

AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 14, 2024
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Thank you all for the opportunity to share updates within the Parks and Recreation Department. This information is typically provided to the Parks and Recreation Board each month. The following report consolidates information shared with the Board over the past several months to allow Area Committee attendees an opportunity to review the same information.

Area Committee Clearinghouse: Area Committee reform will be a part of this effort. In recent experience, the meetings have been all information sharing with few action items and difficulty securing a quorum. One option may be to create a standing, online/virtual workshop to allow Community Recreation Group members to receive information directly from Department leadership on topics of shared concern, such as budget development, recreation center funds, recreation equity, fees and charges, process improvements, and similar topics.

Budget Update:

- On June 11, 2024, the City Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. The approved budget, which was signed by Mayor Gloria on June 14, 2024, includes:
 - Proposed Budget (see <https://www.sandiego.gov/finance/proposed>)
 - May Revision to the Proposed Budget (see https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/fy2025-may-revision-report_final.pdf)
 - Independent Budget Analyst Report 24-14: “Recommended City Council Modifications to the Mayors Proposed FY 2025 Budget and Review of the May Revision” (see <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/24-14-recommended-city-council-modifications-to-the-mayors-proposed-fy-2025-budget-and-review-of-the-may-revision.pdf>)

- City Council Resolution R-315627 (see https://docs.sandiego.gov/council_reso_ordinance/rao2024/R-315627.pdf)
- Some additional changes occurred in IBA Report 24-14 and Resolution R-315627 that impact the Parks and Recreation Department. Those include:
 - Add \$1 million in capital funding to project P-24002 to improve Officer Jeremy Henwood Memorial Park in City Heights
 - Transfer \$500,000 in Infrastructure Fund from Project P-20005, Chollas Triangle Park, to a new project, Southcrest Recreation Center and Park Drainage Improvements (feasibility study stage)
 - Add \$500,000 in Citywide Park Development Impact Fees to Project P-20005, Chollas Triangle Park
 - Add Climate Equity Funds to the following projects:
 - S-22002 – Grove Neighborhood Park: \$4,505,720
 - B-22045 – Hardcourt Improvements at Emerald Hills Park and Encanto Community Park: \$800,000
 - B-23011 – Willie Henderson Lighting: \$350,000
 - S-00752 – Beyer Park Phase 1: \$216,680
 - B-20060 – Chicano Park Improvements Phase III: \$48,000
 - Reduce \$1,498,000 for new facility fleet acquisition and shift that activity to debt financing under the City's Equipment and Vehicle Financing Program (EVFP)
 - Reduce \$974,000 by delaying the start date for Parks and Recreation Open Space environmental initiatives and San Diego River Park Rangers to January 1, 2025 (see memorandum from Director Field dated June 14, 2024, linked at https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/proposed_fiscal_year_2025_open_space_additions.pdf, for more information)

- Reduce \$724,000 for water expenditures given under-budget performance in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 (between \$2.7 and 3.1 million in savings each year)

Childcare Updates: The Office of Child and Youth Success (OCYS) is continuing to look at increasing childcare opportunities Citywide, including exploring options for childcare offerings in local parks. Their work is divided into three main areas:

Measure H Implementation (licensed childcare):

- Current prioritized locations for licensed childcare:
 - Southcrest – use inactive Teen Center.
 - Memorial – use prefabricated modular building on park space.
 - Mountain View – use prefabricated modular building on park space.
 - Encanto – use prefabricated modular building on vacant lot on south side of Wunderlin Street across from recreation center.
 - Linda Vista – use prefabricated modular building on park space.
- The OCYS is seeking funding to upgrade facilities or purchase and install modular buildings.

STEM Pre-Kinder Programs (license-exempt)

- Parks and Recreation Department plans to issue Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) to solicit community providers to operate programs under the Citywide Recreation Services Division.
- Programs would operate in a shared space arrangement in recreation centers.
- OCYS is seeking funding to be able to provide programs at identified sites that are free/low cost to families (priority locations same as above for Measure H).

Outdoor Nature Recreation Programs for Pre-Kinder Children

- City Attorney's Office recommends a Right of Entry Permit for programs to operate.

