

RESORT REPORTER

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FEATURE

DISNEYLAND RESORT CAST MEMBERS POWER THE MAGIC



KEN POTROCK WITH CAST MEMBERS FROM THE CENTRAL BAKERY: CHRISTINA OREJEL, GRACIE GOMEZ AND STEPHANIE YEE.

A Tribute to Our Magic Makers

By Ken Potrock,
president of Disneyland Resort

I always like to look on the optimistic side of life, but I am realistic enough to know that life is a complex matter.”

This lesser-known and incredibly relevant quote from Walt Disney is one I have come to appreciate since I took on my new role just a couple of months into the pandemic. And while the last two years have been complex on so many levels, there is much to celebrate as we kick off 2022.

At the top of my list is the gratitude I feel toward our cast members. It goes without saying that being a Disney cast member is a role unlike any other ... and it's not always easy. In fact, at times it can be difficult. Our cast are the heart and soul of the resort and the power behind our magic. Their resiliency, dedication and hard work carry on the

legacy that Walt set in place to create happiness for every guest who walks through our gates. My gratitude to them is immeasurable.

I'm also grateful that since reopening last April, we have been able to bring back more and more cast members; currently we have nearly 30,000 working. In fact, almost all of our hourly cast have been given the opportunity to return to work. And many of the small number of cast members who remain on furlough — with the company continuing to pay for healthcare contributions for those eligible — may be offered the opportunity to return this spring, when several of our additional offerings return, including “Fantasmic!,” “World of Color” and the “Main Street Electric Parade” (which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year).

Speaking of our hourly cast, we were pleased to close out 2021 by signing a new agreement with our largest union, which represents 10,000 cast members

at both of our Disneyland Resort theme parks. With a \$17 per hour starting wage and a path to \$18 per hour in 2023, we continue to outpace the state minimum wage. We are proud of the work we've done to address wages over the last several years.

We also are focused on our cast members' total well-being and support outside of work. For eligible cast, we provide affordable healthcare for as little as \$7 a week and a low-cost childcare program. In addition, we have access to free mental health services, a financial wellness program and even homework help for kids. We know how important it is for our cast to be able to visit Disneyland Resort with their families and friends using their complimentary admission, and as we move into a new year, we've been able to add more availability for them to play in the parks. And we will continue to find other meaningful ways to support them in their daily lives.

We've also kept the safety of our cast a priority during the pandemic by providing on-site, no-cost COVID-19 testing, access to vaccinations and boosters and additional paid sick time.

Three years ago, we launched Disney Aspire, which covers 100% of tuition for eligible hourly cast members to earn a degree or learn a new trade regardless of whether they want to advance their career at Disney or elsewhere. To date more than 20,000 cast members throughout the company have enrolled and we've celebrated more than 2,400 graduates — and we cannot wait to see the impact they'll make in the world. (Read more about one of our outstanding successes below.)

Again, I could not be prouder or more appreciative of our cast as they have navigated the demands of these unusually complex times, and I couldn't be more optimistic and confident as we head into 2022.

Cheers to our cast! Happy New Year!

DISNEY CAST LIFE

Disney Aspire Graduate Uses ‘Silenzio Bruno’ Mantra to Soar Academically and Professionally

By Krystal Rhaburn

Facing one's fears is never easy. For Disney Aspire graduate Jennifer Ross, the courage to overcome her inner doubts has brought great rewards in her professional, academic and personal endeavors.

As the Disney University coordinator was approaching completion of her master's degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from Bellevue University last summer, her professor suggested the nomination of her final thesis research paper for best graduate student formal composition. Although honored by the recognition, Jennifer

initially responded to the opportunity with hesitation — until she found confidence in an unexpected source.

“[The Disney and Pixar film] ‘Luca’ came out, and it really helped me,” she said. In the movie, the quotable phrase “Silenzio Bruno” is used by Alberto, who tells the title character not to listen to the voice in his head that makes us doubt our abilities. “It's now my mantra because I have to consistently tell myself, ‘Silenzio Bruno. Don't be scared. Just do it.’ So, I allowed her to submit the nomination.”

