

2023-2024 Monthly Shining Star Awards

June 2024



Employee of the Month

Lori (LJ) Juan

Adaptable

LJ has been able to adapt to a change in her supervisor as well as her work location. Temporarily she volunteered to be assigned to Jensen and take on new role and responsibilities all with a smile.

Community-centric

LJ focuses on not only building relationships with her colleagues but the public we serve. From guiding tours at Jensen or at HQ for events/weddings, she makes sure that she provides resources and meets their needs.

Teamwork

LJ is an AMAZING team player and is willing to help where she can. She is willing to learn new things and apply her skills and talents towards any job. She lends a hand when needed without even asking. Recently I witnessed her assisting another colleague who needed help getting around the HQ campus and I am certain she didn't hesitate to make herself available to offer her continuous assistance.

Outstanding

LJ truly exceeds this ACTION daily. "They are outstanding in all that they do. They do what they say they are going to do, striving to be the best and exceeding expectations." No tedious task is ever too small or too big for LJ! She loves to keep herself busy and will clean, clean, clean EVERYTHING around the HQ campus! She loves to use that power washer! (LOL!) She is a work horse (I mean this in the most positive way) and thrives to give 100%!!

Networking

LJ loves to network. This is her passion and she enjoys it while on the job and off the job. She seeks to educate herself on a variety of things and she is a "jack of all trades," because of the connections she has made while doing so. I adore LJ's quirky, and positive attitude. For example: I have witnessed her singing while cleaning those white chairs for weddings in a middle of a heatwave... and I admire that she tackles tasks while making the best of it.

Stewardship

For LJ I feel this is connected to her outstanding service. She takes pride in her job duties and takes the cleaning for our HQ campus seriously! LJ is an asset to RivCoParks and her being nominated is definitely worthy! Keep it up LJ! You set the example!



Employee of the Month

Ramon Victorio

Adaptable

Recently Ramon, as a brand new ranger, had to step up in a big way. He met the challenge head on and powered through taking the lead through not just a couple big events planned at the park but the biggest event the park holds each year!

Community-centric

I remember when Ramon got a permanent park attendant position and started researching the lake, the fish we have here, boats and fishing equipment so that he would know what he was talking about when talking with the fisherman. That's dedication.

Outstanding

Ramon has always went above and beyond for the park from his temp days, to his permanent park attendant, up to snagging the Ranger position and I cannot even comment on what he does in the office just what he does in the field.

Stewardship

Ramon has always been very clear in what is expected, the rules of the park and good at clearly conveying it to park attendees.

Adaptable

Ramon is an Amazing Ranger who helps out in every area and facet of our park.

Teamwork

He works well with others and helps influence and develop our personal skill set and melds them into a cohesive team

Outstanding

He is consistent in his work ethic, thirst for higher education and helping our team work together. Our team appreciates all his efforts.



Volunteer of the Month

Donna Harn

Adaptable

Donna joined our team about 30-days ago; what an amazing, kind, and gem of an individual. She greets our few guests with such enthusiasm that's infectious. IN week one she reached out to thousands via social media and showed off her park and welcomed them all to come visit for the day and hike or stay and camp. Since her arrival, she waters daily, weedeat, mows, cleans the restrooms/showers and is willing to do anything to help MCL Park. AND, she is helping at HKY in the kiosk as the MTN is down their PA.

Community-centric

Her reach is far and wide to bring people to this gem on the MTN

Teamwork

Willing to help any way, any how and at any MTN park

Outstanding

An amazing person with an infectious happy personality

May 2024



Employee of the Month

Loree Broderick

Teamwork

Over the last year, Loree has been all about Teamwork. During this time, she has led the CAPRA team and successfully submitted our 2024 reaccreditation. During the review time, Loree has gone out of her way to help all the Chapter Captains while still functioning as the District HR rep. She worked closely with the team to organize the auditors' virtual site visit. We were successful because of her commitment and being a team player.