- OCYS will work with Parks and Recreation Department to develop permit and outreach to community operators.

OCYS will request to present to Community Recreation Groups at above prioritized sites in the few months to share general information and get feedback about childcare needs in their communities as well as preliminary planning considerations for programs.

Community Recreation Groups and Council Policy 700-42 Reform:

Preparations for an update to Council Policy 700-42 for Community Recreation Groups is still under development. Public input on the draft policy would include a workshop here at the Parks and Recreation Board and at the Area Committee, with the possibility of an ad-hoc committee for additional review and comment as needed.

Parks in the News:

- **Parks After Dark returns for a third summer:** On June 13, 2024, NBC 7 reported that the Parks and Recreation Department and San Diego Parks Foundation have offered Parks After Dark at five locations over an eight-week period. It started in 2022 with three parks and has grown each year since. This year, it has been held at City Heights, Linda Vista, Memorial, and Skyline Hills parks from June 20 through August 17, 2024, and Silver Wing from June 20 to July 27, 2024. This popular program transformed five neighborhood parks into evening community festivals every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night. Highlights include health and fitness activities, music, movies, arts and crafts, games, youth sports clinics, tournaments, resources from non-profit organizations, and free food for children.

Parks After Dark is based on a Los Angeles County program run every summer for more than a decade. According to data provided by the San Diego Parks Foundation, the first three parks to host similar programs in Los Angeles saw a 32% decrease in serious and violent crimes within their first three years, between 2009 and 2013. For more, see <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/san-diegos-parks-after-dark-returns-for-3rd-summer-of-free-family-fun/3540641/>.

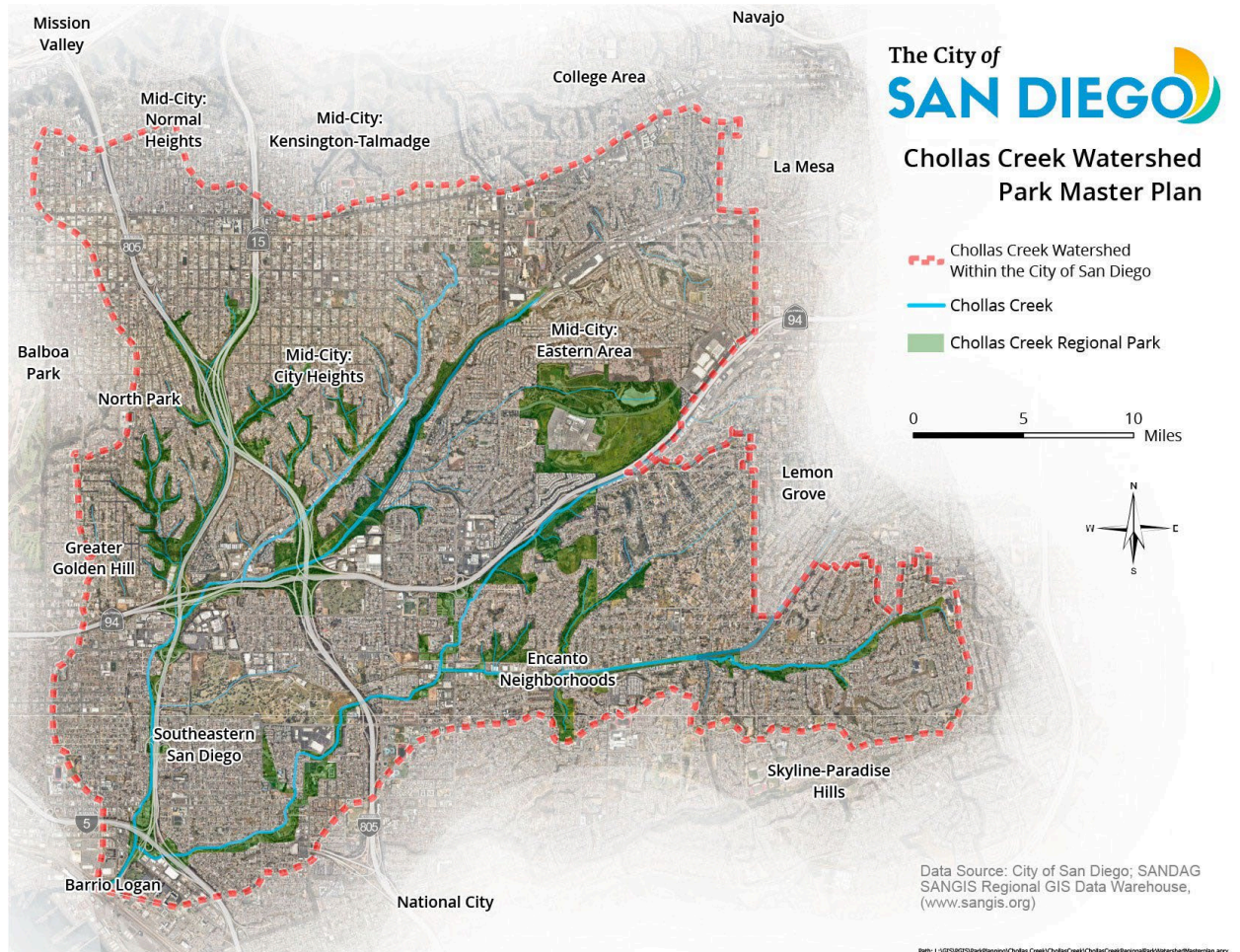
- **Skate Park near Porter Elementary School:** On June 16, 2024, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported on a proposal from Manuela Ippolito, a fifth-grade teacher at Porter Elementary School, to build a skatepark on privately owned property on the west side of 47th Street adjacent to Interstate 805, with a possible second option at Chollas Community Park. Ms. Ippolito organized youth to call attention to the need for a skate park in the vicinity of Porter Elementary School, and she has been in touch with local advisory bodies, the City Councilmember's Office, the Mayor's Office, and the Parks and Recreation Department to learn more about the City's capital program and the public input process. The preferred choice for a skatepark is not owned by the City, no public workshops have been conducted, and there is no project funding currently. A link to the article is provided at https://enewspaper.sandiegouniontribune.com/infinity/article_popover_share.aspx?guid=453aa395-585b-4a46-9961-c374d898aa91&share=true.

