

# RESORT REPORTER

Sunday, March 27, 2022

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## FEATURE

# DISNEYLAND RESORT AND NONPROFITS CREATE “LIFE-CHANGING” IMPACT

By Dani Decena

Since 1955, Disneyland Resort has welcomed guests to experience fully immersive stories and imagine the possibilities within them. That same commitment continues into the community, as the resort has been focused on empowering underserved youth, finding hope in the future and emboldening leaders to build the workforce of tomorrow.

To accomplish this important mission, Disneyland Resort continues to invest in a workforce development initiative, partnering with multifaceted nonprofit organizations that serve a diverse set of needs in the community for youth and job seekers. In addition to the resort's financial support, Disney VoluntEARS build meaningful relationships with these nonprofits by sharing their time and expertise. Over the last four years, Disneyland Resort has donated \$4 million to expand the services these organizations offer so they can create even more opportunities for their clients.

These efforts are part of Disney's broader commitment to developing the next generation of storytellers and innovators. “For decades, we have been a proud community partner, working with local nonprofits to make a difference and address critical needs,” said Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock. “The resort's commitment to investing in workforce development brings our renowned career skill training and leadership development directly to our area youth. We are excited for what the future holds for this initiative and its participants.”

This community workforce development initiative supports three pillars: **mentorship, career skills development and community program support.**

- **Mentorship:** Cast members, through the Disney VoluntEARS program, have the opportunity to mentor youth one-on-one through school and community initiatives.

- **Career Skills Development:** Disney VoluntEARS lend their time and business expertise to lead career sessions with topics such as resume writing, interview skills, business etiquette, engineering, guest service and speaker sessions.

+ STORY CONTINUED ON P.5



DISNEYLAND RESORT WORKS WITH BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF ORANGE COUNTY & THE INLAND EMPIRE TO PAIR CAST MEMBER “BIGS” WITH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT “LITTLES” IN ANAHEIM FOR MENTORSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT.

## DISNEY CAST LIFE

### Meet a Cast Member Working on Degree #2 with Disney Aspire

By Krystal Rhaburn

Chris Garcia-Howell, a Fantasyland attractions cast member at Disneyland park, had put his dream of pursuing higher education on hold — until he heard about the Disney Aspire program. Since the program launched in 2018, paying full tuition up front and reimbursing fees for eligible hourly cast, Garcia-Howell earned a bachelor's degree in Organizational Leadership from Brandman University (now UMass Global) in 2020, where he is currently pursuing a master's degree in the same field of study.

“I kept saying that I would love to go back to school and get a degree,” said Garcia-Howell, sharing that he made a list of pros and cons when he initially considered enrolling. “Every single thing I could try to say to talk myself out of it, Aspire had a workaround for that.”

Garcia-Howell has been in attractions since joining the Disneyland Resort in 2009, currently working as a lead at “it's a small world” and Matterhorn Bobsleds.

He is working toward a stage manager role, with full support from his current leaders. “I hope to be in a role that really allows me to use what I've learned in school to help pay forward the time, attention and energy that's been gifted to me, really helping to influence and shape the next generation,” he said. “I want to keep that legacy of leadership going here at the resort. That would give me fulfillment.”

Garcia-Howell is proud of the hard work and personal sacrifice that has led to his accomplishments so far, but he also credits much of his success to support from his husband as well as his professors — one of whom even suggested he might one day teach his course.

“It meant a lot that I was able to fulfill that goal of being able to say I had a college degree,” Garcia-Howell shared. “I learned so much and can now talk to leaders about leadership styles. It helps me understand other leaders and more importantly, my own leaders even better. And I feel like I can now perform my role better.”



## DISNEY CAST LIFE

## A Round of A-Paws for Our Security K9s

By Aaron Genove

Before guests enter Disneyland Resort, they first meet the security team in charge of protecting the magic. Standing at the gates and patrolling the entrances, these cast members ensure that all guests not only have the most magical day at our parks, but also the safest.

The security team is made up of multiple units, but there is one that stands out — on four feet! Meet a couple members on the Disneyland Resort's Security K9 Unit, including their canines who are just as much cast members as their handlers.