Outstanding

Loree is the epitome of an outstanding Parks employee. Her dedication to her work is unmatched, and she consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that all HR needs are fulfilled. With her attention to detail and strong work ethic, she tackles every task with enthusiasm and efficiency. Whether conducting new hire orientation or addressing various inquiries, Loree approaches her work with a positive attitude and a commitment to excellence. Her passion for the job is evident in everything she does. Every new hire is given a warm welcome from the moment they are called for an interview until they meet with her for orientation. Loree is truly an invaluable asset to the RivCoParks.



Volunteer of the Month **"Boomer" Rick Boomer**

Adaptable

Boomer can pivot on a dime. And has done so repeatedly. When called to handle a task or fill in. Even on scheduled days off. He's always willing to be flexible.

Community-centric

Boomer is a great camp host. He ensures that our park guests are having a good experience and assists with things they may need after hours. Such as firewood.

Teamwork

Teaching new comers in the ways of the park. And lending a hand to whomever needs one. Leading WRP to complete tasks needed. Boomer has filled in for others due to sudden illness, or absence without hesitation.

Inclusion

Boomer treats everyone the same. Staff, volunteers and guests. He is always respectful and helpful. Offers his knowledge and on occasion his personal tools!! 🛠️

Outstanding

Boomer completes the task at hand. He goes above and beyond to get projects done in addition to the daily chores needed to keep the park looking great.

Networking

Boomer will collaborate and conquer any project!! He works well with everyone.

Stewardship

Boomer has been helpful and mindful in planting new trees, and keeping them watered as they establish themselves. Planting trees is great. But if they are not tended. They simply don't make it.



Volunteer of the Month

Third Grade Docents

Adaptable

All 25 docents present interpretive programs for 6,000 third graders every year. This year we decided to reduce the number of students per group to 10 which allows a more intimate and successful experience for everyone. In order to make this improvement happen, many docents worked multiple days per week to assure each and every student received a quality and rewarding experience.

Community-centric

Most student participants in the program have never visited the Ecological Reserve. Many have never been on a hike. Docents provide members of our community with a genuine outdoor experience that showcases one of the region's premier recreation sites and gives many their first exposure to a pursuit and pastime that can inspire them for a lifetime.

Teamwork

Third Grade Docents work not only as a team to coordinate logistics together on the trails and seating areas they share, but they spend time with one another before and after programs sharing information they've experienced on the trail and researched at home.

Inclusion

Docents present programs to school children from 10 different school districts in Riverside County. These districts represent a cross section of our diverse region and give many students their first experience of one of the special places that make our shared communities great.

Outstanding

Time and time again, when those big yellow busses appear in the parking lot, the docents are present and prepared each and every time. They bring their interests, passion and generosity to the program and to each fortunate student that if lucky enough to spend quality time outside with a perfect stranger who is inspired to share their own inspiration.

Networking

Many of our docents were enlisted by other docents. They are truly members of a team that work and build together. Expanding team resources extends more quality opportunities to the community for students and volunteers alike.

Stewardship

The only way for our region's unique resources to prosper is for them to be experienced and appreciated by their nearby communities. Docents on the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve bring a unique resource to life during the two hour hike and program they present. By providing opportunities to discover and explore, our docents help create the next generation of stewards who will help to protect and serve.



Employee of the Month
Richard Tolson

Teamwork

Richard is an amazing team player by offering his help whenever and wherever needed. I have noticed that he is willing to offer a helping hand whether it is for his DMT team or other co-workers.

Outstanding

Richard is quick to respond to the tasks assigned to him and he has a positive attitude while completing it. He takes pride in his work and it shows. He always greets his co-workers and asks how we are doing. Richard is genuine and an asset to not only the DMT but the district as a whole. It is a pleasure to work with him and be greeted when seeing him on HQ campus.



Employee of the Month
Noriko Gardner

Adaptable

During a motor home fire incident at the park, Nori demonstrated composure and worked with emergency services to ensure safety. Adhering to her emergency Action Plan (E.A.P.), she effectively managed the situation and contained the area while prioritizing the owners well being.