Parks Master Plan Updates:

- **Blueprint SD/General Plan Refresh:** On July 23, 2024, the City Council voted unanimously to adopt Blueprint SD, a refresh of the General Plan, intended to create an equitable and sustainable framework for growth to support current and future San Diegans. Blueprint SD identifies areas for more homes and jobs that are connected to convenient and affordable options to walk/roll, bike and take transit to meet daily needs, such as going to work, school, parks, restaurants, and grocery stores.
- **Chollas Creek Watershed Regional Park Master Plan Update:** The Chollas Creek Watershed Regional Park Master Plan effort is underway with the following goals:
 - Protect and enhance the Chollas Creek Watershed's ecology.
 - Improve the watershed's sustainability and resilience to the impacts of climate change.
 - Increase recreational opportunities.
 - Improve walking/rolling and biking within the watershed and adjacent to neighborhoods.

- Foster a sense of ownership and connection to Chollas Creek among community members.

Information on the development of the master plan is available at <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/chollas-creek-master-plan>, with the regional park master plan framework available at https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/ccmp_framework_report_final.pdf.



As an update, City Planning Department continues to work on the master plan update, including:

- Public Workshops and Pop-Up Events – additional events
- Existing Conditions Report – City Planning is examining the Chollas Creek Watershed’s physical and social infrastructure to help map areas

of interest, identify recreational opportunities, and better understand needed improvements.

- First Draft Master Plan – City Planning is developing the draft watershed master plan.
- **Equity Forward:** The Environmental Justice Element (see <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/ej-element-draft.pdf>) was approved by the City Council on Monday, July 1, 2024. The Environmental Justice Element is intended to advance the equitable distribution of benefits and limit environmental burdens to promote healthy and livable communities for all San Diegans. The Environmental Justice Element includes goals that envision a more equitable future, policies that inform City decision-making, proposed activities that build on existing programs to advance environmental justice, and a description of areas of the City most impacted by environmental burdens and associated health risks – collectively known as Environmental Justice Communities (EJ Communities).
- **Community Plan Updates:**
 - **Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment:** On July 30, 2024, the City Council voted to adopt the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment, which includes housing and development strategies intended to strengthen the Hillcrest business district and bring neighborhood benefits where they are needed most. The approved plan and supporting documents are available at PlanHillcrest.org.
 - **University Community Plan Update:** On July 30, 2024, the City Council voted to adopt the University Community Plan Update, which serves as the 30-year vision for land use, mobility, urban design, public facilities and services, natural resources, historic and cultural resources and economic development in the University Community Planning Area. The approved plan and supporting documents are available at PlanUniversity.org.
 - **Mid-City Communities Plan Update:** The City of San Diego is updating the Mid-City Communities Plan for the first time in 25 years to identify opportunities for new homes, businesses, and