Dexter De Guzman first started during the construction of Disney California Adventure park as a construction security officer. After a year of working in security, including a stint with the motor unit and patrolling the park with a vehicle, he was introduced to the K9 unit as he began assisting with vehicle checks. This partnership with the K9 unit led him to a job opening within the team, where he's been working ever since.

"Technically, it was one of those unplanned things," De Guzman reminisces. "I went to Disney thinking, 'OK, this is going to be a summer job, temporarily.' And then it becomes fun. The interaction with our guests and the other cast members is cool ... especially after I joined the K9 team. It's totally different because you have a partner that you actually work with every day."

De Guzman's favorite part about working with his Belgian Malinois, Ka\$h, is the connection he feels to him. "It's a partnership between — or the bond I should say — the bond between you and an animal to go through all the process in training, and then to trust your life for his ability to keep everybody safe — you and our guests." In an effort to better explain the relationship between himself and Ka\$h, De Guzman thought of a metaphor: "It's basically like a dance partner for you. You try to perform a duty, or a specific job, and you are a team: your dog and the handler."

While working on the K9 team could understandably be a very serious job, De Guzman knows Ka\$h will always be

excited for another day as a cast member. "Every time he sees me he's like, 'All right!' For us, it's work. But for them, it's playtime." De Guzman explains how Ka\$h performs searches as guests pass by during the security screening. "He can do that all day. As the guests pass by us, he's basically searching the people looking for 'the toy,' and that's his reward toy. It's kind of like his paycheck."

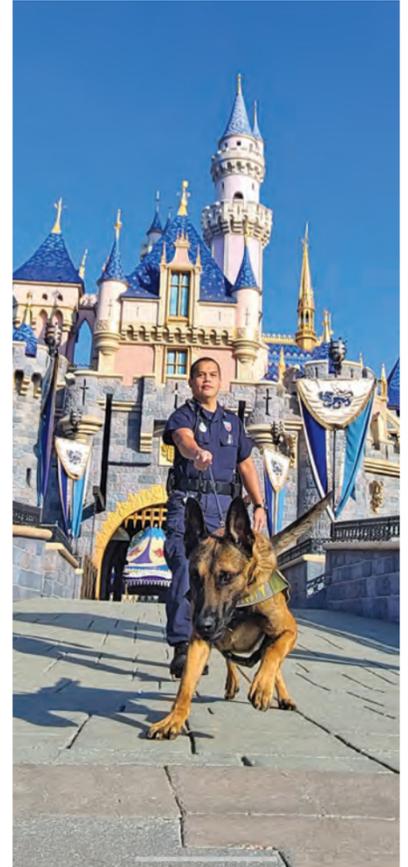
De Guzman shares the same love for the Disneyland Resort as his reliable canine companion. "I'm passionate about everything I did with this team. That's why I became the lead and also the trainer for the team. It's a challenge for me but I love that... Find some ways on how to make our resort, and our cast members, a safer environment."

Shannon Reyes worked security in her previous job, and then built on that career when she joined the Disneyland Resort, taking on roles such as security role host, motor officer, hotel officer and bike patrol. When there was an opening for the K9 unit, she had friends telling her to apply for the role due to her love for dogs and animals. After speaking with other members of the K9 team, including De Guzman, she applied to the role. A couple weeks after the posting, she got the job, and in her own words, has "been happy ever since."

"Gus Gus and I have been together for about seven years," says Reyes, referring to her Labrador Retriever. "I'm happy that I get to work with a dog ... It seems like he looks up to me; we're learning something new every day. I get to learn something different from him, from either his alert or his personality characteristics or whatnot. I just enjoy working with a dog, having that partner and that partnership with someone else that's not a person, but four legs."

Although she found her perfect job as a dog lover, she also understands that working with Gus Gus isn't just fun and games — it's serious work. "It's not just walking your dog ... it's training, it's building that bond with your dog. It's that yearly certification that you've got to pass in order to stay on the K9 team and keep your partner. There's a lot more than just walking that dog and going out to calls that you get throughout the day."

Regardless, Gus Gus knows how to keep the job playful and interesting. "He loves guests," Reyes says. "Guests come in, and he would just go up to them. He just has a sensitive soul. He's the sweet-



DEXTER DE GUZMAN AND KA\$h (BELGIAN MALINOIS)

est dog that I've probably had, and he's a loving little guy."

