



# GREEN SCENE

April 2014

## WORKING IT OUT



### *How a growing number of people are discovering the perks of free workouts at Los Angeles County parks.*

If you believe the headlines, one of the biggest cultural shifts taking place in the United States today is the phenomenon known as “cutting the cord” — as Internet streaming of movies and television shows enables consumers to end decades-long relationships with expensive cable packages.

With much more serious implications for physical and mental health, there is another change occurring — and the evidence can be found at a number of Los Angeles County parks. As more people look to economize when it comes to fitness, and a growing number of parks install outdoor exercise equipment to the delight of patrons, parks are indeed becoming the new gym.

“We all realize that an active lifestyle is essential to improved health, longevity and the enjoyment of life,” said Angel Baltazar, Recreation Services Supervisor at Cerritos Community Regional Park. The park received its second fitness zone last September, and has experienced an estimated 50 percent increase in usage in the months since it was dedicated. That may be because it would typically cost hundreds of dollars per year for park patrons to use similar equipment at for-profit gyms. “There’s nothing sweeter than

getting something for free. That’s what outdoor workout zones in our parks offer — a chance to get in shape without paying a dime. Think of it as a playground for grownups who want to get in shape.”

Across the Department of Parks and Recreation, more than a dozen parks now feature outdoor fitness clusters, which provide a place where patrons can engage in moderate to high-impact resistance exercise alone or in groups — free of charge.

Laura Smarr, 69, has been using the fitness zone at Ladera Park (located just outside the Senior and Community Center) for more than two years. Before the equipment was installed, she would exercise by walking around her neighborhood or using treadmills and stationary bikes at a local gym. She now exercises with friends several days a week at the park — where it’s safe, convenient and free.

“I have saved more than \$1,000 since leaving my ... gym,” said Smarr. “I am always telling people about this equipment. I hope to see more like this added to parks throughout the community.”

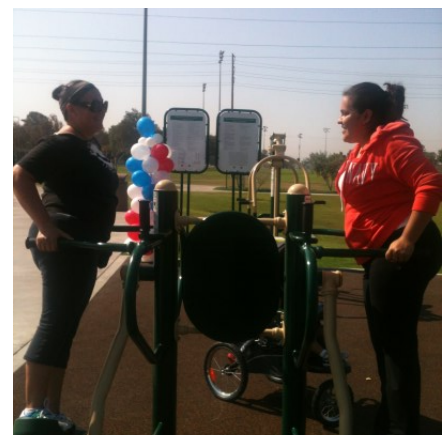
In addition, a number of L.A. County parks offer exercise programs like Zumba and

water aerobics; and two parks in the North Agency host the 100 Citizens Outdoor Fitness program, with Cal State University-Northridge kinesiology students offering a free workout program for adults.

All 174 L.A. County parks are accessorized with natural and man-made resources that provide opportunities for healthy exercise; and, of course, virtually everything one can imagine doing at the park — hiking, organized sports — can result in serious calorie burn.

This trend is borne out by data: a 2010 study published in the Environmental Science and Technology journal found that just five minutes of exercise in a green space can boost mental health.

— *Catarah Hampshire*





# DIRECTOR'S DESK RUSS GUINEY

## ARE YOU READY TO GET FIT?

Everyone who works for the Department knows how important our parks are in promoting wellness. Beginning next month (and going well into the fall), we will have the opportunity to help reinforce that message to our fellow Los Angeles County employees — as we host six out of the nine events for the 2014 Countywide Fitness Challenge! Employees in all of our agencies are putting forth a tremendous effort to make these events successful, and we owe them our gratitude for a job well-done! In partnership with the Department of Human Resources, this program gives us a unique

opportunity to showcase some wonderful parks and facilities while doing our part to promote physical fitness in the County workforce. Here's the lineup at our parks:

“Walk It Off” at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area on May 17 — where you can take part in activities that range from 5K fitness walks to paddling in dragon boats!

“Make a Splash!” at Castaic Lake State Recreation Area on June 14, for kayaking, paddleboarding, 3-mile hikes and more.