infrastructure to benefit everyone in Mid-City. The Draft Mid-City Atlas: Existing Conditions Report was recently released online and feedback is welcome at PlanMidCity@sandiego.gov. Visit PlanMidCity.org to learn more about the plan update and ways you can participate and subscribe to receive updates.

- **College Area Community Plan Update:** City Planning staff is continuing to work on a discussion draft of the College Area Community Plan Update. A discussion draft is anticipated to be released this fall, and the City Planning Department looks forward to hearing additional feedback from community members. Subscribe to receive updates about the Community Plan Update and learn more by visiting PlanCollegeArea.org.
- **Clairemont Community Plan Update:** City Planning staff continues to work on a discussion draft of a revised draft Clairemont Community Plan, incorporating input from the wider community and the Planning Commission. The City Planning Department will share the revised draft community plan for feedback before it is updated and presented to the City Council for consideration. Stay updated on the Clairemont Community Plan Update by visiting ClairemontPlan.org.
- **Parks Master Plan:** Parks and Recreation Department staff is preparing a Status Update of Parks Master Plan Policies and Recommendations for Fall 2024. This update will provide the status of responding to the following 142 policies and recommendations (sorted by category):
 - Access: 6 recommendations
 - Activation: 7 recommendations
 - Arts and Culture: 14 recommendations
 - Co-Benefits: 9 recommendations
 - Community Building: 8 recommendations
 - Conservation, Sustainability, and Resilience: 31 recommendations
 - Equity: 11 recommendations
 - Funding: 16 recommendations

- Mobility as Recreation: 4 recommendations
- Operations and Maintenance: 11 recommendations
- Parks and Programming: 14 recommendations
- Partnerships: 4 recommendations
- Regional Parks: 7 recommendations

The Parks Master Plan and related documents can be found at the Parks for All of Us webpage (<https://www.sandiego.gov/parks-for-all-of-us>) or <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/parks-master-plan>.

- **Trails Master Plan:** On July 15, 2024, the City Planning Department launched a new webpage (<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/citywide-trails-master-plan>) to engage with community members on the Citywide Trails Master Plan.

As part of Equity Forward (<https://www.sandiego.gov/equity-forward>) and as identified as a key implementation action within the Parks Master Plan (<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/parks-master-plan>), the Citywide Trails Master Plan (Trails Master Plan) will guide the provision and enhancement of open space multi-purpose trails that serve pedestrians, hikers, bicyclists, mountain bikers, and equestrians.

Throughout the planning process, the City will host several public workshops and public engagement activities to gather input from community members. An online survey will also become available. Details of these events will be posted on the webpage, and members of the public can sign up for updates today to stay informed of these opportunities. Questions are welcome by email to publicspaces@sandiego.gov.

Parks and Recreation Board Update:

The Board has several upcoming topics in fall and winter that might be of interest to attendees of the Area Committee meeting, including:

- Animal Services
- Aquatics

- Brush Management
- Chair's Award for Community Service
- Chollas Creek Flood Mitigation Modifications
- Council Policy 700-42 Community Recreation Group Reform
- Joint Use
- Communities Plan Updates
- Opportunity Fund
- Parks Master Plan

Recreation Programs: Summer programming continues. Many sites are hosting summer camps, and the Department is hosting popular Come Play Outside, Parks After Dark, and Teen Nite programs at several sites.

Check the recreation center webpages (<https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/centers>) for more information on summer programs.

