

Serving More Than 50,000 Members Be Honored. Be Celebrated. Be Thanked.

live

REC AND PARKS

F

The LA fires gutted much of the beloved Palisades **Recreation Center. But** staff found a way forward.

INSIDE: **Stories of destruction** and resilience. -PAGE 12



Celebrating the work and lives of public employees.

Employees Club of California 311 South Spring Street, Suite 1300 Los Angeles, CA 90013

SERVING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES SINCE 1928

Jasmine Dowlatshahi, Sr. Recreation

Director, 26 years of City service, Club Member, inside the burned-out shell of the Palisades Recreation Center's new





Only \$39.99 (gate price is \$75)

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Palisades Rec Center lives on, and will rise

again in new facilities to see another day for

countless new generations who will thrive with

visors gave us lessons in courage, in dedica-

tion, in fortitude, and in never losing your North

Star. Thank you to them for demonstrating

what public service is all about.

Dr. Ed Krupp, Club Member, receives congratulations on the Observatory's 90th birthday from the City Council in mid-May.

An Observation

Jasmine and her dedicated staff and super-

Speaking of stars, I send my congratula-

tions to Rec and Parks' Griffith Observatory

on its amazing 90th anniversary, and to its

incredible Director and Club Member Dr. Ed

Krupp. The Observatory - featured many

times in Alive! - is one of the most iconic insti-

its assistance.

Trial by Fire



Sr. Director Jasmine Dowlatshahi and CEO Robert Larios inside the scorched main gym at Palisades Rec Center

hen they saw wildfire smoke billowing over the Palisades hill, Sr. Recreation Directors Jasmine Dowlatshahi, Club Member, and Daisy Garcia knew that that day, January 7, would be like no other. Their precious and vital Palisades Rec Center would not survive. Four days later, it was no more.

Physically that was true, but their mission had not changed: serve the children. Serve the families. Serve the community. Circumstances may change, but true purpose does not.

The staff got busy and set up its athletic leagues and other programs in other City rec centers, which were happy to accommodate. Through that

monumental task, the community lives on. In response to the cata-

strophic fires, Club staff contacted our Members to ask how we could help them. At Alive!, while we were talking to City employees about telling their stories of survival, we received an email from Jasmine about her experience. That led to our cover story this month. It is special, for sure. I recommend you take it to heart. Because of their commit-

ment to their community, the

ROBERT'S BLOG

by Robert Larios, CEO, The Club

tutions in Los Angeles, and remains, well, stellar. We are very lucky



indeed to receive (and publish) scientific and cultural reports in our "Alive! Around the World" section from Dr. Krupp periodically. I know I always learn something from those reports. We are blessed to carry content of global interest right in these pages, courtesy

of Dr. Krupp's generosity. Thank you, Dr. Krupp!

Worth Considering

As the Pali Rec Center story exemplifies - embrace your boundless potential to transform adversity into a legacy of progress and compassion that illuminates humanity for a thousand years. It's not what you lose that defines you but how you grow from it. The power to reinvent, to recalibrate, to rise again - that power lies within you.

Happy Summer, everyone. ¡Gracias por leer!

CEO



Raise employee morale! Schedule a **Club Mobile visit!**

The Club Mobile Team will bring benefits experts and Club legendary apparel for purchase at low prices (hats custom-made on site). It's one of the best ways for staff to feel appreciated. Your employees will be

Monthly Anchors:

North Central Sanitation

452 N. San Fernando Rd., 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. The first Monday of every month: Mon., June 2

Van Nuys City Hall

6262 Van Nuys Blvd., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The first Tuesday of every month: Tues., June 3

Harbor

100 W. Fifth St., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The first Wednesday of every month: Wed., June 4

North Hollywood **StreetsLA**

10811 Chandler Blvd., 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. The second Thursday of every month: Thurs., June 12

City Hall Farmers Market 201 N. Main St., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The last Wednesday of every month:

Wed., June 25

Additional Visits:

LADWP Retirees Picnic Whittier Narrows "The Meadows," 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Sat., June 7

General Service, Seventh St. 2310 E. 7th St., 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Wed., June 11

Rec and Parks, Chevy Chase 3900 Chevy Chase Dr., 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Wed., June 11

Airports/LAX, Admin West 7301 World Way West, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Wed., June 25

grateful!

To schedule a Club Mobile visit:

Scan the Code to Schedule a Visit Or contact Lupe Lira, Director of Retail and Ecommerce: (213) 819-0350, or mobile@employeesclub.com



ATTENTION Raise employee morale! SUPERVISORS: Bring the Club to your worksite!

For your convenience, now accepting major credit cards.



Club Mobile is cashless! Follow Club social media for other days, times and locations as they are scheduled:







REC & PARKS



COVER STORY:

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CLUB MEMBER EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT!



THE CLUB WILL COVER YOUR WATER PARK PARKING FEES! June 1-30, 2025

The Club reimburses parking fees at all Water Parks in California (up to \$30) for the first 500 qualified Club Members! Limit 1 refund per member.*



HOW TO APPLY FOR A REIMBURSEMENT:

- Visit any water park in California anytime from June 1-30, 2025.
- · Keep your parking receipt, which must clearly show the parking fee.
- Submit a photo of your receipt via https://join. employeesclub.com/FeesBack
- Members eligible for refunds will receive them via Zelle, whereas those who have not arranged for Zelle payment will receive a check by mail.
- Have a great time at the park your parking's on us!
- * Valid for all California nytime from June 1st through the 30th, 2025.. Limit (1) refund per Club member in good standing who has paid dues and been active since at least March 1, 2025. Maximum refund value of \$30. Receipt must be submitted through online link.

Correction

In our January issue, we misstated the years of City service for Victoria Wong, Library. She Retired with 35 years.

service during the recent LA fires......7 Sanitation's popular open houses conclude in June. 9



The Club apologizes for the error and is happy to correct it.

Kids Coloring Contest Winners



See them online!

alive.employeesclub.com/kidscoloringwinners-202506

The Club

Is Here

to Help



Contact the Club if you have an event you want covered in Alive! or if you have questions about insurance. help@employeesclub.com (800) 464-0452



June 2025 • Volume 24 – No. 6

Alive! is the official publication of the **Employees Club of California** 311 Spring St., Suite 1300 Los Angeles, CA 90013 TELEPHONE: (800) 464-0452 CONTACT US: admin@aliveemployeesclub.com

Alive! (USPS P7960) is published monthly, 12 times per year by the Employees Club of California, 311 Spring St., Suite 1300, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

ALIVE! EDITORIAL OFFICES: 311 Spring Street, Suite 1300, Los Angeles CA, 90013 · (800) 464-0452 POSTAGE: Periodicals postage paid at Los Angeles, CA and at additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS: Annual subscription price for Alive! is included in the membership dues and is nondeductible. **POSTMASTER:** Send address corrections to Alive!, Employees Club of California, 311 Spring St., Suite 1300, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

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In addition, the Club strives to publish only those elements that are produced by the Club itself, are in the public domain, or whose rights have been negotiated.

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HAVE YOU BEEN LAID OFF? FURLOUGHED OR GIVEN REDUCED HOURS? IMPACTED IN OTHER WAYS?

CLUB BENEFITS: The Club has your back during these uncertain times with powerful benefits and features to get you through it.

Consider:

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Some Club benefits are portable, moving with you wherever you go

- Club Cash can mean cash in a hurry
- Personalized guidance

LIFORNIA

· Club benefits can save you money on groceries, entertainment and shopping

> You aren't alone. Help is as close as contacting us. We'll get right back to you:

> > help@employeesclub.com

Employees Club of California Be honored. Be celebrated. Be thanked.

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The Club Honors **Public Employees**





Retire Ready For Active and Already Retired Members

Your Monthly Hub for: • Smart Transitions Into Retirement • Staying Connected, Having Fun

YOU'RE INVITED

A Special Workshop

Retiree Society members – and all City

Retirees - are invited to a special Club event:

Finding Purpose

After Retirement

Join us for a free, two-hour workshop designed

just for Retirees looking to discover deeper

meaning and fulfillment in this next phase

FOR THOSE ALREADY RETIRED



The Retiree Society

San Pedro Walk

A community for Retired City employees to connect, share stories and stay active through events, resources and friendships.

Lancaster Walk



At the Retiree Society walk event at Prime Desert Woodland Preserve May 18 in Lancaster, this group enjoyed a scavenger hunt and a visit to the nature center. Back row, from left: Rebecca DeBolt, Kenneth Pritchett, Dulce Lopez, DeAngelo Thompson Larry Tinson and Roland Manuel. Front: Dawn Cordova, Stephanie Manuel, Robert Cordova and John Hawkins

Coffee in Hawthorne

Enjoying brunch April 25 at the Retiree Society mixer in Hawthorne were (from left) DeAngelo Thompson, Dulce Lopez, Meighan Langlois, Diane Richmond, Guadalupe Lira, Angela Yang and Lily Wren

Event Recap

In May, the Retiree Society hosted several fantastic events. We also attended RLACEI's Western Roundup Picnic, where we connected with more than 200 Retirees! As we continue our efforts, we're reminded of Brené Brown's powerful words:

> "Connection is why we're here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives."

Below are a few pictures from these recent events to give you a glimpse into the wonderful connections being made!

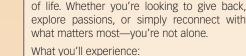
> From left: Katherine Rice, Tony Gatel, DeAngelo Thompson, Daphne Robinson and Diane Richmond celebrated good physical fitness and new friends at the Retiree Society walk event at White Point Nature Preserve in San Pedro May 16.

Griffith Observatory



llene Shapiro enjoyed a walk at the first Retiree Society event March 26 at Griffith Observatory

We can't wait to connect with you!



- Interactive discussions about your purpose and identity after Retirement
- Reflective activities to uncover your unique passions and gifts
- Real stories from other Retirees who've found purpose in unexpected ways
- A welcoming space to connect and be inspired

It's open to all Retirees-no prep needed, just come as you are!

Sessions are capped at 12 people.

Choose one of these two dates:

Sat., July 26 10 a.m. to noon

Urban Café 4001 N. Lakewood Blvd., Suite 100 Long Beach

Or

Sun., July 27 10 a.m. to noon

Lancaster Club Office 1206 W Ave J, Lancaster

RSVP by July 21 to Dulce Lopez, Retiree Coordinator, at (800) 464-0452 (ext. 188) or email retirees@employeesclub.com



Retirees 'Your Best Life' Photo Contest!

Retirees: Show us your best life! Gardening ... dining with friends ... talking walks ... cooking ... show us what you're up to. And you could win a prize!

Submit your photo here:



Enjoying the Retiree Society coffee mixer April 28 at Peet's Coffee in the San Fernando Valley were (from left) Rebecca DeBolt, Luis Carlos, Anna Carlos, Dulce Lopez, Marilou Talbutt and Susana Gomez

Retired? Let's Stay Connected!

for you to reconnect, share stories, and stay updated on all the great benefits still available to you through the Club.

Whether you're traveling, picking up a new hobby, or just enjoy-



ing a slower pace, this is your space to connect with oth-



JOIN TODAY





ers who've walked a

Join the conversation today!

Simply scan the QR code below to go straight to the group on Facebook. Once you're there, introduce yourself by sharing: When you retired

What department or agency you worked for

The Retiree Society has created a special Facebook group just Retiree's Facebook Group

What you're enjoying most about retirement so far

We can't wait to hear your stories and see this community grow. Welcome again-and cheers to this new chapter!

Or email to Retirees@employeesclub.com

We'll award the first five to submit with a \$50 gift card, submitted from the first to the 15th of each month.



FOR ACTIVE EMPLOYEES RETIRING SOON

Planning a Smart Retirement

similar path.



As you prepare to retire, are you making the right decisions? Start with a fun and productive party with the Club!

The Club is here to guide you through the retirement planning process every step of the way! If you plan to retire soon or are newly Retired, you have access to attend a retirement planning party with Club Retiree Specialist Counselors that will set you up for success in retirement.

Topics include pension deduction, Retiree Life Insurance, Retiree Legal Insurance, the Club's Retiree Mentorship Program, our Retiree

Recognition Awards, and other valuable Club benefits. The Club strives to make your transfer from active to Retired as easy as possible by guiding you through the processes; educating you on new, important topics; and welcoming you to our Club Retiree Community.

Attend a Retirement Planning Party!

June 26, 1 – 2 p.m. (Last Thursday of each month)

Club Headquarters 311 S. Spring St., Suite 1300, Downtown Los Angeles Validated parking provided.

RSVP todav!

To reserve a spot at an upcoming Club Retirement Planning Party: Call us at (800) 464-0452, option 4, or email us at info@employeesclub.com

> Don't hesitate to contact our Retiree specialists at info@employeesclub.com • or (800) 464-0452

THE CLUB by Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales **INSURANCE C**



Resources for Club Retirees And Those About to Retire

covered.

den fees.

ments.

length:

vou need it.

Shopping: Take advantage of exclu-

sive deals on apparel, electronics,

Need cash in a hurry? We've got you

All Club Members are pre-qualified for

a \$500 Ioan. No credit check. No hid-

Fast approval. Payroll deduction pay-

Loan increases with membership

select styles at Skechers

Interest Rate: 17.95% APR

• After 6 months: \$500

• 1-plus years: up to \$1.000

• 5-plus years: up to \$2,000

• 15-plus years: up to \$3,000

Sample Monthly Payments:

• \$1,000 (12 months): \$91.69

• \$2,000 (12 months): \$183.37

• \$3,000 (12 months): \$275.06

This is real financial relief—right when

• \$500 (6 months): \$87.77

4. Emergency Help with Club Cash

and more-including 30 percent off

Standing by Our Members During Times of Uncertainty

s economic uncertainty continues to ripple through City departments, many public employees, including some of our longtime Members, are now facing the very real possibility of layoffs. These are not just changes in employment; they are deeply personal challenges that affect families, futures and financial security.

