



Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Director Mike Perez contributed a column to the *Pacifica Tribune* to connect with local residents and keep Pacificans informed on issues that are of current interest in the City of Pacifica. Below is the submission for the May 1, 2019 edition of the *Pacifica Tribune*, which focuses on all the ways that Parks Make Lives Better.

Parks Make Lives Better

Throughout the Country, July is being celebrated as Parks and Recreation month in an effort to recognize the importance of parks and recreation in establishing and maintaining the quality of life for, and contributing to the physical, economic and environmental well-being of communities. We look forward to the community joining us in kicking off Parks and Recreation month with fun, music, games and food on the 4th of July for our annual celebration at Frontierland Park. As we enjoy the rest of spring and head into summer, we want to highlight our recreation opportunities and programs by proclaiming that Parks Make Lives Better.

As a life-long Pacifican, I have been fortunate to live and work in our beautiful town. Having raised our two amazing daughters in Pacifica, my wife and I know firsthand all the wonderful things this community has to offer, especially our Parks, Beaches and Recreation (PB&R).

One of the truly great things about Pacifica is the level of volunteerism displayed throughout the community. The City, and in particular the PB&R Department, has benefitted significantly from the dedicated service of our many volunteer citizens. Last month, in honor of Volunteer Appreciation Month, a dinner was held to recognize the contributions of our 165 active Senior Service Volunteers with City Councilmembers and PB&R Commissioners acting as our VIP servers alongside department staff. Pacificans Care, a shining example of Pacifica volunteerism, also chose to honor all Pacifica Meals on Wheels Volunteers on April 25th at their People Who Care annual Night of Appreciation. In the last year, these volunteers have delivered 16,577 fresh, nutritious meals. Our Senior Services Assistant Supervisor, Ann Cooney, and our Youth Advisory Board (YAB) president, Sara Olsen, were also honored that evening.

We also have several opportunities for our youth to volunteer this summer with our Leaders in Training Education (LITEs – ages 13-17) and swimmer aide programs (ages 11-17). Youth participating in these programs acquire leadership and job skills, become involved in their community and earn community service hours. Along with our YAB, these young people volunteer annually over 4,000 hours of their time and energy, which has proven to be a valued asset to our programs. This experience will help bridge the gap between volunteerism and first time jobs for participants. In fact, many of our young employees were once volunteers. For those ready for the next step, we are currently hiring lifeguards, recreation leaders and child care staff.

Summer is a great time for youth to “get in the swim” and check out our expanded program hours at the Jean E. Brink Pool located at Oceana High School. There will be additional swim lessons available as well as two one-week Wet and Wild Water Camps happening in July. The pool is open for Recreation Swim every day (1-3pm) this summer from June 10th through August 11th with special offerings of Two-for-One Tuesdays and Free Rec Swim for Kids on Wednesdays.

This summer, I’d like to invite folks to stay active by participating in an event, signing up for a class, learning a new skill or sharpening an old one. Head outside for a scenic walk, hike, jog or bike ride at a park, beach or trail near you, and enjoy Pacifica’s natural beauty.
