



SESSIONS

Forever Balboa Park's Biannual Newsletter

FALL 2023





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July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024



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A TIME OF GROWTH IN BALBOA PARK

As supporters of Forever Balboa Park, you know the power of Balboa Park. Each visit sparks wonder, provides healing, promotes learning, and strengthens community. It appears that folks around the country are catching on as well! San Diego and Balboa Park have been in the news a lot lately as top attractions and must-see places.

Trip Advisor recently ranked Balboa Park as the #7 park in the country. San Diego was ranked #3 this year in Conde Nast's Reader's Choice awards, and in October, Newsweek's website featured Balboa Park as an international destination, heralding it with the headline: "Global Parks that Offer Unique Vistas, Calm Refuges for Green Explorers." I couldn't agree more!

The theme of our fall newsletter, *Growing Together*, captures this moment well. The dynamism propelling San Diego to national prominence is an ethos we share. As Balboa Park's nonprofit organization caring for its 1,200 acres, Forever

Balboa Park is committed to partnering with the city and the many organizations working hard to earn these outstanding rankings.

With your support, Forever Balboa Park has made significant capital improvements that safeguard our historic treasures into the next century.

We have provided a platform for increased youth involvement and leadership in the park, growing the next generation of youth leaders for our city and our region. We have improved the visitor experience by growing our exceptional volunteer corps and leveraging digital media to provide more immersive and accessible experiences in the park. The iconic Botanical Building and Gardens is literally growing as we speak, with the structural reconstruction advancing each day, and our capital campaign welcoming

new donors in support of this transformation.

As we move into the year-end giving season, I'm happy to report that the vibrancy of the San Diego region is matched, and exceeded, by the energy and momentum we see in Balboa Park. Forever Balboa Park is honored to be at the center of this rejuvenation, growing together with our city and our region. I hope that you will consider supporting us during this transformational moment with a gift to our fall annual fund campaign. Thank you so much for your support as we realize a shared vision of excellence and inclusivity for our Balboa Park.



Elizabeth C. Babcock

Elizabeth C. Babcock, PhD
President & CEO
Forever Balboa Park

AN INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING PLACE FOR ALL



PUTTING ALL OF BALBOA PARK ON THE MAP

Balboa Park is one of the largest urban parks in the world. With 1,200 acres of designated parkland, Balboa Park is even larger than New York’s Central Park. In order to help visitors navigate the breadth of the park and its diverse offerings, Forever Balboa Park, in partnership with other park organizations, is designing a new parkwide map as part of a signage and wayfinding project. We know sometimes even locals forget about Balboa Park’s many hidden gems, and we want to facilitate easier access beyond the beloved cultural district. Once completed later this fall, the new parkwide map will be available online, in printed Balboa Park visitors guides, and on wayfinding signage around the park.

Other updates to Forever Balboa Park’s signage and wayfinding project include eight new permanent signs to be installed around the park in early 2024, including four park welcome signs and four pedestrian orientation signs that will include the new parkwide map. All eight will be bilingual in Spanish as part of our commitment to increase park access for more visitors.

NEW TECH MEETS CLASSIC BEAUTY

What do Olivia Rose Austin, Coretta Scott King, and Neil Diamond all have in common? Each is a name of a rose variety, among dozens, currently featured in the Inez Grant Parker Memorial Rose Garden. More than just a name, rose enthusiasts can access a number of other interesting details about each variety through the new interactive Rose Garden Map available on our website at 4-bp.org/rg-map.

All 49 sections of the garden (representing 119 varieties) are mapped, making every trip to the rose garden an opportunity to learn more about the rich and diverse collection. The information was compiled by our dedicated volunteer Rose Garden Corps, who dutifully and expertly maintain the garden year-round. Once installed, QR codes on every bed of the garden will provide even easier map access. Coming soon: a similar interactive map for the Kate O. Sessions Cactus Garden.

The Rose Garden map project was made possible by the San Diego Foundation Rose Garden Fund.



