

Elizabeth Chernyavskiy

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Mission Oaks Recreation & Park District



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

I first discovered the field of Parks and Recreation through a help-wanted ad at my high school for recreation leaders. What started as a simple opportunity quickly turned into a passion. I've stayed in this field because of the incredible people I've met—colleagues who became mentors, and mentors who became friends. Their support and encouragement have inspired me to grow, take on new challenges, and achieve milestones I once thought were out of reach.

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

My biggest accomplishment so far has been creating my own special event—Winterfest, scheduled for December 20th this year. Like all of our events, Winterfest is designed to bring our community closer together. Swanston Park has such an engaged and enthusiastic community—one that isn't afraid to share ideas and requests. When they asked for a winter celebration, I saw an opportunity to make it happen. Since it's been years since our last winter event, I took on the challenge, and I'm excited to see our park filled with laughter, connection, and holiday spirit once again.

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

I look forward to creating more opportunities within our community center and district through my involvement with District 2. District 2 offers a wealth of resources that I hope to utilize to enhance the events and programs I help organize. By engaging more deeply, I aim to network, collaborate, and gain inspiration to develop new initiatives that serve our residents.

Members of District 2 play a vital role as advocates who “strengthen California’s public parks and recreation industry” (District 2 page). What excites me most is the chance to become a voice within that larger Parks and Recreation community—representing the families and children at Swanston Park and throughout our district.

Having worked closely with kids who have had fewer opportunities, I've seen firsthand how parks and recreation programs can create brighter paths and foster belonging. Through District 2, I hope to advocate for these individuals, using the district's tools and resources to expand inclusive programs and events. Ultimately, I want to be a voice and an advocate for those who don't always have one.

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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?

I'll be honest—I didn't originally plan to go into Parks and Recreation. I started with a part-time summer job and didn't expect it to turn into something I'd genuinely care about. But my advice to anyone considering the field is simple: take the chance. Parks and Recreation gives you the opportunity to truly connect with your local community in a fun, supportive, and meaningful environment.

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to overlook those around us who need joy and connection the most. Parks and Recreation exists to bring people together—to create spaces where everyone can relax, play, and belong. Your job, quite literally, is to help others have fun—and along the way, you do too. The people you work with share that same passion for making a difference through creativity, teamwork, and service.

Of course, there are busy and challenging days like any job, but the reward is knowing that you've left a positive and lasting impact on your community. And one of the best parts of this field is its variety—there's a place for everyone in Parks and Recreation, whether your interests lie in events, youth programs, facilities, or community outreach.

*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*