At the Employees Club of California, we understand this. And in moments like these, our mission to protect and connect City employees becomes more important than ever.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS THROUGH EVERY STEP

In response to these uncertain times, the Club is taking action to ensure our Members feel supported, informed and empowered:

1. Coverage That Moves With You

If your employment status changes, your Club insurance doesn't have to. We're here to help ensure your coverage continues—because being a Club Member doesn't end when your job does. Many benefits remain accessible even after leaving City service.

2. Personalized Guidance Is Just a Call Away

Our Member Services team is standing by to offer one-on-one support. Whether you have questions about your current benefits or are exploring new options, we'll walk with you through each step with care, clarity and understanding.

3. Stretching Every Dollar

We know that saving matters now more than ever. That's why Club Members enjoy access to more than 75,000 discounts across the country, including

- Dining and Groceries: Save up to 50 percent at local and national restaurants, plus up to 20 percent off farm box deliveries through Farm Fresh to You.
- Entertainment: Enjoy up to 55 percent off tickets to theme parks, movie theaters and popular attractions like the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Aquarium of the Pacific.

YOU'VE GIVEN TO THE CITY. NOW LET US GIVE BACK TO YOU

We recognize the years of service and dedication you've offered the City of Los Angeles. In return, the Employees Club is committed to standing by you-through every shift, every challenge, and every change.

You've taken care of Los Angeles. Now let us take care of you.

To speak with a Club Counselor today, email help@employeesclub.com

Your Club Retirement Experts We're here to serve you! Update your benefits and get all of your questions answered by booking a one on one or group presentation appointment with your colleagues at your job site.

Email help@employeesclub.com to request a Counselor visit today!





Member Services Counselor





Cheryl Martin mber Services Counselor Memb



2025 Events LARFPA

June 4 Annual Picnic LA River Center and Gardens 570 W Ave 26, Los Angeles, CA 90065 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

LADWP Retirees Association

June 7 Annual Picnic

Whittier Narrows Park "The Meadows" 750 S. Santa Anita Ave., South El Monte 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. \$15 admission

Reservation information:

LADWP Retiree Association: (213) 367-3146 LARFPA: events@larfpa.org

Contact Information

Club Retirees Dedicated Helpline: Club Retirees Email: help@employeesclub.com

LA City Employees Retirement System (LACERS) (City Dept.) (800) 779-8328 lacers.services@lacers.org

LADWP Retirees Association (213) 367-3146 activitycommittee@ladwp.com

Fire and Police Pensions (City Dept.) (844) 885-2377 pensions@lafpp.com

LA Retired Fire and Police Association (LARFPA) (888) 288-5073 membership@larfpa.org

Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) See page 18

Dylan Noel mber Services Counselor Men

Lifesaver Honored

HARBOR GARDENER SAVES A LIFE.

HARBOR: At the Harbor Commission meeting April 23, Executive Director Gene Seroka honored Luis Sosa, Gardener, Construction and Maintenance Division, for saving a life.

On April 18, Luis was working at Bloch Field in San Pedro, where he was alerted by a member of the public that an individual nearby was unresponsive. Luis quickly came to the individual's aid and began performing CPR until Paramedics arrived. Thanks to his swift action and hands-on CPR training provided by the Harbor Dept Tuis was able to save the individual's life.

Well done, Luis! The Club honors you for your service.



From left: Luis Sosa, Gardener, Construction and Maintenance Division, with Harbor Executive Director Gene Seroka.



Catch a Wave Of Club Deals On Water Parks

employeesclub.com

Your Insurance Dollars at Work



More than \$135 MILLION in insurance benefits paid!

When Members purchase insurance through the Club, they trust the insurance will help them in times of need.

When you choose insurance through the Club, you're not just obtaining coverage but peace of mind during difficult times of need. Our claims department is here to help ensure a smooth and efficient experience throughout the claim process.

Below are the monthly amounts of claims paid back to Members. **Club insurance products will be there when you need them.**

INSURANCE PLAN	APRIL	TOTAL SINCE 1992
Life/Accidental Death and Dismemberment	\$73,445	\$76,092,559
Disability Insurance	\$171,828	\$37,721,809
Long-Term Care Insurance	\$192,581	\$16,037,478
Cancer/Critical Care Insurance	\$600	\$5,602,600
Accident Plan	[none]	\$155,792
Totals	\$438,455	\$135,610,239

CLUB MEMBERS' PRAISE

"I appreciate [the Club's Claims] services and how everything was handled in a timely manner. When business needed to be handled (such as funeral payment), I was able to do so, due to your efficiency and timeliness. The book [*The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*, gifted by the Club to all with a life insurance claim] explains death. Of course we all have different opinions, but it does simplify death. Thank you."

- Lewis Brooks, September 2022





Trust the Club's insurance and claims services when you need them the most. Contact a Claims Administrator today:



Crew 140 members (wearing safety vests) are honored by StreetsLA administrato

Honoring the Fire Response

STREETSLA HONORED CREW FOR ITS FIRE RESPONSE.

PUBLIC WORKS: On Feb. 25, Public Works/StreetsLA honored its Crew 140 for its work in the aftermath of the historic and devastating LA fires in January.

"StreetsLA crews are often called to assist in an emergency, and we take this responsibility very seriously," the Bureau said. "Recently, Crew 140 was recognized for its outstanding response to the January wildfires. Thank you and congratulations to our outstanding employees!"

Well done, Crew 140! The Club honors and thanks you for your dedicated and excellent service to Los Angeles.



Final Club Clothing Giveaway Set

LA FIRES: In response to the devastating and historic fires in Pacific Palisades, Altadena and other locations Jan. 7, the Club began collecting and giving away financial assistance, clothing, and other items very soon thereafter. The Club is still assisting Club Members and other public service employees facing hardships due to the historic fires but is winding down its response.

The final clothing giveaway is set for Saturday, July 12. See below.

Here's an update: CLUB CARE TEAM: HOW CAN WE ASSIST YOU?



The Club held its first clothing distribution to those in need on Feb 8. The final clothing giveaway is set for Saturday, July 12

Monica Zamudio Sr. Claims Administrator







Are you in need? The Club's helpline remains active for all Club Members who have and are still experiencing hardships due to the devastating fires. Reach out so we can help you:

help@employeesclub.com

Follow this QR code to give via Zelle:



Club Angels Director Arlene Herrero reports that Club Angels has raised more than \$6,000 from Members, and that grocery assistance in that amount has been provided to public service employees in need from Los Angeles City and County.

Club Angels, a nonprofit 501c3 charity led by the Club's Arlene Herrero and dedicated staff, is managing the Club outreach through grocery assistance to public service employees facing hard-ships. Your gift could be tax deductible; consult your tax professional.

MORE CLOTHING OPEN HOUSES SCHEDULED

The Club plans a third and final clothing donation open house **Sat., July 12** at the Club Warehouse in Carson to distribute clothing and household items that have already been donated. A range of essentials for all ages is expected to be available. Reservations are required; contact the team at help@clubangels.org

The clothing drives and distribution are coordinated by Guadalupe Lira.

THANKS TO THE FIRST RESPONDERS

Finally, once again the Club thanks those First Responders – many of whom are Club Members – for their bravery and courage for saving lives during this historic emergency. We are grateful for your service.

Celebrating African American Heritage Month

LAABP TRAILBLAZERS RECEPTION ATTRACTS HUNDREDS.

LAABP: The Los Angeles Association of Black Personnel (LAABP) continued its tradition of celebrating African American Heritage Month with its annual Trailblazers Reception Feb. 27. The reception was held at the legendary Regency West in Leimert Park.

This event is held each year to acknowledge the achievements of African Americans in City government who have forged their way up the ladder to notable positions in their City careers.

Upon arrival, guests were greeted by the LAABP Board and the talents of Maestro the Vocalinist. The black National Anthem was presented by 17-year scholar Alicia Randall and Tobias Moody, saxophonist. Poetry was recited by Conney Williams, and guests enjoyed great food prepared by Boosty's BBQ.

The Trailblazers Reception also included professional development scholarships for City of Los Angeles employees. Terrea Moore, 2nd Vice President, who's responsible for special events, put on a noteworthy event, which included cultural and musical selections by City employees, their children and talented community members.

Among the guests offering salutes to the honorees were former Personnel General Manager Dana Brown; Personnel Assistant General Manager Paula Days; Zita Davis, Executive Officer in the Office of Mayor Karen Bass; and Former VP Angela Brown, Office of CAO. Joining them were proud family, friends and colleagues who came from far and wide to support their loved ones. The sentiment was common that each Trailblazer has opened doors and shattered false narratives by their presence and acumen.

SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition to the Trailblazers, this event acknowledges the efforts of those on their way to reaching new heights in their own careers. In that vein, Career Development Scholarships were awarded to the following City employees and faithful LAABP members:

- Theresa Walker, Police Performance Auditor III, LAPD, for Certification: Association of Fraud Examiners and Axon Conference Attendance
- Amber Osbourne, Workers' Compensation Analyst, Risk Management; and a bachelor of • science degree in organizational leadership from Cal State, Dominguez Hills
- Cherie Byers, Management Analyst, Public Works/Sanitation; bachelor of science degree in ۰ organizational leadership from Cal State, Dominguez Hills

Kenya Wiley, Executive Administrative Assistant II, Housing; a degree from Cerritos Community College

HONOREES

Excellence was in the air! The Trailblazer honorees were Tyrone Spears, PhD., Workers Compensation Administrator, Personnel; Nellie "Seffy" Wiles, Chief Construction Inspector, Public Works Bureau/Contract Administration (BCA): and Kenneth Boothe, Transmission and Distribution District Superintendent, LADWP. 🔵



Immediate Past President DeMarlo Sims (right) and past Second Vice President Antrecia Sims.



Back row, from left: two unidentified guests; Conney Williams; poet Sheldon Cruz, Fourth VP; Ian Monteilh Third VP; Erik Bell, Director-at-Large; and Ericka Hillard, Director-at-Large. Front: Janeshia Robinson: Dana Brown, Retired, General Manager, Personnel: Terrea L. Moore, Second VP. Latrice Williams, Director-at-Large; and DeWanna Sharp, President

Nellie Seflakon "Seffy" Wiles



Nellie Seflakon "Seffy" Wiles has had an illustrious career for more than 30 years as a civil servant for the City of Los Angeles. In 1990, Seffy began her career as a Police Service Representative for the LAPD/Communications, assigned to the 9-1-1 Dispatch Center. Seffy worked days and attended college in the evenings, graduating in 2002 with a 3.2 GPA from the Cal State, Fullerton with a bachelor of science degree

in geology. In 2016, Seffy made history in the City when she was promoted to her current leadership role, becoming the first female African American Chief Construction Inspector/ Division Manager in Public Works/Contract Administration. She is blessed to have such a prolific career that also came with many challenges throughout the past 25 years. Seffy is married to a retired civil servant, and mother to a beautiful daughter who is following in her footsteps in civil service.

HONOREE PROFILES

Tyrone Spears

Tyrone Spears began his career with the City of Los Angeles in 2002 as an asneeded Proctor in Personnel. He transitioned to a full-time role in 2013 as the Workers' Compensation Administrator and currently serves as the Division Chief of Workers' Compensation in Personnel. In this capacity, Tyrone oversees the daily operations of the City's Workers' Compensation programs. He also chairs two Joint Labor Management

Committees for the civilian and LAPPL ADR Programs. A published author of three books, Tyrone is passionate about training, mentoring and helping his staff achieve their

career goals. He was recently appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom to the Fraud Assessment Commission for the State of California. Tyrone holds a bachelor of science degree in human

resource management, an Executive MBA in management, and a doctorate in theology. Professionally, he has earned an Associate in Risk Management (ARM), and is certified by the Dept. of Industrial Relations, Self-Insurance Plans, as a Workers' Compensation Administrator.

Kenneth Boothe



With an extensive 38-year career at the LADWP. Mr. Boothe has built a strong reputation as a leader in power distribution, and construction and maintenance. His experience spans multiple supervisory roles, overseeing transmission and distribution operations, special projects, and infrastructure improvements.

Kenneth has been an IBEW Shop steward, specializing in conflict resolution for more

than 10 years. He is an advocate for safety and compliance. He has been a part of initiatives that improved operational efficiencies across all districts.

He loves to cook and grill. He assists in the community with food and meal deliveries for not only his own family but families in need within community.

With a wealth of experience and a commitment to excellence, he continues to drive innovation, safety, and leadership in power distribution and utility management at LADWP.

JUNETEENTH: JUNE 21

On June 21st, LAABP will be collaborating with the Oscar Joel Byrant Foundation (OJB) for the LAABP's annual Juneteenth picnic, to be held at Point Fermin Park in San Pedro.

Go to the association's social media platforms for more information, and be sure to join to receive e-mails and updates regarding training and events.

ABOUT THE LAABP

Tyrone Spears

The LAABP, a 550-member organization, is the official representative for City of Los Angeles employees of African-American Heritage. Created by former Mayor Tom Bradley, the association is a cornerstone in the efforts to create and maintain diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the City of Los Angeles at all levels. With that, the LAABP provides career development seminars, mock interview programs, networking forums, scholarships to college-bound students and open invitation for membership to all City employees who seek to continue to blaze trails and perpetuate Mayor Bradley's legacy.

In June, the LAABP will be offering several exciting opportunities to educate, elevate and celebrate black excellence. Currently, the LAABP scholarship season is under way, and the association will be honoring the scholarship recipients at a scholarship luncheon.

