Our Resort Springs to Life!

An Inside Look at Our Horticulture Team

Our Volunteers Make a Big Impact

May is Asian Pacific Heritage Month

Create a Unique Origami Butterfly!

No Two Patterns Are Alike
Nearly 10 years ago, while working in Talent Development, I was approached to support the Horticulture team with a project. They wanted to create an online plant identification tutorial to help Team Members aspiring to become Horticulturists learn scientific plant names – necessary knowledge to become certified in the field. I can still remember the first meeting: Archie Bayley and Jason Lieffers radiated with excitement at the potential of getting this info in an easy-to-access format for their team. When Jason handed me a flash drive with audio he personally recorded of the correct pronunciation of each genus and species, along with photos, I knew I was working with a dedicated pair.

From concept to finish, the project took over six months of intermittent work. Sure, it was tedious, but I loved it. Why? Because Archie and Jason’s passion to help Team Members grow was infectious and I will never, ever forget it. They are definitely not your garden variety and both are still leading teams to greatness in Horticulture.

I would have never thought, all these years later, I would be partnering with Horticulture on a very different project – a magazine article that so serendipitously fits into this issue’s theme of growth and springing into action. While the landscape has dramatically changed since we last worked together, the feeling has not – it’s a department that makes me smile and I think they’ll make you smile too.

Debbi Compton
Managing Editor

Have a story or feedback to share? Just email us at communications@universalorlando.com
Behind the Scenes
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This majestic Mejool Date Palm stands at 35-feet tall at the entrance of Universal Studios Florida and weighs over 3,500 pounds! The braces on its trunk are an indication that it has been recently planted... but how does this nearly two-ton palm make its way here?

We're glad you asked.
It’s 3:00am. “I set that tree three times last night in my sleep,” Ron Nerren (Associate Project Manager, Horticulture) exclaims over the roar of work around us. “It’s such an adrenaline rush moving these enormous trees through interesting places.” The palm is being effortlessly carried across the bridge to USF by a telescopic loader. “We’re replacing a diseased Canary Palm that was here since USF opened,” says Jon Aycrigg (Asst. Manager, Horticulture). “It’s always tough to see one of the originals have to go.”

Each member of the 8-person crew is focused as the tree now hovers above the hole. Only one member of the team provides hand signals to the driver, which cuts down on any potential miscommunication. “When you’re moving 3,500 pounds, there’s not a lot of room for error,” says Ron. “Communication is key and not just during the move. Before we even put a shovel in the ground, we secure dig permits and coordinate with Electrical, Plumbing, and other teams to keep everyone safe.”

“It’s such an adrenaline rush moving these enormous trees through interesting places.”

The tree is lowered into its new home and immediately the crew is packing dirt and working to remove any air pockets to make sure it’s snug. Like a well-choreographed routine, the palm was now in place. The loader operator starts to back away and the team moves in fast to start installing braces. “We’ll keep those on up to a year, depending on how quickly it gets established,” says Ron. “Because safety is the number one priority, we don’t take them off until we know that tree is not going anywhere.”

We spent some time chatting about some of the most significant moves the team has done over the years. Ron, who has been with UO since 1996, remembers them all. Like moving a 40,000-lb. oak tree down the road in the middle of the night or even hoisting enormous HVAC units onto buildings. “Because we have the equipment, we will often offer to help other teams lift things,” says Ron. “We’re a community that looks out for each other. We eat lunch with Electricians, Pest Control, you name it – we all know what each other is up to and it’s what makes the job so great.” “We take a lot of pride in our team’s ability to coordinate and undertake such large scale projects, like moving this palm,” Jon adds.

We learned that pride is a core theme of not just the Projects team, but of each and every Team Member we encountered in our time with Horticulture. And they have a lot to be proud of.
Every direction you look, plant life is thriving at Universal Orlando Resort in perfect harmony with its environment – **nearly five million square feet** of irrigated landscape!

