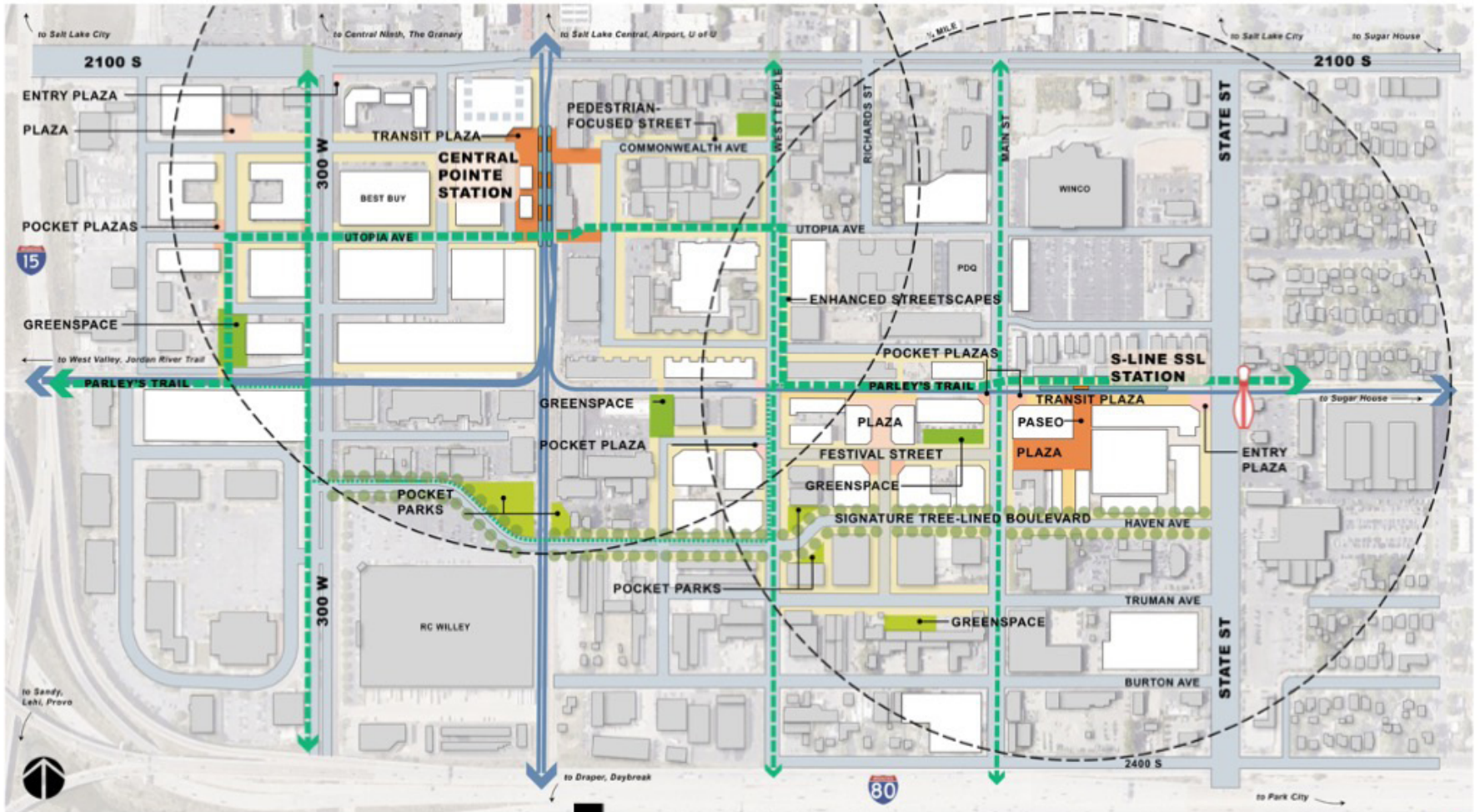




2024 STATE OF THE CITY AWARDS
LIVE WORK PLAY MOVE



**SOUTH
SALT LAKE**



Dear Friends of South Salt Lake,

We have a long and proud history as a City on the Move—and by Pressing Play this past year, we made more progress than ever before. Our central location in the valley and our proximity to interstates and major arterials keeps us at the center of it all. South Salt Lake continues to have thriving neighborhoods, and paired with our services, amenities and programs, we support a robust “live, work, and play” lifestyle.