Much to her delight, Jennifer received first prize for her research paper titled “Employee Engagement Crisis Effects on Remote Office Personnel.” The award was announced in the university's special

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+ DISNEY ASPIRE STORY CONTINUED FROM P.1

edition of its student-run publication and resulted in Jennifer's work ultimately being published on Research Gate, a global hub for scholarly research, articles and collaboration.

"I was absolutely thrilled," Jennifer said. "From that moment, I've continued to use 'Silenzio Bruno' in all of my pursuits."

Jennifer's degree work also enabled her to transition in 2021 from a Casting Services role to her current one at Disney University. "I feel like I was 100% prepared coming out of Disney Aspire to have that interview and to be the exact

perfect fit of what they were looking for."

In her Anaheim-based role, Jennifer is a part of the team that coordinates and delivers the learning and development courses for salaried leaders and hourly cast (such as Traditions, an orientation class for new hires). She has been able to apply her studies to identify areas of efficiency on her teams and successfully create change where needed in the wider department. "I have knowledge of the most up-to-date [learning and development] software that we're using here at Disney," Jennifer said. "I've been able to teach some of my fellow cast members some new tools and help

them to build more inclusive training presentations. Using the 'Silenzio Bruno' mantra, I have been able to do multiple presentations to hundreds of people on Zoom by myself, which is something I never would have done before."

Born in El Paso, Texas, and a mother of two, Jennifer is proud to be a first-generation Latina graduate in her family. She is grateful for her Disney Aspire experience and is now giving back to the program as a mentor. "The environment that Aspire created with Bellevue was amazing. It's so positive, and mentors actually come back. I'm currently mentoring a few participants who are

going through the same program I did."

"[Disney Aspire] changed my entire perspective, not only with education, but also with my confidence at home as well," Jennifer said. "I am the manager of my daughter's soccer team and have become more assertive overall. It also caused me to become more involved here at Disney, joining multiple BERGs [Business Employee Resource Groups] and collaborating on frequent Diversity Equity & Inclusion presentations to our HR Casting team. Going through the Aspire program really gave me the confidence and the tools that I needed to succeed."

HEAR FROM SOME OF THE CAST MEMBERS WHO HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF DISNEY ASPIRE



JOSH COOK

Data Integration and Analytics
B.S. Computer and Network Security
Wilmington University

“The primary reason I did it is because I wanted to be able to further grow and develop within the company, and I knew that higher education would open more doors. Disney is providing something that you probably wouldn't have another chance at, so I would say take it.”

NATALY GUZMAN

2022–23 Disney Ambassador
B.S. Communication—Public Relations and Strategic Communication
Wilmington University

“Because most of my responsibilities at the Disneyland Resort involve different forms of communication, I was able to apply my education and experience to one another simultaneously. It has been the most unique 'hands on' learning experience because both my career and my schoolwork correlate so well, and I've already advanced in my career before graduating (later this spring)!”



DANI DECENA

External Communications Specialist
M.A. Business and Professional Communication
Bellevue University

“Through Disney Aspire, I was able to achieve my dream of earning a master's degree, which previously seemed like an impossible goal. After graduating, I am thankful for the opportunity to apply the professional communication skills I learned in class directly within a new role that is a perfect fit for me — where I get to write creatively as well as exercise my passion for public speaking.”



ERIN TAKANO

Planner, Engineering Services
M.S. Organizational Leadership
University of Denver

“Disney Aspire has helped me build the framework for my rocket ship to reach my own infinity and beyond. It's not the fuel or the paint job, and it doesn't pilot the ship or chart the course, but what I have learned in Disney Aspire is what holds my rocket together and is my foundation to get me to where I want to go.”



