

RESORT REPORTER

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FEATURE

DISNEYLAND RESORT ANNOUNCES \$1.5 MILLION IN GRANTS TO ANAHEIM NONPROFITS AND SCHOOLS



HEAD TO PAGE FIVE TO SEE HOW DISNEYLAND RESORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE FOR ANAHEIM STUDENTS AND JOB SEEKERS!

DISNEYLAND RESORT PRESIDENT KEN POTROCK (FRONT LEFT) AND MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TEAM AT DISNEYLAND RESORT PRESENT A CHECK TO ANAHEIM UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT (AUHSD) TO GIVE MORE STUDENTS OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE FUTURE CAREERS THROUGH ANAHEIM'S INNOVATIVE MENTORING EXPERIENCE.

By Dani Decena

As the Disneyland Resort community workforce development initiative heads into its fifth year, we are excited to announce an additional \$1.5 million in grants to local nonprofits and school districts. These grants go toward programs like Avanza through Anaheim Family YMCA, which prepares high school students with networking skills, resume building and interview techniques; and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County & The In-

land Empire, which matches high school students with Disneyland Resort mentors for a glimpse into the workforce.

In total, the Disneyland Resort workforce development initiative has touched more than 10,000 lives over the last five years. \$5.5 million of contributions have helped nonprofits and school districts grow their existing workforce programming and develop brand-new programs to meet residents' unique needs. These grants support long-term collaborations with organizations like Orange County United Way and Chrysalis, and welcome new organizations to the network, like the Orangewood Foundation and the

Community College District of North Orange County.

Anaheim's Innovative Mentoring Experience (AIME), administered through the Anaheim Union High School District (AUHSD), is a program that Disneyland Resort has supported since 2019. This program allows students from Anaheim high schools to build relationships with mentors in real workplaces (including Disneyland Resort) to experience the workforce and get a taste for potential career paths.

Earlier this month, Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock presented AUHSD with funding to help grow the

program and give more students an opportunity to explore future careers.

"We are so proud to continue our support of Anaheim schools and nonprofits that are championing the workforce of tomorrow," Potrock said. "We are grateful to be part of the ripple effect of support in our community and shining a light on what these incredible organizations do."

"While AUHSD has committed to providing our students with the technical and soft skills to be ready for life after high school, having the students work hand-in-hand with industry lead-

+ STORY CONTINUED ON P.5

DISNEY CAST LIFE

BEST. DAY. EVER! Disneyland Resort Cast Members Make Magic for their New Friend

By Amanda Arreguin

Disneyland Resort Transportation & Parking cast members recently orchestrated a magical day in the theme parks filled with surprise meet and greets, reserved seating for shows and lightning lane access to favorite attractions for a newfound friend.

Chris Parker, who has limited speech and mobility due to cerebral palsy, frequently visits the resort, spending his time riding the trams between Downtown Disney District and the Mickey & Friends parking structure. During his many tram rides, Parker sparked friendships with several Resort Transportation & Parking cast members, most notably Jonathan Pascual and Halley Burns.

"I've never experienced anything more magical here than my friendship with Chris," Pascual said. "I'm just happy we're able to serve him and give him this amazing experience."

Pascual and Burns, along with 18 of their fellow trams cast members and a little bit of pixie dust, teamed up to plan

+ STORY CONTINUED ON P.2



RESORT TRANSPORTATION & PARKING CAST MEMBERS WITH CHRIS PARKER IN DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK.

DISNEY CAST LIFE

Trick or Treat? Cast Members Celebrate the Season at Exclusive, After-Hours Halloween Maze

By Jessica Sweetman and Hannah Torres

Approaching the dark, wooded forest on the edge of Ravenswood – the town that has taken over Redwood Creek Challenge Trail in Disney California Adventure park – you hear a warning whispered from behind, “Don’t enter, turn back!” You quickly turn around, but no one is there. Despite your fears, you forge ahead into the shadows of the forest and suddenly realize that you have only the moonlight to guide your path. You’ve just entered the Twilight.

If this doesn’t sound like the family-friendly Disney treatment of Halloween,

it’s because it’s not. The fictional town of Ravenswood served as the eerie setting for this year’s Halloween Scare Maze, an annual after-hours event hosted by cast members for cast members that just marked its 12th year.

“It’s great for so many cast members from different lines of business to come together because we are one large family,” said Richard Lau, *Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge* retail, who served as creative director for this year’s event.

This year’s theme was Ravenswood’s Dawning of the Dusk, a celebration of peace and harmony between the witches of the Twilight Aether. Those who entered the town found themselves in the middle of a battle between the

witches and the eternal vanguard, who wished to recruit visitors in the effort to uproot their foes from the town.

