

2024-2025 Monthly Shining Star Awards

June 2025



Employee of the Month

Alfredo Salazar

brings a positive attitude, strong work ethic, and genuine care to every project, putting 100% into everything he does. His commitment to collaboration and his willingness to jump in wherever needed has made him an invaluable asset to teams throughout the District.

Community-Centric

Freddy demonstrated his community-centric approach by leading the Outdoor Explore special event at Hurkey Creek Park, where he created an inclusive and welcoming experience for families - many of whom were camping for the first time. He personally helped set up tents alongside children, engaged families in outdoor games, and added excitement with prize raffles that brought smiles to every age group. Through his hands-on involvement and focus on creating meaningful, nature-based experiences, Freddy not only broke down barriers to outdoor recreation but also fostered a strong sense of community. His efforts resulted in a highly successful and memorable event that introduced dozens of families to the joys of camping and public parks.

Outstanding

Freddy is known across the District as a go-to team player who consistently goes above and beyond to support others. Whether it's stepping in to assist with events outside his area, sharing resources, or offering hands-on help to colleagues in need, Freddy never hesitates to lend his time and expertise. He



Employee of the Month
Grant Samaniego

Adaptable

In just six months as a TAP employee, Grant has demonstrated remarkable adaptability and growth. With a technical background from California Fish and Wildlife and Caltrans, he has successfully leveraged his environmental expertise to support and enhance the work of the Parks Planning team.

Despite not having a formal planning background, Grant has quickly adapted to the planning world, showing strong initiative in learning new skills and processes. He has contributed meaningfully to various projects, including feasibility studies, master plans, and RFQs, and has played an active role in moving these documents through key stages of development.

Grant has also begun gaining valuable experience in construction by supporting the SART construction project, further expanding his knowledge and versatility. His eagerness to learn, collaborative spirit, and ability to apply his technical skills in new contexts make him a valuable asset to the team and a strong candidate for recognition.



Volunteer of the Month
Heather Evens

Adaptable

Heather has a very level head and is open to change and rolling with the various needs of the park. She communicates well, asks great questions, and then gets after it. She never lets change get her down and she remains open and positive.

Teamwork

Heather has stepped up several times over the last month to fill in for some vacations and holidays. She put in hours she wasn't scheduled for simply because she felt the person on duty needed a little assistance. She thinks about the team first and it's very much appreciated by all the staff around her.

May 2025



Employee of the Month
Jack Altevers

Adaptable

He's adapted quickly as his site operations have been impacted by park upgrades and the changes that happen in between. Even with the boat ramp closed, he's found creative ways to continue promoting recreation through Marketing, whether it's hiking, fishing, or something neat that happened that day.

Teamwork

Jack is always putting his best foot forward to be a team player, and over the last few months, it's really shown.

Outstanding

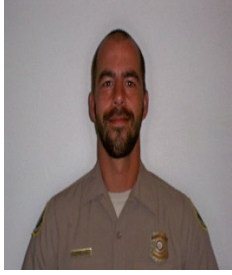
Jack is great at communicating operational impacts at his park, making sure he's doing everything he can to support both his team, Marketing, and the public.



Employee of the Month
Andrew (Andy) Mick

Outstanding

Andy played a vital role in the success of the Color Run through his exceptional efforts in helping to plan and coordinate the event. Most notably, he was instrumental in securing community support by actively engaging with local businesses and organizations. Thanks to his outreach, 21 community sponsors contributed nearly \$7,000 in monetary donations, goods, and services, and over 60 volunteers were recruited to help bring the event to life. Without his initiative and can-do attitude, the event would not have been nearly as impactful. Andy's dedication and ability to build strong partnerships were key factors in making the Color Run a memorable and well-supported experience for everyone involved.



Employee of the Month
Jonathan Reinig

Teamwork

Jonathan supports RivCoParks by working with team members from other departments. Jonathan recently assisted with the SART E-bike Workshop by being a lead guide, informing workshop attendees of the work being done in the Santa Ana River Bottom.

