

RESORT REPORTER

Sunday, November 27, 2022

SPONSORED CONTENT

Disneyland.com

WHAT'S INSIDE

Disney Cast Life
Diversity & Inclusion
Community
OP-ED



FEATURE

DISNEYLAND RESORT SALUTES MILITARY SERVICE ON VETERANS DAY



VETERAN CAST MEMBERS AND SALUTE BERG MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN THE VETERANS DAY FLAG RETREAT CEREMONY IN TOWN SQUARE.

By Katie Whaley

In honor of the many veterans, reservists and active-duty members of the armed forces around the country, Disneyland Resort was proud to come together on November 11 for a special ceremony to commemorate Veterans Day. Cast members and guests alike were invited to join in the celebration during the extended holiday-themed version of

[+ STORY CONTINUED ON P.2](#)

Heroes Work Here Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary

While Veterans Day is a special day, Disney is honored to salute those who serve in uniform and their families in many ways all year round. The Walt Disney Company recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of Heroes Work Here, an innovative hiring program that has led to the onboarding of more than 12,500 veterans throughout the company. Launched in 2012, the program is dedicated to hiring, training and supporting U.S. military veterans, while elevating awareness of their tremendous value as civilian employees.

"Disney is a company that enthusiastically reaches out to veterans, letting us know we have a part to play. Being part of the Disney family has really made a difference as I've transitioned from the military to the next chapter in my journey," said Ariel Elias, manager, supplier diversity, a retired U.S. Marine Corps Warrant Officer and former participant in Disney's military fellowship program.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

New "it's a small world" Dolls Brought to Life by Teams of Imagineers and Cast Members

By Sasha Azoqa

Just in time to mark the 25th anniversary of "it's a small world" Holiday, the beloved Disneyland Resort attraction welcomed two new dolls in wheelchairs to further recognize diversity and inclusion. After all, the "happiest cruise that ever sailed 'round the world" has been an iconic celebration of children from various cultures across the globe since its inception.

"This is the first time someone like me is represented in an attraction at the Disneyland Resort," said Accessibility Manager Erin Quintanilla, who also serves as co-chair of the ENABLED Business Employee Resource Group (BERG) that advocates for people with disabilities. "It's a really big deal and this could not have happened without the amazing teams involved."

Walt Disney Imagineering performs ongoing reviews to make updates that can help better reflect the world around us. "This addition builds on 'it's a small world's' longstanding legacy of diverse representation," said Kim Irvine, executive creative director, Walt Disney Imagineering.

From design to installation, Imagineers worked closely with Resort

[+ STORY CONTINUED ON P.3](#)



TEAMS FROM ACROSS THE RESORT AND WALT DISNEY IMAGINEERING JOINED ENABLED TO SEE THE NEW DOLLS IN WHEELCHAIRS ON "IT'S A SMALL WORLD" HOLIDAY.

+ FEATURE STORY CONTINUED FROM P.1

the patriotic ceremony.

Dating back to Disneyland's opening day in 1955, a Flag Ceremony is a longstanding daily tradition to honor those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. On Veterans Day, the moment was made even more special with over 150 cast members representing all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and members of the SALUTE Business Employee Resource Group (BERG) invited to participate in a procession down Main Street, U.S.A. then gather on the steps in front of Main Street Station to be honored during the ceremony.

"This is the most spectacular day that I can remember as a veteran cast member," said Nick Filippone, operations manager, SALUTE BERG co-chair and U.S. Navy veteran who helped to organize the ceremony. "Our ability to put on events like this to honor our service members reconfirms that Disney has a truly unique and meaningful connection with the way the company supports its military cast members."

Following the ceremony, participating cast members were bestowed with a commemorative work of Disney character art as a thank you gift for their military service. These unique art pieces are created every year since 2004 by Disney Live Entertainment as a meaningful

illustration of the commitment the company offers to cast members who serve or have served in the armed forces.

Disney's enduring support and

respect for military service dates back to the very founding of the company 100 years ago and started with founders Walt and Roy O. Disney, who both personally

served during World War I: Walt Disney was a driver in the Red Cross Ambulance Corps, and his brother Roy Disney was a petty officer in the U.S. Navy.



