

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

July 1, 2025

Proclaiming Parks Make Life Better! Month

July is celebrated as “Parks Make Life Better” month across the state of California to recognize the important role parks and open space have in community well-being. Studies show that access to parks contributes to physical and mental wellness. Additionally, parks encourage stewardship of the environment, enhance social connections, promote economic development, and support youth development.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (LA County Parks) embodies all these benefits—and more—for the communities it serves. LA County Parks manages 183 parks with over 40,000 acres of parkland and welcomes over 50 million visits annually. Our parks system includes diverse facilities from community and regional parks to nature centers; from public swimming pools to splash pads and lakes. LA County Parks also manages over 240 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding and operates the largest municipal golf system in the nation. LA County Parks maintains four botanical centers and owns the iconic Hollywood Bowl, and the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, two world-class performance venues.

Beyond recreation, LA County Parks provides essential prevention and intervention programs that serve the county’s most vulnerable youth and their families. Youth programming supports working families, providing young people with a safe and

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structured environment, as well as opportunities for social emotional growth and enrichment. LA County Parks' programs are particularly essential during the summer months. Research shows that the summer months can be isolating for youth and have the potential for increased loneliness. Additionally, working families face the challenges of work schedules, affordability of summer camps and/or the age restrictions of summer camps that limit to children under 12. LA County Parks is providing diverse set of programs for Teens this summer to support LA County families, listed below:

- **Our SPOT (Social Places and Opportunities for Teens) Teen Centers:** Our SPOT Teen Centers are located at 16 centers countywide offering after-school teen program, for youth ages 12–17, with extended hours until 9 PM and a free supper. Activities include leadership development, social action projects, and recreation. The Hollywood Bowl Access Program also provides special field trips to summer concerts.
- **Summer Youth Nutrition Program:** Free lunch and snack at 49 park locations for youth 17 and under Monday through Friday, during the summer months when school is out. Additionally, youth participating in the Our SPOT Teen Centers are provided with a free hot supper. A dinner option was the number one need identified by teens, underscoring food insecurity in community for the youth.
- **Summer Teen Jobs:** Youth@Work helps place LA County youth in a paid job that leads to a long-term career pathway. Youth@Work provides work experience with a comprehensive and strategic set of employment, training and

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support services for youth ages 14 to 24. LA County Parks also offers a DJ Academy which is housed at 16 Our SPOT Teen Center locations and provides a 12-week instructor-led program. DJ Academy offers youth training in DJing and music production. The DJ Academy not only fosters artistic and technical skills but also builds confidence and leadership. Youth gain real-world experience and receive a stipend for performing at cultural arts events, cohesion events, and LA County Parks hosted concerts.

- **Summer Teen Access to Arboretums and Botanic Gardens:** The Los Angeles County Arboretum, Descanso Gardens and South Coast Botanic Garden offer free admission to students ages 13 to 18, from Memorial Day through Labor Day.
- **Jr. Lake Lifeguard Program:** The Junior Lake Lifeguard Program is a three-week summer program for youth ages 9 to 17 that teaches open water safety, lifeguard skills, and outdoor fitness. Taught by LA County Lake Lifeguards participants learn swimming, kayaking, CPR, first aid, basic lifesaving, and search and rescue. The program promotes self-confidence, discipline, and physical fitness in a structured, team-based environment. Each session concludes with a friendly competition that allows participants to showcase the skills they've learned.
- **Summer Teen Water Sports and Free Swim:** LA County Parks offers a wide range of water sports for youth ages 7 to 18, including swim team, artistic swim, dive team, and water polo. Additionally, teens can visit pools to join Every Body Swims for free swim Monday through Saturday 12:30 to 2pm.

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- **Hiking:** Youth can explore over 240 miles of trails across the county. To find trails and get trail conditions visit our website at trails.lacounty.gov or download our “Trails LA County” App on the App Store on Google Play.
- **Summer Teen Volunteer Opportunities in Natural Areas:** Youth can explore, learn and make a difference by volunteering in LA County Parks’ Raptor Rescue, Nature Centers and Trails. Youth volunteers at the Raptor Rescue will help with animal care support tasks, public education, habitat maintenance, and learning how raptors play a vital role in our ecosystem. Nature Centers offer youth the opportunity to connect people to nature and assist with education programs, lead nature walks and maintain exhibits as well as support special events. Youth can also spend the summer outside volunteering with our trails maintenance to support habitat restoration, native plant care, and visitor engagement at our local parks and open spaces.

LA County Parks critical role in supporting the well-being of our communities was evident during the devastating Eaton Fire—which burned over 14,000 acres and displaced thousands of Altadena families. In response, LA County Parks immediately launched Care Camp, creating a safe, nurturing environment to support caregivers during crisis and help children and youth process trauma and provide a sense of normalcy. The program provided personalized care and emotional support through activities like therapy dog visits, mindfulness sessions, hands-on science and art projects, and field trips to LA County Parks partners.

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The scale of the disaster mobilized widespread support—interdepartmental collaboration, mutual aid, and private-sector partnerships were critical to the program’s success. Support came from the LA County Departments of Public Health and Mental Health, the Altadena Library, park professionals from the cities of Lakewood, San Gabriel, Commerce, Gardena, Lancaster, and Huntington Park stepped in to provide mutual aid, and more than 80 program partners contributed in-kind resources and services. More than just emergency care, Care Camp became a place of healing and connection, showing that parks serve not only as spaces for recreation, but also as vital hubs for community recovery. The National Recreation and Parks Association recognized LA County Parks Care Camp as the national 2025 winner of the Innovation in Health and Well-being Award.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim the month of July 2025 as Parks Make Life Better! Month, recognize parks as places of healing, play, and connection, and commend the dedicated employees of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation for their service to residents of Los Angeles County through providing quality programming and exemplary stewardship of parklands for all to enjoy.

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HLS:gdm