Teamwork

While the fire was ongoing, Nori enlisted the help of her host to gather necessary materials for the Emergency Action Plan (E.A.P.) and manage the situation, collaborating with the fire department.



Volunteer of the Month

Jo Daugherty

Adaptable

Jo drives up the hill every Friday. She is certainly able to adapt to challenging driving.

Community-centric

Connects with birders that visit the feeders she maintains. Shares sightings and eBird links.

Teamwork

Jo works well with all the rangers and community volunteers.

Inclusion

Jo includes all ages and skill levels when she shares her experiences and knowledge of our mountain birds.

Outstanding

Jo is totally committed to making our birding deck a destination for all levels of birders. She has also made financial contributions (seed, suet, and spinach).



Employee of the Month

Gaby Adame

Adaptable

Gaby has been on fire lately! With the pressing timeline of budget, ARPA projects, earmark requests, and other urgent items, Gaby takes changes and new information in stride, adjusts her priorities, and makes things happen. Whether it's a last minute presentation to ask for more money, working with consultants to adjust scope, or drop everything and prepare request for funding, she addresses it with grace and professionalism. Gaby's job can be high pressure in our current political climate, but you don't see her sweating it. Her adaptability helps RivCoParks be responsive.

Outstanding

Gaby does a great job balancing her workload and giving 100% to each task she takes on. Despite being very busy, she doesn't hesitate to offer help in other areas. Gaby follows through on her commitments and if she cannot do what she promised, she takes accountability and circles back to apologize and revisit what can be done. The work Gaby produces reflects her passion and desire to represent RivCoParks in the best light possible.

Stewardship

Gaby is a good steward of resources and looks for ways to be efficient and effective. She has worked with her team to develop tools to share information, create transparency, and keep stakeholders informed.



Volunteer of the Month

Larry Zamora

Teamwork

Larry is always first to jump in a help everyone with whatever task they are working on, from helping to clear the line of cars at the kiosk in the morning on a fish stock day too going over to HQ after hours to repair a leaking water spicket. Larry goes above and beyond to help other accomplish the mission and make Rancho the best park in the county!

Outstanding

Larry is outstanding in all he does. He has used his skills as a Master Die mechanic and tireless work ethic to take on the tasks of mowing all the fields and grass areas around the park and all the maintenance of all the associated field equipment. (Two Mowers, and Both of the tractors that belong to RJU)

Stewardship

Larry is constantly looking for ways to better the park. He has taken on the challenging task of mowing all areas of the park not covered by our landscaping contract. I total Larry mows approximately 205,696 sq meters or 50.68 acres of open spaces around the park.

February 2024



Employee of the Month

John Batterton

Adaptable

John does an amazing job using the available resources responsibly without ever taking our tools or resources for granted. He is so reliable when it comes to preventative maintenance as well! John also does a great job of identifying the parks needs in preparation of seasonal changes and inclement weather. He prepares the park to withstand any storm!

Teamwork

John is so approachable and willing to teach. He doesn't gatekeep his expertise, he is always offering to teach volunteers and staff how to operate heavy machinery in a safe and responsible manner for the longevity of the tools and the safety of team members!!

Outstanding

You can always tell when John has been on duty! He leaves work well done in his wake. John repairs and prepares the park without even being asked or assigned tasks. He is constantly looking for ways to improve the parks and improve staff offices. You can ask anyone that has worked with John what they think about him. We all agree that he is reliable and goes above and beyond on a consistent basis!

Stewardship

John has a true passion for our underdog park McCall. He shows the park love, dedication, and attention to detail. McCall is a small park with many needs and John goes out of his way to treat it with the love and respect this beautiful and often overlooked park deserves! Ask about the beautiful custom wooden safe he constructed for McCall's office! It is true craftsmanship and dedication at its finest.



Volunteer of the Month

Alfredo Macias aka Al

Adaptable

Al has been instrumental as well as adaptable with rapidly changing weather and the affects it may have on visitors. He makes sure peoples safety is top priority! We adore Al and the County of Riverside Parks is better because of all that he does everyday!

