

# RESORT REPORTER

Sunday, August 28, 2022

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## WHAT'S INSIDE

Disney Cast Life  
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## DISNEY CAST LIFE

# CAST MEMBERS MAKE A SPLASH IN TIME-HONORED TRADITION



WINNING TEAMS OF THE 2022 DISNEYLAND RESORT CAST CANOE RACES TAKE A VICTORY LAP AROUND RIVERS OF AMERICA IN DISNEYLAND PARK.

By Jessica Sweetman

Earlier this month, teams of cast members approached the Rivers of America with focused eyes, determined minds and steady hands. With a lingering morning chill, anticipation hung in the air as teams prepared for their final race around the river. They came with different backgrounds, roles, skills and experiences, but they all had one thing in common: they would forever be bonded as finalists of the 2022 Disneyland Resort Cast Canoe Races.

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the return of the Canoe Races — an annual tradition dating back to 1963 — was a welcomed sign this summer. This year's event saw participation from nearly 1,300 cast members (84 teams of eight to 16 members), many of them first-timers to the event and others with decades of experience in the quest to be crowned the fastest canoe team in the wilderness.

Although competition started just

eight weeks prior to the final race, many cast members started prepping long before. Kyle Abrantes' team of nurses and health services cast members mentally prepared for the changes in their schedules to accommodate both their work shifts and their 5 a.m. call time for weekly practices on the river. "Words can't begin to describe how grateful I am that my team believed in our potential as much as I did and were willing to make the sacrifices to attend, whether it was to row or show support," said Abrantes, an emergency medical technician for the resort. "Regardless of the outcome, this team is already a winner in my eyes."

Another team prepared for their race a bit differently. "Our team came up with a PowerPoint presentation," said Chloe Sarabian, a member of the team of industrial engineers. Using what they knew about their team, the structure of the canoes and the flow and velocity of the water, they figured out the precise positions for each rower to ensure the most efficient aerodynamics. "By calculating the best place during our lap



DISNEY AMBASSADORS MARK EVERETT KING JR. AND NATALY GUZMAN JOINED DISNEYLAND RESORT PRESIDENT KEN POTROCK TO THANK CAST MEMBERS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN CANOE RACES AND TO PRESENT A \$2,500 DONATION TO BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF GREATER ANAHEIM-CYPRESS.

to conduct our switches, we mapped out our route to maximize efficiency, therefore minimizing our total lap time."

Teams in the final races on Aug. 3-4 showed dedication and commitment to the competition in their preparation, speed and endurance throughout the races. Waves of applause from friends and families erupted when the winning teams were announced on Aug. 4.

Disneyland Resort President Ken

Potrock wrapped up the event by commemorating what it is like to not only work at The Happiest Place on Earth, but to have fun here as well. "This is what working at Disneyland is truly about - having fun with your fellow cast members in a way that only Disney can do. The sense of community that this event has brought over the years is a true representation of who we are not only as a company, but as a Disney family."

## COMMUNITY

# Continuing the Fight to End Hunger in Orange County

Disneyland Resort Donates \$200,000 to Local Food Banks

By Danielle Bautista

The Disneyland Resort is committed to supporting the community by helping local nonprofit organizations in their hunger relief efforts. On top of supporting local food banks with monetary donations, some of the most popular volunteer events for cast members (or Disney VolunteARS) are at food banks, harvesting fresh produce or packing boxes of food for local residents.

Earlier this month, Disneyland Resort surprised Community Action Partnership Orange County (CAP OC) with a donation of \$100,000 to support their Orange County Food Bank program. To further hunger relief efforts, another donation of \$100,000 will be made to Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County. Both organizations



DISNEY VOLUNTEARS PACK FOOD BOXES AT ORANGE COUNTY FOOD BANK ON JULY 23, 2022.

provide nutritious meals to families and seniors in Orange County.

"This is just one part of the many efforts that Disney cast members and the company are doing to support Anaheim, Orange County and the people that are most in need of our support and efforts," said Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock.

Over the past year, the Disneyland Resort has donated and distributed over 40,000 meals to those in need.

"It means so much to me because we are able to help people in our community, especially the elderly, not have to make those difficult choices on whether or not they will be able to purchase food or pay their bills,"

says Melanie MacDonald, a Disney VolunteAR and Disney PhotoPass photographer.