While South Salt Lake is the City on the Move, we’re also becoming the best place in the Valley to Live, Work, Play... and Move.

Every year, I take stock of where we have been and what we have accomplished. This year was exceptional as we launched several new capital improvement infrastructure projects, planted more trees and pollinators in our parks than ever before, added a new dog park, and to enhance visibility and safety, made the switch to LED street lights. We made necessary renovations and accessibility to the Historic Scott School redwood building and lit up the sky during our first drone light show at Central Park. Throughout the year, I enjoyed meeting up with so many of you at our city functions. Most impressively, last April volunteers from all over came together to help fill more than 30K sandbags in support of our neighbors whose homes risked potential flooding. I love that so many of you took the opportunity to nominate a beautiful yard or at Halloween time added decor to make their homes extra spooky. This year several neighbors came together at seven city-supported block parties. The list keeps going and I have many to thank for our collective successes. Above all, I want to thank you for making South Salt Lake truly the BEST.

It is my honor to bring you the 2024 Best of South Salt Lake Awards. These are just some of the many people, places, partners, and success stories that make South Salt Lake so GREAT!

Cheers!

Mayor Cherie Wood



LEGACY FAMILY: THE MARSHALL AND DRAPER FAMILIES



The Marshall & Draper families have dedicated their lives to South Salt Lake and made many valuable contributions to the city. Neil, age 93, and Louise, who will turn 93 in April, are pillars of our community. Neil was the founding owner of Neil's Pro Service Station in Rose Park and a dedicated scoutmaster. He has touched countless lives with his service and leadership. The couple was married 73 years ago, and settled on Welby Ave in 1959. They have raised their family there with strong ties to Granite High School. As their daughter Susan says, "Our summer vacations involved the family going to Scout Camp," as it was a big part of their lives. Their commitment to scouting and nurturing young minds has left a lasting impact, making them influential figures in our community and beyond.

Susan and Boyd Marshall's love story began in 1980 and they were married in 1983. Their union of 40 years has been blessed with 6 children and 6 grandchildren. Boyd dedicated 17 years to serving the City and District 2 on the City Council, while Susan spent 29 years in Accounts Payable for SLC before retiring. Now, Susan devotes much of her time to caring for her parents (Neil and Louise Draper), who live just a block away. Their roots are firmly planted on Cordelia Ave, where they bought their home and have remained ever since.

The Draper and Marshall families have a long history of participating in all things South Salt Lake. Neil and Louise took the lead in organizing the annual 4th of July breakfast for nine years. Following the parade, they would offer the public a big breakfast, raising money for the city. Their families actively participated in



the day's events, joining the parade, coordinating games like sack races, and treasure hunts in the sawdust, hosting a lively tug of war, and the Fire Department's water cannon show.

In 2009, conversations centered on enhancing child safety in our City. Compelled by a proven model in Harlem, the Mayor proposed to our City Council the idea of an afterschool program mirroring its success. Boyd Marshall, a proactive City Council member at the time and inspired by his Harlem Children's Zone visit, advocated for establishing Promise SSL and we are so thankful for his support. Boyd and Susan also recognized the need for youth to get outside and participate in sports activities after school, and they made significant contributions to the development of our Police Activities League (PAL) program.



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR: LILLIAN WINN

50 YEARS AS A PARAPROFESSIONAL



Every morning, Lillian Winn strolls through Fitts Park with her faithful canine companion, Sadie, preparing for a day of service at Walker Elementary. With 50 years of unwavering commitment as a paraprofessional, she nurtures the needs of our students, navigating the complexities of early adolescence with care and compassion. She is truly a gem in our SSL community.

Lillian worked with Promise and helped run the before-school program at Roosevelt Elementary from 2012-2018. This was a vital service to youth and families at the school, where they received free breakfast, open play time, and did prevention programming “Positive Action” Monday-Friday. Many youth arrived at school early and Lillian helped to create a safe and welcoming space. **~Kelli Meranda, Director of Promise SSL**

I was lucky to have Lillian as my paraprofessional for 19 of her 50 years. As a brand new teacher, I frequently sought her input and learned from her years of experience. She has been a consistent positive force in tens of thousands of students’ lives over the years and most of them have been residents of South Salt Lake. Lillian makes SSL a better place for all who live and work here. I’m honored to call her a colleague and friend. **~Sharla Bynum, SSL City Council Chair**



