



# Park and Recreation Commission

City of Arts & Innovation

---

**TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS** **DATE: JULY 15, 2024**

**FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: JULY IS “PARK AND RECREATION” MONTH; “WHERE YOU BELONG” CAMPAIGN DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS; AND RECOGNITION OF 2023 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR**

**ISSUE:**

Presentation of the programs and services of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department highlighting how “Parks Make Life Better” and the National Recreation and Parks Association July motto “Where You Belong” video, and recognition of the 2023 Employees of the Year.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Park and Recreation Commission:

1. Receive report on department highlights;
2. Receive video presentation of Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department “Where You Belong” campaign; and,
3. Recognize Department’s 2023 Employees of The Year.

**BACKGROUND:**

The National Recreation and Parks Association’s (NRPA) “Where You Belong” campaign celebrates the many ways park and recreation professionals across the country foster a sense of belonging in their community by providing welcoming and inclusive programs, essential services for all ages and abilities, and safe, accessible spaces to build meaningful connection.

On July 10, 2018, the City of Riverside’s Council adopted the Proclamation to support Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCSD) by declaring July as “Park and Recreation” month. Since then, the PRCSD has continued to provide an array of programs and services to enhance the lives of the residents of Riverside and align itself with NRPA’s mission. A dedicated staff prides themselves on providing high-quality services to the community with award-winning programs and activities for residents of all ages and interests in a variety of safe and attractive parks, landscapes, and facilities; from maintenance, park renovations and construction projects; to special events, athletics, social services, cultural arts, school a program,

summer food lunch program and much more. The primary objective of PRCSD is to provide the community with resources, safe places to relax, adequately maintained facilities, physical activity and to have fun. With the collaboration of community groups, local businesses and non-profit organizations, staff and volunteers ensure that “Parks Make Life Better.”

## **DISCUSSION:**

To support the NRPA campaign and July as the Park and Recreation month, PRCSD will offer programming and events theme to “Where You Belong”, such as the Summer Concerts In Park, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks Spectacular, Summer Splash, STAR and STEM Day Camps, swim lessons, senior trips and tours, youth sports, recreation swim, and community park pop-up activities through the Rec-2-Go mobile.

According to NRPA’s 2023 Engagement with Parks report, people place a high value on the programs and services that park, and recreation agencies deliver to their local communities every day and strongly support their mission. Facts state that:

1. More than 280 million people in the United States visited a local park or recreation facility at least once during the past year.
2. Seven in 10 U.S. residents have at least one local park, playground, open space, or recreation center within walking distance of their homes.
3. 84 percent of U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live.
4. Eighty-eight percent of U.S. adults agree it is vital for local park and recreation agencies to engage with every member of their community to ensure offerings meet their needs.
5. Visitors who find their parks and recreation facilities to be inclusive visit these areas nearly two times as often as those who do not hold this view.
6. According to a 2023 NRPA Park Pulse poll, nearly nine in 10 U.S. adults look to their local park and recreation agency to take the necessary steps to ensure everyone in their community feels welcome.
7. Nine in 10 adults agree that their local and state governments must sufficiently fund local park and recreation agencies to ensure every community member has access to the amenities, infrastructure and programming offered.

The mission of PRCSD is to provide innovative recreational experiences and social enrichment opportunities to address the changing needs of the people of all ages and cultures, in a variety of safe and attractive parks, trails, landscapes, and facilities. The City of Riverside values and understands community needs and has already invested into these spaces. The award-winning Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department prudently maintains over 3,400 acres 68 developed and natural parks with 14 community centers, 1 nature center and 7 pools. The facilities offer an assortment of amenities for all ages and interests. The Department’s Recreation Division provides high quality programming, events, and extended learning opportunities throughout the community. The Department’s Parks Division performs tree planting, playground maintenance, gym floor refurbishments and parking lot resurfacing, maintaining the quality of facilities. The Department also provides the Special Transportation

Program which offers transportation services to senior and disabled residents within city limits.

The Department recognizes the efforts of committed staff who produce quality programming and events and maintain quality park facilities and would like to recognize the 2023 PRCSD Employees of the Year: Recreation Services Coordinator Janet Palacio, Project Manager Ali Borujerdi, and Special Transit Driver Patricia Rodgers. The Department would like to thank them for their passion and dedication to the Department and residents.

The presentation video highlights the department's "Where You Belong" campaign and how it aligns with the City of Riverside Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact on the General Fund associated with this report.

Prepared by: Noemi Lopez, Deputy Director

Approved by: Pamela M. Galera, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director

Attachment: Presentation Video