The relationship between the resort and the OC Food Bank goes back 30 years. In that time, the Disneyland Resort has donated over \$8.5 million dollars and hundreds of thousands of Disney VolunteARS hours.



DISNEY VOLUNTEARS HARVEST CABBAGE AT SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF ORANGE COUNTY'S HARVEST SOLUTIONS FARM IN IRVINE, CALIF.

## HISTORY &amp; HERITAGE

## Disneyland Resort Honors Fallen Hero in Special Flag Retreat Ceremony

By Sasha Azoqa

The Flag Retreat Ceremony in Town Square at Disneyland park is a long-standing daily tradition to honor those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. On Aug. 8, a special ceremony was held to recognize the late Lance Cpl. Dylan Ryan Merola, who was killed in action along with 12 other service members during the evacuation of Afghanistan one year ago.

Just before the ceremony began, a special announcement rang out:

"Today's ceremony is a special dedication to a courageous United States Marine who gave his life last August while protecting the security of others at Kabul International Airport in Afghanistan. His valor and ultimate sacrifice is recognized today with the Navy Achievement Medal. Join us as we salute his family and remember Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Dylan R. Merola."

In attendance were Cpl. Merola's mother, Cheryl Rex, his grandparents, sister, and brother Brandon, who days earlier graduated from the Marine Corps Boot Camp. Cpl. Merola grew up locally in Rancho Cucamonga and often visited the Disneyland Resort with his family. "It meant so much to me to honor my son," Rex said. "Growing up, we attended a lot of things at Disneyland, and it's very meaningful here. It's a special place to us."

Cpl. Merola's family stood side-by-side as he was posthumously presented with the Navy Achievement Medal. "Receiving Dylan's medal is very heart-



CHERYL REX RECEIVES THE NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL ON BEHALF OF HER LATE SON, LANCE CPL. DYLAN R. MEROLA.

breaking," said Rex. "It's hard knowing that I'm receiving it and not him."

Ariel Elias, sourcing specialist and co-chair of SALUTE, the Business Employee Resource Group (BERG) dedicated to serving military cast members and families, helped organize the ceremony.

"Every cast member at the Disneyland Resort who is involved with veterans, friends and families of veterans, and event planning and operations

knew that today was going to be special and put forth their best effort to really give the family what they deserve," Elias said. "I was a Marine in Afghanistan, and this moment is something that I could really relate to and feel to the core of who I am." Elias served in the military for 21 years before beginning his career at the Disneyland Resort.

Wellness Operations & Support Manager and SALUTE BERG member

Liz Dunn also helped plan the ceremony. "We forget how precious life is, and these moments where we can stop and reflect are so important," said Dunn, who has several family members in the military. "I remember when my brother went to Iraq, I had all these feelings of fear, pride, gratitude and honor wrapped up into one. Having the flag retreat ceremony dedicated to Dylan is a beautiful way of honoring his whole family and all their sacrifices."

## COMMUNITY

## Empowering Girls for the Workforce of their Dreams

By Krystal Rhaburn

This summer, members of Girls Inc. of Orange County committed to a mentorship program with Disneyland Resort leaders as part of an ongoing community workforce development initiative. Girls Inc. is a nonprofit organization that serves young women from kindergarten to 18 years old and inspires them to be strong, smart and bold. Over the course of their mentorship program, five girls participated in informational interviews, shadowing, networking, tours and a final presentation to the group that captured all of their learnings and takeaways for the future.

Disney leaders guided the mentees through immersive activities, investing in their personal and professional growth along the way. Two of the mentorship pairings shared about their experiences:

## April &amp; Theresa



GIRLS INC. MEMBER APRIL AND THERESA ANDERSON, DISNEYLAND RESORT FOOD &amp; BEVERAGE OPERATIONS MANAGER

**How would you describe your experience in one word?**

**Theresa:** Fantastic.

**April:** Thrilling.

**How would you describe your relationship with your mentor/mentee?**

**Theresa:** It's just been delightful. We bonded immediately over things like our love for Disney and family.

**April:** She's truly my new best friend and third parent. We clicked so easily that even though this program was temporary, she will surely be my mentor for life now.