Teamwork

Al demonstrates teamwork everyday, even on his days off! He makes himself available to the team and communicates any updates we may need. He is a great asset to the Idyllwild Parks team and is really an all around great guy! He helps maintenance here and with other park projects as needed. He is great ensuring ALL fees are collected from our guests, helping the parks revenue stream! He asked a self pay sign be made and moved to the kiosk for guest to be directed to our pay stations when the kiosk is unmanned.

Outstanding

Al is outstanding in ALL areas here at the Idyllwild Campground. He goes above and beyond what is expected everyday. He makes sure the park is a clean, safe place for visitors and works on his days off to ensure fees are collected, visitors are safe and not here to vandalize or participate in any other nefarious acts.

Stewardship

Al is an EXCELLENT steward for the Riverside County Parks! He cares about people, he is responsible and loves the park. The parks are very lucky to have such an amazing volunteer who enjoys what he does!



Volunteer of the Month

Christy Sijen

Adaptable - This is Christy's first season as a volunteer with RivCo Parks. She has maintained a flexible attitude about the changes that take place day to day. Lake Cahuilla has many events throughout our busy season, and the expectations for Kiosk staff can change the day before an event and often even the day of! Christy is never one to complain, grimace, or neglect the right way of doing things. Her customer service and positive attitude remain intact through every change and request. She is ready to pivot at a moment's notice! Her adaptability is always accompanied by a positive attitude even when she struggles to understand the why or how of a situation, she follows through.

Teamwork - Christy is so approachable and willing. Even though it is her first season with us she caught on quick on the Point of Sale system and has made herself available to other volunteers and even staff when it comes to sharing what she knows. She always volunteers for the late shifts no one else wants in order to meet the need. Christy has been faithful in helping her team members have success in any task. She is responsive, approachable, knowledgeable, and ever so willing to help others get on board and succeed!

Stewardship - Christy has gone above and beyond. I truly mean that. She has been the first point of contact for multiple campground incidents that got ugly fast. It was not asked of her. It was not required of her. But she saw an issue unfolding and immediately made herself available to ease the concerns of our campers and provide directions for safety. She truly has taken ownership of this Park in this way. She goes past the saying, "if you see something say something". When Christy sees something in the Park she Does Something without fail. She is never waiting for someone else to notice or to tell her what to do. She is truly a good Steward of Lake Cahuilla Campground.

January 2024



Employee of the Month

Lindsey Drake

Networking:

Lindsey has quickly acclimated to her role as Contracts and Grants Analyst for the Park District. She wasted no time developing relationships with outside agencies such as Family Services Association (FSA), the Grove Church, and Desert Recreation District to collaborate on exciting new opportunities to bring more people into our parks. She has also shared ideas about developing relationships with mental health agencies to better highlight the importance of time spent outdoors for wellbeing. I look forward to seeing where her skills and ideas take the Park District in the future.



Volunteer of the Month

Susan Savolainen

Outstanding:

Susan volunteers at Gilman Ranch anywhere from 4 to 10 hours per week. She is retired and used to supervise multiple landscaping teams. She retired from Metropolitan Water Company and their loss is our gain

Networking:

Susan has talked with a number of different people and companies, not to mention researching out items that could help us here at Gilman Ranch.

Some of these things are:

1. Talking to someone who has a special mower to mow down our steep frontage area.
2. Looking up specialty filters to help with our clogging problems from our natural spring.
3. Trying to help us find pumpkins for our Fall Festival.
4. Had her husband (an ex-painter) paint all our picnic tables for us.
5. Gave us information on heating & air conditioning companies.

Stewardship:

Susan gets things done. With her knowledge and background and licensing, she has been able to start spraying weeds here on the property. This has been especially important on our driveway which is slowly being torn apart by the weeds. We haven't had anyone who could spray here since we last had a landscaping contract here, a number of years ago. (6-7). She has been on her hands and knees, handpicking out goat heads. (Those nasty thorns that are a huge problem out here) She planted her own trees and set up the drip system to keep them watered. She has spread load after load of wood chips where they are needed. She removes invasive mustard plants one at a time with a shovel, to reduce their reappearance. She has planted poppies, and Iris bulbs. She has spent many hours weed eating and raking up leaves. When the weather is too bad outside, she helps me with office work.