FLAG CEREMONY PARTICIPANTS JOIN DISNEY PARKS, EXPERIENCES AND PRODUCTS CHAIRMAN JOSH D'AMARO AND DISNEYLAND RESORT PRESIDENT KEN POTROCK AT THE ART INSTALLATION DISPLAY DURING THE RECEPTION.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Launching a Disney Family Legacy

By Kristen Lewis

The Flag Retreat Ceremony in Disneyland park has always had special meaning to Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel Executive Housekeeper Julia Contreras.

"There's always been a little bit of Disney in my family, and it started with my grandpa," Contreras said of her grandfather, John Surak, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1942 to 1945 and earned a Purple Heart in Okinawa. "He had a lot of pride in our country because of the freedom and ability to exercise our own will."

After his service, Surak and his family moved to California, where, as an aerospace engineer, Surak volunteered to help build the iconic standing rocket in front of the Rocket to the Moon opening day attraction in Tomorrowland. "He believed in the space program and [wanted] to inspire other people with their dreams to go different places," Contreras said. To thank him for his work on the project, Surak and his family were invited to attend opening day at Disneyland park in 1955.

When Contreras was hired to work at the Disneyland Resort in 1996, her grandfather was thrilled. "He was so excited that I work [for Disney] because

it continued the legacy that he had a piece in from the very beginning," said Contreras.

In addition to inspiring her Disney career, Contreras' late grandfather's military service inspired her to serve as a volunteer chaplain for the Riverside Police Department. Contreras completed courses through Shield of Faith Ministries to become a chaplain and provides emotional support to 911 dispatchers. "It is my way of giving back to my community and being a part of something greater than myself."

Contreras also is a member of the Disneyland Resort SALUTE Business Employee Resource Group (BERG), dedicated to enhancing the Disney experience for those who have served in uniform and the families and friends who support them, and she was on hand for the special Flag Retreat Ceremony on Veterans Day. As part of National Veterans and Military Families Month, the Disneyland Resort honored veteran and active-duty cast members at the ceremony. "It's because of [veterans] that we have freedom, and it's not just the veterans that are the ones sacrificing their time, it's their families as well," said Contreras. "It's a wonderful gesture to those families to let them know that we appreciate them and their service."



HISTORIC PHOTO OF CONTRERAS' GRANDPARENTS, JOHN AND BETTIE SURAK, DURING HER GRANDFATHER'S MILITARY SERVICE.



JULIA CONTRERAS JOINED THE FLAG RETREAT CEREMONY IN HONOR OF VETERANS DAY ON NOVEMBER 11.

DISNEY CAST LIFE

Disney Cast Unite for Advanced Screenings of 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever'

Ahead of the launch of the highly anticipated sequel, "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" to the public on November 11, Disneyland Resort cast members assembled in true super hero fashion to enjoy an advanced screening of the film.

Seven Black BERGs (Business Employee Resource Groups) from across the company — collectively referred to as "Wakanda United" — joined forces to create this special day for cast to celebrate Black culture in a distinctly Disney way.

"The experience of bringing our cast members together to watch 'Black Pan-

ther: Wakanda Forever' felt amazing and warmed my heart," said Lindell Skinner, Disneyland Resort PULSE BERG leader and senior manager, Downtown Disney District Business Relations. "It allows us to unite as we pay tribute to Chadwick Boseman after his passing and celebrate a new Black Panther. Being able to collaborate with other Black BERGs across The Walt Disney Company has been an amazing experience and has created friendships and connections that will last a lifetime."

Cast members lifted their Wakanda

salutes in solidarity as the theaters filled with cast dressed in their Black Panther best. In essence of the film and its celebration of Pan-African culture, a few attendees even styled colorful traditional wear.

The exclusive screenings also included photo opportunities, themed giveaways and even a special message from the stars — Dominique Thorne, Lupita Nyong'o, Angela Bassett and Danai Gurira.