Sharing the importance of carrying on this cast-only Halloween event, Operations Manager Tony Montenegro said, “This was truly a team effort. With cast members from around the resort coming together to work with entertainment, attractions and the BERGs (Business Employee Resource Groups), it’s truly magical to see how these cast members can bring their imagination to life.”

More than 100 cast members spent several months preparing for the event with brainstorming, training sessions and rehearsals to ensure the most immersive

experience. Cast members from around the resort were invited to attend the celebration on Oct. 12, which also included a carnival with food, games and booths hosted by the resort’s BERGs, and a Scare Zone with fortune tellers and jump scares. The evening culminated with the Halloween Scare Maze at Redwood Creek Challenge Trail.

Creative Director Forrest Orta shared that every year brings new ideas and challenges for the maze. “Just like Imagineers want to one-up themselves with every new attraction or experience they build, we want to do the same thing,” he said. “We just want to keep opening new doors and try scary new things for our cast so I’m really excited for next year!”



CAST MEMBERS WHO ORGANIZED THE HALLOWEEN SCARE MAZE POST FOR A PHOTO TOGETHER IN DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK.

+ DISNEY CAST LIFE STORY CONTINUED FROM P.4

a magical day in the parks for Parker. The group began their day in Avengers Campus with a special viewing of “The Amazing Spider-Man” stunt show followed by an escort to the Ancient Sanctum, where they anxiously awaited a

surprise visit from the web-slinging hero himself. Parker was delighted to meet his favorite hero for the first time, especially since they share a last name.

But Spidey was not the only visitor, as Miss America Chavez surprised the group when they entered the lighting

lane entrance for WEB SLINGERS: A Spider-Man Adventure. Parker made sure to bring his Disney autograph book and collected signatures from both heroes. The group spent the rest of their day riding Parker’s favorite attractions like The Little Mermaid – Ariel’s Undersea

Adventure and Toy Story Midway Mania.

As Walt Disney once said, “You can dream, create, design and build the most wonderful place in the world, but it requires people to make the dream a reality.” Cast members truly are the heart and joy of the Disneyland Resort.



PARKER MEETS SPIDER-MAN AT AVENGERS CAMPUS IN DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK.

INNOVATION

MAGICBAND+ MAKES MOMENTOUS DEBUT AT DISNEYLAND RESORT

By Yvonne Lee

Your favorite Disney stories are coming to life in a whole new way with the recent debut of MagicBand+ at the Disneyland Resort!

Guests can now experience new, immersive elements during nighttime spectaculars such as “World of Color” and “Fantasmic!” as MagicBand+ comes to life with colorful, dancing lights and vibrations. With *Star Wars: Batuu Bounty Hunters*, guests can embark on a mission as a bounty hunter — searching furtively through Black Spire Outpost, using lights and vibrations from the MagicBand+ to guide them toward targets.

It’s a momentous milestone in technological innovations at the Disneyland Resort. It’s also incredibly meaningful for Gina McCarter, product management director of Digital Experiences at Disney Parks, Experiences and Products, who is part of the team that developed MagicBand+ at Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland Resort.

McCarter and her team were involved with MagicBand+ from the very beginning — from the early stages of designing the product and selecting its features and capabilities and now bringing it to life for guests to enjoy at the Disneyland Resort.

When asked to describe what it was like to work on MagicBand+, McCarter breaks it down into one word: fun. “One of my favorite moments was the first time I ever received a sample of MagicBand+. We had been looking at it on paper and talking about all the things it could do, but actually seeing it for the first time and experiencing a guests’ reaction to it lighting up and coming alive has been really rewarding and very special.”

The element of fun was also one of the guiding principles in develop-



GINA MCCARTER (RIGHT) WITH HAVA LEVY (LEFT) AND STEVEN EATON (CENTER) ARE PART OF THE TEAMS THAT DEVELOPED AND BROUGHT MAGICBAND+ TO LIFE AT DISNEYLAND RESORT.

ing MagicBand+ and unlocking a new dimension of Disney storytelling. “With *Star Wars: Batuu Bounty Hunters*, we took something physical in the land and now with MagicBand+, you get to immerse yourself and play as part of the story in a brand-new way,” McCarter said.

McCarter is eager for guests to check out all that MagicBand+ has to offer at Disneyland Resort and for all that will follow in the future. After all, this is just the beginning, with more features and experiences to come. “Our goal is to

bring MagicBand+ into the guest experience in more meaningful ways. There are so many opportunities, and the possibilities are truly endless.”