*"She's truly my new best friend and third parent," said Girls Inc. member April about her Disneyland Resort mentor. "We clicked so easily that even though this program was temporary, she will surely be my mentor for life."*



FIVE MEMBERS OF GIRLS INC. SPEND A MORNING COMPLETING A SCAVENGER HUNT IN DISNEYLAND PARK WITH THEIR DISNEYLAND RESORT MENTORS.

## Karen &amp; Catherine



GIRLS INC. MEMBER KAREN AND CATHERINE MCCOY, DISNEYLAND RESORT INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING SENIOR MANAGER

**How would you describe your experience in one word?**

**Catherine:** Empowering.

**Karen:** Eventful.

**How would you describe your relationship with your mentor/mentee?**

**Catherine:** We were able to connect well because she is looking to become a mechanical engineer and I am currently an industrial and systems engineer. It's been great to see her grow so much in her confidence and knowledge during this program.

**Karen:** It's a very long-lasting rela-

tionship. We had a spark that made it easy to connect, bonding over our passion for women's rights to take up space in a field that is mainly full of men.

**In your opinion, what is one of the best habits of a great mentor?**

**Catherine:** Transparency. It's so important to create an honest relationship and have in-depth, meaningful conversations that really make an impact.

**In your opinion, what is one of the best qualities of a great mentee?**

**Karen:** Being open-minded and ready to jump on new opportunities.

DISNEY CAST LIFE

# A LITTLE BIT OF MADNESS... A WHOLE LOT OF FUN!



1,600 CAST MEMBERS AND THEIR FRIENDS TOOK TO DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK FOR AN AFTER-HOURS SCAVENGER HUNT.

## Cast Members Find Clues and Solve Mysteries at the After-Hours 'Minnie's Moonlit Madness'

By Amy Cassidy

Holmes couldn't crack it. Nancy Drew couldn't solve it. Columbo wouldn't dare take the case. Where could Minnie Mouse turn? Who could help her end the madness? (Insert dramatic music here.)

Late into the night of Aug. 9 and into the wee hours of the morning at Disney California Adventure park, Minnie Mouse and her Clue Crew enlisted the help of 400 teams of cast members and their friends to help solve "The Mystery of the Missing Snacks" in the return of the beloved cast event, Minnie's Moonlit Madness. Tethered by the bonds of friendship (and a rope), 1,600 super sleuths solved puzzles, decoded riddles and tested their Disney trivia knowledge.

It was a meaningful night for those in attendance as they celebrated the return of another cast member favorite event. "My team and I definitely walked away with a lot of memories that we get to cherish. I think my personal favorite was getting our last clue in with only a minute left of the game," said Lifeguard Coy Zindell. "I definitely am excited to participate in Minnie's Moonlit Madness again next year and I know that my team is as well."

This night of madness was made possible by the incredible Cast Activities team and their Clue Crew, whose members spend months developing, testing and adjusting the scavenger hunt. "I love that being a part of this event allows me to create experiences and memories that are magical for (cast members)," said Clue Crew member Craig Kawamoto of the Walt Disney Travel Company. "There is nothing like seeing close to 2,000 energetic participants so excited to take part in something you put your heart into."



This year, Community Action Partnership Orange County (CAP OC) was on hand to receive a \$5,000 donation, but Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock had an extra magical moment in store for CAP OC's food bank program: "On behalf of our cast members, the Disneyland Resort and our Disney VoluntEARS, I am very excited to present the OC Food Bank with an additional check in the amount of \$100,000," Ken shared onstage with Detective Minnie by his side.

Think you have what it takes to be a cast member participating in Minnie's Moonlit Madness?

## TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE

- 1** In Disney and Pixar's "Finding Dory," what snack does Hank eat in the stroller?

  - a. Goldfish
  - b. Rainbow Goldfish
  - c. Fish Bites
  - d. Pretzels
  - e. Gummy Sharks
- 2** In the Disneyland attraction, Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room, what are the names of the featured birds in order of their introduction?