Outstanding

Jonathan has a positive attitude and a willingness to always lend a hand to his fellow teammates. His knowledge of his field makes him a great team member for RivCoParks.

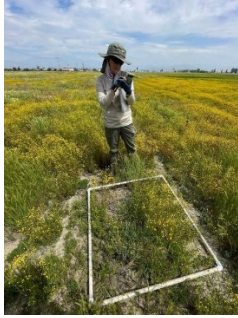


Volunteer of the Month
Bill Lamb

Networking

Bill used his networking skills to recruit reenactors for the Wild West Festival, creating an additional draw for attendance. He also used his connections to acquire horses to pull the stagecoach, which earned over \$200 in ticket sales to help cover the costs of the event.

April 2025



Employee of the Month
Ana Sawyer

Outstanding

Ana has always been a solid member of the MSHCP Unit, but recently she has been knocking it out of the park! In addition to working diligently to protect and uplift natural resources, Ana has been busy making the Unit more streamlined and effective. In recent months, Ana has built out the Unit's SharePoint page, created resources to educate Natural Resource Management division staff, obtained her commercial drone pilots license, and has been working to create a new Field Map for tracking habitat work.



Employee of the Month
Michael Goeken

Outstanding

Ranger Michael Goeken exemplifies what it means to be a dedicated and well-rounded Park Ranger. His approach to rule enforcement ensures a safe and respectful environment for all guests, while his consistent efforts in maintaining the cleanliness and appearance of the park reflect his deep pride in the park.

Beyond his daily responsibilities, Ranger Goeken has taken on the important role of District CPR/AED/First Aid Instructor, successfully certifying over 20 employees and enhancing our team's readiness and safety capabilities. His initiative and leadership in this area have had a direct impact on our district's overall emergency preparedness.

What sets Ranger Goeken apart is his unwavering support for both his team and our guests. He tackles every task with a smile and goes above and beyond to ensure everyone feels welcome, valued, and safe in the park.



Volunteer of the Month

Adam Wilson

Teamwork

Adam is a rock star and works all over the park helping whoever needs assistance. From picking up litter in the park, to cleaning campsites after guest departures, to maintaining the 'fleet' of mowers, blowers, weed eaters, and whatever else needs to be maintained, Adam is right there ready and willing to help.

Outstanding

Lake Skinner has a lot of mechanical equipment that needs regular maintenance to keep it operational and ready for use at a moment's notice. Adam has come in and been key in getting a regular program of PM's for the park equipment to ensure its continued issue-free operation.



Volunteer of the Month

Kelly Fox

Community-Centric

Kelly has built a good relationship with the public she serves. She can provide very useful information on sighting local wildlife or enjoying local hikes.

Teamwork

Kelly remains focused on the overall goal. In doing so, she is able to keep her fellow team members motivated and their morale boosted!

Outstanding

Kelly has incredible foresight on holiday weekends and event days. She can see trouble brewing before it's even here. She is so communicative with park staff in all these observations. It truly helps with problem solving!

March 2025



Employee of the Month

Alison Conner

Adaptable

Ranger Alison Conner has demonstrated exceptional adaptability in stepping into the role of Interim Park Ranger Supervisor. She has not only embraced the responsibilities of the position with professionalism and confidence but quickly learned the nuances of managing operations in a mountain park environment—a setting vastly different from RJU. Her ability to quickly understand both the duties of the role and the dynamics of a new team speak volumes about her capability and commitment.

Teamwork

Alison consistently goes above and beyond in supporting her fellow team members. She's always willing to step in and help, even when the task falls outside her typical responsibilities or expertise. From routine maintenance and painting to operating heavy equipment, assisting with concrete forms, and tackling landscaping projects—like planting new grass or leveling campsites—she takes on every task with a positive, team-focused attitude. Her collaborative spirit and genuine willingness to contribute wherever needed make her an invaluable asset to the team and a true role model.

Outstanding

Ranger Conner is simply an outstanding employee. Her positive attitude, strong work ethic, and dedication to the mission of the park make a lasting impact every day. She leads by example, inspires those around her, and continues to raise the bar for excellence in public service.



