



# GREEN SCENE

August / September 2014

## BELVEDERE PARK AQUATIC CENTER OPENS WITH CELEBRATION



**Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina helps dedicate new facility that is the first of its kind in East L.A.**

Hundreds of local residents joined Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina and Department of Parks and Recreation Deputy Director Frank Gonzales on July 12 to celebrate the grand opening of Belvedere Park Aquatic Center (5035 E. First St., Los Angeles, CA 90022).

Emceed by KTLA personality Vera Jimenez, the ceremony marked the debut of the gleaming new \$14.8 million facility, which provides families with an array of exciting options for healthy, safe aquatic recreation and the opportunity to take swimming lessons that have the potential to save lives.

Synchronized swimming and diving demonstrations were also part of the celebration — where Gonzales welcomed the community, Department staff discussed programs and representatives of the American Red Cross were on hand to provide important information on water safety. Department of Public Works Deputy Director Shari Afshari, artist Sonia Romero (whose work adorns the facility) and two-time World Class Diving Championships record-holder Sam Hernandez were also among the speakers.

“East L.A. is now home to the only outdoor Olympic-size pool open to the public on

Los Angeles County’s Eastside,” said Supervisor Molina, who provided funding to make the facility possible. “Hopefully, this \$14 million investment will help level the playing field so Eastside kids can have a fair shot at Olympic gold.”

The previous pool at Belvedere Community Regional Park was built in 1950, welcoming hundreds of thousands of swimmers over more than 60 years before it was demolished in 2013 to make way for a new, state-of-the-art facility. Belvedere Aquatic Center features a 12,750-square-foot Olympic-size competition pool; 2,550-square-foot lap/instructional pool; 1,100-square-foot children’s splash pool and a 1,100-square-foot leisure pool. To the delight of competitive swimmers, the competition pool is listed by USA Swimming as certified for both short (25 meters) and long (50 meters) course competition.

The new facility also includes an 11,500-square-foot pool building with restrooms, showers, changing rooms, exercise room, classroom and staff offices.

A host of Department staff and partners were instrumental in making the event a success and are deserving of special thanks for making this first-class facility the best it can be: Frank Gonzales,

Manuel Escobar, Rick Tang, Sofia Gavia, Adriana Olivas, Carlos Abarca, Edith Rivas, John Mack, Alexandra Gonzalez, Ashley Jauregui, Steven Robles, Kim Pedregon, Leo Ramirez, Bryan Flores, Amayeli Martinez, Daniel Gomez, Parlox Rodriguez, Rosa Montenegro, Jose Torres, Blanca Galvez, Angie Rodriguez, Justin Wu, Guadalupe Villegas, Orlando Aguilar, Karla Hernandez, Daniel Lara, Yazmin Sanchez, Gerardo Gonzalez, Tiffany Zupan, Veronica Herrera, Jasmine Martell, Martin Rascon, Richard Aguirre, the Grounds Maintenance and Construction Division teams, Departments of Public Works and Public Health and Internal Services, PCL Construction and California Commercial Pools.

“Aquatic recreation is so important to young people in particular — not only because swimming is fun, but also because it is essential to teach and reinforce skills that are potentially life-saving,” said Director Russ Guiney. “Belvedere Aquatic Center is a place where people of all ages can feel welcome to have fun, learn and grow in their community for many years to come.”

— Andre Herndon



# DIRECTOR'S DESK RUSS GUINEY

**D**rought. It is a word that is inescapable to residents of Los Angeles County and all of California, as we cope with one of the worst statewide water shortages in history.

Our Department has taken a leadership role in water

conservation over the last several years — implementing several measures that not only save meaningful amounts of potable water, but also set a good example for the millions of patrons who visit L.A. County parks and golf courses annually. Here are just a few examples:

Recycled water projects completed at 22 parks and golf courses. At Whittier Narrows Recreation Area alone, the project supplies more than 300 million gallons of recycled water each year!

Smart controllers — which irrigate landscaping based on weather data beamed down from satellites — installed at 29 parks.

So far, these state-of-the-art sprinkler systems have saved 219 million gallons of water, which is enough to fill more than 330 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Removal of 280,000 square feet of turf at El Cariso Golf Course, which,

replaced with decomposed granite, saves 9.2 million gallons of water per year — enough to supply more than 50 households.

These are accomplishments in which our entire Department can take pride, and there is still more that we can do!

As our Water and Energy Task Force has made clear, all employees can play an important role in conserving this precious resource — and there is no technical expertise required. With work orders for water-related issues second only to matters of health and safety, all you need is a watchful eye to report broken sprinklers, sinks, toilets and other fixtures that may needlessly result in water going down the proverbial (and literal!) drain.

Your efforts are important to keeping our Department at the forefront of the County's water conservation efforts, and together we are making a difference. Let's keep the momentum going!