  - a. Michael, Fritz, Jose, Pierre
  - b. Jose, Michael, Fritz, Pierre
  - c. Michael, Jose, Fritz, Pierre
  - d. Jose, Michael, Pierre, Fritz
  - e. Pierre, Michael, Fritz, Jose
- 3** At Disney Legend Wally Boag's first performance in 1955 as Pecos Bill in "Golden Horseshoe Review" what famous woman did he introduce who was sitting in the audience?

  - a. Lucille Ball
  - b. Carol Channing
  - c. Mary Blair
  - d. Mamie Eisenhower
  - e. Lillian Disney
- 4** In Disney California Adventure park, "Taste Pilot's Grill" was the predecessor of "Smokejumper's Grill" at Grizzly Peak Airfield. What famous aircraft was mounted on the front of "Taste Pilot's Grill"?

  - a. North American X-15
  - b. Lockheed SR-71
  - c. Bell X-1
  - d. Northrop T-38
  - e. Lockheed Martin F-22
- 5** At the end of "High School Musical 3," which college does Troy Bolton announce he will attend?

  - a. UCLA
  - b. ITT Tech
  - c. NYU
  - d. U.C. Berkeley
  - e. Monsters University
- 6** Which film did the short "La Luna" release with?

  - a. Brave
  - b. Finding Nemo
  - c. Inside Out
  - d. Tangled
  - e. Wall-E

ANSWERS: 1C, 2D, 3E, 4C, 5D, 6A



## DID YOU KNOW?

1. Rather than going to City Hall or Chamber of Commerce to leave a compliment for an incredible cast member, Disneyland Resort guests can now submit mobile cast compliments through the Disneyland app.

### HERE'S HOW TO DO IT:

1. Search "Cast Compliment" in the app.
2. Select a reason for recognition and the location where you interacted with the cast member.
3. (Optional) Provide the cast member name, hometown and date of interaction to be able to pass the compliment along!

2. Since its debut on the Rivers of America in 1992, "Fantasmic!" has performed over 11,000 shows at the Disneyland Resort.

3. The Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage, which reopened to guests last month, uses zero-emission vehicles. Magnetic coils propel the submarines through the water, eliminating the need for hundreds of thousands of gallons of diesel fuel a year.

4. Disneyland Resort hosts several cast member events that give back to the community, including the annual duck races, in which cast members race rubber ducks in the waterways of "it's a small world." Proceeds from this year's event were donated to Goodwill of Orange County.

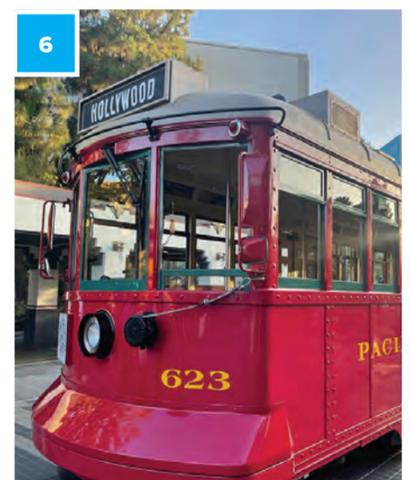
5. Disneyland Resort diverts over five million pounds of food waste from landfill annually! Now guests are able to help by throwing away their uneaten food scraps in specially designed bins available at Galactic Grill and Hungry Bear Restaurant in Disneyland park, with more locations coming soon.

6. Ding ding! The Red Car Trolleys have made their return to Buena Vista Street at Disney California Adventure park. They are modeled after the real trolleys that took passengers across over 1,000 miles of Los Angeles streets from 1887 to 1961. Walt Disney would have encountered ones like these during his arrival to Los Angeles in 1923.

7. At the end of the "Disneyland Forever!" fireworks show, running through Sept. 1, 2022, guests will hear the song "A Kiss Goodnight." This song was composed by Disney Legend Richard M. Sherman, who along with his late brother Robert B. Sherman, famously wrote the songs for beloved films such as "Mary Poppins," "Winnie the Pooh" and "The Jungle Book." The score for the fireworks show was recorded at Abbey Road Studios in London, England, the very same that was notably used by the Beatles to record their music in the 1960s.

8. The Disney Cast Life section of the Disney Parks Blog has reached its first year of digital publication, sharing amazing cast member stories from the Disney parks and resorts around the globe! To celebrate the anniversary, August 23 was named Cast Life Day and cast members at the Disneyland Resort had the opportunity to win prizes, take advantage of special discounts and take fun photos! To learn more about Disney Cast Life, head to the Disney Parks Blog and click the "Cast Life" tab.