Sidewalk Vending Ordinance (SVO):

On February 27, 2024, the City Council passed Ordinance O-21775 to amend the SVO to address expressive activity, sidewalk vending impoundment, and make technical changes to align SVO with State law and other sections of San Diego Municipal Code. Expressive activity is defined as follows:

"Pure speech" protected by the First Amendment includes:

- Speaking on a street corner or in a park about a political, ideological, or religious topic
- Distributing brochures
- Art sales and art creation, including paintings, caricatures, balloon animals, sculpture, and other visual arts sold by the artist
- Street performances/busking
- Face painting or henna tattoos
- Distribution or sale of books, music, paintings, photographs, sculpture or CDs or recordings created by the person selling the items

Examples of activities that are not considered "pure speech" include:

- Sales of handcrafts like jewelry and pottery
- Sales of personal care products, including makeup, lotion, perfume, incense and incense burners
- Sales of mass-produced items, including clothing and hats
- Food sales
- Teaching exercise, yoga, or dog training classes
- Hair braiding, massage, application of skin care, makeup, or other products

The SVO amendments include general time, place, and manner rules that would apply to anyone engaged in protected First Amendment speech on City property, including a space limit similar to the 24 square foot limit applicable to sidewalk vendors, a prohibition from using or attaching equipment to City property, including City utilities, and display and setup provisions to ensure sidewalks and walkways are passable and safe for all people to use.

The sound level limit between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. is 65 decibels, and the sound level limit between 7:01 p.m. and 6:59 a.m. is 55 decibels.

Staff is currently working to designate expressive activity areas in parks, plazas, and high-traffic areas that are available on a first-come, first-served basis, to persons who desire to use equipment, including a table, easel, stand, chair, umbrella, sunshade, or other furniture as part of their expressive activity. Such high-traffic parks include most shoreline and beach areas as well as Balboa Park. These locations are being developed and vetted currently.

Anyone who is not engaged in protected speech activities but is selling items on public property is a sidewalk vendor and thus must comply with the SVO. Park Ranger Chief Michael Ruiz is the lead point of contact on this matter for City Parks.

Webpage Updates:

- **Find Your Happy Space Brochure:** In June 2024, the Department released its new brochure that describes the offerings of the City Park System. It is available at <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/general-info> or <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/find-your-happy-space.pdf>.
- **Event Calendar:** The event calendar lists various events and activities happening at City parks, pools, and recreation centers. It can be found by

visiting the City's website at <https://www.sandiego.gov/parks-and-recreation> and clicking the "Event Calendar" button, which links to <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/event-calendar>.

- **Organization of the Department:** Recent changes have modified the distribution of divisions within the Parks and Recreation Department. For more information on the 10 current divisions, see <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/general-info/orgchart>. This webpage also provides division profiles and contact information for leadership within each division:
 - Administrative Services including Asset Management
 - Balboa Park including Presidio Park
 - Citywide Park Maintenance
 - Citywide Recreation Services
 - Community Parks I
 - Community Parks II
 - Golf Operations
 - Mission Bay and Shoreline Parks
 - Open Space including Maintenance Assessment Districts (MADs)
 - Park Rangers
- **Park Design and Development:** Project information is available at this link: <https://www.sandiego.gov/parks-and-recreation/design-development>. This page includes links to general development plans, upcoming project workshops, master plans, City policies, and related information. Projects managed by the Engineering and Capital Projects Department have project pages posted at <https://www.sandiego.gov/cip>.
- **Procedural Documents:** The Department provides a list of policies and procedures that help inform how the Department operates. Topics include budget summaries, community recreation groups, emergency procedures, field and court use prioritization, integrated pest management, park rangers,

permit processes, and more. This information is posted at <https://www.sandiego.gov/parks-and-recreation/procedural-documents>,

- **Recruitment:** The Department hosts an employment opportunities webpage designed to help match applicants with various job vacancies in parks and recreation. It is available at: <https://www.sandiego.gov/parks-and-recreation-employment>.

Employees of the Quarter:

The Parks and Recreation Department is proud to announce the 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 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 sidewalk 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 Fiscal Year 2025 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 teamwork 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 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.

For a complete list of recent employees of the quarter and employees of the year, see <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/general-info/employee-of-the-quarter>.