HISTORY & HERITAGE

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF STAR TOURS

On Jan. 9, 1987, *Star Wars* creator George Lucas and Walt Disney Imagineering joined forces to introduce the *Star Wars* galaxy to Disneyland park guests and cast members, with the launch of the original Star Tours attraction. Initially blasting off to Endor, additional destinations and 3D technology were added to the attraction in 2011, which has since seen even

more stellar updates as well as new worlds and characters. Cast members Annette Gonzales and Mike Gibson were both present for the jump to hyperspace during the attraction's 60-hour opening party. Annette (pictured), currently working at Avengers Campus, recalls the guests' energy at opening ceremonies being unlike anything she'd ever witnessed.



ANNETTE GONZALES WORKED STAR TOURS WHEN THE ATTRACTION OPENED.



GEORGE LUCAS (RIGHT) AND FORMER DISNEY CEO MICHAEL EISNER JOIN MICKEY MOUSE, MINNIE MOUSE, C-3PO AND R2-D2 TO CUT THE RIBBON ON THE NEW STAR TOURS ATTRACTION IN DISNEYLAND PARK ON JAN. 9, 1987.

"Guests were really excited because it was something definitely different than any other attraction we opened," she shared. "It was a flight simulator, but they didn't know that until they got in there. Our line actually began at Main Street, U.S.A., by the Emporium."

Mike, who still calls Tomorrowland his home, is proud to have been the one who launched George Lucas and former Disney CEO Michael Eisner in Cabin One on the inaugural flight, his own personal claim to fame.

"WDI really got the cast members

involved during the construction process, making us feel very much a part of the making of the attraction," Mike said. "We all had a say in how we were going to run the attraction, with the Imagineers' guidance, of course. It made us even more excited, as we all were watching this thing going from nothing to a spectacular attraction."

Today, Star Tours - The Adventures Continue features new worlds and characters from "*Star Wars: The Force Awakens*," "*Star Wars: The Last Jedi*" and "*Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*."

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

A Painting for the People: Cast Member Celebrates the Beauty and Joy of Lunar New Year in New Mural

By Dani Decena

Bursts of red, orange and yellow fill the scene as a new mural commemorates Lunar New Year, the Year of the Tiger, in the Downtown Disney District. As an homage to her Korean heritage, Associate Art Director Lisa Kang created the mural with inspiration from traditional works of art known as *minwha* or “paintings of the people.”

The mural, located at the former ESPN Zone, gives a birds’ eye-view of the Lunar New Year celebration at Disney California Adventure park as dancers parade through the village. Guests will also notice marketplace booths and familiar characters including Tigger, who will help ring in the Year of the Tiger. As viewers take in the details, Lisa hopes that they are able to recognize and celebrate what Lunar New Year means to so many cultures.

Memories of spending Lunar New Year with her family fueled Lisa’s vision for the design. “To me, the Lunar New Year is a marking of a new beginning and a special time to reconnect with all the beautiful parts of my culture and heritage,” Lisa said. Some of her favorite traditions include making dumplings in the morning and the Korean custom of Sebae — bowing to the elders within the family and receiving blessings from them, including an envelope of cash!

In Korean culture, many families have their own traditional stamps. When delving into her own family history, Lisa was able to incorporate hers as a hidden detail in the top right corner of her mural. “It’s important to me as a Korean American to celebrate the culture that my parents were raised in. It allows me to honor them and keep our traditions alive.”

As associate art director in

entertainment, Lisa has worked behind the scenes for the last four years, coordinating the visuals for entertainment projects such as the “Disneyland Forever” fireworks spectacular, “Pixar Play Parade,” “Oogie Boogie Bash — A Disney Halloween Party” and has even worked on shows for Disneyland Paris, Shanghai Disney Resort and Hong Kong Disneyland. She is also a member of COMPASS, a business employee resource group that represents and advocates for those of Asian and Pacific Islander American heritage.

“I help create the look and feel of many [of] our Disneyland park productions. There are so many different kinds of exciting work we get to do at the parks; that makes my job so fun,” Lisa shares. But this mural puts her own artwork front and center and is by far her most personal project yet.