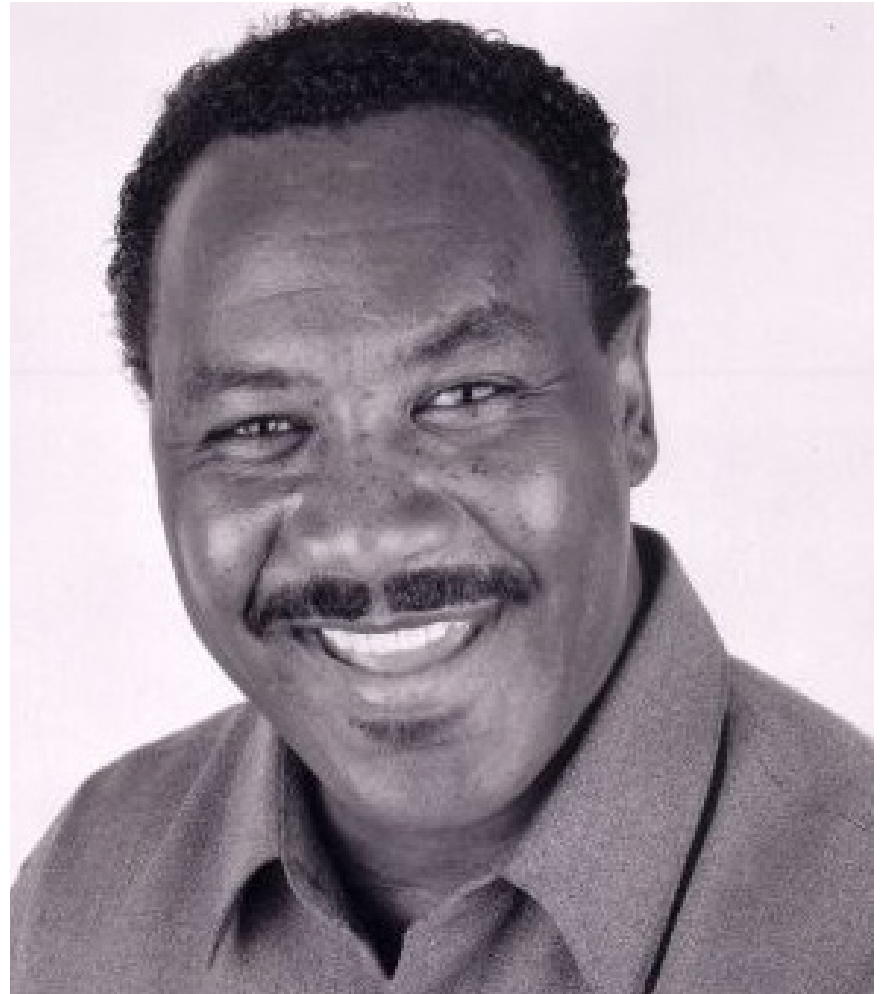
AGING WITH PRIDE: JAMES BROWN

Tonight, we honor James Brown, a beacon of community spirit who lives at Sharon Gardens Senior Community. His dedication to attending city events, engaging in Council meetings, and supporting new businesses and public safety is truly inspiring.

“Living & Aging with Pride” is a groundbreaking multimedia platform that delves into the challenges and joys of aging, ensuring that the stories and experiences of older individuals are recognized and celebrated. As an esteemed broadcast journalist and producer, James brings informative and engaging content to support the aging community’s quality of life, offering a voice to those who are often overlooked.

James not only talks the talk but walks the walk, encouraging both young and not-so-young to stay active and pursue their dreams. Oh, and did I mention, he bakes a mean Sweet Potato Pie? James Brown, your unwavering commitment to community involvement and your ability to inspire action makes you a true role model for us all.

“Living and Aging with Pride” airs Sundays at 9:30 AM (MT) on AMGTV! (Available on Roku and Prime Video).



PROMISE PARTNER OF THE YEAR: THE WELLNESS BUS

The Wellness Bus is a mobile prevention program whose goal is to reduce chronic disease, specifically diabetes, and improve the health of our communities. This is a program offered through University of Utah Health that offers free health screenings and health education to all community members. Reducing access barriers to health care services is the premise of The Wellness Bus; therefore, you do not need insurance or an ID to receive services.

