

RESORT REPORTER

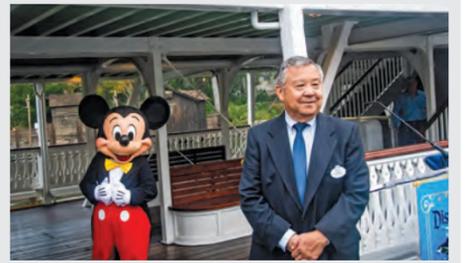
Sunday, December 19, 2021

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Disney Cast Life
Did You Know?
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COMMUNITY

GALAXY OF WISHES: DISNEYLAND RESORT AND MAKE-A-WISH JOIN FORCES TO CREATE MORE MAGIC



DISNEY AMBASSADORS NATALY AND MARK SNAP A PHOTO WITH STAR WARS: GALAXY'S EDGE CAST MEMBERS AT THE EVENT, INCLUDING (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) BAYLEE MIER, CRYSTAL HERNANDEZ, DANNY SALAS, SENNECCA ULLOA AND ANGELICA GUEVARRA.

By Dani Decena

What if you had the ability to make any wish come true? For a child, a wish has the power to touch their heart and change their life. Make-A-Wish, combined with some Disney magic, turns these dreams into reality for many children who are in need of some

pixie dust along their journey.

This month, the Disneyland Resort and Make-A-Wish Orange County & the Inland Empire and Make-A-Wish Greater Los Angeles joined forces to host a Galaxy of Wishes fundraising event in *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* to give even more opportunities for children to have their wishes come true. The first-of-its-kind event on the planet of Batuu provided the perfect backdrop to have their own wishes of being immersed in the *Star*

Wars universe fulfilled while raising more than \$2.5 million.

2022-2023 Disney Ambassadors Mark Everett King Jr. and Nataly Guzman were on hand with Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock to celebrate the longstanding relationship with partners and friends from Make-A-Wish.

"Tonight is very special. It is all about helping kids and giving hope to children and their families when they need it most. A wish brings joy and happiness

to children with critical illness, helping them forget about hospitals, doctors and treatments so they can just be a kid ... bringing magic to children and families is part of our Disney DNA," Ken shared.

For more than 40 years, Disney has celebrated a wonderful global partnership with Make-A-Wish, granting more than 145,000 wishes to children with critical illnesses. In fact, Disneyland was part of the first wish granted by Make-A-

+ STORY CONTINUED ON P.4

DISNEY CAST LIFE

Aspiring Stories

Chef Follows Dream of Continuing Education, Grows his Career

By Krystal Rhaburn

Daniel "Duke" Brown spent years working in culinary arts, but he dreamed of going back to school and advancing his career. Today, thanks to the Disney Aspire program and Daniel's hard work, he is making that dream come true.

Daniel had already worked in fine dining restaurant kitchens when he joined the Disneyland Resort as an order cook at Storytellers Café in 2016. He worked in various departments at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa before joining the culinary team at Napa Rose. After briefly leaving the company to help a friend open a restaurant, he heard in 2018 about the launch of Disney Aspire, which pays full tuition up front and reimburses fees for eligible hourly cast members.

"When I heard about the program, I rushed right back to Disney," he shared. "I attended one of the job fairs, came back and went straight back into Napa Rose — starting the Aspire program three months later. I'd always wanted to go back to college."

Daniel's current pursuit of a bachelor's degree in human resources management through Wilmington University, one of the more than 10 in-network schools, is already helping him in his career journey. Soon after returning to the resort, he transferred to Carthay Circle Restaurant, where he worked until the pandemic closed the parks. When he returned to the resort last May, Daniel was even more focused on finding a leadership position.

"I reached out to Golden Vine Winery, who were looking for leads, and talked to the chefs. I let them know about my aspirations to be a park chef, and they let

me know about ideal next steps for me to take," Daniel said. During his first month there as a lead order cook, a chef position opened, and he was on his way. He recently moved into a role as a chef for Paradise Garden/Pixar Pier, serving various locations including Paradise Garden Grill, Bayside Brews and more. He credits the knowledge he's gained on the job and in his classes with the advancement in his career.

"An HR class that I took had a lot to do with interviews and resumes, and that helped me a lot through the interview process," he said. "One of the chefs actually came to me and told me that my insights and answers made him rethink about the position, how people do things and how they can better put those into their roles."

Along with his dreams of culinary management, Daniel hopes to use his degree to connect with Human Resources leaders at the resort while also advocating for the Food and Beverage department. In fact, he recently joined Thrive, a new mentorship program for members of our Business Employee Resource Groups (BERGs), pairing with a mentor in Human Resources at the resort.



