

The Gratitude Circle

The Gratitude Circle is a partnership between the Conejo Recreation & Park District and Play Conejo. Annually, the CRPD Board of Directors celebrates and honors individuals who have made a significant contribution of time, effort, or energy to recreation and parks in the Conejo Valley.

The Gratitude Circle is also a place where people can honor loved ones and support CRPD's parks and programs through charitable giving.

Past Honorees

2021

Jim Gilmore
Karen Lindsey
Steve Wiley

2018

Richard F. Newman

2017

Doris Granholm

2015

Dennis Gillette
Mike Berger
Barbara Kloster

2019

Tim Hagel
Elayne Haggan
Bruce Stanton

2016

Frances Prince
Rorie Skei

2014

Tex Ward
Mark Jacobsen

CONEJO RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nellie Cusworth, *Chair*
Susan Holt, *Vice Chair*
George M. Lange, *Director*
Chuck Huffer, *Director*
Doug Nickles, *Director*

Jim Friedl, *General Manager*
Tex Ward, *General Manager Emeritus*



The Conejo Recreation & Park District is an independent special district serving the Conejo Valley since 1963. Its mission is to enrich the quality of life for our community by preserving and enhancing recreational opportunities, parks, and open space.



Play Conejo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created in 2012 to provide volunteer, charitable, and financial support for public park facilities and recreation programs which benefit Conejo Valley residents. Play Conejo is raising funds to help the District maintain quality parks and offer diverse and affordable recreation programs.



The Board of Directors of the
Conejo Recreation & Park District
invites you to...



THE GRATITUDE CIRCLE INDUCTION CELEBRATION

honoring

**CECILIA LAUFENBERG
WYATT MCCREA
MARY POWER**



*for their Dedication to the People of
Conejo Valley through Recreation, Parks, and Open Space*

Monday, May 2, 2022 · 5:30pm
Conejo Creek North Park

THE GRATITUDE CIRCLE

Honorees



CECILIA LAUFENBERG

Cecilia earned a BS in Recreation Therapy from Kent State University and spent a career putting her degree to good use. In 1990, after Camarillo State Hospital closed, Cecilia started working as a recreation coordinator for CRPD. She went home to Ohio for a brief stint before resuming full-time work for CRPD as a Recreation Coordinator and then Supervisor specializing in Therapeutic Recreation. She retired from CRPD in 2019 after helping to build and maintain CRPD's much

admired Therapeutic Recreation Unit - - but not before being recognized as the "Community Member of the Year" in 2018 by the Autism Society of Ventura County.

Under Cecilia's guidance, the TR Unit created and expanded the breadth and quality of programming in the TR Unit by collaborating with others and by working closely with the TR Advisory Council. The award-winning "Conejo Theatre for Everyone," Life-Skills classes, summer camps, bike skills, and Special Olympics are just a few of the beloved programs offered by the TR unit. Those programs are in addition to the popular annual events, including the annual Pie Auction and the Silver Starlight Ball.

During the campaign to create the Rotary Dreamcatcher Playground (a disability-sensitive and interactive play area), Cecilia's public-speaking abilities and deep passion for the patrons and families of the TR Unit helped generate the public support and funds needed to complete the \$700,000+ playground.

What really makes Cecilia a standout is her obvious love and passion for everyone connected with the Therapeutic Recreation Unit. The patrons first and foremost, their families, her staff and volunteers and anyone else who fell into the TR orbit. Her care and compassion, combined with her education, training and experience, were a true gift to the TR Unit which she shared freely with others. She now lives in Ohio with her son, Danny. Her daughter Sarah is away at college at Yale University.

WYATT MCCREA

Wyatt McCrea is the oldest grandchild of the late actor Joel McCrea and his actress wife Frances Dee. The McCrea family has had roots in the Conejo Valley since the early 1930's. After spending many years in the financial services and commercial real estate industries, Wyatt decided to switch gears and became the co-owner of Third Point Productions located in Thousand Oaks, CA. Among many other credits, Third Point Productions produced the McCrea Ranch Visitor's Center informational video, as well as CRPD's 50th Anniversary Gold Medal video. He has served as Executive Producer, Associate Producer and actor for both television and film projects. He has also enjoyed portraying a variety of local historical characters, including his grandfather, for "Voices of Old Conejo" at the Stagecoach Inn Museum.

For nearly 30 years, Wyatt has been assisting the Conejo Recreation and Park District with the preservation of the 216-acre heart of the historic McCrea Ranch, founded by his grandfather, and



acquired by CRPD in 1995. He is a founding board member and president of the Joel and Frances McCrea Ranch Foundation dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of the McCrea family's local ranching heritage. Under Wyatt's leadership, thoughtful stewardship, and hard work, the McCrea Ranch Foundation has raised over \$250,000 for capital improvement projects at the McCrea Ranch, trained 20+ docents, and currently hosts over 1,200 people every year at this historic property.

Wyatt is also a longtime board member and past-president of RideOn Therapeutic Horsemanship, a past member of the Corporate Gifts Committee for the Alliance for the Arts, and current advisory board member for TOArts. He is a member of the Advisory Board for the Boys and Girls Club of Camarillo, CA, is a past member of the Executive Committee of the Golden Boot Awards, and is a current board member of the Will Rogers Ranch Foundation in Pacific Palisades, CA.

Wyatt and his wife, Lisa, have gladly supported many local organizations over the years including the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, TOArts, the Conejo Valley YMCA, Conejo Valley Historical Society, Camarillo Boys and Girls Club, and Cal Lutheran University, among others.



MARY POWER

Mary Power grew up in Westlake, graduated from Westlake High School and, after college at Oregon State University, returned home to the Conejo Valley to raise her daughter, Baylee, and son, Niko. She continues to reside in the area with her wife, Erin, and a bunch of critters.

Mary Power held various positions at the Global Information Company, J.D. Power and Associates, for more than half her life. It was a family-owned and operated business until the company sold in 2005 to The McGraw-Hill Companies. Ms. Power continued working at JDPa through the summer of 2010. During her tenure with the firm, her most recent position was senior research manager for the Global Travel and Hospitality Practice.

She currently sits on the Board of Trustees of Mary Health of the Sick, Oregon State University Board of Trustees, Paw Works, the Kenrose Kitchen Table Foundation, and the Play Conejo Board of Directors. Mary got involved with Play Conejo because her parents knew that the hard work of community building is an ongoing process, and they instilled in their children the importance of giving back. And give back, she has done!

Play Conejo was founded in 2012 and Mary was part of the original board. She has served as President four times and has worked tirelessly to make Play Conejo's annual fundraiser, Prom...Again! a financial success by overseeing the auction. Most impactful to Play Conejo has been the direct generosity of the Power family - contributing over 25% of the \$1,100,000 raised by Play Conejo in the past 10 years. That money has been used to enhance numerous playgrounds (including the Rotary Dreamcatcher Playground) and provide hundreds of kids and special needs adults with limited financial means to participate in recreation programs.

The Board of Directors of the Conejo Recreation and Park District are grateful to Cecilia, Wyatt, and Mary for their positive impact. The quality of life in the Conejo Valley is due, in no small part, to their unflagging dedication and passion for recreation, parks, and open space.