The fun continued during the film's opening weekend as participants in the resort's PULSE and ENABLED BERGs

were invited to join artists and authors Frederick Joseph and Nikk Smith on November 12 for the unveiling of a new art mural designed in the Downtown Disney District to honor the new film, followed by a meet and greet opportunity with Joseph and Smith to celebrate their new book, "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever - The Courage to Dream."

"This movie has so much representation and gave so much opportunity for people like me at the resort," said Aurelia Creque in Entertainment. "Being part of something this big feels magical."



CAST MEMBERS SHOWED OFF THEIR WAKANDA SALUTES IN CELEBRATION AHEAD OF A PRIVATE SCREENING OF THE NEW BLACK PANTHER FILM.



CAST MEMBER ATTENDEES WERE GIVEN RED-CARPET TREATMENT AND SHOWED OFF THEIR BEST MOVES BEFORE THE FILM.



MEMBERS OF DISNEYLAND RESORTS' PULSE AND ENABLED BERGS JOIN NIKK SMITH AND FREDERICK JOSH FOR A MEET AND GREET OPPORTUNITY WITH THEIR NEW BOOK, "BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER - THE COURAGE TO DREAM."

+ DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STORY
CONTINUED FROM P.1

Enhancement, Animation, Wardrobe and the ENABLED BERG. "We designed this wheelchair very much in the Mary Blair style and worked with the various [partners] to create the filigree and floral motifs ... to make sure [the design] fit in with the attraction," Irvine said. Disney Legend Mary Blair is known for her distinctive artistic style used throughout the attraction.

The doll represents a Latin American child in a wheelchair and is featured in both the Latin America region and finale of "it's a small world."

"I was able to help consult on the design of the wheelchairs so that the dolls authentically represented those of us who live life on wheels," Quintanilla said, proud of her work to bring authenticity to the art, which is part of what BERGs do at the resort.

From the bend in the child's knee to the push rim on the back of the wheels, each component authentically represents how a child independently uses a wheelchair. "It's also critical that the dolls move just like everyone else in order to be fully inclusive," Quintanilla said.

As the ENABLED BERG provided an authentic voice, Resort Enhancement team members collaborated on the wheelchair design.

"I approached this project through research to understand how someone accurately uses a wheelchair," said Park Decorator and Designer Cassandra Siemon. "It's important that all of the right people and teams are included in

the design process. It became important that we all wrote this story together."

Welder John Cunningham was the lead builder and described how impactful working on a project like this was for him. "It's fascinating for one thing because it's a challenge. There's never been another wheelchair to work with, so we had to build it from scratch," Cun-

ningham said. "It's not just decorative; it's symbolic. And I felt that a little bit when I was working on it. It's something I'll always remember as one of those Disney moments."

"It's always amazing to see a project develop from concept design to the final installation," said Walt Disney Imagineering Producer Michele Hobbs, who

was an ongoing part of the process. "It is so meaningful for Walt Disney Imagineering and our Disneyland Resort cast members. We know our guests will find it equally incredible."

Disney Parks anticipates adding dolls in wheelchairs to the "it's a small world" attractions at Walt Disney World and Disneyland Paris in 2023.



NEW DOLLS IN WHEELCHAIRS ADDED TO "IT'S A SMALL WORLD" ATTRACTION AT DISNEYLAND PARK.

DID YOU KNOW?

FUN FACTS AND NEWS FROM AROUND THE RESORT – HOLIDAY EDITION

1. The holiday season has returned to the Disneyland Resort! Mickey Mouse and friends are rockin' around the 60-foot tall Christmas tree on Main Street, U.S.A., in Disneyland park, which is embellished with nearly 1,800 Victorian-inspired ornaments and 100 oversized faux candles. Main Street, U.S.A. was home to a live Christmas tree until 2007 when the resort opted for a more sustainable alternative.

2. Disney's support for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves' Toys for Tots program dates back to Walt Disney, who was a founding sponsor when the program began in 1947. Today, the Disneyland Resort is proud to continue supporting this tradition. Guests and cast members can join in the Disney Ultimate Toy Drive by donating a new, unwrapped toy at collection bins located at shops in the Downtown Disney District or Hotels of the Disneyland Resort through Dec. 12, or by purchasing online at shopDisney.com through Dec. 24.