MagicBand+ will also add convenient hands-free features so guests can connect their MagicBand+ to their Disneyland Resort theme park tickets or Magic Key pass for an easy way to enter the theme parks (valid park admission and reservation required), use it to check in at Lightning Lane and Virtual Queue entrances (separate valid Lightning Lane or Virtual Queue entry required) and

link Disney PhotoPass photos to their Disney account. Guests can purchase MagicBand+ now at select locations throughout the resort.

- Downtown Disney District: World of Disney, Disney’s Pin Traders
- Disneyland park: Emporium, Pioneer Mercantile, Tomorrow Landing
- Disney California Adventure park: Elias & Co., Trolley Treats, Oswald’s, Seaside Souvenirs
- Hotels of the Disneyland Resort: Disney’s Fantasia Shop, Mickey in Paradise, Acorns Gifts & Goods

Cast Members Get First Look at MagicBand+

As MagicBand+ came alive with dancing lights and vibrations, over 100 cast members also ‘lit up’ when they got to experience “World of Color” with MagicBand+ on Oct. 17 ahead of the wearable technology’s debut at the Disneyland Resort. Cast members attended the event as part of a “Magic Backstage” sweepstakes opportunity and as part of the experience, they also received one of the five Disneyland Resort exclusive designs — a dark blue band featuring the ‘Storytellers’ statue of Walt Disney and Mickey Mouse that was revealed for the first time to cast members at the event.

During “World of Color,” the crowd of cast members’ MagicBand+ lit up and synced along with the show’s dazzling display of water, fire and light. Emmarae Ensor, Fantasyland Retail, a newer cast member attending one her first cast events, enjoys the community built with other cast members and was thrilled to be one of the first for this experience.

“I remember watching ‘World of Color’ as a kid when it first opened,” Ensor said, adding, “MagicBand+ added a whole other layer to the experience in being able to see not only my band light up but those around me.”



MEMBERS OF THE MAGICBAND+ TEAM POSED WITH CAST MEMBERS WHO GOT TO BE AMONG THE FIRST TO EXPERIENCE “WORLD OF COLOR” WITH MAGICBAND+.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Disneyland Resort Cast Celebrate 15 Years of Culture and Tradition During Hispanic Heritage Month

By Hannah Torres

Under shimmering evening stars, cast members came together on Sept. 28 for a once-in-a-lifetime celebration in the heart of Plaza de la Familia in Disney California Adventure park. “Quince, an HOLA celebration,” paid tribute to the 15 years since the HOLA Business Employee Group (or BERG) was founded at the Disneyland Resort for Hispanic and Latin American cast members. To commemorate the milestone, cast members attended the event dressed in their evening best and danced the night away alongside their Disney familia.

The evening festivities were inspired by the Quince, a well-known tradition among several Hispanic and Latin American communities. Commonly known as a quinceañera or quinceañero, the celebration takes place on a teenager’s 15th birthday, commemorating their coming of age and journey into adulthood. The tradition is commonly celebrated through a variety of customs including a religious service and grand party with friends and family.

“Seeing a quinceañera here at Disneyland means so much to me because it’s something I never would have imagined experiencing here as a cast member,” said outdoor vending cast member Juan Torres. “It was a nice surprise to see my culture being celebrated with others.”

The HOLA celebration incorporated a number of Quince traditions, each sprinkled with Disney magic. For example, parents traditionally change their child’s flat shoes, symbolizing their transformation into adulthood. Similarly, HOLA leaders ceremoniously unveiled a new design of the HOLA logo as cast members cheered with orgullo (pride).

Another common Quince tradition



HOLA LEADERS AND FRIENDS STRIKE A POSE AT AT HOLA'S QUINCE CELEBRATION IN DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK.

includes the teenager’s padrinos (godparents). Prior to the celebration, the birthday child is encouraged to ask two important people in their life to be their godparents. Godparents act as mentors and on the day of the Quince, they present the child with a special gift. In lieu of traditional godparents, HOLA leaders asked their fellow BERG leaders to help carry on this tradition. A select number of BERGs in attendance presented a special gift to HOLA including: a Fleur de Lis from PULSE (African and Caribbean cast members), a Military Coin from SALUTE (military and veteran

cast members), an orchid plant from COMPASS (Asian American Pacific Islander cast members) and an America Chavez doll from PRIDE (LGBTQIA+ cast members).

“The voice of our community is embedded in our cast and our cast needs to be able see themselves. For the work that I do, I know that representation has always been important to me and who I look up to,” said Claudia Durón Burke, HOLA co-chair and career and education program manager. “It’s important for our cast to know that there are opportunities for them everywhere.”