Daniel hopes that the work he's put into earning his degree and advancing his career inspires his three children — and his fellow cast members. "The one thing I tell everyone is to just talk to the people behind the [Aspire] program and ask them about the possibilities for them; the options are almost limitless."

DISNEY CAST LIFE

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE: NO SMALL FEAT TO OPEN 'IT'S A SMALL WORLD' FOR THE HOLIDAYS

By Lisa Greathouse

When flooding shut down “it’s a small world” Holiday at Disneyland park — just hours before it was set to return as part of the Holidays at the Disneyland Resort — there was some doubt whether the necessary repairs could be completed in time to allow the beloved attraction to open at all this holiday season. But a mighty team of cast members across multiple lines of business rallied to repair and replace damaged machinery in record time, allowing the attraction to reopen to excited guests on Monday, Dec. 6.

“This attraction means Christmas to the resort, so it gave us something to shoot for,” said Jason Tomlin, manager of Ride Control Engineering at the Disneyland Resort. His team of engineers jumped into action with dozens of other cast members as soon as it was discovered that the underground maintenance room of the attraction’s loading station — called “the pit” — flooded Nov. 10 as the attraction was being refilled. By the time the mishap was noticed, the area that houses nearly all of the ride control machinery and electrical equipment was submerged under at least 7 feet of water.

“When I first heard about it, I thought, ‘That can’t be right.’ You had to see it

to believe it,” said Joelle Medina, senior project manager for Facilities Asset Management, who coordinated the recovery effort among nearly 20 different teams (many of their members pictured right).

The day after the flood “we assembled a recovery team with representation across all key lines of business,” said Engineering Services Director Jason Lovelace. “I asked the group to work toward reopening within four weeks. At the time I knew that was unlikely due to the extent of the work ahead, but the team never blinked.”

The first step was to pump out more than 200,000 gallons of water from the 57-year-old attraction and deem the area safe before the damage could even be evaluated.

With the kickoff of the holidays just hours away, “I don’t think you could have planned this to happen at a worse time,” Jason said. In fact, as celebrities were taping their segments for the “The Wonderful World of Disney: Magical Holiday Celebration” TV special in the glow of the thousands of lights from the attraction, a giant dehumidifier had just been lowered via crane to dry out the area. Teams then began inspecting equipment to determine what parts could be cleaned and salvaged and what needed to be replaced, a task compli-



cated by global supply chain challenges. Since many spare parts kept in the pit were also ruined, the team reached out to its “small world” of partners at Disney theme parks around the world, among other sources, to find essential parts.

“It truly was a team effort with everyone focusing on the same goal,” Joelle said. As a result, work that was initially expected to take several months was completed in less than four weeks. “It’s such an iconic piece for the holidays, and not having it would have been heartbreaking, especially after the last year we’ve had,” she said, adding that it’s a

favorite for the holidays with her own children, ages 6 and 3.

Meanwhile, cast members stationed outside the attraction worked for weeks to alleviate guests’ disappointment by offering to take their photos against the iconic façade, pin trading and even creating a sea of bubbles for children to play in. “When I shared with a group of cast members that we can now tell guests that the attraction [is reopening], they all lit up in excitement,” said Tyler Carter, production manager of Fantasyland Attractions. “Nobody thought this was possible, so it really is a Christmas miracle.”

DID YOU KNOW?

1. The Main Street Electrical Parade will not be returning to the Disneyland Resort.

FALSE

The Main Street Electrical Parade in all its Baroque Hoedown glory will be returning to Disneyland park next year, alongside nighttime spectaculars “Fantasmic!” and “World of Color!”

2. “it’s a small world” Holiday is open to guests at Disneyland park.

TRUE

Thanks to a rallying effort by cast members and ride engineers, the attraction is sailing once again. Get ready to sing “Jingle Bells” around the world!

3. In-person volunteering is back, and Disney VoluntEARS hosted two successful recent events to help feed the community.

TRUE

Disney VoluntEARS harvested cabbage for the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County and assembled boxes with over 3,000 pounds of food for distribution at Orange County Food Bank.

4. 2022–2023 Disney Ambassadors Mark and Nataly gave uniquely crafted gifts to Ambassador Alumni.

TRUE

Mark and Nataly presented Ambassador Alumni of Disneyland Resort with special nametags as a way to honor their enduring legacy. Once an Ambassador, always an Ambassador.

5. Disney and Make-A-Wish recently celebrated their 40-year partnership, having granted 120,000 wishes!

FALSE

Disney has actually granted more than 145,000 wishes over the years in partnership with Make-A-Wish and recently hosted a fundraiser gala, Galaxy of Wishes, in *Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge*.