4 Call It a Career



Lt. Brodie Seagrave, Retired (center), with Capt. Christopher Mayberry and other colleagues at Hollenbeck Division.



party in January.



Officer III Carlos Barrios at his retirement The "77th Legend" Sr. Lead Officer Owen Mills with Deputy Chief Ruby Flores.



LAPD: Recently, four longtime LAPD Officers retired, and received festive congratulations from their colleagues.

Well done, Officers! We honor and celebrate you for your dedicated service to the City of Los Angeles.



Officer III John Cudworth, Retired (center) with (from left) Deputy Chief Emada Tingirides; Capt. Raul Jovel, Commanding Officer, Central Area; Officer Cudworth, Retired; Commander Lillian Carranza; and unidentified.

Officer III John Cudworth

Retired April 29 31 years of City service

Sr. Lead Officer Owen Mills

LA South Bureau Retired April 30 30 years of City service

Lt. Brodie Seagrave

Hollenbeck Division Retired April 8 29 years of City service

Officer III Carlos Barrios

Mission Division Retired Jan. 14 31 years of City service



Earth Day Around the City



DEPTS. CELEBRATE SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN INITIATIVES.

CITYWIDE: Many departments across the City honored our shared planet with celebrations of Earth Day, including messages of sustainability and best practices.

Events of April 19 began in the rain (always welcomed, even on event days). Other events were held the weekend of April 26.

Here are images of some of the celebrations.

REC AND PARKS

Photos by Kayla Williams/ Recreation and Parks

Rec and Parks hosted its annual Earth Day celebration April 19 at the Griffith Park Visitor Center. Guests helped beautify the Visitor Center by planting native plants while learning about environmental planning in the area.

PUBLIC WORKS/SANITATION

Image courtesy Jose Lozano

LA City Sanitation celebrated Earth Day April 26 at Norman O. Houston Park in Baldwin Hills. This year's theme, "Our Power, Our Planet," highlighted community driven climate solutions. The event was zero-waste — attendees were encouraged to bring reusable water bottles to refill at cold, filtered water stations.

The event featured more than 40 interactive exhibits, composting demos, a kids zone, Sanitation vehicles, live music and a DJ, and complimentary food.

LADWP EASTERN SIERRAS

Along with other events, the LADWP in the Eastern Sierras celebrated Earth Day April 26 in Bishop and Lone Pine. Staff connected with community members sharing resources, job opportunities, and shared info about the department's work in the Eastern Sierra. "A greener future starts with every single one of us."







The LADWP celebrated Earth Day in the Eastern Sierras

1 Open House Remaining

SANITATION'S POPULAR OPEN HOUSES CONCLUDE IN JUNE.





\$750 Club Scholarships

Final Call for Club Scholarship '25 Application

DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR CLUB SCHOLARSHIP IS 3 P.M. JUNE 27, 2025.



CLUB: Final applications are now being accepted for the Joannie Mukai Memorial Club Scholarship on the *Alive!* Website.

The 2024 Mukai Club Scholarship Program expects to grant at least

Selection Committee 20 awards and is named after the late Club Board Member Joannie Mukai. Scholarships recognize achievement, academic excellence and community service.

Those eligible include Club Members; their spouses; their children, grandchildren, step-children, and foster children; and nieces/nephews who are in college or will be attending an accredited college or university in Fall 2024. There is no age limit for Member or spouse, but all others must be under 25.

All materials must be completed on

APPLY Today





DEADLINE 3 p.m., June 27, 2025

QUESTIONS Send questions to the Club Scholarship Committee: scholarship@employeesclub.com or call: (213) 873-1843

the *Alive!* Website and submitted electronically by 3:00 p.m. June 27, 2025. Winners will be notified by July 31 before school starts.

The Club expects to give each recipient a stipend of \$750.

"With college costs rising, the Club honors public employees in California with the Mukai Scholarship," says Association CEO Robert Larios. "We want to help develop the next generation of smart, dedicated Club Members with this financial assistance."

INTERESTED CANDIDATES MAY BEGIN THE PROCESS DIRECTLY ON THE ALIVE! WEBSITE AT: alive.employeesclub.com/scholarship





PUBLIC WORKS: Public Works' Sanitation and Environment continues hosting its popular open houses, with its final event June 21.

The Open House program showcases Sanitation's residential curbside collection programs with the promotion of proper recycling practices and information about bulky item collections. Events feature trash truck and equipment demonstrations in addition to facility tours, information booths, recycling games, and refreshments.

There is no charge for admission and all ages are welcome, but Sanitation requests that pets be left at home for safety.

The remaining Public Works/Sanitation Open House date and location is:

> West LA District Yard Saturday, June 21

> > 2027 Stoner Ave. Los Angeles

t the West LA Open House



Will Brown, RCTO, 8 years of City service, and his son, Carter, 6 years old, with a young neighbor in the cab.



Joannie Mukai was a pioneer as the LA Port's Director of Construction and Maintenance. A passionate supporter in the Employees Club and longtime Association Board Member, she died in March 2010. The Club's annual scholarship program was named in her honor. "She believed in education and training, and in preparing for success," CEO Robert Larios said. "That's what the Club Scholarship is all about, and we're delighted to name it after her. It's a perfect way to keep her memory alive."

CLUB SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- All Club Members and their spouses of any age; and children, grandchildren, step-children, foster children and nieces and nephews of Club Members under the age of 25; are eligible to apply.
- Club Member candidates, or the Club Member who is related to the candidate, must be an active Member in good standing for at least six months prior to application deadline.
- The successful candidate must attend an accredited four-year college or university full time in the fall semester 2025. Current high school seniors matriculating to a four-year school in Fall 2025 are eligible.
- Candidates will be judged for academic excellence, community service and financial need.
- Scholarships are expected to be awarded in equal amounts of \$750 (each).
- Deadline: Applications must be completed online at the *Alive!* Website and submitted electronically by 3 p.m. June 27, 2025. All applications must be completed in their entirety and submitted at that time to be eligible. Sorry, but the Club is not responsible for delays in delivery.
- Decisions will be made by Club personnel and will be considered final.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted.
- Application essays may be checked by the Club for originality and authenticity. Club may request applicants to provide draft history.

Happy Father's Day

Father's Day tributes! GO TO: alive.employeesclub.com/fathersday

It's not too late! Pay tribute to your dad, granddad or the dad in your family, and surprise him on his day on the *Alive!* Website and social media!

Here are the personal messages sent to *Alive!* by some very loving and grateful children who wanted to pay tribute to their dad.



"Happy Father's Day to the best dad in the world! Eightyeight years strong. Blessed!"

- Lorean Soo Hoo, Retired, LAPD



country with nothing, gave us everything. Your strength, love and sacrifice built our future. Happy Father's Day, Dad – our greatest hero." – Anthony Rueda,

LADWP

"Came to this



"Happy Father's Day, Dad. I appreciate you more each year, and thanks for everything you do. – Marquas Smith." – Burt Smith, Public Works/Sanitation



"Happy Dad Day Foster! Ever since retirement, he's been traveling nonstop. But he always thinks of us, and sometimes takes us with. Love ya. J &C."

- James Howlett, Public Works/Sanitation



"Wishing you the best Father's Day. We appreciate all you do for our family. We love you!" - Howard Thomas, General Services



"Happy Father's Day. Thank you for being there for our daughter." – For Ernie Gallegos, Animal Services

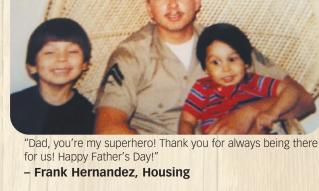


"Happy Father's Day, Grandpa Julian and Dad! We wish you a wonderful celebration because you deserve it. Thank you for everything. We love you!" – Julian Garcia, Public Works/Street Services

"Happy Father's Day to my Dream Dad. Words cannot express how much I love you. 'How wonderful life is ... now you're in the world.'" – Noelle Kauffman, Club



- E Wa





"Happy Father's Day to the best father, but most importantly, my best friend! I love you forever!" – Evelyn Lucero, Public Works/Sanitation





"Thank you, Dad (Marco A. Trinidad) for all the love, laughter, wisdom and faithfilled guidance. You are forever in our hearts and fond memories."

- Rachel Griffin, Retired, Convention Center

"Happy Father's Day, Dad! I love and appreciate you." – Candace Velasco, LADWP

Director of Sales



New Officers Filipe De Silva (second from left) and Damian Santana (third from left) are congratulated by Airport Police Chief Cecil Rhambo Jr. (left) and LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell, Club Member.

Welcome, New Officers

AIRPORT POLICE WELCOMES OFFICERS DE SILVA, SANTANA.

AIRPORTS: On May 2, Airport Police welcomed Officers Filipe De Silva and Damian Santana, graduates of the LAPD Academy class 11-24. They successfully completed courses in criminal law, community policing, defensive tactics and emergency response. Their graduation represents not only their dedication and perseverance, but also their commitment to serving and protecting the people of Los Angeles.

Thank you for your commitment, Officers De Silva and Santana! We congratulate you on your graduation and dedication.



FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED **MEMBERS**

Making an Appointment Is Best Way to Visit LACERS

LACERS uses an appointment-based system for all members who need in-person assistance. There are two options for appointments: in person, at our headquarters, and virtually, via Zoom. These options allow for timely and convenient access to get your questions answered. Visit lacers.org/ contact-us to make an appointment online or call (800) 779-8328.

Appointments aren't necessary if you drop off documents Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., and don't need to speak to anyone.

In-Person and Virtual Appointment Hours

8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday – Friday

Phone Hours 7 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 7 a.m. – 3 p.m., Tuesday

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS Save Your Smile With a Mid-**Year Dental Checkup**

A dental check-up is important for maintaining good oral and overall healthcare. Poor oral hygiene can lead to tooth decay and gum disease (periodontitis), which, if left untreated, may be associated with risks of other serious health conditions such as stroke, heart disease, and diabetes.

Save your smile. Manage your health. Schedule your mid-year check-up with your dentist today. For more information on dental exams and services, visit deltadentalins.com or contact your dental insurance provider at:

Delta Dental PPO: (800) 765-6003 DeltaCare USA HMO: (800) 422-4234 **Keep Your Contact Info** Updated With LACERS

If your contact information is out of date and we are unable to reach you, LACERS may withhold your retirement allowance until the information is updated. Fill out a Change of Address form found at lacers. org/forms with your new information and submit it through the Secure Document Upload at lacers.org/secureupload

LACERS Well Is Having Fun!

Stay active and engaged by taking part in a LACERS Well event or two! Here are a few from April/May:

5K Hike/Walk/Run in San Marino

On April 30, LACERS Well hosted a 5K Hike/Walk/Run at Lacy Park in San Marino. Anthem and Kaiser provided snacks and attendance goodies. Three groups – beginners, intermediates and advanced – walked at least four loops. A boxed lunch was provided, and everyone received a medal.

Walk in Griffith Park - Organized by LACERS Well Champion Ben Gaetos

On May 19 under overcast conditions, the crew got a great scenic view of downtown LA.

Flight Path Museum Tour

On May 16, LACERS Champion Nancy Castles hosted a visit to the LAX Flight Path Museum. Members had the opportunity to learn about the history of aviation and LAX! Some members even got to fly a plane on a simulation!











Dive In to Club Savings On Water Parks



Dining and Shopping Discounts

Unlock savings at over 75,000 dining and shopping establishments across the US and Canada.



Authentic Club Merchandise and Apparel

Show your pride with exclusive Los Angeles City and California State merchandise, available only to Club Members.



The Alive! Newspaper

Stay informed with our monthly publication, featuring news, events, and department spotlights. Available online and in print, included with your Membership.



Free Notary Public Service

Have your documents notarized through the Club or receive reimbursement up to \$15 per document.

Club Cash Program

Get instant financial relief with a pre-qualified \$500 cash advance, low interest rates, and convenient payroll deductions.

Club Sponsored Sports

Join fellow members in friendly competition across various sports such as Basketball and Softball, fostering teamwork and camaraderie.

Fees Back Program

Enjoy affordable tickets without hidden fees. We'll reimburse you for eligible convenience, processing, or handling fees charged by our ticket partners. Lookout for special promotions such as our exclusive membersonly refund for Disneyland Parking, Universal Studios Hollywood Parking, and other fun and exciting limited time special promotions.

employeesclub.com

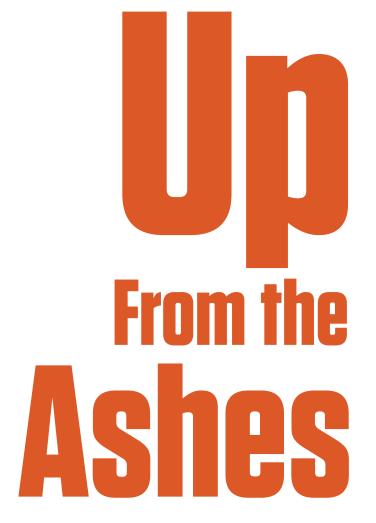
EXPLORE MORE BENEFITS ONLINE

Register your Club membership account online and unlock all your Club Member perks!



12 JUNE 2025 Employees Club of California · Alive!





The LA fires gutted much of the beloved Palisades Recreation Center. But staff refused to stop. Here's their story of destruction and revival.

Alive! photos by Summy Lam, and courtesy Rec and Parks

he Palisades Recreation Center began the new year – as so much of Los Angeles did – getting ready for a year of robust activity and relevance.

That changed on January 7, as fires of historic ferocity devastated Pacific Palisades and Altadena, and parts of the Hollywood Hills, West Hills, Encino, Studio City, and other locations.

Much of the Palisades Rec Center was consumed by fire, and all of it was closed, affecting hundreds of families. Four part-time City employees at the Center and one full-time staff member lost their homes. Directors remained on site during the fire before evacuating, witnessing firsthand the chaos and destruction.