Ex: The map’s info screen for the section of the garden where Coretta Scott King roses are found (C4) describes the variety as “creamy pink blossoms with coral edges [that] celebrate civil rights activist Coretta Scott King, the wife of Martin Luther King, Jr.” It then lists additional details, including the year the rose was introduced (2013).

Seeing Balboa Park Through a New Lens

TOURS PROGRAM EXPANDS

Thanks to our expert corps of Visitor Services volunteers, we offer more ways than ever to see and learn about Balboa Park. In addition to weekly free public tours that highlight the park’s cultural assets and colorful history, our highly knowledgeable volunteer tour guides are branching out into new areas.

This summer, volunteer tour guide Dawn Isbell led summer campers from the Institute of Contemporary Art, San Diego and classes from San Diego Junior Theatre on specially designed kid-friendly tours of the park. Our new Trees for Health Garden volunteers led school groups on instructional tours focused on the medicinal properties of trees and plants found in that garden, as used in health and healing practices around the world.

Starting this fall, volunteer Bill Edwards is presenting a new tour topic every second Saturday morning of the month that explores the park’s exceptional biodiversity and many horticultural wonders. The new botanical tour leaves from the Visitors Center at 10 a.m.. Topics change monthly, so check out the tours webpage for each month’s focus.

For information and updates about our tours, including our custom private tours on a variety of topics, visit 4-bp.org/tours.





DEVELOPING YOUTH LEADERS

SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM BRINGS FRESH PERSPECTIVES AND TALENT TO OUR WORK

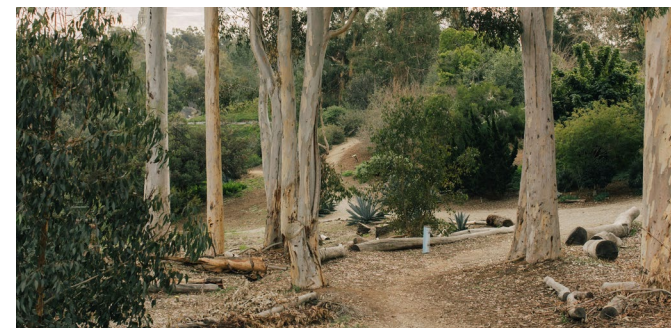
Balboa Park is a regional resource—a place of innovation, creativity, and learning. In order to advance our mission to improve Balboa Park for all, Forever Balboa Park is dedicated to engaging youth in the park. This summer, Forever Balboa Park hosted eight interns. Six high school interns hailed from the Aaron Price Fellows program, and we also hosted two college

interns—one from Yale University and the other from San Diego State University. Interns worked individually and in groups to complete assigned projects, articulating insights Forever Balboa Park will use for strategic planning, website content, and more. The following intern projects were all completed during summer 2023.



Pictured: Aaron Price Fellows

Visit 4-bp.org/blog to see their presentation and read their blog post.



NASRA

A junior at Yale University majoring in Architecture, Nasra worked with our Park Improvement Department this summer. She used ArcGIS to remap the 60+ miles of trails that crisscross the 1,200-acre park in a more universally used geographic software. Nasra researched common colloquial names of each trail, helping connect the communities who will use the map with standard official names. This data will be incorporated into a new user-friendly map of the trail system and will inform our park-wide trail strategy.

Forever Balboa Park is immensely grateful to the 2023 summer interns, and this season will serve as a model for future intern and youth engagement programs moving forward.

FOCUS GROUP INTERNS

Focus Group Interns Lucia and Kay hosted a focus group session of six youth participants. Ranging in age from 15 to 23, participants provided insights on how Balboa Park might better serve the San Diego youth community. A few key insights:

- Balboa Park acts as a safe space, almost a sanctuary, in the middle of a busy, urban area.
- Balboa Park is the setting for incredibly important personal growth and social bonding experiences for these youth, across generations.

MARKETING COMMUNICATION INTERNS

Marketing Communication Interns Eva, Gabriel, Sophia, and Taniya attended National Carousel Day and reflected on their own history in Balboa Park to write a blog post about how youth connect to a place. Written by these San Diego youth, the blog post “How Do Youth Connect to Balboa Park?” illustrates the memory-making power and relevance of Balboa Park to community members of all ages and backgrounds.