When talking about Gus Gus's favorite part about being a cast member, she further emphasizes his happy attitude with guests, but also his desire for a reward after a hard day's work. "He absolutely loves the guest interaction, being pet by a few people here and there. But he enjoys the work, he enjoys to get his 'toy' ... being able to get that toy at the end of his shift, or during training or when he finds something coming into the resort. All these dogs work hard to go for that 'paycheck,' so to say."

After asking Reyes about her favorite part about her job, she expressed the same sentiment as Gus Gus about our guests. "The guest interaction, and working with a dog that you end up loving. You take care of him, he takes care of you," she shares. "At the end of the day, making sure that the guests are safe. The cast members are safe. Making sure that you can come in, do your job to the fullest, and go home knowing that you did what you had to do in order to keep the resort safe."



SHANNON REYES AND GUS GUS (LABRADOR RETRIEVER)

## DISNEY CAST LIFE

## Saying 'See Ya Real Soon' to Mickey's Toontown

By Jordyn Crowley-Watts

Since Mickey's Toontown opened at Disneyland park in 1993, families have enjoyed visiting the zany cartoon home of Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck and other classic Disney characters to push buttons, twist knobs and play interactive pretend. Just in time for its 30th anniversary, Mickey's Toontown is being reimaged to include new play experiences for families with young children, grassy spaces for family play and pa-

rental relaxation, and a new attraction: Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway.

Cast members said a temporary farewell to the land, now closed until early 2023, on its last day of operation, March 8. The cast-exclusive, after-hours event included a ride on Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin and Gadget's Go Coaster, photo ops with iconic Toontown landmarks and citizens, including Mickey and Minnie, and even a dance party, led by cast members in the middle of the square.



CAST MEMBERS POSE WITH MICKEY MOUSE BY HIS HOUSE IN TOONTOWN BEFORE IT UNDERGOES CHANGES OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.



CAST MEMBERS TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO POSE WITH ICONIC TOONTOWN LANDMARKS BEFORE TOONTOWN UNDERGOES CHANGES OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

DISNEY CAST LIFE

# MEET OUR FESTIVAL FOODIES

The Disney California Adventure Food & Wine Festival is back after almost three years, bringing delicious eats and treats inspired by California cuisine, entertainment, specialty merchandise and family fun. To celebrate, we're shouting out some of the food and beverage cast members who make the festival possible — and who just happen to be some major foodies themselves!



## Meet JAN

- Favorite part of working Food & Wine: "Meeting new people. I've met cast members that I never would have met on Buena Vista Street. They come over from Disneyland so I've made some good friends there as well."
- Favorite festival item: French Onion Grilled Beef Tenderloin Slider
- In the off season: You can find her selling snacks at Mortimer's Market on Buena Vista Street or churros at Willie's Churros
- She's excited about: Trying more of the foods!

## Meet PATRICK

- Favorite part of working Food & Wine: "Coming together with all our diverse cast members. We pull cast from all areas throughout the resort. Creating connections with cast members that you don't normally see is what I really look forward to."
- Favorite festival item: Chile Relleno Empanada
- In the off season: He's cooking up cosmic creations in *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*
- He's excited about: Experiencing the exciting energy of the festival again



## Meet FRANCINE

- Favorite part of working Food & Wine: "I like that I get to meet a lot more people ... [cast members] from Disneyland and Disney California Adventure that I wouldn't have been able to meet."
- Favorite festival item: Chicharron-crusted Fried Artichoke Dip
- In the off season: She's whipping up coffee drinks at Market House on Main Street, U.S.A. in Disneyland park
- She's excited about: Giving guests recommendations on items to try at the festival



THE DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL RUNS NOW THROUGH APRIL 26.

### RECIPE CORNER

## Jackfruit Carnitas Banh Mi Nachos with Cilantro Crema and 'Pickled' de Gallo: *Disney California Adventure Food & Wine Festival*

In honor of the long-awaited return of the Disney California Adventure Food & Wine Festival, here is the recipe for one of the most popular items from festivals of the past. This vegan fusion recipe from the vault is fun to prepare at home and pairs perfectly with a jalapeño margarita.