6. The Disneyland Resort was recently nominated for an award through the Orange County Business Journal.

TRUE

The Disneyland Resort was nominated for the “Companies that Care” award for its outstanding service to the community during the pandemic, the Disney VoluntEARS program, workforce development program and over \$20 million in donations to local charitable organizations.

7. The Disneyland Resort also received a “Best of the Southland” Award in the Los Angeles Times.

TRUE

Disneyland Park was recognized as “Best” in the “Entertainment & Living: Family-Friendly Attraction” category.

8. The Candlelight Processional that takes place in December is a celebration of the story of the Christmas Nativity. Each year, the processional includes a mass choir that is entirely comprised of guest performing groups from throughout Southern California.

FALSE

Cast members also have the opportunity to sing each year in the cast choir and volunteer their time and musical talents to bring the living Christmas tree to life!

9. The Disney Ultimate Toy Drive is ending its donation period on Dec. 14.

FALSE

You can still donate online until Dec. 24 by visiting [Disney.com/ToyDrive](https://www.disney.com/toydrive).

10. Disney VoluntEARS spread holiday cheer at CHOC Children’s.

TRUE

Playing the part of Christmas elves, VoluntEARS decked the halls of CHOC and stuffed nearly 500 gift bags with donated toys, crafts and other goodies for patients to receive throughout the holiday season.

11. Disneyland Resort guests get help planning out their best Disney day at the touch of their fingertips.

TRUE

The complimentary Disney Genie service on the Disneyland app creates your best Disney day inspired by your top interests. It also “grants” you new planning features, including a personalized itinerary creator. You’ve never had a friend like this!



DISNEY CAST LIFE

Onto the Next Chapter: Disney Ambassadors Justin and Rafa Become Ambassador Alumni

When Justin Rapp and Rafa Barron were selected as 2019-2020 Disney Ambassadors for the Disneyland Resort, they knew they were about to start the ride of a lifetime, but they had no idea all that their two-year term — which was extended to three years due to the pandemic — would entail.

As Disney Ambassadors, Justin and Rafa served as representatives of the resort and its cast, engaging internal and external audiences, including the community, in Disney magic — through service, storytelling and by inspiring the next generation.

When asked what it means to be a Disney Ambassador, Justin shared, “It means being a servant-leader, putting the cast and all those around you above yourself. It’s representing all that makes Disney, Disney.”

“It also means upholding the ideals, dreams and innovation of Walt Disney,” Rafa added. “It’s an honor to have the opportunity to carry on the legacy of this role.”

As they say: *Once an Ambassador, always an Ambassador.* While Justin and Rafa transition into new roles as employee advocacy communications manager and senior retail stage manager, respectively, they will continue to uphold the Ambassador legacy. As Ambassador Alumni, they wear a special gold nametag and join a long line of Ambassadors who served before them.

From opening *Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge* to reopening the Disneyland Resort after a historic closure, the pair share a look back on some of their favorite memories during their time as Disney Ambassadors.



1 ROCKING THE RUNWAY



“One of my favorite things I did during my time as Ambassador was the cast costume reveal for *Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge*. It was truly an honor to be able to host this event; it was full of excitement and energy. The cast were so excited to be the first ones to see the costumes for the new land. I will never forget the faces of happiness when they saw their fellow cast members walking on the runway in the brand new costumes.”

- Rafa

2 RACING ON THE RIVER



“One of my favorite memories had to be the summer of 2019 when Rafa and I led our own Ambassador canoe team for the cast member canoe races. We hit the river every morning at 6 a.m. with our team for weeks and then had the chance to race Josh D’Amaro, chairman, Disney Parks, Experiences and Products (who at the time was president of Disneyland Resort). It was special to take cast members from across the resort who didn’t know each other and bring them all together.”

- Justin

3 ROLE SHADOWS



“We love to shadow different roles across the resort, but the role shadow with the housekeeping team at Disney’s Paradise Pier Hotel was one of my all-time favorites. Those cast members work so hard every day to make sure our guests are having a truly magical visit at our resort.”

- Rafa

4 A BIG DAY!



“This photo is from the day that Rafa and I were selected and introduced as the next Disney Ambassadors. We were so ready to take on everything that would come our way, and we sure did!”

- Justin

5 BRINGING BACK THE MAGIC



“This moment means a lot to me because we were getting ready to reopen the resort after more than a year of being closed. We were all looking forward to welcoming back our cast members and guests to the Happiest Place on Earth!”