An immensely talented team, led by Linda Hall (VP, Horticulture), demonstrates a command of this land, ensuring the lasting impression of our resort is one of beauty. The “plant life” at UO is one of expertise, hard work, patience, and most importantly passion – and we found there is no shortage on this team.

The “Compass Planter” at IOA points our Guests in the right direction.
Every plant that finds its way on property is carefully selected and placed. From the iconic lands of IOA to the streets of USF to a tropical oasis at Volcano Bay, there’s a delicate balance between art and function. It can take years of planning to get a landscape design just right and it requires a wealth of knowledge to make the right recommendations.

Jon Aycrigg (Asst. Manager, Horticulture) is a trained Landscape Architect and is often asked to leverage his skill to design thematic scenes. “The Guest experience is first – their vantage point informs all of the choices we make,” says Jon. You may have already noticed Jon’s work if you’ve been to Toothsome Chocolate Emporium & Savory Feast Kitchen. He was inspired by the whimsical nature of the venue, and wanted the landscape to mirror it. “I presented three plans to Universal Creative and they narrowed it down to one, from there we collaborated closely – a true team effort,” says Jon. “We had to make sure we got it perfect the first time, because imperfections in plant life get exaggerated over time.”

Looking to the future is always top of mind for the Horticulture department and there are so many considerations to weigh. Can a northern plant-scape survive in the Central Florida heat and humidity? Can exotic species be sourced and from where? What plant life is already available?

The Forest Through the Trees

Often, the plants required for a project are huge, so storage is another factor. They established a small tree farm off property and the extra space has helped them stage plants and trees and even rescue some along the way. When Wet ‘n Wild was getting ready to close, the Projects team moved in to salvage as many trees as possible, many of which have taken root in both new and established landscapes across the resort. Some are still being meticulously cared for at the tree farm, waiting for the team’s next creative idea to determine their new home.

Topiaries are part science, part creativity, part hard work, and ALL fun! Just ask our Topiary Specialists, America Villarrubia and Luis Arbolay who take the use of plants to a place of whimsy. There are two types of topiaries – stuffed and shaped – and each requires a disciplined amount of attention, knowledge, and patience.

For the stuffed topiaries, America uses moss-filled wire frames and plugs them with tiny plants - selecting just the right ones based on color, shape, and texture. For the shaped topiaries, Luis creates sea creatures, spirals, spheres, and more, usually with common Podocarpus training and clipping the plant just right to take shape. Both are expressive art forms that result in eye-catching, living sculptures that stop Guests in their tracks, inspiring a few selfies along the way.
Have Plants, Will Travel

You’ve heard of mobile-friendly technology, but how about mobile-friendly plants? Not every plant we have on property is rooted in the ground—many are in containers, ready to go where needed. From creating temporary scenes for special events like Mardi Gras to staging foliage for productions to installing terrifying “tree-tments” for Halloween Horror Nights and so much more—the Special Projects team is constantly on the move.

“At times, we can have as many as ten setups going on throughout property,” says Julio Ceriale. “We work with Events, Entertainment, Catering, Production, among others, to construct thoughtful greenery presentations.” The team is often asked to use dead plants—that’s right, we said dead plants. We’re talking HHN, of course, and they have imagined some iconic scenes that are straight out of a nightmare. They work closely with the Art Directors to add more dimension to a theme. It doesn’t end there; the team also oversees some impressive displays in back-of-house buildings across property, sharing their green thumb to make our Team Member spaces a little brighter.

The next time you see a plant on the move—be sure to wave and say hi (to the Horticulture team, of course, but we’re sure the plant would appreciate it too).

A Cut Above

The next time you are standing on Hollywood Boulevard in USF, do us a favor: look up. Towering over 50-ft. tall, is a lineup of Washingtonian Palms, many of which were planted before the park opened its doors in 1990. They all started out at about 32-ft. and over the years they have steadily climbed. They are among the nearly 40,000 trees on property and our highly-trained Arboriculture team rises to the occasion to care for them.

