

Sarah Valentine

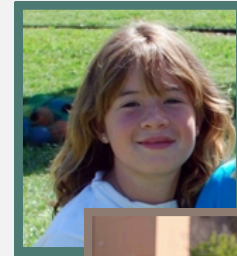
Recreation Specialist City of Folsom Parks & Recreation



Q. What made you choose to enter the field of Parks & Recreation?

My journey in Parks and Recreation began as a Summer Camp Counselor—a full-circle moment, as I had attended the same camp as a child. I always knew it would be an incredible summer job, but it turned into so much more. What started with taking photos and creating Instagram stories to highlight field trips and daily activities quickly evolved into designing signage, capturing event photography, and even creating engaging Reels to promote our programs.

I like to say that Parks and Recreation chose me. Those unforgettable memories I had as a camper sparked a passion for creating opportunities that bring people joy and build connections. Now, I'm dedicated to helping the community experience the same sense of fun, excitement, and belonging that inspired me when I was younger.



Q: What do you consider your biggest accomplishment in the field of Parks & Recreation so far?

In 2023, I had the honor of becoming the first-ever part-time employee to present at a CPRS conference. Being selected to share insights on social media, marketing, graphic design, and more was an incredible milestone in my career. I'm passionate about helping agencies advance because, at the end of the day, we all share the same goal: to provide the best events and programs for our communities.

One of my proudest accomplishments was creating a logo for our 'Social Media Team' a few years ago. The design is a simple yet impactful adaptation of the City of Folsom logo within a camera lens. This branding has been a turning-point—parents and community members are now more comfortable with photography at events, knowing it's tied to our trusted team.

Another initiative I'm proud of is designing custom stickers for every event. These stickers have become a meaningful way to connect with the community after capturing their photos. Instead of just walking away, the stickers create a memorable interaction and leave a lasting impression. It's these small but intentional touches that help build stronger relationships with the people we serve.



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Q: What made you get involved with District 2 and how has District 2 helped with accomplishing your goals in the profession?

I first learned about District 2 through my coworkers at the City of Folsom, who mentioned the Jane Adams Award Grant for professional development. Receiving that scholarship was a game-changer—it not only made me a CPRS member but also allowed me to attend the entire CPRS Connections Conference, which was an incredible experience. I've also had the opportunity to contribute by creating logos for their events, which helped me expand my skills beyond my role at the City of Folsom.

I'm deeply grateful to District 2, not just for the scholarship, but for the amazing connections and opportunities it has provided. I've enjoyed attending their events, like the Activity Guide Swap N' Share, and I was honored to present at their Lunch N' Learn on Social Media and Marketing. If you haven't already, I highly recommend checking out their website at cprsd2.org or following them on Instagram @District2. They're a fantastic resource for anyone in the Parks and Recreation field!

Q: What advice do you have for a peer that is trying to decide whether or not to go into the field of Parks & Recreation?

My advice would be to consider your passion for community impact, creativity, and collaboration. Parks and Recreation is about more than just maintaining parks—it's about enriching lives, fostering connections, and creating memorable experiences for people of all ages. If you enjoy problem-solving, teamwork, and having a direct, positive influence on your community, this field can be incredibly fulfilling. At the end of the day seeing smiling faces and helping to create memorable experiences at events, programs, parks, and other facilities is what makes this job rewarding.

*Do you have a suggestion for a Rising Star or someone we should consider featuring?
Email your suggestions to the Director of Public Relations, Frankie Nelson, at fnelson@folsom.ca.us*