



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: April 24, 2026  
TO: Parks and Recreation Department Employees  
FROM: Andy Field, Director, Parks and Recreation Department  
SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2026 Third 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 Third 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 third quarter of Fiscal Year 2026:

- **Matthew Benoit**, Grounds Maintenance Manager, who is a consistently dependable and supportive presence across operations. He willingly assists anyone in need, not just his own crew, and his collaborative approach has earned the respect of both staff and management. He regularly steps up during heavy workloads, volunteering his time to support the CMS Division Management Team without expecting anything in return. Matt provides guidance to new supervisors, strengthening team cohesion, and his attention to detail and adherence to policy make him an invaluable asset. Even during budget constraints, he finds efficient ways to maintain productivity, managing both the Mow Crew and Turf Crew seamlessly. He also shares equipment to ensure critical safety services are delivered;
- **Carmelo Esquer**, Grounds Maintenance Worker 2, who on Monday, March 9, demonstrated exceptional dedication to the community when he encountered a hiker at Mission Trails Regional Park who had slipped, fallen, and sustained minor head injuries. As the injured woman and her family slowly made their way up the trail, Mr. Esquer provided support and transported them safely back to their vehicle so they could seek medical attention. According to the hiker's husband, she is "fine and healing today due to Carmelo's quick and caring action." With 24 years of service to the City of San Diego, Mr. Esquer continues to support his peers, park volunteers, and the community. Thank you, Carmelo, for two and a half decades of outstanding service;

- **Savannah Lee**, Recreation Leader 2, who is consistent, meticulous, and dependable in her daily duties, including customer service, park maintenance, and training completion. Beyond that, she actively creates new programs to meet community needs and builds strong relationships with participants. She willingly leads programs, assists new staff, and covers shifts without hesitation—and she does so with enthusiasm. She currently serves as camp lead, supports multiple adult classes, participates in the Golden Hill Steppers, teaches Youth Cooking when needed, assists with the onsite after school program, and is preparing to coach peewee soccer. Savannah also strengthens team camaraderie by celebrating staff birthdays and modeling a strong work ethic. She is a vital member of Golden Hill Recreation Center and exemplifies Parks and Recreation’s community-focused values;
- **Julio Morales**, Grounds Maintenance Manager, who is an exceptional team player and who consistently steps in to help others. Whether assisting coworkers with SAP, editing staff reports, troubleshooting water issues, or covering another district, he always goes above and beyond his regular duties. He also volunteers for additional responsibilities, including serving on the annual department meeting committee, coordinating peer to peer PEAK awards, and acting as a quiet but reliable Risk Management contact. Recently, when a coworker faced a medical emergency, Julio immediately offered to cover their area and coordinate with contractors to ensure continuity of work. This is typical of his dependable support. All of this is on top of managing three maintenance assessment districts, two of which were transitioning contracts during a challenging procurement delay. Julio’s positivity, reliability, and service focused approach make him an outstanding representative of the department and the City of San Diego;
- **Francisco Rios Sandoval**, Park Utility Supervisor, who is the Irrigation Repair Unit Supervisor overseeing seven Irrigation Specialists for the entire citywide park system. His performance consistently exceeds expectations. He leads major irrigation projects, works closely with his team, and ensures assignments are completed safely and on time, even with limited staff and materials. He regularly prepares quotes and materials lists, coordinating with other units and departments as needed, and readily takes on additional work, especially during special projects outside normal duties. This quarter, Francisco managed multiple irrigation mainline repairs, minimizing impacts to turf and budget, and supported tree plantings, beautification efforts, and in house CIP projects. He stays positive, works extra hours to reduce backlog, and approaches every task with calm, wholehearted dedication. Francisco truly embodies a spirit of service;
- **Da ’Ron Terry**, Grounds Maintenance Worker 2, who is a dedicated and dependable member of the Shoreline Parks Unit, consistently meeting the high standards of service expected by the Ocean Beach community. He arrives each day with purpose and pride, working to enhance the Ocean Beach area through his proactive efforts at Veterans Plaza, Saratoga, and the Newport parking lot. His commitment has earned him deep appreciation from residents and recognition from city leadership. In December 2025, Mayor Todd Gloria issued a proclamation declaring December 3rd as “Da ’Ron Terry Day” in honor of his exceptional service. Da ’Ron is also a key support for Shoreline staff, assisting during challenges at coastal beaches and training GMW I employees. His work reflects excellence, dedication, and genuine care for the community;
- **Jose Venegas Valle**, Grounds Maintenance Worker 2, who has been a strong addition to the University City grounds maintenance team. In the short time since transferring to Nobel, he played a key role in helping the site pass reclaimed water irrigation inspections twice. He thoroughly inspected the system, identified problems, and made needed repairs—often

Parks and Recreation Department Employees – Employee of the Quarter Selections

going above and beyond by adjusting or rebuilding irrigation heads to ensure everything functioned properly. Jose also improved the landscaping around the library, dog parks, parking lot, and athletic field, creating cleaner, more welcoming spaces. Library staff expressed appreciation for his work, including his practice of mulching leaves around trees to support their health. Jose is a valued team member who readily helps other GMWs, assists with group projects at Standley and Doyle, and covers areas when coworkers are out. We are very fortunate to have him;

- **Quincy Waltar**, Recreation Leader 1, who has made an outstanding impact at Standley Recreation Center through his exceptional work and dedication. As an OCA stepping into the Assistant Center Director role, he quickly learned the expectations of the position and consistently demonstrates professionalism, accountability, and initiative. He learns fast, applies new information immediately, and confidently steps in wherever needed to keep operations running smoothly. He brings a positive attitude to the team, supports his coworkers, and helps create a welcoming environment for staff and patrons. His reliability, strong work ethic, and eagerness to grow make him an invaluable asset to the center. Quincy's contributions have not gone unnoticed, and he is truly deserving of recognition. We are fortunate to have him on our team.

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