By definition, Arboriculture is the cultivation, management, and study of trees, shrubs, vines, and other perennial woody plants. “It’s not just about looks, our number one priority is safety,” says Julio Ceriale (Asst. Manager, Horticulture). “A tree may appear healthy from the outside, but some diseases may weaken it from the inside out, making it unstable.” Not only do our Arborists constantly conduct thorough risk assessments, they also keep our trees looking their best. Thanks to them, our Hollywood palms are ready for their close ups.

Keeping a Log

Imagine keeping tabs on the thousands of trees across property. You might ask, ‘why keep track of trees? It’s not like they’re going anywhere.’ “We need to know a lot about each tree and for years we’ve used software to record our inspections and maintenance,” says Julio. More recently, the team implemented a tree RFID tagging system. “Now, we can walk up to a tree, scan it, and get info like the genus and species, latitude and longitude, and more in the palm of our hands—it’s really cool.”

Chris Rangel (Coordinator, Technical Services) demonstrates how a very small RFID chip is quickly inserted into the trunk with air pressure—with this technology, they’ll never be barking up the wrong tree.

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Behind the Scenes

Wilted blooms are removed from the flower beds, mulch is refreshed, shrubs get a final prune, irrigation lines are checked... and that’s just the short list before the sun rises.

Maintenance is the backbone to any landscape and keeping everything looking its best requires the contributions of Groundskeepers, Gardeners, Horticulturists, and Specialists – all working together. With millions of square feet of irrigated landscape, 1.5 miles of landscaped resort waterways, 2 miles of Jasmine covering our parking structure – and that’s just the beginning – they have a LOT of ground to cover. “I’ve pretty much done it all and I can tell you that it’s all very physical, hard work,” says Linda Hall. “When you’re out, bent over a flower bed at three in the morning, inspecting each bud or trimming lines and lines of shrubs so they’re perfectly even – it’s nothing short of a labor of love.”

And it’s not just about trimming, planting, cutting, and refreshing; they monitor the health of each and every plant they interact with and are in constant communication with Irrigation, Pest Control, Arborists, and others. “It takes a lot to keep this place show ready,” says Linda. “But we’ve got a team that goes above and beyond to get it just right, each and every day.”

Maintaining the Land

The right amount of water is essential to any plant’s success and the Irrigation team is responsible for nearly 1,500 individually programmed water schedules.
The **Green Team**

They say ladybugs are a sign of good luck – well, then we’d have to say it was our lucky day. We watched in awe as Sueli Goldberg (Pest Control Technician) released 4,000 of the colorful beetles in the Garden of Allah in USF. It wasn’t long before dozens were crawling on us. “If they get in your shirt, they’ll just tickle a little,” Sueli casually comments. The ladybugs will help get rid of destructive insects like aphids and mealybugs. Each year, millions of beneficial insects are released across property – just one of the many eco-minded approaches the Pest Management team takes.

“We keep pushing ourselves to find the most environmentally-friendly pest control and fertilization options,” says Wayne Prudhomme (Supervisor, Pest Management). Worm castings, ocean minerals, and even coffee grounds are used to feed our plant life. Plus, eco-smart pesticides like wintergreen oil, thyme oil, biological insecticides, and many more help keep pests away and are considered ‘spray and play’ – meaning you can enter the area as soon as it’s sprayed without harm. “It takes a lot of hard work and patience to apply a lot of these green practices,” says Wayne. “But, it’s the right thing to do and totally worth it.”

**A Bee-a-tiful Relationship!**

Bees are an important part of any ecosystem; however, not always welcome in busy areas. Artificial hives, located back-of-house, attract bees to build their colonies away from Guest areas. From there, the bees are provided to beekeepers where they are safely re-hived.

**Critter Corner**

Picture It: a brood of fuzzy ducklings are swept away into a storm drain. They chirp and chirp with nervousness, no mother in sight. We can tell you’re getting a little nervous too.

Don’t worry, this has a happy ending - the Pest Management team sprang into action. After an exhaustive search, the team found the mother duck and reunited the family. That’s just another “day in the office” to this bunch – who tout critter control as a service they provide. They’ve seen it all: possums, snakes, raccoons, even wild turkeys in Central Park (you read that correctly). Working with local wildlife centers, they always rehome each of these critters.