ALEXIS

Alexis is a student at San Diego State University majoring in Marketing. Alexis supported our team in cataloging, photographing, and writing descriptions about the many species of cacti, succulents, and desert plants in the Kate O. Sessions Cactus Garden. She collaborated with members of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society for their plant identification expertise. The fruits of their work, a new interactive Cactus Garden map, is coming soon to our website.

RESTORED CAROUSEL NOW OPEN

The meticulous years-long effort to carefully restore the 100-year-old Dorothea Laub Balboa Park Carousel was recently nominated for a prestigious 2023 Orchid Award by the San Diego Architectural Foundation in the Historic Preservation category. The recognition demonstrates Forever Balboa Park's commitment to stewarding the park's historic assets, including its iconic attractions.

In early 2023, work began on restoring the Balboa Park Carousel's façade, returning it to its original profile by removing the non-historic triangular roof extensions. In addition, the clerestory window frames were repaired and repainted, both roofs were replaced, and the structure's interior support framing was reinforced. Historic photographs guided decisions on roof design, materials, and paint color, and wherever possible, original materials were preserved. The renovations were made possible in part by a generous grant from the Conrad Prebys Foundation.

Following several months of closure for this latest round of renovation work, the Carousel reopened in time for National Carousel Day celebrations on July 25. Thousands of visitors enjoyed free rides, live entertainment, and activities for kids.

The Carousel will remain open through the fall and winter on Saturdays, Sundays, and school holidays, 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



Anyone wishing to have the historic Carousel all to themselves can book a birthday party or other private event during off hours by contacting us at carousel@balboapark.org. You can also take a piece of history home with you by purchasing a Balboa Park Carousel T-shirt, baseball cap, or other merch in the Balboa Park Visitors Center.

TRUSTEES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Like all nonprofits, Forever Balboa Park relies on the guidance and expertise of its governing board. The 30 dedicated volunteers who make up the Forever Balboa Park Board of Trustees, and our many additional board advisors, represent a diverse range of talent, backgrounds, and knowledge. That we are grateful for their service cannot be stated enough. Not surprisingly, the impact and reputation of many of our trustees draws attention and accolades from outside our organization.

Last May, Betty Peabody received a Key to Balboa Park from Mayor Todd Gloria during his first-ever State of Balboa Park address. The honor recognized Betty's many years of dedicated volunteer service and park advocacy work, which includes her founding of the former Friends of Balboa Park, among other accomplishments. Betty has spent decades working to improve Balboa Park, and we were proud to see her honored at such a milestone event for the park.

In late September, Lynn Langley, who does triple volunteer duty for Forever Balboa Park as a trustee, Tree Steward, and Garden Steward, was honored with a Daily Point of Light Award. The recognition came from Points of Light, the national nonprofit organization that certifies only the most impactful volunteer programs, including Forever Balboa Park's. In addition to her extensive volunteer work in Balboa Park, Lynn is also very active with the Master Gardener Association of San Diego County.

We're also thrilled to share that Victoria Hamilton, Chair Elect of the Forever Balboa Park Board of Trustees, was recently appointed to the board of the Conrad Prebys Foundation, a longtime supporter of Balboa Park and charities throughout the region that benefit San Diego communities. Victoria will help guide the foundation's philanthropic vision in the years ahead. Victoria's leadership as the past President of Californians for the Arts and the past Executive Director of the San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture is greatly appreciated, as the arts are a key component of the Balboa Park experience.

These recognitions represent only a sampling from the past few months and are a testament to the caliber of our entire volunteer governing team.



Betty Peabody, Trustee



Lynn Langley, Trustee, Garden Steward, Tree Steward



Victoria Hamilton, Chair Elect

Born of a Dream & Rooted in History

BEHIND THE SCENES OF BALBOA PARK'S ICONIC PROJECT

One of the most valued aspects of the Botanical Building and Gardens is its botanical collection. Beyond the historic architecture and general splendor, the unique collection of plants able to live and grow in the Botanical Building and Gardens brings thousands of visitors annually.