Employee of the Month

Michael Alferez

Michael is a very caring leader and has a passion for the work that he does. He approaches every assignment and challenge with smile on his face and a "can do" attitude. Even when bringing up issues, Michael is respectful and helpful, only seeking to assist with correcting the problem.

Michael has worked a large part of this year with missing team members. Despite being under-staffed, he has been optimistic and driven to still achieve our needed results. This includes ensuring reports are prepared and shared on time, audits are completed, we are being responsive to our customers and partners, and we are continuing to meet our fiscal responsibilities.

Michael is a shining example of how to "bring the weather" and lead with optimism. His attitude sets the tone for important internal customer service and, as a result, his team is well respected and provides consistently great service.



Volunteer of the Month

Johnelle Cimino (and husband Frank)

Johnelle has consistently supported the SRP over the years and along with her husband Frank, hold steadfast to their commitment. They attend all trainings and study together the things they learn. The jump at opportunities to teach on the trail and love creating experiences for guests. They are also adamant about conservation and trail etiquette and have a wonderful way of sharing WHY the rules are in place without people deflecting their anger towards them.



Employee of the Month

Shawna Allison

We have been camping here for over 30 years. Shawna has kept the park well maintained and the family feel. She is doing this basically with her and volunteers. There is no job she won't do. She has unclothed the dump station on numerous occasions. Keeps bathrooms clean and nice. Works with the city to her new people here. She is very open and friendly with everyone. When we had a storm here, on a holiday weekend, and had lost phones, internet and then a broken water pipe she handled it with professionalism. She can do most anything here to fix stuff. There aren't enough words to say how much we care for her. As a volunteer I would do anything for her and consider her like a daughter. She doesn't get the recognition or help she should all the way out here.



Volunteer of the Month

Gordon and Connie Kraft

Camp Host Gordon & Connie Kraft arrived at Lake Cahuilla in early part of November to Equestrian Campground where the restoration from the Hurricane had not been taken place. They quickly took their super high tech tools such as shovels, rakes and a hose, started the rehabilitation. Together, they spent countless number of hours patiently moving dirt to level the camp sites by raking. The end result was more esthetically pleasing than it was before. They certainly visionaries. Gordon & Connie also helped CAH PMW develop his skills in heavy equipment operation by being his extra eyes to guide him through demonstrating their team work spirit. The end result was outstanding, better and more beautiful than it once was. We can't wait for these beautiful sites to be used by hundreds of campers who will discovered the hidden beauty of the desert at Lake Cahuilla Equestrian campground.

October 2023



Employee of the Month

Freddy Salazar

Freddy was instrumental in helping us procure a new tracked-skid steer with attachment and trailer for the new CalFire Grant. The amount of time spent researching, traveling, learning and training staff was an exceptional feat that must be recognized. All of this was done on top of his normal MSHCP duties and for a different Unit.



Employee of the Month

Anthony Miller

Since coming on as Project Manager for Planning and Development, Anthony has been an absolute superstar. He has taken on an active role in managing the day to day of all planning projects, provided invaluable insight into parks and their needs, worked tirelessly to meet deadlines, and has been the definition of a team player. It is without a doubt that Anthony is passionate about his role in Parks and the work we do for our community. We at RivCoParks are incredibly lucky to have such a dedicated employees



Volunteer of the Month

Yesenia Villagomez In the few months I've been with RivCoParks, Yesenia Villagomez has embodied EVERY "A.C.T.I.O.N.S" category.