There are the actual ducklings that the Pest Management Team helped to reunite with their mother.
Behind the Scenes

Jon Schultz (Asst. Director, Horticulture) will celebrate 30 years with UO this September. To say he is a bank of knowledge would be an understatement. From some of the first palms at USF to every plant at IOA and everything in between, Jon has literally seen it all. So, when he offered to take us on a walk to see some of his favorites in Islands of Adventure – you bet we jumped at the chance. Here are just a few of the “gems of the jungle” that Jon pointed out and their interesting stories.

Jon’s Jungle Gems

Variegated Mahoe Tree (Talipariti tiliaceum)

One of the first trees planted in IOA, this Mahoe Tree sits in Port of Entry and has doubled in size over the years. It offers flowery shade with blooms that start off yellow and turn red.

Senegal Date Palm (Phoenix reclinata)

Affectionately referred to as IOA’s icon palm, Jon let us know it was the very first tree in IOA, planted at the park’s highest elevation. We asked what makes it so special. “Believe it or not, this palm is nearly 100 years old and was grown from a seed on the banks of Lake Okeechobee,” said Jon. “And let me tell you, getting it here was no easy feat. It required a police escort from South Florida to avoid power lines and street lights!”

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Bismarck Palm
(Bismarkia nobilis)

“Interesting fact about this palm – it shouldn’t be growing here,” said Jon. The species prefers warmer climates and Jon shared that they put heaters on it at first to get it acclimated. “Now it is thriving. Just goes to show that with the right amount of care and patience – almost anything is possible in our world.”

Leopard Tree
(Caesalpinia ferrea)

“Often we buy trees for their bark,” said Jon. “When you look at this tree, it’s no mystery where it gets its name from.” When the bark exfoliates, it leaves a leopard-like pattern that is truly eye-catching.

Shaving Brush Tree
(Pseudobombax ellipticum)

There are couple of distinct features that you can’t miss on the Shaving Brush Tree. First, the blooms resemble…any guesses? Yes, a shaving brush, but that’s not all it has going on. Jon asked us to take a step closer and feel the bark. What does the bark feel like? Nope, not a shaving brush, but close – reptile skin (maybe even dinosaur)!

Giant Fishtail Palm
(Caryota gigas)

The largest variety of the Fishtail Palms, this is one of Jon’s personal favorites. They can reach up to 60 feet, but a word of warning: it’s a monocarpic plant, meaning once it flowers, it unfortunately dies. “Every time I walk by, I look up to make sure there’s no flower,” said Jon. Our fingers are crossed that we don’t see it flower any time soon.

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When a construction project had a beloved, unique Palm in its path, Linda Hall (VP, Horticulture) made it known it wasn’t going anywhere. “I told them I would chain myself to the tree if it came down to it,” Linda chuckles. “You know what? They redrew the plans.” There is no second guessing Linda’s commitment to the plant life entrusted to her and more importantly the commitment she has to her team.

Linda started with the Horticulture team at UO in February 1992 as a Gardener. She took root instantly, and within six months was promoted to Arborist. From there, she continued a career marked by constant growth, leveraging challenges along the way to cultivate traits of a successful leader. “I often make the comparison of plants to people,” says Linda. “We want our plants and Team Members to thrive and exceed our expectations. Both require the right conditions and a lot of care, you get back what you put in.” It’s that philosophy and approach that has resulted in a team dedicated to a shared vision. “I’m really proud that we have so many Horticulture Team Members that have been here long-term, many from the ground up.”

Fostering an environment where the team can grow and be proud is a priority for Linda, but she also feels a great sense of responsibility to our Guests traveling from across the globe, often spending hard-earned savings. “You only get one chance to make a first impression and plants are essential to theming,” she says. “For Guests to feel like they are actually in Scotland for example, they need to be surrounded by appropriately themed trees and that’s not always easy to accomplish.” But, it’s challenges like these that keep Linda and the team going – and we’ve gotta say, we can’t wait to see what they do next.