3. Originally debuted in 1995, "A Christmas Fantasy" Parade is the longest-running holiday parade in Disneyland Resort history. It features seven different units comprised of 16 floats, including two stand-alone Christmas trees and a "Humdinger" wind-up toy car.

4. An annual highlight at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa is the 7-foot-tall, 12-foot-wide gingerbread replica of the hotel, which is displayed in the lobby. This year's creation is made from 600 pounds of powdered sugar, 250 pounds of fondant and one pound of "pixie dust." After the season concludes, the gingerbread is recycled as part of the resort's food scraps recovery program.

5. At Disney Festival of Holidays at Disney California Adventure park, take in the sights and sounds of cherished holidays including Christmas, Navidad, Hanukkah, Diwali, Kwanzaa and Three Kings Day, starting with a spirited lineup of world-class entertainment! New this year, Tina and The Sounds of Celebration! will bring her dynamic vocals and musicians to perform holiday tunes with an uplifting repertoire of salsa, merengue, cumbia and rock Latino.

6. Celebrating its 25th anniversary, "it's a small world" Holiday features dolls and toys representing children around the world, enjoying the distinctive holiday traditions of their respective countries. Unique to this year's presentation, each room in the attraction features a small detail displaying the number 25.

7. Five barges ignite in a brilliant lighting effect to create the grand finale for "World of Color – Season of Light," filling the lagoon with a magical glow that lights up the night.

Plus, more than 1,200 fountains and 800 individual light fixtures bring the show to life.

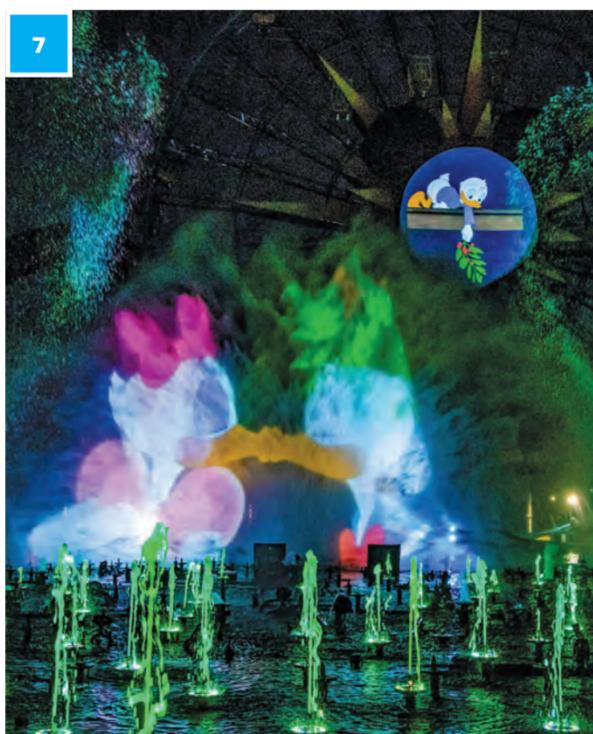
8. Returning this year is the Holiday Time at the Disneyland Resort Tour! This guided tour of Disneyland park tells stories of Walt Disney and gives unique facts of how Disneyland celebrates the season, followed by guests setting sail on "it's a small

world" Holiday. The 2.5-hour walking tour ends with a reserved viewing area of "A Christmas Fantasy" Parade where guests receive holiday treats and a commemorative pin.

9. This year, Downtown Disney District features 25 seasonal foods and beverages, such as the peppermint ganache macarons from Kayla's Cake, tikka masala

pizza from Naples Ristorante e Bar and mistletoe mule from Catal Restaurant and Uva Bar & Café.

10. More than 25,000 poinsettia, cyclamen and flowering plants are placed and planted around the Disneyland Resort by the horticulture team, adding color, theming and seasonal magic during the colorful festive season.