#### DIRECTIONS (Serves 6):

##### FOR MARINATED JACKFRUIT:

1. Whisk soy sauce, sesame oil, garlic, ginger and brown sugar in a small bowl until sugar dissolves.
2. Place jackfruit in a large bowl and cover with marinade. Refrigerate for at least three hours or overnight.

##### FOR PICKLED VEGETABLES:

1. Whisk water, vinegar, salt and sugar in a small bowl until sugar dissolves.
2. Add radish, carrots, jalapeño and cilantro. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour.

##### FOR CREMA:

1. Preheat broiler to high. Place jalapeño on baking sheet and broil, turning every 2 minutes, until pepper begins to blister. Place in a plastic bag for 5 minutes. Remove skin and seeds, then finely chop.
2. Combine jalapeño, sour cream, cilantro and lime juice in a small bowl. Mix with an immersion blender until smooth and light green in color.
3. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

##### TO SERVE:

1. Drain marinated jackfruit. Place jackfruit in a medium saucepan and cook over medium heat for 8 minutes, until it reaches a temperature of 165°F. Drain any excess juices.
2. Drain pickled vegetables.
3. Place tortilla chips on a large platter. Top with marinated jackfruit and pickled vegetables.
4. Drizzle crema and garnish with cilantro.

**COOK'S NOTES:** Canned jackfruit can be used in place of frozen jackfruit. Make sure to rinse and drain canned jackfruit before marinating. Always use caution when handling sharp objects and hot contents. Please supervise children who are helping or nearby. This recipe has been converted from a larger quantity in the restaurant kitchens. The flavor profile may vary from the restaurant's version.



#### INGREDIENTS

##### MARINATED JACKFRUIT

- ½ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup sesame oil
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped ginger
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 pound frozen jackfruit, thawed

##### 'PICKLED' DE GALLO

- ½ cup water
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ¼ cup sugar
- ⅔ cup shredded daikon radish

- ⅓ cup shredded carrot
- ½ jalapeño pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro

##### CILANTRO CREMA

- 1 jalapeño pepper
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- Juice of 1 lime

##### NACHOS

- 13-ounce bag tortilla chips
- Cilantro, to taste

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

## Horticulture Cast Members Celebrate Women’s History Month

Thanks to a team of Disneyland Resort Horticulture cast members, floral Minnie Mouse is on display just inside the main entrance of Disneyland park, in honor of Women’s History Month this March.



**ANSWERS:** 1. Changed shirt color. 2. Flag removed. 3. Color of Minnie's bow changed. 4. Birds added. 5. Cast member nametag removed.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

# Minnie Mouse Blooms for Women’s History Month

By Sasha Azoqa

Since opening day on July 17, 1955, guests entering Disneyland park have been greeted by the iconic Mickey Mouse floral display ... until now! In honor of Women’s History Month throughout March, floral Minnie is on display on the hillside just inside the main entrance, in front of the Main Street, U.S.A. Disneyland Railroad station.

“There have been some seasonal changes over the years,” said Horticulture Manager Sarah Day, whose team installed the display. “But Mickey Mouse has always been the star of the show ... until now!”

A team of 13 Horticulture cast members began the transformation process

around midnight March 1, lights illuminating their intricate work. By 6 a.m., the transformation was complete, and Minnie Mouse, with her iconic bow and eyelashes, was center stage.

Horticulture Specialist Stacy Wise was tasked with creating the design in collaboration with her team. “I’m really excited to show my family,” said Wise, whose passion for horticulture blossomed as a child while helping her father with his landscaping business. “I’m looking forward to getting my picture with the Minnie Mouse design and sending it to my dad.”

Wise was tearful as she explained what this moment means to her. “It’s amazing that we’re having this step for Women’s History Month, and having Minnie Mouse featured is fantastic,” she

said. “Minnie Mouse is just as iconic as Mickey Mouse, and she needs a little face time.”

**The Horticulture team shared these fun facts about the floral:**

- The traditional floral design includes over 1,750 individual plants.
- Minnie Mouse’s bow consists of approximately 750 individual plants, known as Nemesia.
- The swirls on either side of Minnie Mouse contain over 1,900 individual plants, including pansies, violas and petunias.

March is designated as Women’s History Month, a time to honor women throughout history, share their stories and celebrate their achievements.