**Linda’s Guide for Growth**

- Have the right attitude
- Be humble
- Know which battles to fight
- Lead by example
- As Bill Davis often says, plan the work and work the plan, but always have a plan B
- Take ownership, and work with a sense of urgency
- Surround yourself with smart people
- Believe in what you are doing
- Strive to make a difference
- Remember, we are in the business of making memories
"We’re always hungry for feedback,” says Chef Robert Martinez Jr. (Executive Sous Chef, Research & Development). “Based on social media and Guest Service comments, we knew our vegetarian and vegan Guests wanted more options in our parks.” And after conducting research, his team learned that it’s not just vegetarians and vegans who eat plant-based – a lot of Millennials and Gen Z like to explore meat-free eats too. “With this broad of an audience, we wanted to do it right,” says Chef Robert. “We brought in a variety of industry-leading, plant-based items to test and develop – we really pushed ourselves to take our options to the next level.”

Meet Chef Robert Martinez Jr.
Executive Sous Chef, Research & Development

Years with UO: 18
All-time Favorite Meal at UO: The “Fork, Knife and Spoon Grilled Cheese” at Mythos – it brings me back to my childhood instantly! It’s a 3-cheese grilled cheese sandwich on buttered brioche and set inside of a Tuscan tomato soup with some pork belly and crispy chips as a garnish. You definitely need all three utensils to devour this dish.

Best Part of the Job: This one is easy to answer for me! I get the opportunity to see amazing Food & Beverage projects go from ideas on a piece of paper to amazing buildings that are serving delicious food. This to me is so humbling and fulfilling.

A Look at Our Plant-Based Food Options

All that work paid off. Guests have been raving about the recently introduced vegan dishes in both quick and full service restaurants. Whether you’re vegetarian, vegan, or just looking to branch out – take a step into the kitchen with Chef Robert and check out his delicious descriptions of just a few of these new menu items:

Chef Robert’s Tasting Notes:

- **Pipeño Sausage with Orzo** — Confisco Grille
  This dish is by far my favorite. It has Garden Italian sausage crumbles, roasted red peppers, chipotle pesto, and fresh arugula. This dish would make anyone happy.

- **Impossible Burger** — Richter’s Burger Co., Captain America Diner, Kohala Reef
  This burger is delicious! It is made with a plant-based American cheese, garlic veganaise on a toasted vegan kaiser roll that gets baked fresh every night in our bakery.

- **Spaghetti Bolognese** — Louie’s Italian Restaurant, Café 4
  This pasta is made to order with a spicy, soy-based Italian sausage crumble – a great new take on a classic.

- **Penne Genovese** — Lombard’s Seafood Grille
  This hearty entrée features Beyond Sausage, roasted broccoli, and cherry tomatoes – as tasty as it is colorful.

Plant-Based Eats at Team Member Grills

By popular demand, Team Member Grills are also serving up new vegetarian and vegan-friendly dishes and snacks. Keep an eye out for daily specials like vegan curry, a weekly healthy grains bar, an all-new vegan chick’n sandwich and many more. Selections may vary at each location, so just be sure to ask what is available and stay tuned for more choices!
Universal Orlando is committed to inclusion and honoring the vast diversity that makes up our UOTM family. Our unique backgrounds, stories, skills, and perspectives are what help keep our brand so relevant. As we look forward to the highly-anticipated Universal Being Resort, our third park in Asia, our global mindset is ever-so important. Throughout the year, our Diversity & Inclusion team works with our Asian Pacific American Network (APA) to offer engaging opportunities to grow, focused on career, community, commerce, competence, and culture. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is a time to take additional pause to honor and connect with the immense diversity of Asian and Pacific Islander cultures.

Stay tuned to UOTeam.com/events for a lineup of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month events in May. Plus, we’ve got a firsthand experience for you just ahead – the ancient art of origami!