Inside the burned-out shell of the Palisades Recreation Center gymnasium are personnel from Rec and Parks' West Region, front row, from left: Kortley Norris, Supervisor, West Region; and Jasmine Dowlatshahi, Sr. Recreation Director, Palisades Rec Center. Back: Leslie Richter, Recreation Supervisor, West Region; Sage Woodruff, Recreation Assistant, Palisades Rec Center; and Ernesto Diaz, Recreation Director, Felicia Mahood Senior Center (formerly of Pali Rec Center). Ernesto helped manage the All-Star championship (see right).

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW

More Than Just a Park

On April 16, Club CEO Robert Larios and Alive! editor John Burnes interviewed four Rec and Parks employees at the Palisades Recreation Center who were directly affected during and after the fires that devastated Pacific Palisades Jan. 7. They are: Jasmine Dowlatshahi, Sr. Director, 26 years of City service, Club Member; Kim Van Duzer, Administrative Intern, 7 years; Tony Murphy, Recreation Specialist, 14 years; and Ramon Cerrillos, Principal Recreation Supervisor, West Region, 31 years of City service, Club Member.

Alive!: Thanks everyone for joining us today. It's been a challenging time for



Ramon Cerrillos: Similar to Jasmine, I started as a youth in the depart-

"The Palisades Recreation Center is the heart of our town—a gathering place for joy and connection," Sr. Director Jasmine Dowlatshahi, Club Member, wrote to *Alive!* "Many parents have shared that their children inquired about the park's condition before even asking about their own homes."

Pali Rec Center carries on, even while it's closed. Its 70 basketball teams and numerous art classes relocated to other City Rec Centers. T-shirts with a message of resilience were created. Support Camps were established. Trophies, banners, violins, Pokémon cards and other items lost in the fires are being replaced. And plans are being designed to create a brand new Rec Center in the place of the ashes.

The story to be written about the Palisades Rec Center during January 2025 won't be just about destruction – it will include revival in the spirit of its ongoing mission to serve.

The Club thanks all in the West Region of Rec and Parks who made this feature possible.

you. Before we get into it, tell us how you started with the City.

Jasmine Dowlatshahi:

I started with Recreation

and Parks when I was

a teen. I was volunteering and then hired as a

Summer Camp Counselor.

Moving up after college,

I became a full-time employee as a Recreation

Coordinator. Shortly after

that, I became a Facility



Jasmine Dowlatshahi

Director and then a Sr. Facility Director. I have managed more than 10 centers, including Studio City Rec Center, Shadow Ranch Rec Center, Northridge Rec Center, and Cardenas Rec Center in Panorama City. Next I opened Chatsworth Rec Center after it had been closed for 10 years. After COVID, I worked at Reseda Rec Center as a Sr. Director. Then I moved over to the westside, and I've been at Palisades Rec Center ever since.

I have dedicated my life to Recreation and Parks, and it's truly my passion. Being a Park Director is about so much more than just managing a space; it's about creating places and fostering relationships that create a community in many ways. ment as a Rec Assistant. I became a Facility Director and then a Sr. Director. I did an article in *Alive!* a few years ago when I was in charge of PlayLA.

Ramon Cerrillos

That's right. I know that article. That's

an excellent program.

Ramon: I was promoted to Principal Recreation Supervisor II here in the west for the last two years, which oversees the Palisades area.



Tony Murphy: I've been with Palisades Rec Center for 13 years. I started off as a summer Counselor, and then I've been doing mostly all youth sports for the 13 years that I've been here managing the refereeing schedules, scorekeeping, coaching, all that. I've been working with youths for about 34 years,

and 31 years of it as a school teacher, too.

Alive! Feature



From the Fires, A Championship

After the fires, Palisades Rec Center continued its more than 70 youth sports teams at other City locations. One of those teams – the Palisades Minors All-Star team - won a championship representing their devastated neighborhood.

The championship took place at Oakwood Rec Center in Venice, where Pali Rec Center staff created a pop-up remote rec center. "Oakwood Rec Center was nice enough to open their doors and let us set up shop there," said Jasmine Dowlatshahi, Pali Rec Center Sr. Director.

"We took our minor co-ed league to the all-star City Championship," she continued. "On April 11, they won - champions of the whole City! After everything that had happened to them, they still went out there and gave it their all. The coaches lost their homes. Nobody skipped a beat.

"I'm so proud of them," she said.

Congratulations to the Palisades Minors All-Star team, its coaches, staff and parents. And a huge thanks to the Oakwood Rec Center for welcoming them in.



Champions: The Palisades Minors All-Star team, with coaches and staff. The tournament was held at Oakwood Rec Center in Venice.



Kim Van Duzer

and stay a part of the community.

Kim Van Duzer: I've

lived in the Palisades

for 35 years and raised

three boys there. The

three boys played

all the sports at the

Palisades Rec Center.

When I became an

empty nester, I decided

to get a job at the Rec

Center as a way to give

back to the community

And you lost your home in the Palisades due to the fires. Kim: Yes.

Tony: We had just finished up flag football, and we had gone through all of the evaluations for basketball. We were accommodating probably, what, 750 kids?

Jasmine: Yes, I would say 750. We had all our uniforms ready. We had just had our first day of practices on Monday the 6th, and we were giving out the uniforms. Some of the kids were really excited because JJ Redick [LA Lakers coach and neighborhood resident] had joined our minor league, and some of them were going



baseball. It's the main baseball youth program in Palisades. So that's where their home field was. Also AYSO soccer, which is huge. They used one

Jasmine: Kim also managed a lot of permits for events, like birthday parties. We had them every weekend.

Kim: Yes.

Ramon: In the West Region, Citywide season is one of the biggest seasons annually. We were

could be.

Jasmine: We had Daisy Garcia, an Emergency Facility Director, working with us at the time. There was so much going on. She left after the fires because she unfortunately lost her family home in Altadena. We were grateful for her assistance.

the mountains and felt comfort. It's a place where you would let your kids run around and you wouldn't worry about it. In fact, I have two little boys who are involved in our basketball programs. At the park they were surrounded by friends who became like family. They may walk to the Palisades Garden Cafe after their game. We knew everybody who worked there, and we knew everybody along the way; it was that kind of a place. To see all of that taken away so quickly was just really hard.

Everybody who lives there cares about their town and is very involved with it. They have traditions, and their entertainment is the parkthat's where they go to socialize and see their friends.

Tony: For the 13 years I've been there, I've seen been playing since o have young, who are in college now. I've gotten to know a lot of families. I've been to Halloween, carnivals, all-star games; I've been in the Fourth of July parade. Even though I don't live in the Palisades, I still feel like a big part of it.

of the main fields at the Rec Center.

trying to be as organized as we

That's really tragic. We'll talk about that a little later.

A Normal Busy Winter Day

In general terms, describe the Palisades Rec Center before the fires, on what would have been a normal day.

Jasmine: We were done with our fall season of basketball and flag football. We had participated in Flag Football All-Stars. We were starting the winter season. It's our biggest basketball season of the year with a City-Wide All-Star tournament at its conclusion. We had 78 teams; we had conducted evaluations, a week of drafts, had coaches' meetings, and organized the teams. The park also had a vibrant bocce league and tennis program. We were conducting a pilot pickleball program. We were holding many classes like Tai Chi, ballet and Toddler Clubhouse as well as our Park Advisory Board meetings; they were working on remodeling our playground and restrooms to make them ADA compliant. The park was as busy as ever!

From left: Sr. Directors Jasmine Dowlatshahi and Daisy Garcia before they evacu-ated as the Palisades fires encroached on the Palisades Recreation Center Jan. 7.

to have him as their coach. That weekend we were supposed to have our opening day.

Kim: The Rec Center is the heart of the Palisades. It's where I watch the community gather. The bocce courts were a huge, thriving social event for the neighbors of all ages. It's a great place for the seniors to find something to do and find their community, and stay social and engaged. Three schools came on a regular basis for the kids to practice their sports. It was a very engaging Rec Center that was always busy from opening to closing. It was completely filled with kids and adults using every inch of that park. That's what it was leading up to the fire.

Tony: Palisades is the home to Pacific Palisades

The Center of the Palisades

Kim said that the Center was the activity hub of the neighborhood. Hearing you mention all that you had going on, I don't doubt it. Describe the Palisades Rec Center's relationship to the Palisades.

Jasmine: When I first started working at Pali, the town quickly took me in. Pacific Palisades is a small town in a big city. Everyone knows each other, and it's very friendly. It's a little piece of heaven. I had printed on our camp shirts "Pacific Palisades: Where the mountains meet the sea." Every day on my drive to work I got to a point where I'd drive along the ocean and it instantly made me happy; then I'd drive into **Kim:** My friends grew up at the Rec Center, and now they're in their 60s. Generations of people who have stayed in the Palisades still talk about the memories of the Rec Center.

Jasmine: The Palisades Garden Cafe, a neighboring cafe to the park, reopened in March. When I walked in, everybody was crying. Even the workers were telling me that this is their family. They've watched these kids grow up since they were little. While we were inside it all felt like old times and nothing had changed. Then once you glance or step outside it's back to this new reality. Everything all around it is completely destroyed.

Ramon: From the management side, we're in support of the staff at the Pali Rec Center and Jasmine. It's a very vocal community who loves their park, that's very involved. They have an extensive Park Advisory Board that's one of the best that we have in the City.

- CONTINUES PAGE 14



Jasmine: Since the fires, we've still been having Park Advisory Board meetings via Zoom. We're having them monthly now, which is more often as we feel it's an important time to keep all updated and get community input and concerns.

January 7

Tell us about the day of the fire, January 7. What were you doing, how did you react, and how did you feel that day?

Jasmine: [Emergency Rec Director] Daisy [Garcia] and I were at the Rec Center along with two of our Rec Assistants, and we noticed the fire was starting on the hill above the park. Smoke was starting to come through, and I could tell that within two hours or so the park would be engulfed in smoke. My phone started going off constantly with concerns and questions. I let our part-time staff go home by 11 a.m. Daisy and I [the full-time staff] stayed. I called the Emergency Management Dept. to update them about the fire and that I had released staff. They were under the impression that our park was going to become an evacuation site. I quickly sent them videos so they could see for themselves that the smoke would be overtaking the park shortly. Four planes were in the air fighting the fire. Daisy and I evacuated by 1:30 p.m. There wasn't anyone else at the park by that time except our mailman. We left signs on the door that read, "We're closed today 1/7 due to the fire." We canceled all the practices and I told staff not to come in.

We never in a million years thought the fire would go farther than the hillside. We didn't think it was going to come into town. The wind was very strong; it was a fire windstorm. Like nothing I've ever experienced before. The sky was quickly changing. It was pure pandemonium in the streets. The traffic signal lights were already off. Police were directing traffic going down to Temescal Canyon. Daisy and I followed one another out down to Sunset Boulevard toward the 405 Freeway and Brentwood. It was gridlock. We didn't know it at the time but the street was packed with parents who were trying to get their kids out of school only to be told to go to another location in Brentwood to pick them up off-site. It was a lot of confusion and frustration. We were there in traffic for about two and a half hours. It was a moment I'll definitely never forget.

We finally made it to the Freeway where Daisy and I parted ways. It was another two hours until I made it home. I live in the west part of the San Fernando Valley. Once I got home and turned on the news, I saw that the fire was hitting landmarks that were very familiar to us. I started getting phone calls and text messages more and more rapidly. I started seeing people we knew on the news. I was so worried about our park families' homes and wellbeing. I started getting text messages about the park being on fire. Kim's house was in jeopardy.

Friends sent me clips. We saw the park burning. It was really hard to watch. You pour a lot of love and a lot of yourself into it. I consider my park an extension of my home. It was hard to see everything burning down, and I couldn't do anything about it. The park burned for four days until it was finally put out.

The hardest part for me that night was putting my kids to bed - before I knew anyone's house was lost. They were crying their eyes out. They said that the park made them the happiest. I said to them, "I'm going to do whatever I can to rebuild that park as fast as possible." I didn't believe it when I said it, but I put it out there

It was hard to sleep that night while I knew the town was hurting and the Rec Center was on fire. What else was on fire? Is her house okay? Is his house okay? Is this place okay?

The next day, I learned about the rest

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

the hangout spots, the library, the churches, the grocery stores, and the park. Everything we knew in the Palisades was gone. Never could I have imagined that a whole town would be gone. Five of our staff lost their homes, including Kim and Daisy.

I wrote an email to check in with all of my 78 coaches. I wanted to know how they were doing. I put in a lot of hope. "Listen, we're going to come back," I tried to write. "We're going to come back stronger. We're going to build a Rec Center that's state of the art. And we're going to do it fast because we don't want these kids to age out of recreation sports."

I wanted to continue our winter basketball league more than anything. I knew how important it was to so many, and I wanted to keep a sense of normalcy alive. So many lost their homes, but somehow everyone was in a positive state of mind and concerned with the park. I couldn't believe it: concerned about the park after their losses. They had it in their heart to think about the park and think of ways to help. Palisades people offered so much support; they started banding together, and they made it their mission to bring back the park. They have been doing so since.

Who told you to evacuate?

Jasmine: My supervisor, Kortley Norris. She told me to leave at around 1 o'clock.

What did you do after the fire?

Jasmine: Right after the fire, the City created a support camp to aid the families that were affected by the fires-they couldn't take their children to school, and they had a lot of things that they needed to tend to. The City created free camps at Mar Vista Rec Center and Oakwood Rec Center, and the City also opened up shelters for the people who couldn't find a place to stay at Stoner Rec Center or Westwood Rec Center. Our staff worked at Mar Vista with the support camp. It's where I got to see my families for the first time, and it was very emotional for all of us. Once they dropped their kids off, the parents would go outside, talk, trade notes and release [their emotions]. It was hard to see the parents hurting. This offered a great opportunity for our community to reconnect. A lot of people donated their time and their service to the support camp.