Throughout the month, cast members have participated in events hosted by the Women’s Inclusion Network (WIN), one of the Business Employee Resource Groups (BERGs) at Disneyland Resort, made up of cast members whose mission is to elevate and highlight the powerful influence of diverse women on our culture, people and market, as champions of inclusion.

Women have always been a driving force behind many of the most treasured theme park experiences, and we aim to celebrate not only this month, but all year long.

Thank you to Stacy, Sarah and the incredible Horticulture cast members at the Disneyland Resort for being part of the magic ... and here’s to a month of celebrating incredible women!



HORTICULTURE SPECIALIST STACY WISE

**+ WORKFORCE STORY CONTINUED FROM P.4**

**• Community Program Support:**

Disneyland Resort offers grants to organizations that specialize in helping students and adults enter or re-enter the workforce.

Here are stories from three organizations that exemplify the far-reaching impact that is possible when working together.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County & the Inland Empire**

“The number one intervention to success in a young person’s life is a positive role model,” shares Sloane Keane, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County & the Inland Empire as she reflects on the impact of student career coaching and development programs. In 2017, the organization began connecting high school students with Disneyland Resort cast members to be “Bigs” or mentors, in order to build positive relationships and showcase the different possibilities they could have for their future careers.

“What has been really special is the amount of magic that is infused within the curriculum,” Sloane said. “It was very eye-opening for our Anaheim students to see what types of careers they would have exposure to underneath the Disney umbrella.”

Continuing this momentum, Sloane is excited about the launch of a second phase of the program, which helps students after high school make the connection between academic achievement and meaningful employment. With

funding from Disneyland Resort, and in collaboration with Cypress College, students who are about to graduate are paired with Disneyland Resort mentors during a semester for one-on-one support and coaching for the next step in their journey.

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Anaheim-Cypress**

On the subject of mentors, the power of positive influence is strong throughout Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Anaheim-Cypress as they develop programs to enhance career-building skills in youth starting as young as 11 years old. From academic tutoring to health classes and music enrichment, Boys & Girls Clubs aim to develop youth holistically, and their programs evolve to meet the needs of their students, including recently opened STEM labs. With support from Disneyland Resort, Boys & Girls Clubs have launched “Geared Up!” in which students can learn skills such as business etiquette, resume writing and interviewing from Disney VoluntEARS facilitators.

“What we really appreciate is that Disney identifies itself as not only a business partner in the community but a real asset for making life better for those who live in the community and surrounding area,” said CEO Anne Hertz on how both organizations have continued to change lives together.

One student landed her first job using the knowledge and skills that she learned from Disney facilitators and was even connected to a Disney Imagineer for mentorship. “So, when we say ‘life-changing,’ we’re really not kidding!”



SENIOR SECURITY MANAGER KIM SIMS WORKS ONE-ON-ONE WITH CLIENTS AT THE ANAHEIM CHRYSALIS LOCATION.

shares Erika Gary, chief operating officer.

Anne hopes those who participate in the programs “are going to self-identify as being more than capable of achieving their goals.” With Disney’s continued support, she is looking forward to opening more sites this year in order to reach even more kids and families in need.

**Chrysalis**

The third pillar of the workforce development initiative supports nonprofits like Chrysalis that help adults who may be facing obstacles to successfully re-enter the workforce. Disneyland Resort was one of the first supporters in Orange County and provided Chrysalis the resources to expand and open a center right down the street in Anaheim.

“Disneyland Resort opened up the world for us from a community standpoint,” said CEO Mark Loranger, noting that support from the Disneyland Resort has made a difference between pov-

erty and self-sufficiency for over 1,000 clients since opening. “When Disney says ‘this is a partner that we trust, that we invest in, someone that we have our cast members volunteering at’ ... that is a huge endorsement, and it gave us that jump-start and credibility — I couldn’t have asked for a better partner.”

Disney VoluntEARS like Kim Sims, senior security manager at Disneyland Resort, offer their time and talents to help clients build resumes, practice interview skills and learn business etiquette. Some clients have even become cast members at the Disneyland Resort.

Over the next several months, we will be sharing the life-changing accomplishments of these organizations through the eyes of our cast members who dedicate their time and talents to developing future leaders of the workforce. Keep following the Disney Parks Blog and Disneyland Cast and Community on Instagram for more inspiring stories!



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Disney

# Disneyland Specialty Job Fair

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