Volunteer of the Month

Nola Columbaro

Adaptable

Nola's main job is to give tours of the Gilman Ranch Museum. When she is called on to help with the paperwork for one of the special events, she does it with a sure knowledge of what needs to be done.

Teamwork

Nola invites others to work with her and the Gilman Ranch Hands. She always includes others! She will show them, with a good attitude, what needs to be accomplished.

Outstanding

Nola has a large part in organizing the special events. She does a lot of her work at home and works long hours to make sure everything is in order for the special events to work smoothly.



Employee of the Month

Christian Sanchez

Community-Centric

Christian is very approachable and professional when engaging with the general public. Especially with our Unhoused population in the river bottom, he is sensitive to their situation and is a model to the SARB team on how to engage in services. He is always open to answering questions and providing education to the workings of the SARB.

Teamwork

Christian always challenges the SARB team to think outside the box and creates an environment that encourages creativity and problem solving.

Inclusion

Christian is big on training and actively encourages the SARB team to look for opportunities that will create well rounded rangers and maintenance staff.

Outstanding

Christian has a work ethic that has inspired and encourages the SARB team to get things done. He trusts in the ability of their team

and that trust has enables the team to continuously succeed in many of the projects they get tasked with.

Networking

Christian is always acquiring new contacts and partnerships that enable the team to complete tasks in the river bottom. His people skills and confidence attract agencies to lend a hand when the SARB team needs help.

Stewardship

Christian recognizes the skills and abilities of their fellow coworkers and calls to their expertise to ensure the land the SARB team manages is done correctly. Their goal is to provide the community a safe and sustainable Environment for generations. Ultimately making the Santa Ana River a place where all can enjoy.



Volunteer of the Month

Josh Hankard

Community-Centric

RJU is incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated and selfless volunteer like Josh Hankard. His unwavering commitment to the community and passion for making every event special have been instrumental in the success of Movies in the Park. Josh consistently goes above and beyond, volunteering extra time to help with setup, ensuring the event runs smoothly, and working tirelessly at the concessions tent.

His efforts create a warm and memorable experience for all who attend, turning each event into a cherished moment for families and friends. Josh's enthusiasm, hard work, and dedication to the park and its visitors embody the true spirit of community service. We are incredibly grateful for his contributions and look forward to many more amazing events with his invaluable support!

Teamwork

At RJU, we are incredibly grateful for the dedication and selfless commitment of Josh Hankard. He is the definition of a true team player, always willing to step up and help in any way he can. Whether it's arriving early, staying late, covering shifts, or providing extra support at the kiosk, Josh is someone we can always count on.

His contributions go beyond just working events—he plays a key role in making Movies in the Park a success by helping with setup, concessions, and cleanup, ensuring a seamless and enjoyable experience for all. Additionally, he goes the extra mile by assisting with park maintenance, keeping the grounds clean, and making sure everything is in top shape for visitors.

Josh's unwavering reliability and willingness to help whenever needed set an incredible example for those around him. His hard work and dedication make a real difference in the success of our events and the overall experience at Rancho Jurupa Park.



Employee of the Month
Ryan Mark

Adaptable

With January being a new year with new challenges, and having multiple personnel changes, Ryan adapted quickly and took on more roles. He filled in anywhere he was needed and even helped by working a District event!

Teamwork

Ryan can easily shift from his own work to helping out others in any way he can. Even with short staffing and a lot on his plate, he never denies anyone that needs his assistance. He hears the word 'help' at least twenty times a day and always replies with a smile and a solution!



Volunteer of the Month
Cynthia DeLanty

Adaptable

Adaptable is Cindy's middle name: whether it's 25 or 112 participants Cindy's can-do attitude and smile is a pleasure to have around. In the heat, wind or frigid cold she's ready willing and able to take on any station needed with a smile.

Teamwork

Her willingness to help out and take on whatever I throw at her is amazing. I asked her to take on the project of completing the museum store. Cindy hit the ground running, rearranged, priced everything, reorganized and has the store up and running. Great job Cindy.