When was your first time back?

Jasmine: Probably about three weeks after the fires, so Tuesday, January 27th. The big gym was destroyed; I went to empty out the small gym that survived and collect the salvageable items. That was a very difficult trip for me. For all of us on our first time back, it was devastating, and it's hard to comprehend. I'm a sensitive person and very empathetic. I have made many strong relationships in the Palisades. To see all the homes destroyed, the shells

Sr. Director Jasmine Dowlatshahi reflects on the damage caused by the January 7 fires.

Alive! Feature



of hundreds of cars, trees and the mountains blackened and everything – and I mean everything – gone, I didn't even know where I was when I was driving around. It was hard to breathe for a few days after that, too. I don't know if it was psychological, but it took a lot out of me.

I'm sure.

Jasmine: But that's why I wanted to continue our sports leagues. I knew that was something that could help with this tragedy and help all of us.

I checked in with my staff of 18 at the time. Like I said, five of them lost their homes. We had to make sure that they had employee assistance and everything they needed. The ones who were able to work were given hours at other parks immediately.

Parents wanted to help. One started a GoFundMe campaign for the part-time staff. Navigating all of that was a job within itself. Running the leagues remotely kept us busy. It was unbelievable. The minute we decided we wanted to do it and we got approval from Rec and Parks, we got brand new uniforms and equipment from PlayLA because ours were destroyed in the fire.

Oakwood Rec Center was nice enough to open their doors and basically let us take over. We created a pop-up Pali Rec Center at Oakwood Rec Center, so we're there on the weekends for practices and games. We have girls' games on Sundays. It's been really great.

During the Fire

The Palisades fires approach the Palisades Rec Center.



Jasmine's First Return

Sr. Director Jasmine Dowlatshahi's first visit back to the Pali Rec Center a few weeks after the fires.



of the town. It was devastating. All the schools, all our park families' homes,



The new gym's exterior damage; the LADWP staffs a neighborhood service center in the Rec Center's old gym



A hallway in the new gym, destroyed.



The Rec Center's golf cart was melted during the fires; its shell is inside this space saved for recyclable materials.



Rec Center damage.

'I consider my park an extension of my home. It was hard to see everything burning down, and I couldn't do anything about it. The park burned for four days until it was finally put out.'

- JASMINE DOWLATSHAHI, SR. DIRECTOR, PALISADES RECREATION CENTER

Tony: I was teaching elsewhere on that day, so I didn't know about it right away. I was scheduled to come in from my school to the park. Jasmine texted me and said not to come in because of the fire. I didn't know the extent of the fire until I got home and watched the news about the Palisades and Altadena. It wasn't good. I was kind of lost in space because I was trying to get a sense of reality, of what was really going on.

Have you been back?

Tony: No, because of the safety hazards. I know it's going to be very hard the first time I do. I wasn't the guy who drove down Sunset – I drove through all the residential streets every time I came to work, to be part of the community. It's going to be a shock not seeing them.

Kim: I had been moving out of my house because I'm recently divorced.

Back in 2021, the Rec Center acted as an evacuation site for a different fire in the Palisades. We didn't take it too seriously at the time. People just left and stayed overnight in Santa Monica or nearby and came right back the next day. Nobody took anything of value because nobody thought it was going to be that serious.

We've never experienced this type of serious fire and serious evacuation.

It was hard to get updates. So somebody said, check your Ring camera to see what's happening. My Ring was disconnected, which meant it was gone.

It's a loss that's so complex. It's one thing to lose a house, but it's another thing to lose your community. That's what people are really struggling with, because you can build a house in a year or two, but then what? When will the community be restored? Why be in a rush to build a house if you have no community to go back to?

How did you feel when you went back to the Rec Center?

Kim: I was surprised that it was still standing. It looked like a bomb fell on the rest of the Palisades, with everything reduced to ash. There was almost nothing left. But to see the Rec Center standing, was surprising.

Ramon: We started getting calls from Jasmine saying they were evacuating. We originally thought that the fire wasn't going to reach the park. The City has never had a park burned. It wasn't in our mind. We thought it was going to act as an evacuation center, and we were getting ready for that. But then at night it became apparent that the firestorm burned everything down. Our focus was on our staff there and to monitor how they were doing mentally and emotionally. This was really hard on them, on Jasmine and Daisy. After that, our next step was to open up the camps at Mar Vista and at Oakwood, and then continue the sports leagues at Robertson and Oakwood.

I saw the area maybe 10 days after that. The gym still had smoke coming out of the top. The brick building was still standing, and Firefighters were still out there monitoring. The horror of seeing the damage was devastating. That park is one of the most beautiful parks in the City. To see it the way it was devastating. There's a real sense of peace in the canyon there. Just to see all that gone and the community at a loss was devastating in a recreation sense.

I felt grief. All the kids who played sports there had something to accomplish. It's very important to these kids who play there. Thinking of them not being able to do that hurt a lot. Being in recreation for a number of years, you know how important these leagues are. I felt like, wow, when is this park going to come back, and what are we going to do? Then Jasmine said that she wanted to play Pali's seasons at Oakwood and Robertson, and we got busy opening those doors. Now you can see a lot of the parents breaking down and hugging Jasmine and the staff members for what they've done for the families. It's a step of normalcy back into their lives.

Mission Intact

Your response was more than just continuing the sports leagues, right?

Ramon: Absolutely. We sprung into action for the Emergency Service Worker program. We opened up Westwood and Stoner Rec Centers as places where folks could go and shelter. Staff members went there from our district.

We also opened up the Mar Vista Rec Center and the Forward camp. It was all hands on deck. The other Rec Centers paused their seasons so that we could all wait for Palisades to begin. We moved our Citywide tournament; we did not want to exclude them. Some of our programs require personal information like birth certificates and things like that. But a lot of the Palisades families lost those documents in the fires. So we had to get creative to not have excuses why we wouldn't let them in if they wanted to play.

Jasmine: A lot of different City agencies helped to make our program successful. Rec and Parks PlayLA, a huge Olympic-funded program to fund youth sports in LA, also stepped up. PlayLA has an option where you can pay \$10 to do any sports program in the City if your family income is below a certain threshold. That's to make sure everyone has an opportunity. They could be in the Olympics someday! Well, that was something that was not needed at Palisades Rec Center; everyone was paying full price. But after the fires, I spoke with Ramon, and he made it so our park could utilize the \$10 option because people had lost everything. Nobody [in the Palisades] thought they would ever be in this position, but now they are, and the City was able to help

Kim: When the fires were happening, somehow people were still in the community taking pictures. News agencies were getting pictures. I was staying in denial until I saw the first picture of the Rec Center burning down. I sent that photo to Jasmine, and I felt like it almost broke her.

Jasmine: I felt helpless. A lot of my friends were asking me, "Which park are you going to work at now?" It doesn't work like that; you have to continue fostering the relationships that you've built. I felt helpless, but that didn't last very long. The Palisades community was not going to let



Local Heroes

Rec and Parks Recreation Centers thrive in part due to the parents and other supporters. Despite its damage, Pali Rec Center continues its mission with the assistance of the community, including Dorita Ahdoot, Michael Hendifar and Alex Hemmat. Here's why they believe in the Pali Rec Center.

DORITA AHDOOT

Palisades Rec Center supporter and mother of two boys in Pali Rec's All-Star Basketball teams

"My boys grew up at Pali Rec," she says. "It was our happy place. We met a lot of new friends, hung out with old friends, cheered on our friends' kids, and played in the play-ground with my nieces and nephews."

Keeping the teams going "brings the community back together again. What Jasmine Dowlatshahi did by continuing the winter basketball program right after the fires was vital for the community.

"We are looking forward to being back again!"

ALEX HEMMAT

Palisades Park Advisory Board Member, Pali Rec Center basketball and volleyball coach, and father of two

"The Palisades Rec Center is the heart of our neighborhood — more than just fields and gyms," Alex writes. "It's where kids learn courage, friendships take root, and families make lasting memories. My daughter took her first solo slide ride there and learned to roller skate. I coached my son's basketball teams for years. It was so beloved, we'd circle the lot for 20 minutes just to find parking — and it was always worth it.

"Even when the building closes, the spirit lives on. These programs are the heartbeat of our community — giving kids purpose and parents connection. Seeing so many familiar faces come together at Oakwood Rec Center these past weeks has been truly healing. It's a power



The original scoreboard donated by the Alex Hemmat family. The scoreboard was installed in the old gym.

past weeks has been truly healing. It's a powerful reminder of how much youth sports matter.

"What makes this place magical isn't the turf or the courts, it's the people. We lift each other. It's not just a Rec Center; it's a living, breathing example of what a true community looks like.

"After the fires broke out, I was the first one to arrive on site — heart pounding, not knowing what I'd find. I flagged down the fire department and urged them to spray water on the two gyms. We did everything we could. The big gym, sadly, didn't make it. But the small gym survived. And inside that gym is something deeply personal to me: the scoreboard my family had donated just a few months earlier. Seeing it still there, standing after everything, felt like a symbol of survival and resilience. That scoreboard wasn't just a gift. It was a promise that we would endure, that we would come back.

"That day changed me. And it deepened my commitment to this place in a way I can't fully put into words. The Rec Center is magical. It's sweat and laughter and determination. We may have lost part of the building, but we didn't lose the heart."

MICHAEL HENDIFAR

Pali Rec Center basketball and soccer coach and father of three

"It was always a dream of my wife, Jackie, and I, to coach our kids' sports and have them play on the same team," Michael writes. "The Rec Center is where that dream came true. Our first experience of the wonderful community was all the great families we met through the Rec Center, cheering on our kids. This camaraderie made for good friendships

- CONTINUES PAGE 16



Club CEO Robert Larios surveys the damage to the Rec Center's new gym. With him is Sr. Director Jasmine Dowlatshahi.

and great memories.

"What hurt the most after the fire was losing the community–the people we would see every day. The Rec Center brought the community together. The Rec Center hosted a free camp soon after the fire, and seeing the staff and their loving, caring faces, welcoming us in, brought tears to our eyes.

"The first practice for our kids, Tala and Nara, was scheduled for Wednesday, the day after the fires. We were devastated that we lost a season of the girls playing together. When Jasmine Dowlatshahi restarted the league, we were so excited. We showed up to Oakwood to see balloons, a welcome sign, T-shirts, food and drinks. It was all evidence of how much we meant to Jasmine, and I hope she knows how much she means to us. She is the heart of the Rec Center, and the Rec Center is the heart of the town."



Palisades ennis-center

The Palisades Tennis Center, run by a vendor on the Rec Center campus, before the fires.

The Rec Center's subcontracted tennis center clubhouse was destroyed. The white structure in the foreground previously stood upright.

Upfrom Ashes

'What started as a feeling of devastation has changed to excitement and positivity and hope. We're going to come back so strong. We're going to be the best rec center ever.'

> - JASMINE DOWLATSHAHI, SR. DIRECTOR, PALISADES RECREATION CENTER

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

this be the way that it ended. They were going to stick together and rebuild. They formed WhatsApp groups and banded together, no matter where they happened to be sheltering or living.

I couldn't believe how much people really cared about the park. I loved it too, but I didn't know that other people felt that way. So I drew a picture of my dream Rec Center with all that our park would need. Every time I would see somebody, I would pull it out of my pocket and show them the picture. When I showed it to the community and to leaders like [then-Recovery Czar] Steve Soboroff, Just a few months after the fire JJ Redick created a foundation, LA Sports Strong, and rebuilding the park is the first project he wants to work on. Mayor Karen Bass and [developer] Rick Caruso came together with other organizations to form a foundation to rebuild our park.

Was anything saved from the gym?

Jasmine: Yes. After the fires, a lot of the families asked us if we had pictures of the kids from their teams and trophies that they hadn't picked up yet. I went back to the park to find those things; some had survived. When I returned them to the family, they would cry their eyes out. What we couldn't recover, I reordered trophies. They had lost everything. That would help them start to recover.

All the banners that hung from the gym's walls were lost in the fire, but one corner survived. Our trophy case survived. I gave the banners to our banner company, and they have all been remade and waiting to be hung in our new gym.

Tony, how did you feel?

Tony: I definitely felt a loss in the aftermath. I got to see these kids I used to see throughout the week. I got to know them. Not only did they lose their park, they lost their schools, their supermarkets, and all the places they frequented. I tried to support them and their families emotionally when I got to see them afterward. That's the best I could do.

The Center – what was left of it – became a kind of hub for recovery efforts, for press conferences, things like that.

Jasmine: We jumped in and did what we needed to do. We were inundated with requests from people who wanted to use the park for something specific, like press conferences. It wasn't part of my job, specifically, but now it is. It was time to be adaptable and flexible and do what I needed to do for that community. There's nothing I wouldn't do for them.

Our small gym [that survived] is being used right now as a command post where neighborhood people can get their utility needs taken care of. The LADWP is there. ITA has erected a cell tower there, and they also erected the largest American flag you've ever seen in your life. The Palisades is flattened out now, and you see this flag from everywhere. The firefighters told me that they love seeing the flag. They can see it from their station and it gives them a lot of hope.

Through a couple of grants, we've started rebuilding our playground; that will be the first thing that we're remodeling. It's going to have a fire truck and first responder theme to thank the heroes who worked to save the Palisades as much as they could. It's going to be beautiful. Other than that, nothing is set yet. We're really excited about our partnerships with the LA Sports Foundation and the LA Parks Foundation.