Third-Shift Cast Members Light Up the Season During Overnight Reveal in Disneyland Park



The pumpkins are gone and the garland is out after the Resort Enhancement team worked tirelessly to prepare for the Holidays at Disneyland Resort — which officially began Friday, Nov. 11. Third shift cast members were invited to enjoy donuts and hot chocolate while taking in the highly anticipated Christmas tree lighting in Town Square, a resort annual tradition since 1955.

In the early morning hours before park opening, many of the cast members felt how special this moment was. "It's traditional, you know, lighting up the tree and getting everyone around," said Jessie Thiltgen, a third shift custodial cast member. "It definitely shows that we can all create magic together."

Soon after the tree was lit for the first time, Adam Schwerner, director of Horticulture and Resort Enhancement, placed a menorah in the window of Disney Clothiers, Ltd. in celebration of Hanukkah. The window display is one of the resort's many efforts to represent more of the holidays celebrated by guests and cast members alike.

OP-ED

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH / Sharing my Native and Korean Heritage Through Food as a Disney Chef

By Chef Daniel “Duke” Brown

My name is Daniel “Duke” Brown, and I am a member of the We Wai Kai band of the Laich Kwil Tach people.

Like so many Native and Indigenous people, my story is unique. Growing up in a Korean American household, I struggled to feel accepted. I never knew about my Native roots until later in life. I met my grandma’s family for the first time at her funeral, and that’s when I learned of her Native heritage. After meeting that side of my family, I made the scary but exciting decision to connect with this newly found culture. I visited the reservation in Vancouver Island for the first time 14 years ago, where I learned about my grandmother’s lineage. I continued learning about the proud history of my heritage by visiting museums, landmarks and talking to people in the community. I felt nervous at first because I wasn’t sure if my family would accept me, but that couldn’t be further from the truth. I was welcomed with open arms. I am now a registered Native in Canada where my reservation is, and I continue to learn from my family every day.

One part of my Native culture I’m excited to learn more about is food. My earliest memories are of helping my mother cook Korean food. Food to me is more than just sustenance but a feeling, an experience, a memory. It’s how I share my heritage with my children. During one of my visits to the reservation, I went on fishing boats to experience the harvesting process and the vast amounts of seafood provided by the



CHEF DANIEL “DUKE” BROWN

land. My tribe always pays respect for the land and what it has to offer when it comes to food. Sharing is an important thing, and all catches are shared amongst the community. Catching salmon fresh from the waters off my ancestral lands gave me a whole new respect for the craft. One of my cousins on the reservation is also a chef, and I’ve

learned so much about Indigenous food techniques from her.

I am a chef at Disney California Adventure park, where I oversee Food and Beverage locations in Cars Land, Hollywood Land, Buena Vista Street and Avengers Campus. I’ve worked at Disney for three years, but I have over 25 years of culinary experience. My

family and I are avid Disney fans and love the food festivals. I thought, what better place to have the freedom to work across multiple different cuisines? From that moment, it became my goal to create my own menu items inspired by my culture and journey at a Disneyland Resort food festival. I’m proud to say I’ve achieved this goal and have created menu items during both the Disney California Adventure Food & Wine Festival and Lunar New Year celebration. Passing down traditions from both my Korean and Native sides is very important to me.

I’m grateful to Disney for providing a community of support and learning through the Native Americans & Allies Together with Vision business employee resource group, NAATV. Within this group, I’ve had the opportunity to hear stories about people just like me and learn even more about myself. It has helped me realize that I am indeed a part of this community. I am also a Disney Aspire alumnus, and I think it’s special that Disney encourages us to get an education regardless of age. The program made it easy to focus on work, family and school, while pushing me to achieve my goals. Because of my background, diversity and inclusion have always been interests, and my courses helped me learn how to apply these concepts in my role here at Disney.

To me, food is a love language. As a chef, being able to share my experience, passion and hard work through food is the ultimate reward. Heritage and culture are so important to me and being able to represent that at Disney is my way of giving back.

COMMUNITY

Women, Warriors and Working Wardrobes: Disney VoluntEARS Make a Difference

By Megan Tate

Disney VoluntEARS recently traveled 56 miles to Camp Pendleton to support female military personnel who are transitioning to civilian life as part of the resort’s community workforce development initiative.