- A - Yesenia gets community members involved and encourages them to bring materials in case we don't have enough.
 - C – Yesenia is 100% committed to the community she lives in and constantly works to improve it.
 - T- We are in constant communication and she's always enthusiastic to plan events in collaboration with RivCo parks.
 - She is committed to providing safe and clean areas for all residents to enjoy and makes sure Spanish-speaking volunteers feel seen and welcome.
 - O– Even with family commitments/ community engagements, Yesenia is able to rally large groups (50-80) around a project, even at 7:00am on a Sunday morning. She even provides lunch!
 - N– Yesenia knows over 100 neighbors by name and recruits even more through word of mouth and social media.
- S– Bain Street is a great place for horse owners! Safety for the horses and their owners is one of Yesenia's top priorities.



Employee of the Month

Mike Van Daele

In the last two months Mike has taken on the task of restriping all of the roadways in the park. Not only did he start the project but he expanded it as he went through and trained other staff to utilize the tools so the task can be repeated long into the future. Originally, the task was to just do the center stripes on the entrance road and a few of the parking lots. As he got more confident he adapted and took on the entire park including getting some templates and redoing the 'stop' signs on the road and some of the directional arrows. He did all of this work in and around the other tasks he's required to do as Ranger. The results have been excellent and the park looks better for it.



Employee of the Month

Shawn Huggard

Shawn is an excellent communicator and leader in the District. When he's not covered in mud, eyes sparkling behind a face caked in mud from augering holes and finding solutions to big District problems with his team, He can be found responding to queries for advice from staff from Blythe to the Mountain Parks to downtown. He is very willing to share advice and wisdom. Not only that, he delivers outstanding solutions and gets things done. A true Jack of all Trades, without sacrificing talent and skill.



Volunteer of the Month

Paul Lanhardt

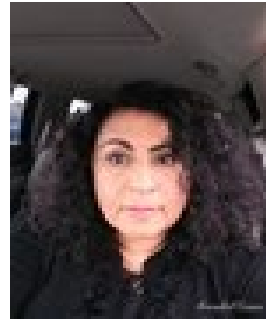
After volunteering for the Santa Rosa Plateau for several years, Paul recently began volunteering with the MSHCP Unit. Even in that short period of time Paul has helped the Unit tremendously by hiking remote areas of our conservation land that are very hard to access. Paul preplans his trips and reports back his findings which helps the MSCHP as an extra set of boots on the ground. Although Paul is a volunteer, Paul has the mindset and work ethic of RivCo Parks Ranger. Paul has already hiked many miles checking remote portions of RCA lands, including hiking to the far flung Bishop and Sierra Bella properties to sign their remote boundaries. Paul also found a shooting area in a hard to reach canyon of the Olsen Canyon property, which prompted MSHCP rangers to go and block access to the shooting range. Paul's work with the Unit is much appreciated and we hope he chooses to continue the great work!



Employee of the Month

Martha Carmona - SARB

Since joining RivCoParks, Martha has been an outstanding team member and leader. She has taken on numerous roles and responsibilities in the SARB unit and in Bus Ops. Recently, Martha was able to create a District-wide trail map that included dozen of miles of trails in Open-Space and Regional Parks. She also maps all of our facilities and including nature centers and campgrounds. During this project, she showed that she is capable of Networking with all of the District site supervisors and express Teamwork to get this project done in a timely manner. Martha is truly deserving of the employee of the month award



Volunteer of the Month

Annabel Casas - Lake Skinner

Annabel has been a great teammate and take time to help out whenever she can. She is always asking if anyone need anything from the store while she is out of the park. She exceeded expectation when just recently we Lost power at Lake Skinner, and she jump into action to remind Camp host with pet the electricity was out. She even saved the life of the oldest pet in the park. And if that pet could talk, she would thank her so much. Annabel went over to Camp host 275 house and open window after find out they where out of the area and would not get back in time. our heart are super grateful for her.

July 2023



Employee of the Month

David Ledbetter

Dave Ledbetter has been invaluable for his knowledge of the park operations and policies. He can be counted on to help others when needed. He takes the time to show staff various ways to be more efficient in daily routine. He has a tremendous work ethic. Dave has been a truly outstanding teammate.