## PROCLAIMED!

**A**t the July 8 meeting of the Board of Supervisors, several Department personnel were on hand as Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich made a special presentation to recognize Park and Recreation Month. In a proclamation, the Board commended “the hard-working and dedicated employees of the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, and urges all residents to use and enjoy the many parks and recreation opportunities available to them.” It also praised our efforts to preserve and protect historic, natural and cultural resources; offer positive alternatives for youth during non-school hours to reduce negative behavior; helps youth develop and grow into healthy and productive adults; and strengthen community image, sense of place and cultural unity. In attendance, left to right: Director Russ Guiney; Meliza Hernandez (Loma Alta Park); Supervisor Antonovich; Penny Daniels (Loma Alta Park); Lorraine Martinez (Arcadia County Park); Dave Campbell (Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park); Trevor Zemp (Castaic Sports Complex Aquatic Center); and Chief Deputy Director John Wicker.



## WHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT



# IS THIS ???????

**ANSWER ON PAGE 4**



# PLAY BALL! NEW DODGERS DREAMFIELD OPENS



**Field at Ted Watkins Memorial Park is “a beautiful place” for young people to “enjoy a great game and reinforce crucial values of teamwork and sportsmanship.”**

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Department of Parks and Recreation Chief Deputy Director John Wicker were among those on hand July 12, as a new Dodgers Dreamfield was dedicated at Ted Watkins Memorial Park (1335 East 103rd St., Los Angeles 90002).

As part of the celebration, the new field, made possible through a partnership with the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation and the LA84 Foundation, was the site of a youth baseball clinic led by several Dodgers stars.

“I would like to thank LA84 Foundation and the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation for the investment they have made not only in this community, but in so many others around the Second District,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “Having safe and beautiful parks with brand new fields like this one ... is an important part of creating strong communities. We invest in our communities so the residents can enjoy healthy lifestyles.”

Added Los Angeles Dodgers

Foundation Executive Director Nichol Whiteman: “We were thrilled to be joined by Adrian Gonzalez, Chris Perez, Miguel Rojas and Justin Turner ... as we dedicated our 34th Dreamfield. Their support on a game day, in addition to the support of our partners, proves the dedication of the club to the Dreamfields program which provides a safe place of play for youngsters in our community.”

The Dreamfield at Ted Watkins Memorial Park includes a number of new features, such as laser leveled infield surface and bases, a new infield watering system, new laser leveled outfield surface, new sprinkler heads and sod, new dugout roofs, 6-foot side and outfield fence, new remote-controlled, solar-powered scoreboard and new field signage.

“This wonderful addition to the park will make it possible for youngsters in the area to learn and practice their baseball skills under the tutelage of coaches and other caring adults while having fun,” said Patrick Escobar, LA84 Foundation Vice President of Grants & Programs.

Several Department staff deserve thanks for all the hard work that went (and will go!) into making this field the recreational focal point that it deserves to be: Joe Mendoza, Mika Yamamoto, Melinda Mayoral, Louie Guerrero, Tenesha Ware and the entire Ted Watkins Park team, Miguel Vasquez, Eva Jusup, Sam Armas, Carl Dye, Abraham Ricardo Perez, Lonnie Eason, Jorge Rimada and Jose Mendez.

“This is such a beautiful place, but we aren’t just celebrating a new baseball field. We are celebrating what this field represents: a new and exciting opportunity for the young people of this community to learn values of teamwork and sportsmanship that every parent knows will make their futures even brighter,” said Wicker. “Those lessons are extremely valuable, and they are absorbed much more easily when you can look forward to playing on a first-class field like this one — enjoying a game you love, in a place where your family, friends and neighbors can participate or just come to cheer you on.”

— **Catarah Hampshire**

**ON** YouTube



On a recent #ThrowbackThursday, our YouTube channel looked back a few months at December 14, 2013 — with a emotional piece by Video Production Specialist Shane Savanapridi chronicling the 50th anniversary event commemorating the tragic collapse of the Baldwin Hills Dam. Held in a section of Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area where the ill-fated reservoir once stood, the event honored those who lost their lives that day and those who survived or acted heroically to prevent further irreplaceable losses. Many survivors and witnesses shared their stories with us exclusively: <http://youtu.be/dGJrneOt3Bs>

# UNDER THE STARS

**FamCamp partnership with California State Parks provides community organizations with all the essentials for fun, enriching overnight trips to Castaic Lake.**

Recreation in nature should be accessible no matter where you live or how much money you may have — and the sights, sounds, scents and camaraderie that come with overnight camping trips can be a big part of establishing a lifelong love for the outdoors. At Castaic Lake State Recreation Area, a newly-formed partnership between the Department of Parks and Recreation and California State Parks aims to make those aspects of recreation more widely available in Los Angeles County.