The Wellness Bus program launched in June 2018 and has been an active and integrated part of our South Salt

Lake community since the start. They have interpretation services available in over 240 languages, which is an amazing service for the diverse resident base of our City. Every week, The Wellness Bus parks at Central Park Community Center to ensure our community has access to life-saving healthcare resources. Services offered through The Wellness Bus include chronic disease screenings, nutrition counseling and education, lifestyle coaching and education, and referrals to health and social service providers and programs. All services are free and confidential. Their friendly team of health professionals includes registered dietitians, community health workers, and University of Utah Health students training to become future healthcare workers.

Many families that participate in our Promise SSL programs do not have access to affordable medical care, so The Wellness Bus is a life saver for many. Also, factors other than health insurance or medical care can contribute to the overall health status of a person, which is why they provide referral services for free or low-cost resources for food and housing assistance and medical and dental care. Thank you for keeping our community safe and healthy!





EDUCATION LEADER OF THE YEAR: MICHAEL DOUGLAS

Mike Douglas has served as the Principal at Cottonwood High School since 2021. Principal Douglas started with a laser focus on supporting specific policies intended to improve the graduation rates at the high school and support student success.

Promise South Salt Lake hosts an afterschool program for students at Cottonwood High. Providing a dinner service for youth in the program is incredibly important to the success of the program, where students eat lunch at 10:30 am and stay in the Promise afterschool program until 5:30 pm. However, providing the dinner service has been a challenge ever since the start of Promise Cottonwood High, because to qualify for federally funded free dinner programs schools must have at least a 50% low-income population. Though the vast majority of afterschool program participants at Cottonwood High qualify for free/reduced-price meals, since 2015 the school, as a whole, has fallen just short of this requirement. Principal Douglas prioritized getting meal service for the afterschool program this school year. He worked for months to make this happen, collaborating with the Promise SSL Coordinator, looking into various meal service programs, reaching out to community partners and local businesses, and generally advocating for dinner service for the program.

After hitting multiple roadblocks, Principal Douglas kept pushing forward, even offering funds from his own school budget. His persistence paid off and he was able to set up an outside contractor to provide a delicious and healthy dinner program, which is now served every day in the Promise Cottonwood af-

terschool program. Feedback from youth has been overwhelmingly positive since dinner service began in December, and the afterschool program has seen an increase in teens staying for homework assistance and enrichment activities.

Thank you for never giving up, Principal Douglas. You are a true example of an Education Leader!





EDUCATION PARTNER OF THE YEAR: DR. RICHARD NYE

Dr. Rich Nye was appointed as the Superintendent of the Granite School District in July 2021. Prior to leading Ogden School District and Granite School District as the Superintendent, Dr. Nye taught science (naturally!) in middle school and higher education. His credentials are impressive, with a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from Utah State University and dual master's degrees from Weber State University and Arizona State University, it's his genuine connections and impactful engagements with students, educators, and community collaborators that truly leave a lasting impression.

He worked his way up through the education system ranks, and it shows because he is a leader who hasn't lost touch with who he serves as he demonstrates great integrity and compassion. His commitment to teachers and students is unwavering, as he tirelessly strives to provide safe learning environments and support for our youth.

Partnering with South Salt Lake, the Promise Partnership identified Cottonwood High School as a key focus of the New Road to 100% Graduation program. Dr. Nye has been a steadfast supporter since the beginning, sharing the vision of achieving a 100% graduation rate for all students at



Cottonwood High School and trusting in the community partners' ability to make it a reality.

Since taking on the role of superintendent at the Granite School District, Dr. Nye has consistently demonstrated leadership by addressing challenges head-on, implementing transformational initiatives, and leading by example.

We are so grateful for you, Dr. Nye, and you are a most valued partner and member of our community!

EQUITY CHAMPION: JAYNELL HOLLINS

The school motto at Granite Park Jr. High is “Inspiring Students to Dream of College and Beyond”. Achieving dreams and demonstrating hard work are values Jaynell “Ms. J” Hollins instills in her students as a Special Education Teacher. Granite Park is made up of a diversified student body with youth from all over the world. Ms. J uses her role as a Special Education Teacher to ensure all students feel welcome and confident to achieve their dreams and to dream big! During recent workshops, students were asked to identify who were their biggest supporters, and Ms. J’s name was brought up consistently. Regardless of what grade students are in or who their teachers are, students admire Ms. J and regard her as a true student champion.