**IN THE FOLD**

Origami, the Japanese art of paper folding, has been around for over 1,000 years. What makes it unique is that it only requires paper – gluing, cutting, and drawing is avoided. Other than paper, you just need patience and the willingness to carefully follow instructions.

Sharon Lum (Director, Parks Technology and former APA Executive Champion) has been folding origami since she was a child and has shared her knowledge and skill for years at UO through APA events and displays. Follow along with Sharon’s step-by-step instructions to create your own Spring-inspired origami butterfly!

**BONUS FLOWER FOLD ON INSTAGRAM**

Want to try something different? Visit @UOTMLife on Instagram after May 1 for a special bonus fold. Joel Eng (VP, Business Development and former APA Executive Champion) has a love for origami, and like Sharon, has shared his talents with the APA and UO for years. Check out his video with step-by-step instructions to create an origami flower ready to bloom!

Beginning Wednesday, May 1, visit the main Team Member Wardrobe Building way or B-110 Lobby to give your origami butterfly or flower a home in our Asian Pacific American Heritage Month displays. Each unique butterfly added represents both our diversity and unity – let’s make our garden grow!
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Start with the colored side of the paper facing up. Fold in half both ways, then unfold and turn over.

2. Fold diagonally both ways.

3. Push the sides in and allow the paper to collapse into a flat triangle.

4. Fold the upper - layer corners up

5. Turn over.

6. Fold the corner up, just past the edge.

7. Fold the tip behind. Turn over. Do not flatten at areas circled.

8. Fold along the center line.

9. Gently spread the paper apart.

10. Metamorphosis is complete. Your butterfly now has wings!
If Sandra Chen (VP, Legal Affairs) were an action hero, she would be Lady Justice—masterfully balancing two different scales. On one side would be the cheerful nature of a theme park, while the other scale would hold the seriousness of the law. How does one person find harmony in those two worlds? Well Sandra, it turns out, is quite skilled at balancing acts. She is both warm and decisive, a role-model with mentors herself, a seeker and provider of answers. When she isn’t catching the latest action flick, Sandra guides Universal Orlando in making important decisions that shape our future. Having joined the UO team in 2001, she was one of only a handful of attorneys at the time. In the years since, she’s seen both the company and her department grow tremendously. Sandra briefed us on the keys to her success, which include Team Members she considers family.

Tell us a little about yourself.
I love travel and adventure, and I don’t like to plan it, I just go. I love to try new things. As far as hobbies go, I collect and repurpose antique jewelry. You don’t always have to buy new. I enjoy recycling things and making something new.

What does being a UOTM mean to you?
It means being part of a bigger picture, helping to create experiences that bring joy and happiness to people.

What sparked in you a love for the law?
I’m not sure I love the law, per se. I see it as a lever, bringing education and awareness to the issues that matter most to me—like women’s rights. So, I wouldn’t say I love the law. I do love my job though.

What would someone be surprised to learn about you?
When I was a teenager in New York, I used to participate in duo piano competitions. My piano partner and I would sit on the same bench and play pieces arranged for four hands, weaving our way up and down the whole keyboard.

What’s been the key to your success?
Support from leadership. Having someone be a mentor and champion for you. I’ve had the good fortune of having incredible mentors, like Cathy Roth (SVP, General Counsel/UPR) and Judy Luengas (SVP, Legal Affairs/Asst. General Counsel). But mentors come in all different forms—sometimes it could just be the person who gives you encouragement, receiving feedback. That’s how you learn.

We understand that you were the founding Executive Champion of UO’s Asian Pacific American Network (APA). What was your fondest memory during that time?
The way this company embraced us. In 2005, we put together an APA showcase in Soundstage 33—with lion dancing, delicious food, and lots of local organizations. We were encouraged to celebrate our heritage and were fully supported in doing so. We are very lucky to work for an organization that values the diversity each of us brings.

What’s the most fun part of your job? What gets you out of bed each morning?
The people. My team is awesome! We have a time to work, and a time to laugh. Working with them is the best part of my job.

