

Best New Program: Wildlife in the California Food Chain - Regional Facilities Agency



(L-R) Kevin Regan, Deputy Director of Regional Agency; Hugo Maldonado, Regional Operational Manager, Regional Agency; Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Colleen MacKay, Regional Park Superintendent; Kim Bosell, Regional Park Superintendent; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; John Wicker, Director.

The program was initiated by the San Gabriel Unified School District G.A.T.E program as part of the 4th grade curriculum to teach students about the ecosystem. At Whittier Narrows Nature Center, the staff taught the 4th graders about the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers, the wildlife habitat, the importance of water conservation, as well as native vegetation. The program ended with the students' artistic representation of the Life Science in their Art Exhibit and iMovie, so that visitors – including families and teachers – were educated about the ecosystem. In the spring, the students' art will be exhibited at Jefferson Middle School. This program is designed to meet the California State "Next Generation Science Standards." It's a true example of "Parks Make Life Better!"

Commissioner's Award: Grounds Maintenance Forum - North Agency



(L-R) Roy Williams, Regional Operations Manager, Regional Agency; Hugo Maldonado, Regional Operations Manager, Regional Agency; Jonathan Gargan, Deputy Director, North Agency; Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Robert Horio, Regional Grounds Maintenance Supervisor; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; John Wicker, Director

Comprised of classes, vendors and friendly competition, the Grounds Maintenance Forum was created to motivate Department staff to find efficient and effective ways to do their jobs. This year's forum was held at El Cariso Park, which hosted more than 300 Grounds Maintenance workers and 24 vendors. Due to the high use of El Cariso Park by the community, it required strong teamwork between the Department's Grounds Maintenance Divisions and the North Agency's Recreation and Crafts Division to ensure this event's success. Through this event, staff were able to learn, grow and come together, thus increasing comradery and morale.

Director's Award: Doug Newell – North Agency



(L-R) Jonathan Gargan, Deputy Director, North Agency; Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Doug Newell, Recreation Services Supervisor; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; John Wicker, Director

Doug Newell is a regular at Homeowners Association and Civic Association meetings, providing information about Richard Rioux Park and its upcoming events and programs. He's been able to host programs that have significantly contributed to the mission and goals of the Department, including children's sports programs, programs for senior citizens and Concerts in the Park.

Efficiency Award: Electrical Shop - North Agency



(L-R) Johnathan Gargan, Deputy Director, North Agency; Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; accepting the award for the Electrical Shop, Don Houston, Manager of Facilities, Operations and Crafts; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; John Wicker, Director

Throughout the year, electricians are busy replacing obsolete lights with new LED fixtures that are more energy efficient. A total of 180 units were replaced in 384 hours. These new fixtures use less electricity than standard light bulbs, and also last 30 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Department electricians worked around the clock to ensure that programming was not affected at any of the parks.

Genesis Award: Charlotte Perkins - South Agency



Khadija Goulhiane, Recreation Services Leader; Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Margaret Trujillo, Recreation Services Supervisor; Veronica Cortez, Recreation Services Leader; Lynette Edmond, Recreation Services Leader; Charlotte Perkins, Recreation Services Supervisor; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; John Wicker, Director

The first South Agency Senior Prom/Winter Formal took place on Dec. 11, 2016 at the Hacienda Heights Community and Recreation Center. This was a vision that was created through conversations with senior center participants at our local parks, where seniors expressed sadness about not attending their senior proms in high school. The community wanted to create a lasting memory for those seniors attending prom by creating an event that would be low-cost. There were 150 seniors in attendance, and it was a magical night, because we recreated the ambiance of their youth in the form of their senior prom.

Image Award - Seeloong Young - North Agency



(L-R) Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Seeloong Young, Instructor; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; John Wicker, Director

Seeloong Young leads by example and provides an atmosphere of creativity, sportsmanship, and proper etiquette. As an instructor, Seeloong made learning fun. She is well versed with lifeguarding and all challenges that a lifeguard encounters on a day-to-day basis. Whether it be CPR, deep water rescue, or a simple cut, she explains and demonstrates with grace. This year, the Department introduced a pilot program for online swim lesson registration. This was a completely new system that all management was unfamiliar with. Seeloong was involved with the program from the start, and gained thorough knowledge of the system with ease. She is well deserving of the 2016 Image Award.

Individual Contribution Award: Roy Higgins - North Agency

Roy Higgins is an expert in his craft and has on multiple occasions been able to complete projects in a very efficient manner, well under expected timeframes and deadlines. Roy is the only Refrigeration Mechanic in the North Agency, and he completed 1,569 work order hours in 2016. His work has enabled our pools to run smoothly throughout the season, diminishing the need for additional costs and repairs. Roy has not only benefited the North Agency, but his skills and knowledge have assisted the Department's other agencies, as well.