- Rafa

Welcome, Mark & Nataly!

2022-2023 Disney Ambassadors Are Ready for Their Turn

Meet the next team of Disney Ambassadors, Mark Everett King Jr. and Nataly Guzman, who officially begin their term on Jan. 1, 2022. Mark and Nataly have shadowed and learned from Justin and Rafa over the last several weeks and are now ready to take on the next two years as Disney Ambassadors.

Get to know the new team:

Why do you love being a Disney cast member?

Mark: I love being a Disney cast member because I can contribute to the memories that our guests get to take back home with them.

Nataly: We get to make people happy through small moments of kindness and fun every day!

Which Disney character most embodies your personality?

Mark: Mushu because I am funny, sassy and can be dramatic at times.



MARK AND NATALY STOP BY TO VISIT WITH CAST MEMBERS WORKING AT PLAZA DE LA FAMILIA IN DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK.

Nataly: Belle. I love adventuring into “great wide somewheres” and discovering the stories of this world! I am driven by curiosity and inspired by knowledge, and seek to understand people deeper than what’s on the outside.

What are you most looking forward to in the next two years as Disney Ambassadors?

Mark: I am looking forward to rebuilding our cast experience and getting to know more of our cast, locally and globally.

Nataly: I look forward to proudly representing our cast members and help in rebuilding a strong cast experience. We’re excited to be their voice and tell the stories of the talented, inspiring and passionate individuals who bring the Disneyland Resort to life every day.

What have been your biggest takeaways during the last few months of training?

Mark: I’ve learned that grace allows us to make mistakes and learn from them. Being authentically ourselves is how we can create a connection with our cast on a larger scale by working together.

Nataly: My biggest takeaway has been optimism. With hardships endured by everyone worldwide over the last two years, it’s been incredible to see a strong desire to keep wonder and magic alive.

What do you hope to work on in the next two years and improve upon personally?

Mark: I hope to help define and advocate



for inclusion, while also finding ways to continuously improve our cast experience! Personally, I would love to continue to grow in different aspects to help make me a better person, leader, advocate and ally.

Nataly: I can’t wait to grow personally

and professionally in so many ways. I hope to grow in my confidence to ask questions all of the time, to be unafraid of my creativity and to learn how to be a strong team player with everyone that will help make our Ambassador term a memorable and successful one.

SEE IF YOU CAN SPOT THE FIVE DIFFERENCES IN THESE TWO PICTURES

Downtown Disney District welcomed a real-life sandcrawler-inspired vehicle from the *Star Wars* galaxy, loaded up with *Star Wars* toys, to be donated to the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots program as part of the Disney Ultimate Toy Drive. You can still donate a toy to a child in need by visiting shopDisney.com/ultimatetoydrive by Dec. 24, 2021.



ANSWERS:

1. Scarf changed color to green. 2. Removed light post on the left. 3. Stack of toys in the center of sandcrawler is higher. 4. Toy box on far left stack (outside of the sandcrawler) is bigger. 5. Blue light saber missing from its box.

+ MAKE-A-WISH STORY CONTINUED FROM P.1

Wish in 1980, when 7-year-old leukemia patient Frank “Bopsy” Salazar visited the park. Since then, the company has continued the tradition of making dreams come true for these deserving families, whether it is a visit to our theme parks, a hotel stay or a special meet and greet with a beloved character or role model.

Let’s take a look back at some of the magic that we have been able to create together in recent years:

In 2013, 3-year-old Violet received her wish to meet Mickey Mouse at Disneyland park after undergoing treatments for a rare eye cancer. Now 10 years old, Violet continues to be active within the Make-A-Wish organization and still loves coming to the Disneyland Resort with her family.

In 2019, 6-year-old Linden Bradley’s wish was granted to open the gates of Disneyland park after receiving his cancer-free diagnosis. He and his family traveled all the way from Canada to watch Linden as he was given a special key to the kingdom!

These wishes have also come full circle for cast member Lexi, who was a former Make-A-Wish recipient herself when she was a young girl, and now



works at the resort as an entertainment host. She gets to orchestrate meaningful interactions with characters for wish families. Lexi shared, “Depending on the situation, I will tell the families I was a wish child. Working here and still being able to be involved with wishes is the best of both worlds. It means so much to me to give these families the hope and strength they need to get through what-

ever hardship they’re going through.”

Lexi is not the only cast member who has been touched by the magic of granting wishes. Danny Salas, gatherer at Savi’s Workshop in Disneyland park, loves giving back to the community and used his artistic abilities to create his own fundraiser for Make-A-Wish. When asked how he felt about Disney’s partnership with Make-A-Wish, Danny said, “It’s a

win-win. Not only is Make-A-Wish one of my favorite organizations, but knowing that the company I work for also supports them, it’s a huge win! So, I take way more pride in being a cast member.”