The intent of the Botanical Building interior is to create a sense of otherworldliness and honor Alfred D. Robinson's vision for the gardens by including plants not often seen in home gardens.

Over the years, the building has accumulated three distinct microclimates. Paying close attention to light availability and moisture levels, the renovated building will house three different botanical collections—west, center rotunda, and east.

The west wing is naturally sunnier and drier. The restored western interior gardens will focus on flowering plants and oversized grass-like textures. Bright and varying colors in both flowers and foliage will decorate this wing, and plants with fragrant flowers will perfume the air year-round. Fast climbing vines and widespread greenery will quickly create a canopy and lend depth to the garden.

In the central rotunda's transition zone, the building will host changing plant displays. To maintain a beautiful and welcoming space for

visitors, existing palms, tree ferns, and mounted plants will create a backdrop for rotating items.

The east wing is shadier and wetter, and will be the home of many of the plants salvaged from the building before the restoration began. This will be the greenest area of the building, with original preserved trees, palms, and cycads, that will be complemented by plants like orchids, succulents, and air plants.

Wooden framing for the restored arcades is visible now behind the construction fence. And the tenting protecting the sandblasting process has moved to the final third of the building. Progress continues! We can't wait to see more and share more with you.

For more information about how you can support our capital campaign, please email or call us at info@balboaparkbotanical.org or **(619) 331-1991**. We are deeply grateful to the 90+ donors who have already committed significant support to this project.



"Now I had entered the garden of Eden. Palms and ferns and flowering plants and vines on all sides, sending out their delicate scents upon the night air to mingle with the odor of moist earth and recent rain, a draft as intoxicating as champagne."
—Alfred D. Robinson



NEW VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

Your Support Helps Balboa Park Bloom with Possibility

Forever Balboa Park is dedicated to helping the region meet its environmental sustainability goals. In the last year, Forever Balboa Park volunteers planted more than 80 trees in Balboa Park. Since 2017, we've planted 600+ trees. As those new trees grow, they continue to sequester carbon, prevent water runoff, provide cooling shade, and clean the air of pollutants.

Balboa Park is San Diego's largest urban park, and its trees provide approximately 30% canopy coverage for the park. The city's Climate Action Plan established the goal to increase the urban tree canopy to 35% coverage by 2035. Forever Balboa Park is doing its part to make that possible, with plans to plant even more trees this coming tree planting season.

However, much like the plant in your window at home, without careful care, there is no guarantee that newly planted trees will survive and mature. In order to increase survival rates and help new saplings grow into healthy trees, Forever Balboa Park created a cadre of Tree Steward volunteers focused solely on tree maintenance. During the warm months of summer, tree maintenance volunteers checked in on new trees to provide extra water, clear the area around their base, and re-stake support poles where necessary.

This summer, the new volunteer group stewarded over 220 trees in the Bennington Memorial Oak Grove, Grape Street Dog Park, Morley Field, and Federal Building Parking Lot—all trees that Forever Balboa Park planted recently.

To learn more about volunteering for Forever Balboa Park, go to 4-bp.org/volunteer. Thank you to our many volunteers who make this work possible!

You, too, can support climate goals with Plant It Forward—Forever Balboa Park's community education program that promotes and facilitates planting trees and climate-appropriate plants at home. On **Saturday, Nov. 4, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**, in the **Plaza de Panama**, Forever Balboa Park is handing out free tree saplings that you can plant at home. Saplings start super small, so you only need space for a pot!



FOREVER BALBOA PARK

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Developing Youth Leaders

Forever Balboa Park hosted eight interns this summer who brought fresh perspectives and talent to our work.

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Stay in touch! Subscribe to our enewsletter.
4-bp.org/newsletter



Donate today! Support our annual campaign.
4-bp.org/fall2023

Generous Support

Forever Balboa Park's programs and initiatives to enhance Balboa Park and the visitor experience are generously supported by The Favrot Fund, The Granada Fund, Brandes Investment Partners, Walter J. & Betty C. Zable Foundation, and San Diego Foundation.

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