



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: August 6, 2024
TO: Parks and Recreation Department Employees
FROM: Andy Field, Director, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2024 Fourth 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 Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024.

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 fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2024:

- **Fabian Alvarez**, Swimming Pool Manager I, who has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication, professionalism, and exemplary performance in his role. Fabian works at the Bud Kearns Pool and despite the high volume of activity at this pool, Fabian excels in training and mentoring new staff members while operationally serving as the key leader simultaneously overseeing a wide variety of programs and activities;
- **Ulises Alvarez**, Tree Trimmer, who greets everyone with enthusiasm every morning and approaches tasks with a can-do attitude; is consistently willing to lend a hand, even beyond his designated responsibilities; and willingly takes on additional projects. He is a great asset to the Park Forestry Unit as his abilities, tree worker certification skills play a crucial role in trimming trees to limit and eliminate potential safety hazards. He encourages and motivates others to maintain a positive mindset, even when the workload becomes overwhelming;
- **Issac Avila**, Recreation Aide, who creates a fun, interactive, and a safe environment at the South Clairemont Rec Center. He excelled in managing a new soccer class, increasing attendance, and guiding it to success. Issac also took the initiative to start the first soccer

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skills class and going above and beyond in promoting it to the community. He began with five children and grew the group to 15. He helps children learn new sports techniques and basics of sportsmanship, is always eager to learn and demonstrates strong leadership skills by taking on additional responsibilities;

- **Roberto Bejar**, Senior Park Ranger, who had the challenging task of forming and mentoring a brand-new Ranger team dedicated to navigating and enforcing the new street vendor and expressive activities ordinances. The task was extremely difficult given the huge pushback, confrontation and high level of abusive rhetoric while he and his team remain calm, respectful and extremely professional. He represents the best in how public servants should interact with the public, professional, intelligent and fair;
- **Mark Berninger**, Senior Planner, who during the FY25 budget development process was an integral part of building out the number of positions, tasks, and supporting documentation to request 12 positions for the Open Space Division. Worked closely with management and analysts to construct priority adds, which resulted in packages that included Park Rangers, Biologists, administrative, and grounds maintenance staff. Mark was the subject matter expert during the budget hearings, which later resulted in the City Council approving all 12 positions which is a huge win for the Division;
- **Valentin Briones**, Grounds Maintenance Worker II, who is a fantastic employee. He is responsible for the maintenance of Cesar Chavez Community Center/Larsen Field and all its amenities and is the San Ysidro area parks rover on the weekends. When there are team work projects, he doesn't hesitate to assist, or to fill in when another GMW is off. He receives compliments from park users for the cleanliness, well maintained, graffiti-less and for how safe it feels to use the park with their families which is demonstrated by the lack of Get it Done and Ask Parks inquiries regarding his sites;
- **Sidney Michael, Jr.**, Recreation Leader I, who is the soul of Standley, the whole community knows him, and the kids respect him and obey him at the same time. He's a great worker and does his job very professionally and on time. He goes above and beyond when he has a job that is important to the community. He provides wonderful customer service, answers the phone very courteously and helps with special events and programs. He is also a reliable staff member in all aspects of building maintenance;
- **Tan Nguyen**, Utility Worker II, who brings a lot of knowledge to the Hardscape Facility Repair and the Playground Unit. He recently acquired his class B commercial license, with the intention of balancing the workload among team members. He demonstrates humility and a willingness to prioritize others over himself. Tan is a veteran employee with a young and humble heart, always going beyond his regular duties and took the initiative to train new staff on repairing the pour in place surfacing. Tan encourages others to maintain a positive attitude; Tan is a true example of a model public servant;
- **Erika Weikel**, Senior Park Ranger, who continues to excel in her position which oversees over 3,000 acres of open space canyons; had two volunteer habitat restoration events, focusing restoration in underserved communities (150 plants); two volunteer trash cleanups with I Love a Clean San Diego (3,500 lbs removed); presented a PowerPoint on the duties of an Urban Park Ranger to 300 students at the annual Careers in Public Service; hosted a booth at the Rotary Club Earth Day event to connect interested parties in future volunteer opportunities; and assisted an unsheltered woman who could no longer care for the dog she

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had found. Erika volunteered to find the dog a new home, but when it was discovered that the dog was chipped, it led to reuniting the dog with its original owner.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Field". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andy Field
Director
Parks and Recreation Department

Attachment: Fiscal Year 2024 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
Division Payroll Specialists