When asked how she feels about her artwork being out on display for guests to see, Lisa exclaims, “[It’s] truly special! I’m so used to just being in my own corner working on park projects behind the scenes, and having my name on something like this is wild!”

When guests experience the piece, Lisa hopes that they are able to celebrate the new year and not just survive it! “We’ve been through a lot, and we deserve to celebrate ourselves with good food and flowers. It’s important — especially at a time like this — to actively seek and look for the beauty around us and within us. I hope that when people see this mural, they feel that they’re being celebrated.”

**The Lunar New Year Celebration takes place January 21–February 13 at Disney California Adventure park. Theme park admission and reservation necessary.*



COMMUNITY

Disney VoluntEARS Celebrate an Impactful Holiday Season

For more than 70 years, The Walt Disney Company has supported the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots Foundation to bring comfort and happiness to children and families in need during the holiday season. This year, the Disney Ultimate Toy Drive launched with a company donation of \$500,000 to Toys for Tots and brought together guests, fans, employees and cast members to celebrate the season and inspire hope where it’s needed most.

Nearly 7,000 toys were collected at Disneyland Resort as part of the overall toy drive, in which more than 163,000 toys were collected globally. Donations came in all forms — online through the Toys for Tots website and shopDisney.com and through in-person collection sites, putting big smiles on more than 100,000 faces of deserving children.

Throughout the holiday season, VoluntEARS from Disneyland Resort logged nearly 700 hours through safe and meaningful VoluntEAR opportunities, including decking the halls for patients at CHOC and helping get food on the table for underserved communities. Thank you, Disney VoluntEARS!



6,950
Toys collected at Disneyland Resort in 2021

683
Disney VoluntEARS hours logged during the holiday season

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

Members of COMPASS — a business employee resource group (BERG) that advocates for members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community — celebrate Associate Art Director Lisa Kang and the mural she created to honor Lunar New Year and the Year of the Tiger, on display now at the Downtown Disney District. Lisa drew inspiration from her Korean culture and even incorporated her family's unique stamp in the top right corner of the mural.



1. Lisa's family stamp moved from the top right corner of the mural to the top left corner. 2. Red and yellow Mickey head in the top right corner is enlarged. 3. The red and yellow Mickey head at the top center of the mural is solid yellow. 4. The color of the shirt on the cast member second from left changed from red to yellow. 5. The blue name tag is removed from the cast member second from right.

ANSWERS:

FEATURE

Young Guest Draws Strength from Elsa-inspired Prosthetic Arm

By Lisa Greathouse

Just days after receiving her long-awaited prosthetic arm, 8-year-old Lily Elliott had a few must-do's for the family's trip to Disneyland Resort last month. At the top of that list? A chance to meet Princess Elsa, whose courage, confidence and selflessness inspired Lily to choose her signature aquamarine color for her prosthesis.

On Dec. 6, the first of the family's five-day visit from Northern California, Lily got to meet Elsa and Anna at Fantasy Faire in Disneyland park. And even from a safe distance beyond the ropes, Lily showed off her custom arm, fitted below the elbow and embedded with a shimmering snowflake design inspired by her "Frozen" heroine. Lily was born with the genetic amputation disorder.

"She was completely starstruck and clammed up like she never does. It was like a teenager seeing the Beatles

for the first time," Lily's dad, Ryan, said with a laugh. "But it was a beautiful moment; Elsa and Anna made amazing eye contact with genuine interest, really seeing her not as a person in a crowd but as an individual." With some prodding from her mom, Jenna, Lily showed them how she is able to open and close her hand and "walked away with confidence," Ryan said, adding that Lily quickly followed the interaction with the question, "What ride are we going on next?"