What challenges do you and your team face, and how do you overcome them?
One of our biggest challenges is balancing our volume of work. We have to be nimble and efficient, always finding better ways to do things. In order to keep things moving, communication is key—sometimes you just need to pick up the phone and connect instead of sending another email.
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**What does being a UOTM mean to you?**

It means being part of a big, diverse family. And, I emphasize family. We get to be part of a bigger picture, helping to create experiences that bring joy and happiness to people.

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**What challenges do you and your team face, and how do you overcome them?**

One of our biggest challenges is balancing our volume of work. We have to be nimble and efficient, always finding better ways to do things. In order to keep things moving, we need to pick up the phone and connect instead of relying solely on emails.

**What principles guide you in making tough decisions?**

I’ve learned to not rely solely on my own thoughts and opinions. I always try to think from the Guest’s perspective and about what’s best for the company. I routinely get second and third opinions from my team. I’m also willing to take risks, and say the unpopular thing when it needs to be said.

**When it comes to our business, have you just about seen it all or are there still things that surprise you?**

It’s like working for a mini-city. You never know what’s going to be in your inbox. I’ve learned to expect the unexpected. UO is so resilient and we always come up with such great solutions to make things better. Personally I like when things don’t stay the same—I like to learn.

**What are some of the things that have happened through the years that you’ll never forget?**

Throughout the years, I’ve seen tremendous growth, but the thing that stands out most to me is when Comcast officially became our parent company. They really care about Universal and are willing to invest in us to see us succeed.

**What advice would you give a teenage Sandra Chen?**

It’s okay to make your mistakes, but try not to keep making the same one.

Sandra contributes her talents to an expo put on by the Asian Pacific American Network, while she served as Executive Champion of the group.
Last year, Universal Orlando Volunteers donated 40,000 hours of time in our community – that adds up to over 1,600 days’ worth of service! Our volunteers teach and mentor, build homes, wash pups, fill rooms with music, and so much more. How they give back may look (or sound) different, but what this group has in common is that they devote time to others. Those that log 52 hours or more are invited to be part of Club52. The annual Club52 luncheon is about taking time to honor them and their incredible impact.

Bill Davis (President & COO) took to the stage to kick-off this year’s event. “One of the best things someone can do is give back because we’re all part of this community,” Bill said. “And at Universal Orlando, giving back is a priority.” Each year at the luncheon, the President’s Volunteer of the Year is revealed, and applause filled the room as Bill announced this year’s award recipient – Steve Eisinger (Sr. Director, Parks Technology). Steve has contributed over 4,000 hours since 2013 with a focus on mentoring, and helping to build homes in the community. Upon receiving the award, Steve exclaimed “It’s great to be part of a company that values volunteering – we do make a difference!” Be sure to read “In His Nature” on the next page to learn more about Steve’s story.

Current President of the Volunteer Board, Cathy Fischer (SVP, Merchandise) has been a champion of the program for 20 years. “The people in this room are the heart and soul of our Volunteer program,” Cathy said. “Of the 40,000 hours of service that Team Members logged last year, 86% of it was by Club52 members.” To much applause, Diane O’ Dell (VP, Community Relations) shared that this year, each Club52 member would get to award a $1,000 grant to the non-profit of their choice. And for those who volunteered 104 or more hours (Club52 Elite), a $1,500 grant. “That’s $311,000 to roughly 150 local organizations,” Diane said. “And it’s all thanks to you.”

The event went out on a high note as talented members of Central Florida Community Arts (including some of our very own Team Members) gave a heartfelt a cappella performance – a demonstration of one of the many ways to give back. If you want an invite to next year’s luncheon, we’ve got some good news – all you have to do is volunteer 52 hours this year. All it takes is an hour each week to be part of this inspiring club – and it’s always looking for new members!

Get Involved! Visit UOTeam.com/events to check out upcoming volunteer opportunities and log your hours on myUO (accessible from any on-property computer).