Funds raised from the event will help make even more life-changing wishes come true. To learn more about how Disney and Make-A-Wish together grant magical wishes, visit wish.org/Disney.

DISNEY CAST LIFE

Honoring Longtime Cast Members

By Jordyn Crowley Watts

True magic is represented by the cast members who make the Disneyland Resort the incredible place it is. Six Disneyland Resort cast members were recently joined by friends, family, their leaders — and none other than Mickey Mouse — aboard the Mark Twain Riverboat to celebrate an incredible milestone — five decades of service! Share in the special celebration by meeting the honorees below.

Martha Blanding



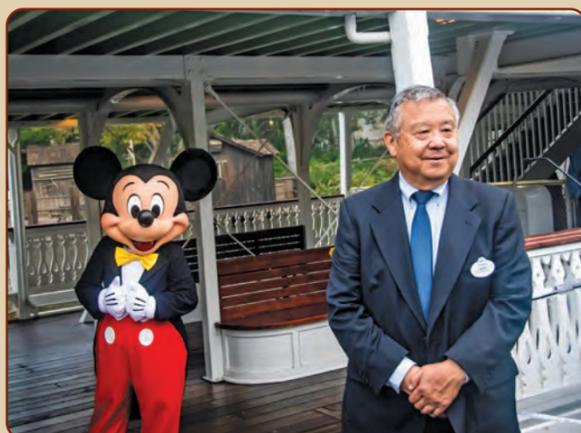
Started: May 1971, as a Disneyland park Tour Guide
Current role: Senior Manager, Disneyland Resort Merchandise Special Events

- One of the first Black women in resort history to be a full-time VIP Tour Guide, as well as the first Black female buyer and first Black female manager
- Hosted celebrities including Rock Hudson, Cary Grant, Diana Ross, Elton John, Magic Johnson, the Jonas Brothers and Julie Andrews
- Co-founded PULSE, a Business Employee Resource Group (BERG) for Black cast members and employees

"It's not like going to work. I enjoy everything about what I do — the good and the bad. I just choose to always smile and laugh through it."

- Martha

Dean Yamada



Started: June 1971, at Refreshment Corner
Current role: Theme Park Duty Manager, Disneyland park

- Helped open Tokyo Disneyland in 1982
- Planned and opened the Mickey & Friends Parking Structure, the largest parking structure on the West Coast at opening
- He has served as a theme park duty manager for over 17 years and has been part of grand openings and countless special events

Sue Clements



Started: July 1971, as a Wardrobe Attendant
Recently retired after serving as Manager, Disney Look and Cosmetology

- Officially began on Disneyland park's 16th anniversary, spending 47 of her 50 years in Costuming
- Additionally served three years as operations manager of Show and Parades for Disney California Adventure park

Patti Oltman



Started: June 1971, as a waitress
Current role: Retail Allocator

- Held 13 roles across 50 years, including helping open Indiana Jones Adventure, Mickey's Toontown and Critter Country
- Helped with the opening of Tokyo Disneyland, including managing food, equipment and staffing of a corporate event for more than 5,000 guests
- Creator of multiple cast resources including the Disney Loss Prevention guideline

"I've always had someone to lift me up here. From birthday parties to baby showers ... everything we've celebrated and endured has helped us form a deep camaraderie and friendship."

- Patti

Dave Brizic



Started: July 1965, in Security

- Has served his entire Disney career in Security, beginning the year before Walt Disney passed away — and even saw Walt walking Disneyland park frequently
- Worked in Fantasyland the day Walt dedicated the opening of "it's a small world" in 1966
- Met his future wife, a fellow cast member, in 1967 — and married her in 1968
- Drafted and served in Vietnam in 1968, returning to Disneyland park in 1970

"The friendships I developed with people I worked with kept me coming back. I became part of a group of 12 Disneyland Resort Security Officers ... we met weekly for years and still meet up occasionally today."

- Dave

Vic Polwektow



Started: 1966, at Plaza Inn

- Was able to interact with Walt on many occasions while dining at Plaza Inn, as it was his favorite restaurant
- Has worked in Costume Issue since 1978 — 43 years!
- Married a fellow cast member, Gail
- Successfully learned every cast member's name who came into Costuming

"The thing I love most about working at Disneyland is all the friendships I've made over the years."

- Vic

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*One-half million pounds of food donated to local food banks last year,
providing more than 400,000 meals to people in need*