Outstanding

When I first interviewed Cindy, she said she only could work 3 days a week. Once Cindy started it became 4 days with both Cindy & Richard. And it's only gotten better from there. Cindy's dedication is remarkable, she worked on the Spooky event with a broken foot! Even when she's been out sick, she's made sure her husband came in to cover for her, even when we told her it wasn't necessary. She is just a joy to be around!

Networking

Cindy loves our parks and it shows. Not only does she bring her family and friends to show off HER park, but she has recruited her favorite Mr. Richard (hubby) to volunteer alongside her.



Employee of the Month
Janae Pulido

Community-centric

Janae goes above and beyond to reach the community and connect youth with volunteer opportunities. She believes that volunteerism is a crucial part of youth development and takes pride in her work.

Teamwork

Janae is always looking to see how she can tie the mission of volunteer groups to other items in the district. She really cares about her program!

Inclusion

Janae believes parks are for all and works to make sure groups who could be marginalized or left out have equal opportunities to be on a RivCoParks team.

Networking

Janae is a great networker, from large organizations like casinos to smaller schools, she always gives 100% and makes RivCoParks look like the BEST place to volunteer. She wears her work with pride.



Volunteer of the Month
Al Matta

Outstanding

Al is ALWAYS watching the campground. He is in a camp host spot where he can see the front entrance! He seems to really love his job and taking care of the park.

Stewardship

Al is always taking good care of the park and going above and beyond! Park guests are always happy to see him and he is always doing his best for them. Al is GREAT!!!



Employee of the Month
Josh Knisbell

Teamwork

Josh Knisbell is an exceptional Park Maintenance Worker whose dedication and teamwork are the cornerstones of his success. Whether it's tackling the parks major painting project, repairing roads, installing drainage, or performing routine park maintenance, Josh's skills and reliability consistently contribute to the success of his team. He is always the first to lend a helping hand, creating a collaborative and supportive environment that empowers his colleagues to excel. Josh's commitment to improving Rancho Jurupa Park goes far beyond his individual tasks—his efforts elevate the entire team, ensuring the park remains a beautiful, functional, and welcoming space for visitors and staff alike. His passion for his work and his unwavering support of his team makes him an invaluable asset to Rancho Jurupa Park.



Employee of the Month
Maggie Chavez

Adaptable

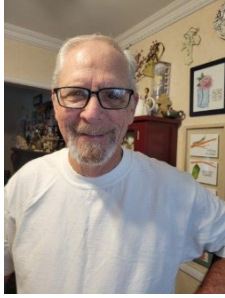
Maggie comes to our special events with a plan and a work assignment. However, due to the dynamic work environment she always adapts to changes in circumstance and tackles challenges on the fly.

Teamwork

Maggie always lends a helping hand to the rest of the team. Whether she is taking on kids craft tables or parking and entrance fee collection, she offers help at setup and tear down.

Outstanding

Maggie needs little supervision in completing her work assignments. She listens to directions and then comes up with ways to improve and go above and beyond the basic task.



Volunteer of the Month

Tim Doughty

Teamwork

Tim will help anyone who needs it and he prioritizes team success. He helps others throughout the task and strives to do his best. He also shares his resources while aligning with our overall mission.

Outstanding

Tim does a good job and is outstanding in all he does! He does what he says he is going to do and strives to be the best and is constantly exceeding expectations.



Employee of the Month
Shawn Huggard

Adaptable

Shawn is amazing in his workflow. One day he was helping me on the Mountain and the next day he was out at Blythe fixing the suppression system. His ability to adapt situations and make things happen is very much appreciated and impressive.

Teamwork

Shawn's ability to work across all of our site is much appreciated and valuable to the District. Shawn is always for how we can be a better Team to solve problems together.

Outstanding

There is nothing Shawn can't do and he is very humble in his approach. He is very calculated in his work and always delivers an outstanding product.

Networking

Shawn can network and bring together PMW's and AM to solve serious and complex issues. Shawns networking brings unity to the District and breaks down historic silos established by the Area Managers.



