays late to help finish projects and other various tasks. The golf course only closes for a handful of days each year and he makes sure that we are able to maximize that time. Juan is a special employee and a very integral part of the golf maintenance section.

Parks and Recreation Employees of the Year represented by MEA or Classified/Unrepresented:

Martha Acosta, Supervising Management Analyst, Fiscal Operations Unit:

Martha has demonstrated exceptional work performance by having temporarily taken the reins of the budget processes for the Department. Originally part of a team of three in the Fiscal Operations Section, the team dwindled to just herself due to a retirement and a promotion. Martha stepped up to the plate and churned out several key deliverables, such as the department presentation for the Executive Budget Review meeting, and the Budget Equity Impact Statement for inclusion. She also oversaw the 3rd Quarter Budget Monitoring Process, requested additional funds during the May Revise process, and provided exceptional detail to budget questions by the Department of Finance, Office of the IBA, and the HR Department. She completed a Request to Fill Cost Analysis for vacant positions and provided projections for the department's expenses. She spearheaded an effort to close out old PO's, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars being released back into the budget, which delayed AVC and allowed the department to function operationally. She is a team player who has gone the extra mile by providing 110% every day and truly deserves recognition.

Kai Binger, Golf Operations Assistant, Torrey Pines Golf Course:

Kai has greatly contributed to the operations of the Golf Division. Initially a Recreation Aide, he expanded his role to take on the responsibilities of a Golf Operations Assistant. He went from picking up range balls and washing carts to eventually becoming the primary point of contact for customer service interactions. He worked in the pro shop, managed the POS system, and enforced City policies. Within just a few months, he excelled at serving the customers and demonstrated strong proficiency with the tee sheet software used to operate the golf course. It is no surprise that Kai was recently promoted to Golf Operations Assistant as he truly deserved better compensation for his contributions to the Golf Division's success. Despite being a full-time student at SDSU, Kai is committed to the Golf Division and works multiple shifts, including extended hours to meet staffing needs on the busiest days and also steps in to cover shifts during employee call-outs, demonstrating his reliability and dedication. We are pleased to have Kai on our team due to his skills, his commitment, contributions, and admirable qualities.

Stephanie Green, Landscape Designer, Parks Infrastructure & Assets Team:

Stephanie is a member of the Assets Management Team who has made a remarkable impact, establishing herself as an indispensable team member through her skill, dedication, and professionalism. Steph manages a broad and complex portfolio of responsibilities, including the review and oversight of in-house design projects—such as Dog Off-Leash Areas and Nature Play Areas—alongside joint-use projects with school districts, developer-delivered park projects, and major CIP projects. Steph also serves as a plan check reviewer for Parks and Recreation through the Development Services Department, demonstrating both her technical expertise and her versatility. Where Steph truly shines is in the preparation and delivery of developer-delivered park projects. She has mastered an intricate and often opaque process that involves the review and creation of Park Development Agreements, Park Maintenance Agreements, Park Maintenance Standards, Lease Agreements, and the coordination of all required Council Actions. These processes are both legally and politically sensitive, and Steph navigates them with clarity, precision, and unwavering professionalism. Her ability to independently manage these responsibilities—many of which require coordination across multiple City departments and external stakeholders—demonstrates not only her knowledge and work ethic but her collaborative spirit and leadership potential.

Paloma Maldonado, Pool Guard 2, City Heights Swimming Pool:

Paloma is a superstar lifeguard excelling in all aspects of the job. She consistently helps at the front entrance to the pool, especially during the busiest times and takes the time to provide the public with detailed answers to all questions. She explains the facility rules and policies and goes out of her way to ensure everyone entering the facility feels welcome. She takes great pride in maintaining a clean pool. During slower periods of her shifts, Paloma performs cleaning and various maintenance tasks. She goes the extra mile often dedicating additional time to ensure every task is completed thoroughly. Paloma is one of the City's Aquatics system's top swim instructors. Her expertise and experience are evident in the consistently high quality of her lessons and the progress of her students. Paloma excels at teaching Tot swimming lessons (ages 6 months–5 years), a group most at risk of drowning. Her classes are engaging, and students often acquire life-saving swimming skills faster than most children in the same age group. Paloma also serves as a mentor instructor to her fellow lifeguards. She frequently juggles teaching difficult lessons while mentoring co-instructors, and despite the challenge, she thrives in this role. Parents have often praised Paloma directly to supervisors, expressing gratitude for her teaching.

Moises Vasquez-Calderon, Grounds Maintenance Manager, OS Canyons/Chollas Lake/SD River:

Moises led, and along with his team, executed, and completed several major projects and dozens of smaller ones. One project was a very large and heavy foot bridge built by the Boy Scouts in Balboa Park which needed to be transported, installed, and leveled in place below the dam at Chollas Lake. Another project was to assist ESD with a cleanup of an island near Friars Road. The team developed

and built a raft in less than a day and hauled several tons of trash and debris from the cleanup site. Next, it was removal of the pier at Chollas Lake. Within three days, the pier was dismantled and disposed of, saving the city considerable cost. There were also two major trail repairs at Los Penasquitos in association with the San Diego Mountain Bike Association, and the other at Paradise Canyon. Moi was also involved in the removal of 12 tons of ice plant in the Tri-Canyons so that the area could be restored with native vegetation. Moi is a hardworking, self-motivated leader who loves his job and his City Family. He shows his can-do attitude through his professionalism and dedication. He is the gold standard of a parks employee.

Thank you **Sarai Aguilar, Juan Razo Aguilar, Martha Acosta, Kai Binger, Stephanie Green, Paloma Maldonado, and Moises Vasquez-Calderon.** You make the Parks and Recreation Department and me very proud!

Our department is truly fortunate to have so many talented and caring employees with a true heart of service, and a passion for giving back to the community. I am proud to head a department with SO many excellent, dedicated employees, and my appreciation goes out to all of you for making Parks and Recreation the best department in the City.

The Parks and Recreation Department ROCKS!!

Sincerely,



Andy Field
Parks and Recreation Director

AF/ra

cc: Kristina Peralta, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Karen Dennison, Parks and Recreation Department Assistant Director
Tom Tomlinson, Parks and Recreation Department Assistant Director
Parks and Recreation Department Rewards and Recognition Committee Members
Sophia Williams, Senior Human Resources Officer, Human Resources Department
Yvette Davis-Duckett, Human Resources Officer, Human Resources Department
Employee Personnel File