In partnership with the nonprofit Working Wardrobes, cast members from the SALUTE and Women’s Inclusion Network Business Employee Resource Groups (BERGs) assisted Marines and sailors with selecting suits, shoes and accessories before each woman took a professional headshot. As part of National Veterans and Military Families Month, the event also featured veteran panelists, including Labor Relations Senior Manager Bri Foster, who spoke about her journey from serving in the military to becoming an industry professional.

For Jeanne Costello, area manager for Operational Costuming, this opportunity to help women find the right professional attire was right up her alley. “When you see the looks on women’s faces when they see themselves, it is as powerful an experience for those who are standing behind the mirror as those who are standing in front of it.”

Santa Ana-based Working Wardrobes is a workforce and career readiness organization that provides services and soft skill training for veterans and their families and others in need.

“It’s all about those who are serving in our community; it’s not about us,” said Michael Barrett, director of Client Services at Working Wardrobes. “The team from Disney has made an impact, tenfold.”

As a retired U.S. Marine and Purple Heart recipient, Barrett utilizes the leadership skills he learned during



CAST MEMBER VOLUNTEARS TEAMED UP WITH WORKING WARDROBES AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE TO PREPARE SERVICE MEMBERS TO TRANSITION INTO THE WORKFORCE AFTER THE MILITARY WITH A PERSONAL SHOPPING EVENT.

his 21 years of service in his work with Working Wardrobes.

“Militarily speaking, [Disney and Working Wardrobes] are in lockstep; we’re marching together in line, synced with the values and mission Disney brings to the table,” Barrett said.

Disneyland Resort Senior Security Manager Kim Sims attended the event at the military base in Oceanside as a leader of SALUTE, a BERG committed to enhancing the Disney experience for those who have sacrificed in support of the military. “Knowing that our company supports our military service members and families is huge,” said Sims. “Our cast members have such huge hearts and special talents and those need to be shared within and outside of our resort.”

More About the Community Workforce Development Initiative

Disneyland Resort collaborates with nonprofit organizations and school districts that serve a diverse set of needs in the community for youth and jobseekers. The community workforce development initiative supports three pillars: mentorship, career skills development and community program support. The Disney VoluntEARS efforts at Camp Pendleton were part of the Disneyland Resort community workforce development initiative.

Disneyland Resort Cast Members Share the Joy with “A Christmas Fantasy” Parade Preview

DISNEY CAST LIFE

By Megan Tate

Twinkling lights, a winter chill, the midnight hour, a snowcapped Sleeping Beauty’s Winter Castle and 4,000 cast members set the scene for the perfect kickoff to the holiday season with the cast preview of the beloved “A Christmas Fantasy” Parade.

Cast members lined the streets on Nov. 9 filled with holiday cheer, decked head to toe in their most festive holiday

gear. Candymaker Kim Smith came ready to see her favorite part of the parade — the dancing gingerbread men!

“I just love everything Disney,” said Smith. “Getting to see [the parade] first is really exciting.”

Before the parade stepped off, cast members enjoyed holiday treats, exclusive shopping opportunities and fun time with friends. To cap off the evening, cast members enjoyed the first “snowfall” of the season as the lights on Main Street, U.S.A. dimmed and Sleeping Beauty’s Winter Castle sparkled in the distance to welcome the official arrival of the season.



CAST MEMBERS WAIT PATIENTLY IN THEIR HOLIDAY ATTIRE FOR THE PARADE TO BEGIN.

We're **HIRING** Disneyland®



**OUTSIDE MACHINIST • PARKS STEWARD
CULINARY • ENTERTAINMENT COSTUMING
ELECTRICIAN • HOTEL STEWARD**

JOB FAIR

**DECEMBER 8
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

**CASTING CENTER
TEAM DISNEY**

700 West Ball Road
Anaheim, CA 92802



**WEEKLY
PAY**



**TUITION
ASSISTANCE**



**THEME PARK
ADMISSION**



**HEALTHCARE
COVERAGE**

**BENEFITS VARY BY ROLE AND ARE
SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME.**

APPLY TODAY

DISNEYLAND.JOBS/JOBFAIR