With a live DJ, festive pastries and colorful décor, the evening radiated as cast members danced and sang alongside one another until the early morning. While the event was a celebration of HOLA’s history and growth, it was also evident that the experience served as a moment of representation and community empowerment.

“Representation is super important to our community,” Torres said. “Sometimes people can feel left out and when they see themselves working at Disneyland or on TV, they feel that they can be [like] that person.”



PARTNERS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION CAST MEMBER VICKY CABOT AT HOLA'S QUINCE CELEBRATION.

Celebrate Everlasting Bonds at Plaza de la Familia

Plaza de la Familia in Disney California Adventure park is an immersive, limited-time celebration, inspired by the spirit of Día de los Muertos that features live entertainment, festive foods, crafts and more. Can’t-miss activities include “A Musical Celebration of Coco,” a lively street performance honoring Disney and Pixar’s “Coco” and the everlasting bonds of family. Guests also enjoy Mariachi music at Paradise Gardens Bandstand, The World of Coco, an intriguing art installation, a photo opportunity at the iconic Arbol de la Vida (Tree of Life) photo location and memory wall as well as a greeting with a hand-animated figure of Miguel from “Coco.”

Guests visiting the parks through Nov. 2, 2022 can experience Plaza de la Familia, but the Disneyland Resort celebrates Hispanic and Latin American cultures in a variety of ways throughout the year. We invite you to join us!

Meet Chef Martha Segala

Can you tell us about the authenticity of the Plaza de la Familia food offerings?

“Everything is made from scratch; we are not opening cans or opening prepared items. We are preparing them here in-house. It’s important to me that we feel proud about everything we create here. It was exciting to bring these dishes to the resort because some of our cast members have never tried anything like this before, making a mole or carnitas from scratch.”

Can you talk about the cultural inspiration behind the flavors?

“Everything reminds me of my hometown in Mexico and brings back memories from my grandma, my tias, my mom and neighbors. The flavors that we have here remind me of when my whole family used to gather together at the dinner table making tamales. My grandma owned a Cervceria, which was a small restaurant in her town, and she was very famous. Every time I cook something, I think of her, and I try and represent the root flavors that are traditional in my family.”



+ FEATURE STORY CONTINUED FROM P.4

ers in our own backyard propels our students to be leaders in their schools and communities and empowers them to be agents of change in their own life to better those around them,” said Ray Solorzano, AIME summer program coordinator.

From long-term mentoring to facilitating skills workshops, Disneyland Resort cast member volunteers (or Disney voluntEARS) have been allies to these incredible organizations, giving their time and expertise, while building relationships with students and adults entering the workforce. Check out some success stories from the past five years of the program:

One of the Disney VoluntEARS making a difference is Princeton Parker, associate manager, content programming and synergy, pictured to the right. Passionate about inspiring youth, Parker volunteered to be a part of the Speakers Bureau for the workforce development initiative, which allows him to speak to

various groups about his career journey. During virtual leadership sessions with Orange County United Way, he empowered one high school student in particular, Cindy Nguyen, to have more confidence in pursuing her goals. She now works at the Disneyland Resort as a food and beverage cast member!

Another long-time Disney VoluntEAR is Kim Sims, security manager, who works with clients at Chrysalis to empower them with skills and confidence to land meaningful employment. Since Chrysalis opened in Anaheim in 2018, they have helped over 2,000 individuals find jobs. Sims has helped prepare them with everything from interview skills to help building a resume, many for the first time.

Stories like these showcase just how much incredible work is being done to inspire the workforce of tomorrow. Take a look at the graphic below to see how the workforce development initiative has made a difference for students and job seekers in Anaheim.



CINDY NGUYEN (LEFT) AND PRINCETON PARKER (RIGHT) MEET IN-PERSON FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FRONTIERLAND AT THE DISNEYLAND RESORT.

Disneyland RESORT

COMMUNITY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

\$5.5 Million

GRANTED OVER FIVE YEARS TO PREPARE AND DEVELOP OC'S WORKFORCE



supporting **19 nonprofits*** in Anaheim

300



contributing **2,200 hours**



67 long-term Disney mentors



160 sessions led by Disney VoluntEARS

- Career skills workshops
- Speakers and career panels
- Mock interviews
- Resume workshops
- 1:1 mentoring



10,000 Anaheim students and residents impacted

- Elementary, junior high and high school students
- Young adults entering the workforce
- Adults with barriers to employment
- Veterans



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