

## **2022 Employee of the Year Nominee, Michael Singhanate**

The Parks and Recreation Department strives to be the heart of the community by providing enriching opportunities through dedicated people, beautiful parks, and inspiring programs. An employee who embodies the mission is the Department's Aquatic Program Coordinator, Michael Singhanate. Michael has an unparalleled passion for aquatics and is the embodiment of how parks makes life better. He was first introduced to Burbank's aquatics through the swim and water polo teams in his youth. He has dedicated nearly 12 years to Burbank Aquatics working his way up from a Lifeguard to the Aquatics Coordinator. He was just recently introduced to the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS), and is eager to be more involved. He always seeks out additional opportunities to represent aquatics throughout his community through opportunities of employment, health, wellness, and enjoyment.

As the Department's Aquatic Program Coordinator, Michael oversees the full operation of two aquatic facilities including one year-round 50-meter competitive pool, one activity pool complete with splash pad and two large-scale water slides, one seasonal 50-meter competitive pool, and over 45 part-time staff. The operation and success of these facilities speak volumes to his thorough knowledge of the policies, procedures, practices and industry standards used in the aquatic field. Michael successfully transitioned a season pool to a year-round pool operation to accommodate the displaced water polo and swim teams of Burbank Unified School District.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Michael lead his team with resilience, dedication, and innovation in offering the community great activities at clean, safe, and modern pool facilities. Michael was able to keep the Verdugo Aquatic Facility fully operational and provide a home to many displaced regional swim teams including, Vision Swim, Splash Synchro, Swim Pasadena, K Swim Elite, Saint Charles School, LA Racer's Swim Club, One with the Water, Blast, Golden Road Aquatics, and Burbank Unified School District. He was able to accomplish this while being in complete compliance with all LA County COVID protocols.

As a result of Michael's resilience to the challenges set in place by stringent protocols; along with a desire to provide to the public an outlet for health and exercise, the Verdugo Aquatic Facility remained open with its normal operating hours 7 days a week. Subsequently, the aquatics revenue for 2020-2021 increased by 130% when compared to revenue produced in 2018-2019 (a non-pandemic year). Created and implemented an efficient use of forced COVID closures to renovate and restore to pristine condition two water slides and splash pad.

Most recently, Michael developed an innovative and robust aquatic recruitment strategy to maintain staffing and program levels. His strategy included utilizing contract instructors, the creation of a feeder programing, and developing an off-season partnership with LA County aquatics' lifeguards.

Michael's accomplishments and contributions to the community are endless. Under Michael's leadership The Verdugo Aquatic Facility received the "Best in Burbank 2021 Award" as Burbank's best recreation facility. This prestigious community award is voted on by the Burbank community members and local business. This award can be directly accredited to Michael's dedication, leadership, and vision for Burbank's aquatics.

More notably, Michael was recognized and received a national award from CPRS as a 2022 Rising Star Award Winner in the Aquatic Section. This award recognizes the contributions of those rising stars who work on behalf of CPRS Aquatics Section to advance the profession and who strengthen and support CPRS Aquatics Section as a professional organization. In addition to Michael's operational and supervisory responsibilities, Michael successfully prepared a state grant application for funding the renovation of McCambridge Pool. Due in great part to Michael's efforts, Burbank's Aquatic Facilities were the first to reopen to the public in Los Angeles County after the initial COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

Michael is a true testament of a leader who leads by inspiring others! His service and commitment to this community is immeasurable.