“Get Cultured!” on Aug. 9 at the Hollywood Bowl, with fitness walks, “Dance Mania,” yoga and chair massages.

“Be One with Nature!” on Sept. 6 at Alondra Park, where you'll enjoy fitness and nature walks and circuit training.

“Take a Hike!” at Placerita Canyon Natural Area and Nature Center on Sept. 20, where you will be amazed by bird walks and interactive sessions with reptiles and other animals – not to mention challenge hikes of up to 7 miles!

“Play for Life” on Oct. 18 at Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area, where you can take part in our own fun, County version of a triathlon — which consists of a two-mile power-walk, bicycle/buggy fun rides, and a pedal boat relay. There will also be exercise sessions and more!

We are looking forward to a great showing by Parks and Recreation employees at these and all of the Countywide Fitness Challenge events, so stay tuned for official invitations to register yourselves and family members. Together, we can stay active and healthy!

## DREAM LOCATION

On Jan. 31 at Jesse Owens Park, in partnership with Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation, LA84 Foundation and the Department of Parks and Recreation celebrated the opening of our fifth and sixth Dodger Dreamfields!

The event was held on Jackie Robinson's birthday, and a number of present-day Dodger players — including breakout star Yasiel Puig — were on hand to teach fundamentals of the game, sign autographs and show dozens of young people how much joy the game of baseball can bring into their lives.



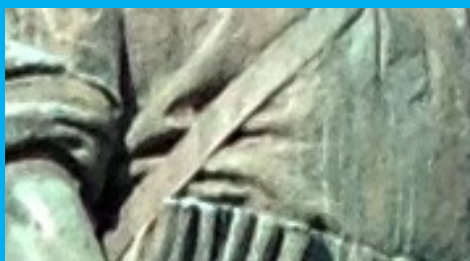
## ON YouTube



With a grant from the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), the Department of Parks and Recreation was able to remove 52 tons of illegally dumped waste material from two County wildlife sanctuaries last fall. Great work by our Grants and Natural Areas teams!

Want to see how “Team Up to Clean Up” was done, and learn why the cleanup effort was so important to the environment? Go to our YouTube channel and watch the video by our Public Information office: <http://bit.ly/JElzTb>

## WHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT



# IS THIS ???????

ANSWER ON PAGE 6



# AT THE PARK, SPARKING NEW INTERESTS



**VOLUNTEER  
PROFILE**

fun — all to learn more about energy, electricity and sustainability.

At the core of his efforts: an intense desire to understand how the world works and share that knowledge with others. “This is for the kids,” Ferrassoli says of his volunteer work, “to create that spark in them.”

With an eye on the possibility of future challenges, Ferrassoli believes young people today should be encouraged to “look to the future and solve the puzzle of our energy problems. I won’t have to worry about it; but maybe the next generation, or the generation after that, will.”

With a mind that can hold and relay information with the speed of a high-voltage battery, Ferrassoli is always in high demand — from park day camps in the summer, to outreach

sessions at libraries all year round. He isn’t limited to electricity either; another popular demonstration, which he calls the “Wonderful World of Water,” explains some of its many surprising qualities. Did you know water can “float” in a pan? Ferrassoli will show you and explain how. Much of his work can be seen on his YouTube channel, “ScienceTubeToday.”

In a big way, Ferrassoli’s demonstrations enable him to continue learning more about the complexities of the world and — figuring out new ways to use that knowledge.

“Teaching is learning,” he says. “And learning by doing translates into practical use.”

— Heather Larson

Sharing a passion for discovery, a man of science energizes young people at West Creek Park.

On a warm January day in Valencia, Calif., young people of varying ages huddled closely around a picnic bench under the pavilion at West Creek Park. Their attention was focused intently on one of several contraptions of curious design.

They were listening to Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation volunteer Orlando Ferrassoli as, with contagious enthusiasm, he explained the use and history of a collection of machines with spinning wheels, metal rods, magnets and coils. It was a Saturday that the park had dubbed Benjamin Franklin Day, and the main attraction was the knowledgeable man with bright eyes — carefully explaining how electricity was first harnessed, and how humankind has put it to use from the

1600s to the present day.