9. Guests can find ways to Celebrate Soulfully throughout this summer including food, music and immersive experiences. Check out "The Soul of Jazz: An American Adventure" exhibit in Downtown Disney District in which Joe Gardner from Disney and Pixar's "Soul" takes guests through a musical history of jazz. Located adjacent to the Star Wars Trading Post from through September 5, this free exhibit has toured across America, starting in EPCOT at Walt Disney World and journeying to the birthplace of Jazz, New Orleans, and on to unique places with rich musical history such as Kansas City and Harlem!



DISNEY CAST LIFE

# CELEBRATING FOUR YEARS OF DISNEY ASPIRE

By Molly McGranahan

Happy birthday, Disney Aspire! It's been four incredible years since the introduction of Disney Aspire, The Walt Disney Company's education investment program for eligible hourly employees. That means 1,460 days have been dedicated to making career dreams come true.

In the last year alone, the Disney Aspire network has expanded to include North Carolina A&T, Johnson & Wales University, Fullerton College and California State University, Fullerton. And that's just the beginning!

Take a look at some of the ways Disney Aspire is changing the lives of cast members and employees across the company, and head to [DisneyAspire.com](https://DisneyAspire.com) to learn more about the program.



## Disney Ambassador Crosses the Finish Line as a First-Generation Graduate



DISNEY AMBASSADOR NATALY GUZMAN, FIRST GENERATION-GRADUATE, EARNS DEGREE WITH DISNEY ASPIRE, THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY'S EDUCATION INVESTMENT PROGRAM.

By Krystal Rhaburn

2022-2023 Disneyland Resort Ambassador Nataly Guzman became the first Disney Ambassador to earn a degree through Disney Aspire earlier this year when she graduated with a degree in communications from Wilmington University. See how Disney Aspire helped put Nataly's dreams within reach.

### What led to you join Disney Aspire?

Finances were probably the biggest draw. [Disney Aspire] launched at the most perfect time in my life; right when I was exploring different schools to attend for my bachelor's degree.

### What was application process like?

It was easy. I was a first-generation student. My parents were from rural Mexico ... their highest education was up to middle school. Although they knew about college and how important it was, they had no idea how to help me ... they didn't know what SATs were or what financial aid was. It felt like such an impossible task just to get in, let alone finish it all. With Aspire, it was significantly easier than what I had to go through back in high school, due to the help I received with navigating through everything.

### Was there any sense of community with other Aspire students?

It was fun to connect with cast members from Aulani to Walt Disney World; that was one of the most fascinating things. There was always this little sense of community, especially seen with things like online discussion posts that touched on working in this company.

### What would you say to someone interested in joining Disney Aspire?

For someone who wants to pursue more education, I would remind them that this is an incredible opportunity to take advantage of that is genuinely no strings attached.

### Now that you have graduated from Disney Aspire, what do you aspire to do next?

I landed a role [as a Disney Ambassador] that covers every discipline of communication, which is such a unique opportunity. Since I won't be in this forever, it's a little scary to think about what is possible in the future.

In high school, the thought of a master's was just, "absolutely not; there's no way I can ever finish anything like that." And now, I can do that, which is pretty cool. What I do know is I want to stay in storytelling. I want to stay in messaging. And I want to stay in this company.

**Disney Aspire**

**1,460**  
Days of Disney Aspire

**85k+ Eligible Employees**

**13,000+ = 13,000+**  
currently enrolled #DreamsWithinReach

**>50%** identify as persons of color

**>60%** identify as female

**60%** are earning a Bachelor's or Master's degree

**3k+ Graduates**

**2.1k+** of students and graduates have been internally promoted

**More than 35%** are enrolled in a second program

**10+** in-network learning providers

**1 in 4 applicants** cite Disney Aspire as their primary reason for applying to hourly roles at The Walt Disney Company

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Disneyland

# In-Person Job Fair

AUGUST 30 & 31 | 9 A.M. – 5 P.M.

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- Security
- Lifeguard
- Pastry Culinary
- Hourly Chef
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