The Elliots said that after adopting Lily at 18 months from an orphanage in southeastern China — where she was taken after being found on the side of a road shortly after birth — Disney characters were instrumental in her development. Kept in a crib for all but 45 minutes a day during her time in the orphanage, Lily was malnourished and wasn't able to walk or talk when the Fairfield, California, family adopted her in 2014. "It was a long road for Lily to

learn to trust others," Ryan said. During a trip to Disneyland park when she was 2, the toddler "let go of mom and went straight over to Minnie Mouse to give her a hug. That was a huge moment for us in seeing that she was learning to trust."

Around that time, Lily saw "Frozen" — her first movie — and was mesmerized with the characters, language and music. It remains one of her favorite Disney movies, her dad said, so it was no surprise when she chose the bright blue for the myoelectric prosthesis, which she can control with electrical signals generated by the partial muscles in her forearm, allowing her to open and close her hand.

Lily is now an energetic, vivacious, curious third-grader, said Ryan, a physical therapist. The family, which includes biological sons, John, 17, and Martin, 13, delighted in seeing Lily enjoy the parks as she got used to her new arm.

"Disney has played such a big role in our lives, and getting to come to the



parks after such a difficult time over the last couple of years was really great — and having that moment for Lily to share a really important part of her life was really amazing," he said. "We're so grateful."

INNOVATION

Disney Genie Service Grants Choice and Flexibility for Guests

By Yvonne Lee

Meet Nicole Bond, the director of digital experience at Disney Parks, Experiences and Products. Nicole and her team use technology to help make guests' visits even better when they visit Disney parks and for the past few years, they've been focused on bringing Disney Genie to life. Disney Genie service launched in December at Disneyland Resort, and we chatted with Nicole to learn more about this new tool and how it will help guests create their best Disney day.

Q. What inspired Disney Genie Service?

A. Disney Genie came from a desire to simplify and enhance the guest experience. If you look at the digital landscape right now, people are using technology to simplify their lives and add convenience — they mobile order their food and use navigation apps to find the best route to avoid traffic using real time information. We wanted to be able to provide our guests with that similar experience all in one place in the Disneyland app.

We're taking more than 60 years of knowledge and expertise in how guests visit our parks and using that to give guests what they told us they want — more choice and flexibility. Our guests have things they know they want to do, so how do we provide them with the ability to predict the best times to experience them? We wanted to give that information to our guests to help them plan and give them options.

Q. The technology sounds fascinating. How does this all work?

A. The technology behind Disney Genie service is really powerful and can evaluate thousands of combinations of an itinerary. Disney Genie service can look at open dining reservations AND check mobile order availability AND show forecasted wait times across attractions to help find the combination for the day that works for them. And it isn't a set itinerary — if a guest decides to eat somewhere else or ride another attraction, it can reoptimize the day and give you other choices in real time.

Q. What does that technology look like for guests when they use Disney Genie service?

A. Guests can use the Disney Genie tip board, which shows them both the current estimated wait times and forecasted future attraction wait times to help them predict the best time to experience it during the day. They can check out the personal day optimizer by telling the Disney Genie service what they want to do, and Disney Genie can map out an entire day and help them make the most of their park time so they



can have more fun.

Before Disney Genie, there were multiple places in the Disneyland app where information would live so you'd have to have to look around to find available dining reservations or attraction wait times and we wanted this to all live in one place.

Q: What features will guests who purchase Disney Genie+ service or individual Lightning Lane entrance arrival windows be able to access?

A. We took a lot of learnings from Disney MaxPass to try and make our Guests' experiences even better. Guests who purchase Disney Genie+ or individual Lightning Lane entrance arrival windows can use those options for even more convenience and flexibility by helping to prioritize some popular attractions and experiences that are important to them. We're providing our guests with the information they need to make choices and be more spontaneous.

Q. What a huge accomplishment. Disney Genie service has helped so many guests make the most of their visits to Disneyland theme parks. What are you most proud of through all this?