Employee of the Month
Jacquelyn Muller

Adaptable

Jacquelyn has demonstrated remarkable adaptability in managing the Marketing Division with minimal assistance, even when down one team member. Despite these challenges, she has successfully kept the District moving forward by taking on a variety of tasks, including creating engaging flyers, keeping the website up to date, and producing videos. Her ability to juggle these responsibilities under pressure highlights her resourcefulness and dedication to the team's goals.

Teamwork

Jacquelyn exemplifies what it means to be a true team player. While leading the Marketing team, she consistently offers her support to event staff, Interpretation staff, and park staff, ensuring the success of various projects across the board. Her willingness to step in wherever needed has not gone unnoticed, as she has received praise from both Park staff and County team members for her collaborative spirit and dedication. Her ability to balance these roles while maintaining leadership within her division speaks to her commitment and versatility.

Outstanding

Jacquelyn is an outstanding asset to the

District, embodying a deep commitment to her work and the organization as a whole. As she often says, she “lives and breathes Marketing,” and her passion is reflected in everything she does. Always reliable, Jacquelyn goes above and beyond to support her teammates, offering help whenever it's needed. Her dedication, hard work, and willingness to contribute make her an invaluable team member. Beyond her professional excellence, Jacquelyn’s positive attitude and warm personality make her a pleasure to work with, enhancing the team dynamic every day.

September 2024



Employee of the Month

Rhonda Long

Adaptable

Rhonda's extensive experience with the County and her consistent delivery of high-quality work make her an exemplary employee. Her ability to adapt to change and her openness to adopting new processes to enhance Finance operations are particularly commendable.

Community-centric

Rhonda's proactive support for her finance colleagues and her ability to foster a collaborative work environment are highly valued. Her adept communication with various county departments significantly boosts efficiency and cooperation.

Teamwork

Rhonda truly exemplifies dedication and exceptional customer service! Her impressive tenure with the County speaks volumes about her commitment and expertise. Rhonda consistently delivers top-notch service to customers. Her willingness to go above and beyond demonstrates her dedication. Rhonda's proactive assistance to her finance colleagues is commendable.

Inclusion

Rhonda's strong sense of ownership and

readiness to take responsibility greatly enhance our work environment. Her proactive handling of contract billings, including her keen ability to identify potential reimbursement issues and consult with her manager, reflects her dedication to accuracy.

Outstanding

Rhonda's adaptability to changes in leadership and processes is commendable. Her self-accountability and consistent production of high-quality work are admirable. It's great that she actively seeks to learn new processes and suggestions to enhance workload efficiency. Collaborating with her supervisor to improve processes, such as reconciling the general ledger and billings, demonstrates her commitment to excellence.

Networking

Rhonda contributes to a collaborative work environment. Also, building and maintaining robust communication with various county departments is crucial. Rhonda's ability to do so enhances efficiency and cooperation. Meeting deadlines is crucial, and her solid relationships with key contacts in other county departments such as RCIT, Fire, County Counsel, Fleet Services and demonstrate effective collaboration.

Stewardship

It's admirable that Rhonda recognizes the intricacies of working with outside agencies and approaches communication with tact and care. Her proactive approach to seeking assistance or guidance from her supervisor or manager when needed demonstrates her commitment to effective collaboration.



Employee of the Month

Mike Van Daele

Adaptable

Given budget constraints and limited resources Mike has found ways to improve Rancho Jurupa Park.

Community-centric

Making the park better in various aspects has been the main objective of Mike's. Reaching out to guests and reading the customer reviews, Mike has found deficiencies and solutions that are noticeable through the park.

Teamwork

Mike has completed various improvements. Parking lot striping, Lakeview bathroom improvements, Lakeview campground improvements, implementing recycling bins from the park's surplus. Mike has also implemented a schedule that has us working more during peak times and more days off. The only thing that Mike has done different is bringing us together to share and work for a Team objective. He is the definition of a fair leader and instills teamwork.

Stewardship

Mike's stewardship leads with the standard he lives by. He deeply cares about the people he serves and the resources he is responsible for.