Ms. J acts as the advisor for the Black Student Union at Granite Park. Every time you walk into the club after school, you’ll find kids who are realizing their dreams by researching HB-CUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), talking with local politicians, and learning about career paths that interest them. Ms. J’s reach extends beyond her classroom, as she forges opportunities for all leadership club students (Student Body Officers, Latino/as in Action, etc.). Ms. J. gives Granite

Park students the chance to collaborate with and learn from community and state leaders through real, hands-on experiences and connections that they can take with them throughout their educational career.

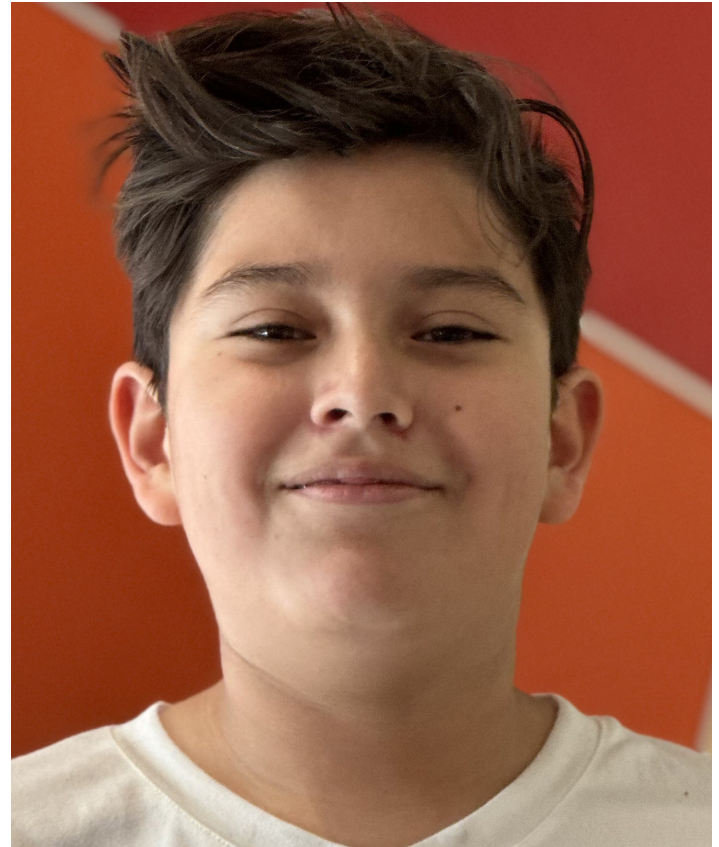


Jaynell is being presented with the Equity Champion Award not just because she inspires the Granite Park Jr High community daily, but also because she takes an active role in shaping the lives of the future leaders of our South Salt Lake community and beyond.

YOUNG LEADER OF THE YEAR: ANGEL CAYETANO

Angel Cayetano is a 6th-grade student at Granite Park Jr. High who participates in Promise SSL after school programs. Angel is that particular kind of student who comes to programs every day with such positive energy and ambition to learn and grow that it attracts and rubs off on other students. The Granite Park Jr. High Promise program offers a wide variety of clubs to help our youth discover their passions and strengths. It was no surprise that Angel wanted to get involved with all of the clubs, from Lego Robotics to Sketch Comedy workshops. He is always there and always giving it his best effort. Earlier this school year, Promise Granite Park Jr. High held a vote to let our students choose clubs they wanted to see in the program. From this process, the students started a News Club that works to build confidence, hone presentation skills, and inspire other students. Angel has become an integral part of this new club, both behind and in front of the camera.

Angel's favorite question is "Can I please take home supplies to show my siblings?" When we have extra supplies from programs, Promise staff let youth take them home to show family and friends what they've learned. Angel's compassion and eagerness to 'show and tell' what he's learning is one of the many reasons why he shines as a great leader. He thrives when it comes to



answering questions and demonstrating to others how to do something. Angel leads by example and we are lucky to have him as an active participant in our program and community!

2024 COUNCIL CHAMPION: COREY THOMAS



Corey Thomas is a dedicated leader in her second term as a City Council member for District 2 and has a strong commitment to pedestrian safety and community well-being. Her efforts have brought about significant improvements, including the addition of crosswalks and flashing crosswalk signs.