A. We're seeing a lot of guests use the product and we're hearing that it's improving their experiences. I'm proud of the flexibility and choice that Disney Genie provides, and I'm also excited about how it will evolve. Disney Genie will continue to get smarter over time. We're looking at holistic guest trends to understand what recommendations are commonly swapped out or how they're using the itinerary to create their best Disney day. It's giving our guests more ways to experience our parks the way they want to.



5 DISNEY GENIE+ TIPS

Theme park enthusiast, author and founder of online guides to theme parks, Gavin Doyle shares his favorite tips for using Disney Genie to help guests make the most of their visit to Disneyland Resort.

1 START EARLY! The morning is the best time of day to get on popular attractions as lines tend to be shorter. During these early hours, the standby wait times are shorter and Disney Genie+ return times are almost immediate so check out the complimentary Disney Genie Tip Board to plan ahead and use all your options!

2 TIME IT RIGHT! If you purchase Disney Genie+, you can make a new selection every two hours OR after you redeem your Disney Genie+ selection. If your next return time is within the next two hours, book your next attraction on the Disneyland app right after you scan into the queue. If your next selection return time is more than two hours away, set a timer for two hours so you'll be ready to book another as soon as it's available.

3 PARK HOP TO USE DISNEY GENIE+ AT BOTH PARKS! Disney Genie+ service is available for 19 attractions at Disneyland Resort — 12 at Disneyland park and seven at Disney California Adventure park. By purchasing Disney Genie+ service, you'll have access to Disney Genie+ at both parks, so make the most of it.

4 PICTURE PERFECT! Disney Genie+ service includes unlimited Disney PhotoPass digital downloads. We took advantage of this feature by making sure to stop when we saw Disney PhotoPass photographers (there was never a line even during the busier holiday season) and copied down the photo codes from attraction photos to link them on the Disneyland app. We loved the magical photos where the photographers inserted Disney characters into the picture. We took one with Tinker Bell on my sister's outstretched hand and one with Tie Fighters soaring above us at *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*.

5 CHECK OUT THE INDIVIDUAL LIGHTNING LANES! Three attractions at Disneyland Resort offer "a la carte" individual Lightning Lane selections separate from Disney Genie+. During our visit, we purchased this service for *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance* and were thrilled that we did when we walked right up to the attraction with less than a two-minute wait. It was worth it to us because some in our group hadn't experienced the attraction yet and wanted to avoid waiting in the standby line.



The best-selling author of "Disneyland Secrets: A Grand Tour of Disneyland's Hidden Details" and founder of online guides to theme parks, Gavin Doyle runs MickeyVisit.com and DisneyDose.com, where he helps his readers save money and make the most of their visits to Disneyland Resort.



CALENDAR

What's new in '22?

It's only January, but 2022 has so much in store for the Disneyland Resort. Beloved entertainment, shows, spectaculars, festivals and other offerings will be welcomed back this year—take a look!

Jan. 21–Feb. 13

The **Lunar New Year celebration** returns to Disney California Adventure park, commemorating the Year of the Tiger (with Tigger joining in, of course!)

February

"**Celebrate Gospel**" returns in honor of Black History Month, featuring live choir performances on select days during the month, now at Fantasyland Theater

March 4–April 26

The **Disney California Adventure Food & Wine Festival** returns with a dozen festival marketplaces offering delicious California-inspired fare along with complimentary culinary demonstrations

Spring

Disneyland park guests will celebrate the return of the iconic "**Main Street Electrical Parade**" in time for its 50th anniversary. Beloved nighttime spectaculars "**Fantasmic!**," "**World of Color**" and the "**Disneyland Forever**" fireworks also return.

May

Grad Nite returns on 16 dates in May and June in Disney California Adventure park after a two-year hiatus



Just talk to the people behind the [Aspire] program and ask them about the possibilities... the options are almost limitless.

– Chef Daniel “Duke” Brown

Disney
Aspire

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- * Flexible program schedules and structures
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Learn more at aspire.disney.com

For information about job opportunities at Disneyland Resort, visit disneyland.jobs