Are there specific plans to rebuild **Palisades Rec Center?**

Jasmine: There is so much support coming through. The LA Parks Foundation has opened up an account for the park, and people have been donating to that. We have the LA Strong Foundation, led by resident JJ Redick; that's new, and we're working out a partnership with them right now. I don't have any more to add to that right now, but we are very optimistic that we will come back stronger, better and state of the art. The future is bright.

lot of the parents didn't see each other until the sports leagues. Seeing their emotional embraces after the fire was huge for them, and for the kids. It was more than about the competitive spirit of playing a sport. It was those connections, those relationships.



Pali Rec Center staff created these resilience T-shirts for families in sports leagues after the fires.

Jasmine: This was not just a park. It's so much more. I created T-shirts that say "Pali Rec Resilience, Strength and Unity." That became a logo for us. We gave them out to everyone, and everyone wore them with great pride.

A park coach and father requested the names of the kids who had lost their sports memorabilia in the fires. He then presented them each with signed jerseys of great NBA players. That was a beautiful moment to witness. The kids and their parents were beyond happy and started to smile again.



Photos and memorabilia saved from the remnants of the Pali Rec Center were displayed at remote rec centers during basketball tournaments.

Kim: Jasmine has to get 100 percent credit for doing that. She knows every single player. She knows everybody by name. She knows their parents. She has a relationship with everybody at that park. She didn't miss a step with this fire. She just regrouped, reorganized and got the kids at those other two Rec Centers to have some sense of normalcy and support. The signup desks featured a lot of hugging and crying, and we had art therapists there for the kids, too.

Jasmine: I love working for the City and seeing how we all come together during these unprecedented times. I've worked for the City since the Northridge earthquake and worked with FEMA. Then with COVID, all our Rec Center closed; we opened homeless shelters, and suddenly I was a homeless shelter manager. I thought that was tough, but this was something else.

is, if you can fit the needs of that community, you can make it a safe haven. We can spread that through all our parks in LA City. That would be great.

Jasmine: It had a feeling like you were home and you were surrounded by family and friends; it's a comforting place. And it was always filled with people.

These fires impacted all of Los Angeles, in one way or another. Our city has changed forever. Driving home, I drive through Malibu, and it's heartbreaking. It's hard to see our city hurting so badly. But I know our people here are strong, and they're not going to let this be the way that this story ends. There's no way.

I want to hope that it will be a quick turnaround. Also, we have the Olympics coming up, and that's a really big incentive for us to get moving. I'm very hopeful, and I'm excited for our future.

Ramon: I can see that the community involvement at Palisades is a model for the rest of the parks. As City workers, if we could go volunteer and get involved with our parks, it helps create a community.

A Passion for Parks

What do you love about what you do?

Jasmine: Watching the kids grow up is really great. I've been a Park Director for 25 years. My dream was always to be able to watch my own kids in the gym, and now I am able to do that.

I love that my work is not redundant. It changes every day. I get to work closely with the community and I have great relationships with so many. I have an ear to the community, and I know what they want at their local park and the types of sports or events they would like. When you can make that a reality, it's really beautiful to he able to facilitate

I love all things LA, and working for the parks was one of my dreams. As a little girl, I used to go hang out with the Park Director at my local park and ask him everything about his job. I feel very fortunate that I've been able to do what I love for my entire life.

Tony: Sports. I grew up in the Rec and Parks system, so that connection to sports has always been number one priority. Sports kept me out of trouble growing up.

I also love being a school teacher and connecting to youths, whether they're small or even as teenagers, that's something that I've always been able to do professionally. Being a part of Palisades for the last 13 years, my meaning comes from the community, the kids and the parents. Building a connection with them has been a huge part of my life.

Kim: My kids are in their 30s, and if you ask them about the happiest times of their life, it's their memories of the Palisades Rec Center. Being around kids when they're experiencing some of the happiest moments of their lives, I feel grateful for that.

Jasmine: In my opinion, there is nothing better than watching youth sports. My favorite thing ever!

Kim: Like T-ball. It's so fun to watch them try to hit it. Their parents get so excited thinking that their kids are going to be professional baseball players because they can hit the ball off the tee on the first swing!

Ramon: At the executive level, we're a little removed from the park. I envy the Rec Center staff because that's what I used to love about the park when I was in my own community. With our management team, with Sonia Young Jimenez, our Superintendent of the West Region, we help the parks in every way we can - uniforms or money or fixing things for them, things like that. When people walk to the park and feel like they're part of that park. we might be behind the scenes, but we feel like we're a big part of that.

Jasmine, Kim, Tony and Ramon, thank you

What started as a feeling of devastation has changed to excitement, positivity and hope. We're going to come back so strong. We're going to be the best rec center ever. What's the most important is that we stayed a community even when we didn't have one.

That's powerful. Sports can be therapy, as the mission of the Rec Center carries on.

Tony: Yes. It's very good to have that outlet for the kids, but I think it was also very good for the parents, too. Because of the fires, a If you could send a message to the LA City community or future generations of Angelenos about the importance of the Rec Center, what would it be?

Kim: The Rec Center is for everybody - children, families, seniors. It fulfills everyone's needs. That's important.

 $\ensuremath{\text{Tony:}}$ It connects to its residents, its people. Whether it's through basketball, seniors, pickleball - no matter where your community for sharing your stories with us. We celebrate all that you do for Los Angeles.

Jasmine: Thank you and thank you for sharing our story.

Kim: Bye.

Ramon: Thank you.





Club CEO Robert Larios and Sr. Director Jasmine Dowlatshahi outside the destroyed tennis center clubhouse.



The bocce courts and picnic areas received extensive damage.



The new ovm's wooden floor was buckled from heat and water damage.

Noelle Kauffman, **Club Sports** Commissioner

<u> IBSPORTS</u>

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CLUB SPORTS SPOTLIGHT: Badminton

This month, we shine a light on badminton, a fast-paced, energetic sport that is as fun as it is accessible. Played with lightweight rackets and a shuttlecock, badminton is easy to pick up, great for all ages, and delivers a full-body workout.

Club Member Wai Hon Jung recently introduced us to his local group, the Philippine Badminton Club of America (PBCA), based in El Monte. More than just a sports club, PBCA is a warm and inclusive community that welcomes players of all ages and backgrounds.

"We're about having fun, making friends and staying active," says club leader Jared Zabala

PBCA plays regularly at the San Gabriel Valley Badminton Club and offers training programs, friendly tournaments, and social events for both kids and adults.

> San Gabriel Valley Badminton Club 9255 Telstar Ave, El Monte, CA philippinebadmintonclub.com pbca.treasurer.2019@gmail.com

Other fantastic local clubs to check out include, Los Angeles Badminton Club, Elite Rally in Santa Fe Springs, and Arena Badminton Club — each offering their own unique



space to play and connect.

As Wai Hon Jung puts it, "Badminton brings people together." Whether you're looking to compete or just have fun, it's a sport that fosters both fitness and friendship.

Want to spotlight your club, team, or sport? Email me at nkauffman@ employeesclub.com. I would love to hear your story!

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Boxing and Redemption

RETIREE AUTHOR RELEASES NEW BOOK ON HOPE AND FRIENDSHIP.

LADWP: When last we caught up with Ben Alirez, Retired, LADWP, 33 years of City service, he had just published a novel about the pandemic. That was 2022, after he had already published a series of short stories.

"I've managed to stay busy writing since my last novel, Embers of Innocence, on the COVID-19 pandemic," he wrote to Alive! "This latest novel, El Gato's *Crusade*, is a coming-of-age story about a teenage boxing sensation who becomes entangled in gang violence and personal loss. More specifically, it addresses the senselessness of hatred and gangs found here in Los Angeles. It's fast-paced and brimming with action. It also has elements of faith and hope-love and



Ben Alirez, Retired, LADWP, and his latest novel. El Gato's Crusade.

friendship. Ultimately, it is an inspirational story that hits home for far too many of us. My short stories have also appeared in four anthologies for the California Writers Club since I retired in 2018."

He feels like his journey in retirement is expanding his footprint.

"As I look back on my time with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, I am very proud of the things I accomplished," he explains. "Many of them, procedures developed for the benefit of employees' present and future. "But they were also confined to offices or sections. In writing



stories, novels in particular, I feel like I'm leaving behind a larger footprint for others to enjoy. I find this new chapter in my life extremely fulfilling. Thankfully, my time at the LADWP has allowed me this incredible opportunity, including training courses in report writing, proofreading, and grammar."

Ben worked for the LADWP for more than 33 years, retiring as a Principal Clerk Utility. He now serves as Membership Chair

for the Inland Empire branch of the California Writers Club, having previously held the offices of treasurer and secretary. Prior to El Gato's Crusade, he co-authored Brothers in Arms in 2004, a young adult novella also about gangs and inner-city life, and in 2022. Embers of Innocence, a novel about the devastation COVID-19, as experienced through an ensemble cast of characters.

"I remain devoted to growing in the craft of writing. And playing pickleball, not necessarily in that order."

El Gato's Crusade is now available in paperback and eBook. It's also expected to become available as an audio book before long.

Well done, Ben! The Club is delighted to showcase your continued journeys in telling your stories.

Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.

RLACEI

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Send in your Interesting



Beverly J. Clark

Meet Barbara Nobregas, a Retiree on the Move. Barbara Retired in 2018 after working more than 34 years with the City of Los Angeles. She Retired from City service as a Management Analyst at Fire and Police Pensions. Her City service began



Barbara Nobregas and Beverly Clark.

Personnel and included a variety of positions in various departments,

- Legal Secretary, City Attorney's Office
- Secretary, Office of Mayor James Hahn •
- Secretary, Public Works/Street Services
- Secretary, Mayor's Office
- Commission Executive Assistant and Executive Secretary, Fire and Police Pensions

Family



Barbara Nobregas and her husband, William

Barbara and her hus-

band, William Nobregas, who works in Public Works/Street Services,, are proud parents to five adult children: Victor, Crystal, Vanessa, Sabrina and Nicolette. Their joy has multiplied with eight grandchildren ranging from ages one to 10 years old, and they eagerly await the arrival of their ninth grandchild this month.



Barbara fills her retirement days with purpose and joy. She cares for her 93-year-old parents, spends time enjoying her grandchildren, and continues to enjoy hobbies such as sewing, hiking, reading, and playing dominoes with her father. She also enjoys catching up with friends. Barbara has enjoyed travels to destinations such as London, Copenhagen, Malta, Sicily, Alaska, Japan (Tokyo and Kyoto), Cancun, Colorado, and the Bahamas. Her sights are set on traveling this summer to Seattle and Victoria.

Staying Active

Barbara is actively involved in her community and is very much involved with her church and its various activities. She enjoys regular hikes led by LACERS Well leader Ben Gaetos at Griffith Park and the Rose Bowl. She also attends some RLACEI events as time permits.

Words of Wisdom

Barbara encourages future and current Retirees to enjoy life, stay active and social, and prioritize brain health. She recommends Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age by Dr. Sanjay Gupta as a helpful resource to prevent dementia.

What steps did you take to prepare for retirement?

"Meeting with a LACERS counselor at a LACERS seminar was very helpful. Additionally, contributing to the City's 457 Plan/Deferred Compensation program was one of my best financial decisions."

What do you miss about your years of City service?

Barbara reflects fondly on the friendships and connections made during her career and takes pride in her professional growth and promotions within the City. In retirement, she continues to find fulfillment in caregiving, family time, crafting, and exploring new interests. She looks forward to the future, especially to traveling more once her husband joins her in retirement.



Barbara Nobregas and her grandchildren.



Barbara Nobregas in New Mexico.



as a Clerk Typist in

including

Contributions: Beverly J. Clark

Contact: Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director Beverly.Clark@RLACEl.org or Email: (800) 678-4145 ext 716 Phone:

RETIREE EVENTS

- Summer Picnic- Luau Thurs., Sept. 18 Friendship Auditorium 3201 Riverside Dr. 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- Thurs., Dec. 11 **Holiday Party** Friendship Auditorium 3201 Riverside Dr. 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

RLACEI EVENTS RESERVATION LINE

Call: (800) 678-4145, ext. 701 or Email: contact@rlacei.org Due to staffing, telephone confirmation cannot be provided.





RLACEI is dedicated to advocating for retiree interests. Members of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. enjoy all RLACEI events such as, member picnics and holiday party.

> Call (800) 678-4145 x706 or visit our website at RLACEI.ORG

Ν ΤΟΠΑ

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For Retired Club Members



GUEST COLUMNIST

Enjoy 'Free Days' in Your Retirement



Retirement allows Retirees to have more time for activities they could not engage in while working. The purpose of this article is to share with Retirees some

Mark Blunk

free activities available. These free activities provide Retirees and their families with a chance to enjoy various attractions around Los Angeles at no cost. The aim is to highlight a few places that might be of interest.

Free days are one way to enjoy gardens, museums and other points of interest in the greater Los Angeles area. Be sure to plan in advance, enjoy various locations for free, and enjoy a wonderful day around these opportunities. We are now approaching summer, and I find the botanical gardens throughout the area to be great for scenic walks. Why not walk about a beautiful garden on a free day and get a little exercise at the same time?

Recently I enjoyed a free day at Descanso Gardens, and although it was still a bit early for the blooms, the gardens had plenty of blooms to enjoy among the various garden sites.

Here are two botanical gardens I enjoy:

Descanso Gardens

Descanso Gardens in La Cañada Flintridge is a nice getaway for enjoying a botanical garden and seeing the great outdoors. Their free days are not only an opportunity to see the gardens for free, but to get some great



Descanso Gardens Website

exercise while doing so. The free days are the third Tuesday of each month. However, you must make a reservation in advance to reserve free tickets. Reservations become available on the first working day of each month at 10 a.m. If the first day of the month is on a weekend, the tickets open at 10 a.m. on the Monday following. It is best to go to Descanso's website to plan your free day at Descanso Gardens.