As Vice-Chair of the Legislative Policy Committee, Corey advocates for the needs of our community, attending weekly meetings on the Hill to ensure our voices are heard.

Corey's unwavering support for public safety initiatives has made a lasting impact as well.

Thank you, Corey, for your dedication as an elected representative and for advocating for the well-being of all of us.



EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR: ELIZA UNGRICH

Eliza Ungricht started with South Salt Lake as a City Planner three years ago. She quickly proved to be a consummate professional who excelled in all aspects of her work.

Those who know Eliza can attest that her performance at work is consistent, professional, and efficient. Affable is another word that aptly describes Eliza, as she is well-liked and respected by her teammates and colleagues. There are those among the team that naturally act as the glue that holds the group together, which was precisely the phrase that was used in describing Eliza by peers when she received our annual Rockstar of the Year award for 2023.

Outside of the office, Eliza represents the City and Community Development Department with grace, and external stakeholders look forward to working with her. “Her positivity makes our work environment enjoyable,” shared a team member. “She is always willing to help and communicate clearly to complete tasks.”





VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: CAMERON SWENSON

Have you ever asked yourself, who writes those fun introduction posts for our dogs at South Salt Lake Animal Services? Let's take a moment to introduce our behind the scenes volunteer, Cameron Swenson. Cameron is a rockstar who selflessly donates 3-6 hours a week to volunteer at the Animal Shelter, come rain or shine. During her volunteer shifts, she takes an active role in assisting with behavioral assessments, taking adoption photos, and putting together social media descriptions for the many dogs that come through the shelter.

It's not just her time that she donates to our shelter animals, Cameron also makes financial contributions to support them. When the shelter was bursting at the seams with dogs and we were in dire need of adoptions, she graciously sponsored our "Pet of the Week" program and paid for the adoption fees to incentivize would-be adopters. Even after leaving her volunteer shift, Cameron continues to support and help the Animal Shelter by networking at home with local and out-of-state rescue groups to move and place some of our animals where they will have a great chance at adoption. Cameron is well-loved and respected by everyone at the Shelter, animals and humans alike. Her dedication and commitment have made and continue to make a huge impact on our Shelter animals.



Zorro is a Zoomy puppy with lots of love to give!

We consider Cameron part of the Shelter pack, and we thank her for all of her support in helping save and love all those under our care at the South Salt Lake Animal Shelter.

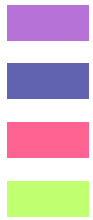
TRAILBLAZER: JUAN ARCE-LARRETA

Juan Arce-Larreta is the force behind one of the most effective grassroots organizations in the state – Parley’s Rails, Trails and Tunnels, also known as PRATT. The PRATT Coalition has been working for 30 years to complete the 8.5 mile trail from the mouth of Parley’s Canyon to the Jordan River. It began with bridges, three of them to be exact, over I-215. It ended in 2023 with two more bridges over 900 West, building a safe route to the final destination on the river.



The Pratt Coalition continues with a group of dedicated volunteers led by Juan.

Juan is one of the most determined and dogged people you will ever meet. Nothing can stop him; not red tape or legal hurdles; not exploding budgets or unexpected “contingencies.” He forges on and overcomes obstacles to spearhead improvements to the safety and comfort of the Parley’s Trail, with an eye this time on improvements in Downtown South Salt Lake. Juan, you are our South Salt Lake Trailblazer!



BEST LOCAL ART ADVOCATE: MICHELLE MARKAY NELSON

Michelle Markay Nelson has been an advocate of healing and strength in South Salt Lake since 2020. As a licensed clinical social worker, her journey began amidst the deepest grief following the loss of her son, Roan William McClain.

In her pain, she found purpose by creating the Roan William McClain Foundation, also known as Roan Your Boat. Through this foundation, Michelle has planted seeds of healing in our community, starting with a tree-planting event at Fitts Park in 2021 to honor Roan and others lost to suicide.

Michelle's passion for healing extends to her role as an Art Instructor for the South Salt Lake Arts Council, where she leads Kintsugi Healing Groups. Through the transformative power of Kintsugi which means in Japanese 'Golden Joinery' or 'Repair', Michelle guides individuals on a journey of strength and beauty after loss.

Michelle's dedication to healing and resilience in our community has touched hundreds of lives, making her a truly deserving recipient of this award.