With FamCamp, non-profit community organizations are able to use a trailer stocked with enough camping equipment — tents, sleeping bags, pads, stoves, lanterns, propane and more — to accommodate up to 35 people. To take advantage of the opportunity, at least one leader in a qualified organization must undergo training in the use of the materials provided in the trailer.

With participation from youth representing a number of County parks, the Department of Parks and Recreation has been hosting or facilitating training events throughout the summer.

The idea is quickly catching on. Aside from providing a new opportunity for people to enjoy camping, “one goal

that I hope to achieve with these programs is developing the next generation of outdoor recreation professionals,” said Castaic Lake State Recreation Area Superintendent III Lori Bennett. As a young person, Bennett said, “my mother took me camping, and where I gained a passion for the outdoors, and my grandfather took me sailing — and look how I turned out! I have a dream job with Los Angeles County, but now the work really starts.”

With the training events that have been conducted this summer, a number of Department staff and volunteers made substantial contributions. Special thanks go to Lori Bennett, Russ Kimura, Diane Alarcon, Chris Mowry and Friends of Castaic Lake. At California State Parks, Sedrick Mitchell, Dolores Mejia and Michael DeBoer have been tremendous supporters of bringing FamCamp to its first Department of Parks and Recreation facility.

“I’ve been working to make the dream of FamCamp come true through developing this partnership,” said Bennett. “I hope to have all Los Angeles County parks participating in a FamCamp activity in the future.”

— **Joyce Fitzpatrick**



## WHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT

**ANSWER**—During construction of the Vasquez Rocks Interpretive Center, a consultant was hired to test the ground to ensure that the new building would not impact an unknown archaeological resource. During this testing, a milling stone and round sphere were uncovered. A milling stone is a stone tool that was utilized by Native Americans to grind up various seeds and grains for consumption. The stone sphere is thought to have been a gaming piece. This milling stone, made of Pelona Schist, measures 1.5' x 2.5' in size, and is estimated to be somewhere between 500–6,000 years old. It is currently on display inside the interpretive center. — **Ansley B. Davies**





Last night's screening of AFRICA UNITED was, beyond a doubt, my favourite BAFTA screening to date. I have never seen so many children have their attention held so raptly by a movie. I couldn't stop telling my wife about it when I got home.

The movie was so popular with the Sheriff's Dept. that they asked to borrow the DVD. When we hit a technical snag early in the evening, Charlotte provided the equipment that enabled the DVD to be played. Charlotte, you are a true leader in the community and a blessing to the families who frequent Roosevelt Park. It was wonderful that Melinda joined us for the evening and to see her again.

I was thrilled to see so many participants in the soccer clinic beforehand. It certainly is a draw. ...

In closing, a friend of mine came out to the screening and brought his young son. In leaving at the end of the night, he commented on all the staff, saying, "They are doing God's work."

Best wishes,

**Grahame Wood**

*Member of Council,  
BAFTA - British Academy of Film and Television Arts  
(Sent via email to Charlotte Perkins, Melinda Mayoral & Joe Mendoza)*

On several occasions I have had the opportunity to enjoy our wonderful park in Lake Los Angeles. I have spent time with grandchildren playing on the playground or, most recently, with mem-

bers of my church on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Today, as I spoke with Shirley Harriman about how the park is a blessing, I realized I needed to express my gratitude for what has been given to this community. The hard work put in to bring a quality level of recreation has truly given this community something to enjoy.

My thanks to you, Regina [Bradley] and the hard working park staff who make Sorensen Park an oasis in the desert. I attribute the great atmosphere at the park to hardworking attitude of Regina and the staff. It is for that reason, my wife and I enjoy participating at "trunk or treat" as we hand out candy and taking the kids to movie night.

Again, my thanks to you and all who made the park what it is. May God bless you all as you have been a blessing to this community.

Blessings,

**Pastor Bob Benoit**

*Twin Lakes Community Church  
(Sent via email to Gary Dickerson)*

This is the first time I have volunteered as a youth coach at the Castaic Sports Complex and I just wanted to take a moment to compliment you on your professionalism. As an attorney, I receive many emails throughout the day. However, your emails are always welcome because they are not just informative, but also upbeat and positive.

Your league is extremely well run. You communicate clearly. Schedules and uniforms are ready timely. You are consistent with your willingness to answer even the silliest of questions (despite your no doubt hectic schedule). In short, you make volunteering easy and fun.

I hope you will not mind but I have taken the liberty of copying others on this email. Although I am sure they already appreciate your talents, I wanted to provide my feedback anyway.

Thank you!

**Donald Brown Esq.**

*Father of Trey and Shiloh  
(Sent via email to Jessica J. Haley)*



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