As a volunteer, Ferrassoli isn’t paid or reimbursed for the time and effort he invests in creating and sharing these demonstrations. He spends hours in the park- hoping to ignite a fervor for science in young people, who are visibly fascinated by his presentations.

For the Brazilian-born Ferrassoli, it all began with curiosity, imagination and fascination with the world we live in. With a professional background in language education and transportation, he has always been, in his words, “absolutely and unconditionally fascinated by technology and electricity.”

To satisfy that intellectual curiosity, he immersed himself in books and even enrolled in some college courses for



**VANPOOL** The South Agency has started the first Department of Parks and Recreation vanpool! With their vRide participation sponsored by the Metro Vanpool Program, our pioneer riders are Ron Cox, Lillie Munoz-Ledo, Miguel Vazquez, Robert Castanon, Sam Armas, Carl White and Lonnie Eddings. Wouldn’t you rather sleep, text, read, talk on your cell and eat — all while saving gas, money, time and wear-and-tear on your personal vehicle?

For information on starting your own vanpool, please call (800) VAN-RIDE or go online to <http://www.metro.net/riding/vanpool/>

# CLASS ACT

One year after the passing of Sal Castro, his commitment to higher education lives on at several East Agency parks.

Before he passed away in April 2013, education activist Sal Castro approached Department of Parks and Recreation Deputy Director Frank Gonzales with a proposition: Why not set aside space inside park buildings to provide young people with information on low-cost opportunities for higher education?

Castro — who served on the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Commission for nearly two decades, and called “the most passionate man I have ever met in the field of educational empowerment” by Supervisor Gloria Molina — did not live to see his plan materialize. But today, his vision lives on at 10 parks in East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley: The “College Corner” provides park visitors, day camp participants and afterschool club members with easy access to the kind of information that Castro fought his entire life to make more available to underserved communities.

At the parks hosting the program, a large poster featuring Castro’s photograph is filled with information about academics, financial aid and campus life at a number of colleges. In large letters, it urges all who see the display to “GO TO COLLEGE AND GRADUATE.”

“Sal was committed to making higher education accessible and affordable to all young people, and he was a tireless advocate for our parks and facilities playing a role in that mission,” said Department of Parks and Recreation Director Russ Guiney. “The College Corner is a great example of how we can all play a part in encouraging young people to avail themselves of opportunities to make



a brighter future.”

With detailed information updated on a quarterly basis, some of the institutions represented include Azusa Pacific University; California State University, Los Angeles; California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; East Los Angeles College; Mt. San Antonio College; California State University, Fullerton; and Citrus College.

The College Corner can be found at Belvedere Community Regional Park; City Terrace Park; Dalton Park; Allen J. Martin Park; Eugene A. Obregon Park; Rimgrove Park; Ruben F. Salazar Park; San Angelo Park; Sunshine Park; and Valleydale Park. — *Maritza Anderson*



U.S. Green Building Council recognizes Castaic Sports Complex Aquatics Center for environmentally-conscious construction.

The Olympics may be over, but the Department of Parks and Recreation is bringing home the silver: For its environmentally conscious design, the Castaic Sports Complex Aquatics Center has been awarded the prized Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Dedicated by Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich in May 2013, the center was designed with a focus on minimizing waste, recycling construction materials, using locally sourced materials whenever possible, reducing waste water, and utilizing drought-tolerant landscaping. Energy optimization and efficiency

practices were employed in the lighting and climate control of the building through the use of day lighting, insulation, and high efficiency HVAC programming.

The LEED certification program has been a driving force in the movement toward environmentally responsible construction. Receiving LEED certification is an honor for new construction throughout the United States, and the Department of Parks and Recreation is proud to add another LEED certified project to its growing number of sustainably designed facilities.

For more information about the LEED certification program, visit <http://www.usgbc.org/leed>.