BEST TACO: TACOS DON NICO

Yolanda and Alejandro Prado opened their taco truck, Tacos Don Nico a year ago near the Historic Scott School Community Center, and quickly became a local favorite among community members and our City staff. Their motivation to start a taco truck stemmed from a desire for independence through business ownership.

Yolanda's culinary prowess, cherished by friends, neighbors and colleagues, inspired the venture. Their delectable offerings have graced various City events, including Juneteenth, the Easter Egg Hunt, and the City's 85th celebration.

Yolanda, Alejandro and their eldest son Josue collectively contribute to the business's success, with Yolanda adding her unique touch to ensure consistent delectable flavors. While the classic tacos remain a crowd favorite, the expanding menu offers an array of classic Mexican fare such as tamales, burritos, and quesadillas. The business is named after Yolanda's father, and operates Monday thru Friday from 10 AM to 10 PM and Saturday from 10 AM to 6 PM.

The Prado Family has been part of the South Salt Lake community for two decades and have greatly appreciated the community's robust resources and family-friendly



atmosphere. Yolanda and her family have also been integral members of Promise SSL programs for several years. Their eldest son engaged in the PAL boxing program at Central Park, and their two youngest daughters participate in the afterschool program at Historic Scott School. All three children have benefited from participating in Promise programs, and the Prados are grateful for the community's unwavering support.



BEST LUNCH SPOT: PHO 33



Our mouths watered when Pho 33 moved to South Salt Lake from Midvale in September 2022. It has quickly become a favorite among many residents, joining the ranks of all of their followers that have been frequenting the restaurant for many years.

Pho 33 brings the authentic flavors of Vietnam to our community, and stands out for its exceptional Pho (a traditional Vietnamese soup consisting of bone broth, rice noodles,

and thinly sliced meat) that garnered high praise during a reputable social media Pho playoff event in 2023.

Located conveniently in our Central Park neighborhood, this family-owned restaurant serves up perfectly balanced broth and tender, flavorful meat that keeps customers coming back for more. Even though they secured second place (out of 32 contenders) in the competition, Pho 33's outstanding flavors and quality make it a winner in the hearts of our community's pho-natics, and offers several other menu items, including vegetarian and vegan options.

Pho 33 is an exceptional lunch locale as it offers quick service, is tasty, affordable, and most importantly, going there is a great way to support our local businesses.



BEST HIDDEN GEM: PARKER THEATER

Parker Theatre began in 1985 to provide live theater to the public. In 2011, they found a permanent home in South Salt Lake at the former Avalon Theatre. They operated as the Utah Children's Theatre for most of their time here, but in 2018 they purchased the building next door and remodeled it into "The Studio" with a classroom and 99-seat theater to host their youth after school programs and summer camps. This opened up the old theater, which was transformed into the Parker Theatre mainstage that now hosts an outstanding bill of seasonal performances.

This property, 3605 S State Street, has a 78-year history of serving the South Salt Lake community with theater and cinema entertainment. It first opened in 1946 as the Apollo Theatre with 650 seats for patrons to enjoy live plays. In 1963, it changed owners and became Avalon Theatre, screening films, primarily second-run and classical, for 40 years. The building has undergone many changes and renovations throughout the decades, but it has stuck to its roots in theater performance. Today, the building has never looked better! Michael Hohl and his team have poured a lot of love and resources into updating and maintaining this wonderful space.



Parker Theatre seats 179 within the main floor and balconies and features a 1930s-style Soda Fountain where the on-site chef creates show-themed treats including house-made brownies, cookies, and handmade sodas.

Parker Theatre truly is a 'sweet' gem in our community. While they certainly deserve our Best Hidden Gem award, we think Parker Theatre is more of a beacon that has been serving our community for nearly four decades.



ROCK STAR EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR



MAYRA SERNA



CRISTIAN MEDEL



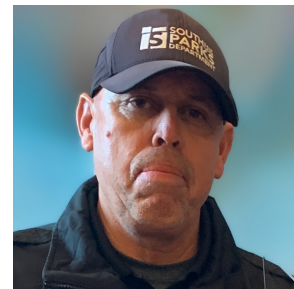
ALYSSA SCOTT



LARISSA GOODRICH



MAISY HAYES



LINO CALDERA



ELIZA UNGRICHT



STERLING WRIGHT



SHARON MITCHELL



Creating a Community

LIVE

WORK

PLAY

MOVE