Huntington Library and Gardens

The Huntington



MikeWilkinson4LACERS@gmail.com **Board Hears Report on LACERS Well Expansion**

LACERS BOARD UPDATE

by Michael R. Wilkinson, LACERS Commissioner

Michael R. Wilkinson

LACERS Well recently reported to the Board on a successful program for 2024 and plans for 2025. LACERS Well is a program funded by the LACERS health carriers to improve the physical and mental health of LACERS Retirees by participating in a wide variety of activities.

The 2025 LACERS Well program will add to its basic mix of exercise, activity classes and brain health programs to include:

- Two language class series in conversational Spanish
- A back-to-basics class in computer technology, and
- A disaster preparedness class.

The budget approved by the Board of \$378,500 includes funding for fitness events such as Zumba, dancing and professionally led exercise classes as well as hikes and walks led by volunteers.

The funding by the health carriers means that there is no financial drain on the LACERS trust assets or the Section 115 trust that provides additional funding for LACERS' healthcare costs.

For 2024, there were 12 in-person events and workshops, 77 webinars and virtual classes, and 3,448 program participants. The program would not be as successful as it is without the enthusiastic participation of the 17 Champions volunteers who regularly lead LACERS Well activities in everything from local hikes to hula dancing. For 2025, the theme is Wellness in Motion, Knowledge in Action.

The goal of LACERS Well is to encourage healthy living by supporting members in achieving purpose in life, keeping their bodies and minds active. These healthy habits lead to a happier life, which has the additional benefit of lowering health costs for the members and for LACERS.

Finishing on a personal note, I participated in the April 30 LACERS Well run/walk at Lacy Park and had a wonderful time meeting our members and having a great lunch and presentation session at the end. Thanks to Kristal Baldwin and Alejandra Zuniga, team leaders and Karen Freire, the Health Wellness and Buyback Division, our health carriers and Keenan and Associates, for a wonderful event.

Corrections

Previous articles by Michael R. Wilkinson in Alive! included production errors.

- In May, we published that the one-year investment return rate was minus 7.36 percent, when it should have read (a positive) 7 36 percent
- In April, the article's headline should have read: "LACERS Sets Three Percent COLA for 2025.'

Alive! regrets these errors in production.

Library and Gardens in San Marino is truly one of the wonderful day events in Southern California. The gardens alone are amazing, and with the newer Chinese Gardens, the gardens are a special treat for



anyone who loves both cultural enrichment and beauty. You will also get a great workout as well. Their "Free Day" is on the first Thursday of each month. Like Descanso, you must make a reservation in advance. Reservations are open on the last Thursday of the month prior and can be made beginning at 9 a.m. until all free tickets are booked. It is also recommended to go to the Huntington's website for the "free day" and plan your reservation and free day accordingly.

My sincere wish is that you will try out one or both free days and enjoy your retirement!

Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

Washington, D.C.



"My husband Ron and I visited Washington, D.C. and saw many landmarks in the area. The White House was one as well as the Lincoln Memorial, where Dr. Martin Luther King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech, and the Washington Monument. My Facebook friends can see me reciting part of his amazing speech. It was a wonderful trip!"

— Jean Sarfay, Retired, LAPD/Communications

Send in a travel picture holding *Alive!*



• Snap a high resolution photo of you holding *Alive!*

• Go to: alive.employeesclub.com/ alivearoundtheworld. You'll find a convenient online form to send your text and pics for publication.

Letter From Japan

Cherry Blossoms and Pocket Wi-Fi

Japan is where the sun rises over an archipelago of some 6,800 islands. All are mountainous, including the four main islands of Honshu, which is the largest and most populous island and home to Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka and Kyoto, and the impressive 12,388-foot volcano, Mount Fuji; Hokkaido, the northernmost island, with its milder summers and much colder winters (snowfall is widespread, and there

are many ski resorts); Kyushu, the southernmost island, near the Korean Peninsula and is its beautiful beaches, volcanoes and hot springs; and last is Shikoku, the smallest of the four main islands, with its temperate climate, separated from the rest of Japan by the Inland Sea. Each island is proud of its culture and traditions, which date back thousands of years. These include arts including kabuki theatre, sumo wrestling and tea ceremonies.



The statue of Hachikō outside Shibuya Station in Tokyo remembers Japan's most famous dog, renowned for his exceptional loyalty in waiting faithfully for his dead master to return for almost a decade.

If you visit Japan for the first time or for only one week, don't waste time on aircraft changes. Fly direct to Tokyo, Kyoto or Osaka to enjoy maximin time there. It is one of the world's safest and most politically stable countries to visit; its crime rate is very low, and the people are very courteous. Costs of food, drink and local travel are 50 percent lower than in the United States at the time of this writing. Getting online is easy in Japan, and this can be done by renting a portable pocket Wi-Fi.

Captain's Log

Traveling with Capt. Michael Barnes, Retired, Harbor

At the Meiji Shrine – a Shinto shrine in Shibuya, Tokyo, dedicated to the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Shöken.

pick up the unit when you arrive at the airport (\$77 for two weeks). This gives you access to WhatsApp and Google Translate for your Japanese-speaking and reading challenges. Also, if you are not on an organized tour, buy a Suica tap card at the East Japan Railway counter at the airport and add \$20, suitable for buses and local trains. If you run out of credit while travelling, it can be topped up inside train stations.

I suggest pre-booking with

Japan Wireless directly and

The Japanese currency is yen, written as \mathbf{H} , with the symbol ¥. U.S. dollars can be changed at the airport, but the best place is at 7-Eleven 24-hour ATMs (much larger

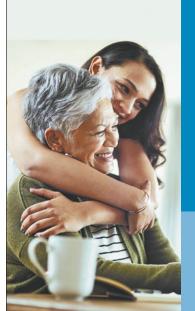
than in the United States). They also sell fresh ham and cheese sandwiches for non-fish eaters. Japanese cuisine seems to be fish-oriented, except for the odd beef dish, and even the noodles have a suspicion of the sea. Electrical outlets are 100 volts, different from the U.S. standard of 110 volts, and sockets are two-flat-pin, similar to North America.

If traveling on an organized tour, you will be shown stunning rural scenery and visit many fascinating places, like the popular cherry blossom spots from March to late April at Ueno Park, Meguro River and Shinjuku Gyoen in Tokyo; Maruyama Park in Kyoto; Osaka Castle; or Mt. Fuji. But stay with your tour bus group and

do not wander off or leave your ...

- Continued on Web Alive! SEE MORE PICTURES!





Life Insurance

FROM THE CLUB

If anyone relies on your income, you need Life Insurance.

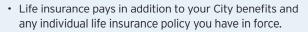


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RETIREMENT PLAQUE PRESENTATIONS We Honor Your Service!

Association CEO Robert Larios and Club staff honor Retired Club Members with a plaque for their many years of dedicated service to Los Angeles.





Retired from LADWP, 38 years of City service **Robert Lopez** Retired from LADWP, 38 years of City service

Have You Reserved Your Plaque?

The next grand **Retirement Plaque celebration** is scheduled for **July 10** at the California Endowment Center in downtown LA. The Club Retirement Plaque is one of the Club's very best benefits. *Reserve your plaque now!*

FREE!* CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE

Retired or Retiring Soon? Receive your own personalized Club Retirement

Plaque, free! (Must be a Club Member for at least five consecutive years.) * a \$499 value!





employeesclub.com

The Cybersecurity Flag, Captured Story and photos courtesy Cesar Alvarado, ITA

INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICE HOSTS FRIENDLY COMPETITION TO EMPHASIZE BEST CYBERSECURITY PRACTICES.

ITA: On May 7, 2025, the Information Technology Agency's (ITA) Information Security Office hosted a Capture the Flag (CTF) event. This competition was designed to enhance the cybersecurity skills of L.A. City's personnel. Teams composed of three to five employees represented various City departments, including: Building and Safety, Finance, ITA, Harbor, Airports, and LADWP. Students from Cal Poly Pomona's SWIFT technology club were also



Ted Ross, ITA Chief Information Officer and General Manager, welcomes participants before the flag-capturing began.

invited to participate and get first-hand insight into a career as a City employee.

This day-long Capture the Flag event featured seven teams competing against each other in two distinct exercises: a morning session focused on red team (offensive) tactics, and an afternoon session dedicated to blue team (defensive) strategies.

- In the red team exercise, participants exploited vulnerabilities to access and escalate privileges on target machines. In the blue team exercise, attendees investigated a simulated ransomware attack using forensic tools, traced attacker activity, identified malware, and decrypted data to restore systems and complete the challenge.
- In the blue team exercise, the ITA Integrated Security Operations Center achieved first place. Cal Poly Pomona students delivered a notable performance, securing a close second.

ITA's Chief Information Officer and General Manager, Ted Ross, Club Member, opened the event by emphasizing the importance of building cybersecurity skills, closing knowledge gaps, and encouraging collaboration across departments. Closing remarks from ITA's Chief Information Security Officer Timothy Lee, Club Member, encouraged ongoing skill development and teamwork.

Tim presented awards to the winning team, the ITA Integrated Security Operations Center (ISOC) (featured in the May issue of *Alive!*). The event benefited from the strong support of cybersecurity leaders across the City, including in-person attendance of Tony Zhong, CISO, Harbor, and Mike Tyner, representing LADWP.

The Capture the Flag participants found the challenges both

relevant and engaging, expressing enthusiasm for future events. This event showcased the expertise within the City's cybersecurity teams and also served as a valuable platform for inspiring and recruiting new cybersecurity talent for the City. A big thanks goes to the ITA Command Post team for its support with logistics, and to the City Controller's Office for allowing us to use their facilities. ITA also acknowledges its partnership with vendor Immersive to produce the event.



Chief Information Security Officer Tim Lee, Club Member, explains the rules and importance of cybersecurity knowledge



The team from Cal Poly



Participants in the recent Capture the Flag cybersecurity challenge.

Arlene on the Scene

Alive! follows Arlene Herrero as she meets Club Members.

by Arlene Herrero

Vice President of Business Development





Arlene and LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell, Club Member, at the start of the race.

Arlene with Officer II Frank Sarabia, LAPD/ Communications and Security Services Division team.

Arlene with Dep. Probation Officer II Paul Chavez from the LA County Probation team.

Life's Important Moments

Share your news... and send in a photo!

Have you gotten married? Had a baby? Graduated? Is a family member in the military? Send in a photo and a paragraph, telling us the details. We love to share your good news.



Births Weddings Graduations Special Achievements Military Service Tell Their Story



Send your photos and text online: alive.employeesclub.com/ lifesmoments

RETIREMENTS*

We honor the people who have spent their working lives building, managing and imagining a better LA, and are now Retired. We thank and appreciate all you have done!

Below is a listing of those who Retired from the City. To all we say, welcome to the best years!

