



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 30, 2026

TO: Parks and Recreation Department Employees

FROM: Andy Field, Director, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2026 Second Quarter Employee of the Quarter Selections

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It is my pleasure to announce the winners of the Parks and Recreation Department's Employee of the Quarter (EOQ) winners for the Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2026.

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 second quarter of Fiscal Year 2026:

- **Eddie Aguiluz Meza**, Equipment Operator 2, who is also known as "Little Eddie" exemplifies what it means to be a dedicated and public servant. He is assigned to the Support Services Unit, yet he regularly volunteers to assist with tasks well outside his job scope. He's hands-on during concrete pours, emergency responses and last-minute work requests. He takes initiative to ensure safer operations and higher-quality outcomes. His supervisor frequently receives emails from area managers expressing their appreciation for Eddie's dedication, and strong work ethic. Eddie is humble, polite and respectful and is highly regarded by his peers. Eddie is quoted as saying, "I'm here to help and make things better for us as a team and for us to shine as a work unit. We are in this together." This statement truly reflects his character, teamwork, and commitment to our organization's success;
- **Franchot Broy**, Utility Worker 2, who demonstrates outstanding teamwork, professionalism and a strong commitment to getting the job done right. Franchot has graciously stepped into OCA assignments on numerous occasions, serving as both Park Utility Supervisor and Equipment Technician II. His willingness to support the department beyond his assigned role speaks volumes about his dedication. He takes great pride in serving the public, especially when it comes to maintaining and repairing playgrounds. He excels in pour-in-place rubber surfacing repairs, delivering high-quality work that directly impacts public safety and accessibility. Recently, he led a major project involving the full demolition and re-

layout of deteriorated pour-in-place surfacing at 28th St Park. The playground's attenuation surfacing is no longer compromised and is now restored to full functionality;

- **Gary Burns**, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, who demonstrated exceptional initiative and leadership after identifying a noticeable decline in one of his park sites, he proactively coordinated with Citywide Maintenance and multiple vendors to secure the necessary materials and resources to complete a full turf renovation. The project was successfully executed with outstanding results, significantly improving the condition and appearance of the site. Gary possesses extensive institutional knowledge with park operations, historical understanding, and unwavering commitment to excellence, which he consistently shares with staff to support both daily operations and long-term success. His helpful nature and team-first attitude reflect a strong work ethic and a genuine commitment to serving both his colleagues and the community;
- **Mary Ekhaml**, Recreation Leader 1, who with her exceptional performance in the San Carlos-Allied Gardens area demonstrates dedication, leadership, and a strong commitment to serving the community. Mary Beth played a key role in planning and executing the October Halloween Fest, helping ensure a fun, organized, and welcoming event for families. She assisted with Toys for Tots registration and contributed significantly to the winter events, helping create engaging programs. She built an excellent community rapport, connecting with participants and families to create a positive, inclusive environment. As the basketball and volleyball lead, she manages league drafts and officiates games with fairness, organization, and a strong emphasis on sportsmanship and safety. Her leadership and reliability make her an invaluable asset to the team and community;
- **Portia Gregory-Burnette**, Associate Management Analyst, who recently stepped in to train her supervisor on how to properly cancel and reverse goods receipts, thoroughly explaining each step of the process. Portia also assisted her supervisor and another analyst in gaining a better understanding of the new EUNA City budget system software. Although instructions were provided, they did not include all the necessary steps. Portia identified the missing steps, shared the process, and ensured a smooth transition to utilizing the new system, allowing the team to successfully meet their deadline. Her patience, clarity, and strong analytical knowledge made the learning experience smooth and effective. Portia consistently maintains a pleasant and welcoming attitude, and her positive attitude, dedication, and willingness to support others make her an invaluable member of the MAD team;
- **Walter Heyward**, Grounds Maintenance Worker 2, who oversees the maintenance at Golden Hill Recreation Center, Montclair, and Cedar Ridge Parks- all of which require diligent care as they are all visited frequently by community members. At Golden Hill, Walter is known to most neighbors by name. He is a constant presence ensuring the park is free of graffiti, trash, and wayward trees and brush. He is a listening ear for patrons to issue requests and bring attention to any issues. He is an exemplary GMW who takes great pride in his work. He isn't afraid to ask for help from staff if he needs it, he volunteers to help with work projects at other sites and has helped train other grounds staff at our sister sites. Walter is an exemplary GMW who takes great pride in his work, gives 110%, and is an exceptional employee who goes above and beyond his regular duties every day;
- **Kevin Lewis**, Golf Operations Assistant, in a short period of time, he has proven himself to be one of the most dependable employees in our golf operations, always prepared, focused, and ready to contribute. This quarter, Kevin's hard work and dedication were reflected in his transition from an hourly position to a half-time role. With this increased responsibility, he has continued to exceed expectations by stepping up to help train new employees, ensuring they understand procedures, expectations, and the high level of service we strive to provide.

Parks and Recreation Department Employees – Employee of the Quarter Selections

His willingness to support and mentor others has had a positive impact on the efficiency and cohesion of our team. Kevin also consistently takes initiative, identifying tasks that need to be completed and handling them. His proactive approach, strong work ethic, and team-first attitude make him an invaluable asset to our department;

**Kemii Soundara**, Recreation Specialist, who has stepped up to organizing, and supporting various events, which include coordinating with recurring volunteer groups such as San Diego FC, Dexcom, Cal Coast CU and ASEZ WOW for service projects in multiple council districts. Kemii has been instrumental as a department liaison on multi-departmental event planning and support such as the Tree Planting Event at Encanto Elementary and Joint Use Park, planning for the Teralta Park event, and planning for the events spearheaded by the Office of Council District 9. Included in her role in these events are the execution of the requests from the Mayor, Council members, and Director of Parks and Recreation. Kemii has represented the department and the volunteer office with exceptional respectability;

- **Albert Vargas**, Recreation Leader 1, who has continually shown excellent and professional customer service with all patrons. Whether it is through teaching a wide array of class topics or answering questions at the office counter, he makes the effort to answer all questions and if he does not know, is willing to find the answer. He is reliable and steps up to help when other staff have called out. He is enthusiastic about trying new ideas and has a positive attitude and has shown he is very versatile at solving issues as they come up. He has assisted with every special event such as Halloween Carnival and Crafts & Cocoa from start to finish, whether it is coming up with creative ideas as additions to each event including designing creative crafts, event layout, logistics, games and other activities.

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 2026 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