Volunteer of the Month

Sandy Tatich

Adaptable

Sandy is responsible for recruiting vendors for events, making sure that the event site is ready to accept vendors. In the case of recruiting people to pick flowers for the Wildflower Days event, she communicates the details necessary for a successful event for the people as well as the Nature Center.

Community-centric

Sandy works with many aspects of the Nature Center, including being a Board Member for many years.

Teamwork

Sandy works with staff and volunteers extremely well to make sure that events are done to the best abilities of all.

Outstanding

She is outstanding because of her determined performance, her cheerful demeanor, and her commitment to success.

Networking

Sandy volunteers with several other organizations in Idyllwild and her knowledge of contacts in town, as well as her ability to communicate the needs of the Nature Center to staff and volunteers have

made Sandy an outstanding and valuable asset for many years

Stewardship

Taking good care of The Nature Center has been at the core of Sandy's motivation for many years. Her commitment to the welfare and mission of the Nature Center sustains her ability to be such an outstanding volunteer



Employee of the Month
Andy Mick

Adaptable

RJU has been short-staffed due to people out on medical and training at other sites. Andy has stepped up and shown leadership in all roles with a smile on his face and a willing personality.

Community-centric

Andy is always thinking about how he can better serve the visitors in the park. He is always offering activities to kids, and suggestions to people at the kiosk of what they can do including local attractions in Jurupa. He always talks about how if people feel like family at the park, they will come back. He wants people to have the best experience.

Teamwork

Andy organizes potlucks and is always encouraging staff to do their best. He has been a listening ear for other team members in difficult times and is looked up to as a role model by other staff.

Inclusion

Andy is always willing to train staff on something he may know. He wants to see everyone around have the same opportunities to learn like he did. He treats everyone the same. And it doesn't matter if you are a volunteer or a supervisor, he is willing to make everyone feel important to the park by helping them learn new things.

Outstanding

Outstanding is the best word for Andy. He will always pick up his phone for us, even if he is not at work. He goes out of his way to take on duties not assigned to him if we need help. Visitors really like him. Andy cares about RJU like it's his park, even showing up to work 15 minutes before his shift starts and staying late to help the night ranger. He has a lot of pride in his work and sees a long-term future here which encourages him to strive to do his best.

Networking

Even though The Gopher Hole is not RivCoParks-staffed, Andy is always willing to help the ladies there. They will call him sometimes to ask questions and Andy has no issue making sure he can answer their questions. He wants to show we are a good partner.

Stewardship

Andy is always thinking about how he can make the park better. From maintenance to landscaping to customer service to planning park activities. Andy embodies what a good co-worker, staff member and leader looks like.



Employee of the Month
Jason Timme

Adaptable

Jason has jumped at the opportunity to help the team in several roles through the years, such as filling in at the Multi-Species Reserve, Box Springs Mountain Reserve, and most recently as Acting Ranger Supervisor while the current Ranger Supervisor is out. He has adapted well to all of the new tasks and gets things done!

Community-centric

Jason maintains relationships with community members who are concerned about weed abatement needs or interested in available resources.

Teamwork

Jason is an awesome team member! You can believe he'll be right there working with you and will be getting his clothes dirtier. He is good at balancing the needs to the reserves and the team.



Volunteer of the Month
Lydia Herrera-Salsbury

Lydia is a vital part of the IDY and MTN Park team. She has been a volunteer for a number of years and over that time she has gained valuable information on park operations as well as local facts and history that help her provide great customer service to our guests. She is a team player who is willing to help out however she can, whether it is staffing the kiosk, helping clean fire pits and campsites or assisting with efforts to maintain clean facilities for our guests. Lydia has built positive relationships with her colleagues and works hard to make the guest experience at IDY a positive one. She is professional and friendly which both help her build great rapport with our guests and make them feel comfortable as they check into the park. Additionally, she keeps a vigilant eye out for fire safety providing additional park checks at night during the week. There have been multiple instances of Lydia seeing a potentially dangerous situation and taking action to mitigate it. The best example of this is when she saw smoke and flames coming from an unattended bbq and took action to put water on the flames to mitigate the hazard. IDY is fortunate to have a Caretaker who is as dedicated and hard working as Lydia!