NAME	TITLE	DEPT. YE	ARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT. YE	ARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT. Y	EARS
Aburto, Manuel A.	Refuse Coll. Truck Driver	Public Works	17	Harwood, Richard A.	Heating/Refrig. Inspctr.	Building and Safety	/ 21	Rice, Katherine L.	Planning Assistant	Planning	36
Aguilar, Alma	Maintenance Laborer	Airports	23	Hendrickson, Yauchiuan	ITS	LADWP	-	Robledo, Sylvia	Public Info. Director	Cannabis Reg.	7
Alba, Edna S.	Sr. Administrative Clerk	Public Works	10	Hester, Kent A.	Helicopter Mechanic	General Services	30	Romasanta, Maria G.	Advanced Tech Infrstrcr.	LADWP	-
Ali, Nawal A.	Airport Guide	Airports	13	Hickman, David B.	Sr. Bldg. Mech. Inspctr.	Building and Safety	/ 22	Rosenberg, Alma S.	Paralegal	City Attorney	36
Anaya, Luz D.	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	-	Hoffman, Paula P.	Librarian	Library	1	Ross, Willie P.	Sr. Bldg. Mech. Inspector	Building and Safet	y 30
Ayos, Ramel D.	Customer Service	LADWP	-	Hughes, Robert J.	Building Inspector	Building and Safe	ty 9	Roybal-Valdez, Brandy K.	Real Estate	LADWP	_
Badgrow, Ross M.	Supt. of Operations	Airports	19	Hypolite, Latanya R.	Supply Chain	LADWP	-	Rubi, Ruben P.		LADOT	27
Banguguilan, Leandro G.	Field Engineering Aide	Public Works	26	Ingalla, Karen Elizabeth O.	Wastewater Manager	Public Works	39	Ryan, Kevin T.	Deputy City Attorney	City Attorney	40
Banks, Waymond D.	Equipment Operator	Harbor	24	Kaiser, Dave K.	Plumber	Airports	11	Sakurai, Glenn R.	Fleet Services	LADWP	_
Barin, Farah Aileen R.	Accounting Clerk	Economic/Wrk Dev	. 35	Karsten, Steven M.	Power C&M	LADWP	_	Salazar Perales, Jose	Heavy Duty Truck Operator	Public Works	25
Barron, Hector	Water Supply	LADWP	_	Knoh, Joanne	Recreation Assistant	Rec and Parks	8	Sanchez, Manuel H.	Refuse Coll. Supervisor	Public Works	38
Binotapa, Noel Macalalad	Mechanical Repairer	LAFD	20	Longoria, Manuel	Water Engineering	LADWP	_	Sarao, Eloisa R.	Chief Mngmt. Analyst	Library	35
Botnick, Lerae M.	Budget	LADWP	_	Lyons, Renon Y.	Secretary	Economic/Wrk Dev	. 30	Sarbaz, Faranak	Power System	LADWP	_
	Fleet Services	LADWP	_	Mallet, Earl J.	Wastewater Trtmnt. Mech.	Public Works	26	Sellers, Gary L.	Detention Officer	LAPD	33
Browne, Monique D.	Traffic Officer	LADOT	35	Martinez, Pablo	Gardener Caretaker	Rec and Parks	21	Shallimi, Elias J.	Custodian	General Services	23
Calderon, Bertha	Management Analyst	Rec and Parks	27	Masi, Douglas J.	Power Supply	LADWP	_	Shapero, Wendy C.	Deputy City Attorney	City Attorney	26
,	Fleet Services	LADWP	_	Masuda, Matthew H.	Sr. Civil Engineer	Public Works	32	Shuttleworth. Thomas D.	Asst. Park Srvs. Attendant	, ,	3
Castillo, Herman E.	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	_	McBreen, Betty A.	Crossing Guard	LADOT	7	Sibolboro, Celeste D.	Management Assistant	Aging	6
Castillo, Victor M.	Refuse Coll. Truck Op.	Public Works	33	Medina, Froylan V.	Transitional Worker	LADOT	19	Sih, Jimmy Li	Sr. Management Analyst	LĂPĎ	12
	Sr. Constr. Inspector	Public Works	38	Miller, Deborah J.	Sr. Administrative Clerk	Rec and Parks	16	Smith, Rodney C.	Sr. Traffic Supervisor	LADOT	36
	Sr. Accountant	Harbor	22	Mingo, Debbie M.	Management Analyst	Airports	18	Sneed, Ferralyn M.		LACERS	37
Cooper, Carl D.	Supt. Operations	Rec and Parks	27	Molina, Mario R.	Power C&M	LADWP	_	Solano, Estela M.	Customer Service	LADWP	_
	Metering Services	LADWP	_	Montalbo, Mark A.	Supply Chain	LADWP	_	Soto, Marco A.	Gardener Caretaker	Airports	31
· ·	Power C&M	LADWP	_	Morishita, Mary H.	Asst. Park Services Att.	Rec and Parks	9	Stadelhofer, David W.	Power C&M	LADWP	_
· ·	Supply Chain	LADWP	_	Munguia, Reyna M.	Special Program Asst.	Rec and Parks	9	Stapleton, Edward F.	Sr. Real Estate Officer	Airports	19
	Tax Compliance Officer	Finance	25	Murillo, Gabriel A.		LADOT	16	Treinen, Donald J.	Power Supply	LADWP	_
	Equipment Operator	Public Works	30	Navarro, Noemi G.	Accountant	Rec and Parks	25	Turner, Iral J.	Sr. Traffic Supervisor	LADOT	39
'	Supply Chain	LADWP	_	Neira, Jesse	Power Transmission	LADWP	_	Ugas, Berta N.		LAPD	34
	Fleet Services	LADWP	_	Nguyen, Tammy	Database Architect	LADOT	32	Vaswani, Jaideep J.	Chief Airport Planner	Airports	33
Flores, Rogelio P.	Special Program Asst.	Rec and Parks	16	Onishi, Mark I.	Automotive Supervisor	General Services	26	Velasco, Raul	Refuse Coll. Truck Oprtr.	Public Works	25
, 0	Geographic Info. Spec.	Public Works	35	Pai, Yuehwa	Procurement Supervisor	General Services	15	Walker, Charles I.	Advanced Tech Infrstr.	LADWP	_
, 0	Sr. Bldg. Mech. Inspctr.	Building and Safety	23	Paz. Jose R.	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	_	Ward, Jay E.	Project Assistant	General Services	25
	Fleet Services	LADWP	_	Perez, George	Water Operations	LADWP	_	Watson, David A.	Electrician	Airports	23
	Supply Chain	LADWP	_	Perryman, Toni L.	Crossing Guard	LADOT	14	White, Kevin E.	Energy Distribution	LADWP	_
0,		General Services	18	Protto, Tamara A.	Police Service Rep.	LAPD	30	Wong, Ronnie	Equipment Operator	Public Works	27
	Power Supply	LADWP	_	Quan, Lily	Exec. Admin. Assistant	Planning	42	Wright, Lonay S.	Maintenance Laborer	Airports	19
				. , ,		LACERS					

* NOTE: If you wish to have a listing deleted from our online posting of Retirement notices, please email us at admin@ aliveemployeesclub.com, stating the name and department of the Retired person. The request must come from the actual Retired person. We derive our lists from official public records provided by the City and LADWP.

IN MEMORIA

FREE!* CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE

Retired or Retiring Soon? Receive your own personalized Club Retirement Plaque, free! (You must be a Club Member for at least five consecutive years.)

*a \$499 value!





ACTIVE

Garcia, Keith F.	LADWP
Gutierrez, Isaac H.	Rec and Parks
Poon, Walyee A.	Library
Sencion, Walter	Library
Akers, Tom R.	Mayor's Office

RETIRED

Almeida, Lorraine C.	General Services
Anderson, Vincent J.	LAPD
Ballentine, James H.	LADWP
Blair, Herman B.	-
Bonani, John	LADWP
Boyd, McArthur	LADWP
Brown, Roylan G.	LADOT
Cannon, John D.	LADWP

We honor those who have passed away and recognize their lifelong service to the City of Los Angeles. Their lives mattered to our City and our region. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the following current and Retired City employees who were reported to have passed away.

OF	YEARS OF DEPARTMENT SERVICE					
	Chou, Yeuan W.	Bldg. and Safety	25			
9	Contreras, Virginia	Rec and Parks	2			
2	Cummings, Pamela A.	Emegncy. Prep.	38			
20	De Fries, Jon J.	-	-			
16	Delgadillo, Robert	-	-			
<1	Fermin, Caesar N.	Controller	33			
	Ferrer, Deborah A.	LADWP	29			
	Gallagher, Patrick D.	LADWP	34			
32	Garza, Jose A.	City Attorney	34			
32	Gonnella, David W.	-	-			
29	Hight, Benjamin J.	LADOT	12			
_	Hirst, Alan G.	Airports	14			
39	Hooks, Joe S.	-	_			
17	Kreutzberg, Donald C.	LADWP	39			
11	Kuykendall, Virgie M.	LADWP	26			
26	Lee, Josephine	LAPD	35			
-	Lee, Young J.	LADWP	37			

-	-	Son,
-	-	Suar
-	-	Tash
LADWP	31	Thara
Public Works	23	Thon
-	-	Ulbri
-	-	Vald
Rec and Parks	s 15	Varg
LADWP	38	Volla
-	_	Walk
. Public Works	12	Whit
L. LADWP	34	Widr
LADWP	38	Willia
Public Works	28	Wolf
LADWP	29	Zell,
LADWP	16	
-	-	
	DEPARTMENT LADWP Public Works - Rec and Parks LADWP - Public Works LADWP LADWP Public Works LADWP Public Works LADWP Public Works LADWP	- - - - LADWP 31 Public Works 23 - - Rec and Parks 15 LADWP 38 - - Rec and Parks 12 LADWP 34 LADWP 38 Public Works 22 LADWP 38 Public Works 28 LADWP 29

YEARS OF SERVICE DEPARTMENT , La Voy L. LADWP 29 rez, Louis A. Rec and Parks 34 h, Bruce I. LADWP 24 LADWP ravej, Pat 14 mas, Alphesia LAFD 16 Public Works rich, Dwain K. 42 dez, Otilia R. Rec and Parks 3 Econ./Wrkfce. Dev. 27 gas, Armando J. aire, Arthur R. General Services 33 ker, Joseph C. tfield, Floyd rig, Paul 33 iams, Frederick A. LADWP lford, David A. General Services 32 Stuart J.

Graduations



Aliyah Garnica graduated from **Alexander Fleming** Middle School. "When I graduate from high school, I would like to further my education in becoming a teacher," she says. Aliyah is the grandchild of Johnny Williams, Public Works/ Sanitation.



Brooke Carcámo-Toledo graduated from Chico State University. She plans to return to Chico State this fall toward earning her master's degree in public relations. Brooke is the child of Gerald Toledo, LADWP.



Brandon Richard graduated from Cal State, Dominguez Hills in business finance. He plans to pursue a master's degree in business analytics at Loyola Marymount University. Brandon is the child of Joe Richard II, LADOT.



Lauren Richard graduated from St. Mary's Academy in Inglewood and plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in psychology at Cal State, Dominguez Hills. Lauren is the child of Joe Richard II, LADOT.





Nicholas Aaron Kenji Burton graduated from Chapman University. "Congratulations, Nicholas! As you graduate and continue your graduate MBA program, know how proud we are of you. We love you. Mom and Dad." Nicholas is the child of Anna Burton, Retired, Harbor.



Jaelah Davis graduated from Serra High School in Gardena and plans to attend UCLA in the fall, studying biology. She's a "beautiful daughter of Jamal Davis," Public Works/StreetsLA.



Jayla Love graduated from Paramount High School and plans to attend Cal State, Dominguez Hills in the fall. She'll play basketball and major in communications. She's the daughter of James Love, Public Works/ StreetsLA. "Very proud of her."



Tyler Robideau graduated from Valencia High School

Autumn Garnica graduated from the Port of LA Charter High School and plans to study artificial intelligence at the University of California, San Diego. "I plan to use my degree to build the future of technology and computer systems." Autumn is the grandchild of Johnny Williams, Retired, Public

A Grad of Our Own THE CLUB'S RONALD CORTEZ EARNS HIS MASTER'S DEGREE. CONGRATS!

THE CLUB: On May 16, Ronald Cortez, the Club's Assistant Quality Assurance Analyst, graduated with a master's degree in business administration (MBA) from Boston University and walked proudly across the stage. It was the largest graduating class to date for BU's Questrom School of Business.

Ron's MBA journey was long in the making. "My parents always wanted me to pursue a master's degree, but it wasn't until the birth of my son during the pandemic that I was compelled to complete a goal I had placed on hold," Ron explains.

"I literally, and figuratively, could not have completed my MBA degree without the support of the Club," he continues. "For that, and for so much more, I am immensely grateful for the Club's leadership team in helping me achieve this goal."

Ron says that the past three years offered him a few doses of challenges, but each module (semester) proved overwhelmingly insightful, given the program's exposure to a global network of professionals from more than 65 nations and across 30 industries. "As I spoke to more and more peers, I became aware of the Employees Club of California's unique standing in the business landscape. Our goal to provide the best service is clearly unmatched,

and the company's innovative culture is admirable. "Over the

course of this scholarly journey, I have been able to apply my learnings to the





will continue to share the knowledge acquired to continue to provide the excellence in service our members deserve. I wish to share this accomplishment with all Club staff, for we are a team. Their constant words of encouragement never faltered."

Congratulations, Ron, on your outstanding achievement!

THE CLUB ADVANCED DEGREE TEAM

By earning his MBA, Ron joins a growing list of Club staff who have earned advanced degrees to better serve Members with experience, foresight, innovation and strategic analytical skills.

THE OTHER CLUB STAFF WITH ADVANCED DEGREES ARE:

- Leigh Thompson, Controller, earned a master of business administration degree from University of Phoenix.
- John Hawkins, Education and Training Manager and Club Founder, earned a master of business administration degree from Pepperdine University's Graziadio Business School
- Robert Larios, President and CEO, earned an executive master of business administration degree from the University of Michigan, Ross School of Business.
- Arlene Herrero, Vice President of Business Development, earned a master of science in leadership management degree from the University of La Verne.

This fall, Noelle Kauffman, Director of Sales, begins her studies to earn an executive master of business administration degree (class of 2027) from the University of Michigan, Ross School of Business.

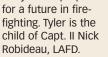
Put your graduation photo in *Alive!*

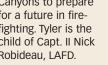
Club members: Have you had a family member

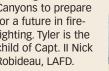


Ron with son, Liam, and wife, Claudia

and is taking classes Works/Sanitation. at College of the Canyons to prepare











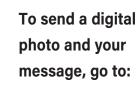
Kennedy Richard graduated from Windward School in Mar Vista and plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in sociology at Pomona College before studying for a law degree. Kennedy is the child of Joe Richard II, LADOT.

Ashlei Howard graduated from Southern New Hampshire University and plans to pursue a doctoral degree. Ashlei is a Communications Information Rep II at the Public Works/ Sanitation customer care center.

graduate from elementary school... high school...or college? Send us a photo, and we'll publish it in Alive!

Make sure you tell us:

- The name of the graduate.
- The school from which they graduated. If a college, tell us their major.
- Their future plans (briefly)
- The name and department of the Club member they're related to, and how they are related







alive.employeesclub.com/graduations





Show Off Your Work Crew! Enter and win!

Celebrate you and your work crew! Submit photos of your City of LA coworkers (with or without you) in action on the job, working or socializing at the office or yard, behind the scenes, routine or even quirky.

We'll give a \$50 gift card to the first five who submit each month.

Entry Period for July issue: June 1 – June 15, 2025

Here are a couple of sample entries.



"Catching up with friends at work." With Freddy Cupen-Ames, Trinity Straw, Narcis Grasu, Jacob Brothers, Jennifer Jones, Jacqueline Cervantes, Dale Kanegawa and Brian Pak.

– Jacqueline Cervantes, Public Works/Contract Administration



This office team at LAPD/Communications had fun during their Spirit Week. Submit a photo of your work team having fun, and you could win a gift card!

First 5 entries receive a...



Submit your best photos online at alive.employeesclub.com/onthejob/ Club Members only. Good luck!



Entry Period for July issue: June 1 – June 15, 2025

RETIREES:

You have your own contest now! We want to see you living your best life.

See the Club's new "**Your Best Life**" photo contest on page 5.



From November 2015: On Daly Street, Public Works/Sanitation and Environment staff removes trash as part of Operation Clean Sweep.

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