(Photo Not Available)

Parks Make Life Better!: Hart Park Barnyard – Regional Facilities Agency



(L-R) Hugo Maldonado, Regional Operations Manager, Regional Agency; Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Kevin Regan, Deputy Director, Regional Agency; Rachel Komulainen, Park Animal Keeper; Eric Reifman, Regional Park Superintendent; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; John Wicker, Director

In 2016, the William S. Hart Regional Park Barnyard experienced a lot of growth and improvement in ways that positively affected all of its visitors. Among the improvements was the construction of two large additional enclosures for deer and the equine. These enclosures have allowed more space for the animals to move around, and can be used as relocation space in case of an emergency. The barnyard offers various educational

tours year-round that impact the lives of those who attend, and many become emotionally invested in the animal residents there.

Safe Equipment Operation/Safe Contribution: Construction Division – North Agency



(L-R) Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; Don Houston, Manager of Facilities, Operations and Crafts; Dinah Quinones, Park Project Coordinator; John Wicker, Director

In an effort to create a better and safer playground experience, the North Agency Construction Division put together a special team to focus on improvements to existing structures. The team – which included Dinah Quinones, Park Project Coordinator, and General Maintenance Worker, Daniel Yawn – ensured that each playground in the North Agency underwent a rigorous inspection, and any broken, unsafe or aging equipment was repaired or renovated. In 2016, this resulted in 70 work orders totaling 600 hours of labor aimed at making our playgrounds safer. The North Agency Construction Division worked painstakingly on the details of this project to enhance the beauty and safety of our facilities, and to ensure that “Parks Make Life Better!”

Valor Award: Jaime Padilla - North Agency

On July 22, 2016, Jaime Padilla received a phone call from a co-worker who felt ill and needed to go home. Something about that call made Jaime feel that something wasn't quite right, and he drove the 10 miles from Pearblossom Park to Stephen Sorensen Park

to check up on her. Upon arrival, Jaime found the building locked, though he knew that his co-worker was still in there. He continued searching and knocking, trying to get her attention, and when he was finally able to get her to open the door, he immediately realized that she was not very responsive, and was slipping in and out of consciousness. Jaime called 911 for help, and the arriving emergency personnel immediately began treatment and confirmed that she was having a medical emergency. Jaime's intuition, quick action and determination helped save a life, and for that, he received this Valor Award.

(Photo Not Available)

Valor Award - Eric Valdez - South Agency



(L-R) Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Eric Valdez, Construction and Repair Labor; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; John Wicker, Director

On June 24, 2016, Eric Valdez was on his way back to South Agency Headquarters when he was stopped at a traffic signal. While at the intersection, he witnessed two cars collide, causing an SUV to flip two or three times. Eric immediately went to render aid to the crash victims. A crowd of bystanders was yelling "Fire," so Eric grabbed his sledge hammer, broke the front windshield and freed the occupants. As a result, no further injuries occurred, and the parties were carried to safety. This example of disregard for personal injury to himself and assisting an innocent victim is in accordance with the finest values of this Department and the County. For his actions above and beyond the call of duty, Eric was presented this Valor Award.

Valor Award - William Jarrett - South Agency



(L-R) Mika Yamamoto, Regional Operations Manager, South Agency; and Derek Elleri, Lake Aquatics Manager, accepting the award on behalf of William Jarrett.

On October 3, 2016, while tending to his duties at Martin Luther King Medical Clinic, William heard a call for help from his co-worker. While changing out the trash bags, his co-worker was suddenly, and without provocation, assaulted by a man who had been loitering in the area. The man punched his co-worker twice, knocking him down, and was about to start kicking him until William ran to the scene. The suspect fled upon William's arrival, and his co-worker was spared further harm. William's willingness to risk his own safety to help protect and render aid to a co-worker shows a level of compassion and bravery worthy of this year's Valor Award.

Volunteer Involvement Award: L.A. County Teens of Cerritos - South Agency



Accepting the award on behalf of L.A. County Teens of Cerritos are (L-R) Norma E. Garcia, Chief Deputy Director; Melissa Centino, Fourth District Parks and Recreation Commissioner; Mika Yamamoto, Regional Operations Manager, South Agency; and John Wicker, Director

The Los Angeles County Teens of Cerritos have become the forefront of its community. When it comes down to the wire and assistance is needed, they respond promptly to lend a hand. The teens have been asked to participate in several departmental events in which they have developed a sense of pride and confidence of their worth. They also develop leadership skills, and provide opportunities for planning, decision-making, contributing to the facility and community events, and celebrating our Department's mission by strengthening the community through diverse programming.