— *Heather Larson*



## 20 YEARS



Frances Qiu  
Administrative Services Agency

## 25 YEARS



Josephine Ang  
Regional Facilities Agency



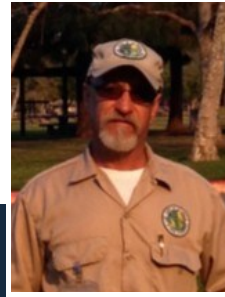
Rudy Candelaria  
East Agency

## 30 YEARS

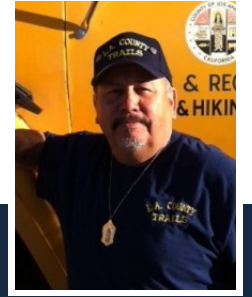


Vernie Patterson  
Administrative Services Agency

## 40 YEARS



Santiago Castillo  
Regional Facilities Agency



Jose Del Castillo  
Regional Facilities Agency



## Hugo Maldonado

### Q&A:

On March 25, it was announced that Hugo Maldonado — who has worked in a variety of capacities in the Department’s Aquatic Safety Program since 1990, most recently as Chief Lake Lifeguard — has been appointed Regional Operations Manager, filling the position formerly held by Kimel Conway in the Regional Facilities Agency. Having established himself as a capable and respected leader for his years of service keeping the public safe, Maldonado (who holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology from UCLA and a master’s degree in public administration from USC) said in a

note to his colleagues that he “enjoyed my time as a Lake Lifeguard and I have benefited greatly from working with the diligent lifeguards and park staff at all three of our lake facilities.

Over the past 24 years, we have responded to many emergencies, overcome many challenges and accomplished many extraordinary achievements that we can all take pride in. The things we have experienced together are memories that I will value for a lifetime.” As he settles into the new assignment, Maldonado spoke to Green Scene about accepting a fresh challenge.

**Why did you apply for the position of Regional Operations Manager?**

It served as an important step in my professional life. I felt that my unique

experience and skill set would allow me to serve the County to a greater extent in this new position.

**What are your goals?**

To provide leadership and support to the park superintendents and their staffs by providing them with the tools and the resources that they need to be effective at serving the needs of our County residents and park visitors.

**What expectations do you have for yourself in your new position?**

I am looking forward to my new responsibilities and I intend to work very hard to make certain that we are providing high-quality services.

— Joyce Fitzpatrick

**Oksana Korneenko**, Administrative Assistant III – *Administrative Services Agency*  
**Marche Palmer**, Crew Instructor – *Regional Facilities Agency*  
**Larry Woods**, Electrician Supervisor – *South Agency*  
**Barry Shih**, Grounds Maintenance Worker I – *East Agency*  
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**Sean Gorman**, Plumber – *Regional Facilities Agency*  
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**Margarita Salgado**, Recreation Services Leader – *East Agency*



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## WHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT



**ANSWER**—This six-foot-tall bronze sculpture by Theo Alice Ruggles Kitson is located facing the playground at Arcadia Park. It is one of 52 casts of the Spanish American War Memorial (also known as The Hiker) made between 1921 and 1956 to commemorate the Spanish American War. Born in Brookline, Mass. Mrs. Ruggles Kitson (1871-1932) showed an early sculptural ability, and by the time she was 19 she had exhibited and won an honorable mention at the Société des Artistes Français, Paris. The Hiker is her most famous artwork and casts of it can be found in cities all over the United States. In 1940, Los Angeles County presented and dedicated this artwork to the United Spanish War Veterans of Southern California. . — **Ansley B. Davies**

## HIGH FIVE



RECOGNIZING YOUR SERVICE  
TO THE COMMUNITY

I traveled from FL out to CA for vacation. I spent two days in your lovely city. I just wanted to share a couple of the pictures I took at Vasquez Rocks. I was told the beautiful clouds were rare to see so I thought you may enjoy these. Thank you for preserving such a beautiful place. I can't wait to get back out to the West Coast. I plan on taking a camping trip in the L.A. area soon! Thank you, again! I truly had the perfect vacation!

**Tristin Taylor Crowder**  
*Via Facebook*