These Recent Universal Orlando Volunteer Honorees are recognized with our year-round Volunteer Spotlight Program:

Christina Llamas
Jennifer Redmond
David Phillips
Andrea Samuel
Christina Smith
Kevin Kalbfeld
Other Honoree includes: Karen Oakman

MARKETING & SALES
41 years. That's how long Steve Eisinger (Sr. Director, Parks Technology) has worked for Universal. But, this story isn't about his impressive years of service — it's about his impact as a volunteer. Last year, Steve logged 835 hours with UO's Volunteer Program and if you do the math, that’s an average of 16 hours a week! We sat down with Steve to talk about his recent Volunteer of the Year Award and why he dedicates so much of his time to our community.

Steve’s Story

Steve spends the majority of his volunteer time with two organizations, Boy Scouts of America and Habitat for Humanity. “As a young Boy Scout, I gained a love for the outdoors and learned a lot of valuable life skills from influential role models,” says Steve. “Now I get the opportunity to be that role model and impart the lessons I’ve learned in my life.” As part of his work with the Boy Scouts, Steve leads “off the grid” retreats and uses the outdoors to teach practical skills like conflict resolution and communication. “One of the rules on my trips is no electronic devices. Instead we talk face-to-face — not to glass.” Over the years, Steve has had the privilege to see many of these kids grow into successful adults.

When not backpacking through the wilderness, Steve likes to spend his time a little closer to home — building homes in fact. Once a month, he and fellow Parks Technology Team Members work together to build and refresh homes in our community with Habitat for Humanity. “It’s really powerful when you see how happy you can make someone with just your time and energy. The paint and the dirt on your fingers may wash off, but the impact you’ve left behind is long-lasting.”

Our Universe of Caring

Steve credits his ability to contribute so much of his time in the community to Universal Orlando’s culture of caring. Within the Parks Technology division, Steve is one of many leaders who make volunteering a priority. “A supportive environment is everything. Through thick and thin, this company has always given back and it does my heart good to be a part of it.”

Our company’s commitment to volunteering is one of the reasons Steve has stayed here for over forty years. “The fact that we provide Club52 members grants each year for the charitable organization of their choice speaks volumes.” Bill Davis (President/COO) announced Steve as Volunteer of the Year at the annual appreciation luncheon. “I was shocked — I had no idea my name would be called. I am so humbled by this award, but I really don’t do it for the recognition. I love being part of a larger community that values giving back because at some point, everyone needs help at some level.”

Steve’s Tips to Make a Difference

1. Have Fun! There are literally hundreds of organizations to choose from, so there is bound to be one out there that speaks to you. If you’re not having fun, choose something else.

2. Find a Buddy. If you’re a social person like me, volunteering with friends and co-workers makes it even more fun — and the more you invite, the greater the impact.

3. Do What You Can. We all lead busy lives and it can sometimes be hard to find the time to volunteer. Don’t get caught up in the number of hours you’re volunteering — every hour makes a difference!
Meet the Career Network

Howie-Alice Jones
(Sr. Coordinator, Talent Acquisition)

Whether you call or email, Howie-Alice is the first person you’ll connect with.

“The diversity of talent among our Team Members is incredible! We see people who use our services to become the best versions of themselves. To inspire and guide our top talent in the direction of their dreams and showing them their potential is the most rewarding piece of my role.”

Elise Griffith
(Sr. Representative, Talent Acquisition)

From mock interviews to resume reviews to overall guidance, Elise is your pathfinder.

“I am humbled that I get to do what I love for a living and it brings me great joy to assist our Team Members in reaching their career goals. The fact that UO provides Team Members these kinds of opportunities for growth is one of my favorite things about working for this company.”

Christopher Porch
(Representative, Talent Acquisition)

His “desk” is in the field: Christopher will be coming to you with helpful career information.

“Being a part of the Career Network gives me the opportunity to support Team Members in a unique way. I feel like I have the best job at the resort because I get share in a Team Member’s journey from our initial meeting until they are placed in their dream role – it’s very rewarding!”

If you’re ready to make a career move, you’re reading the right story. With literally thousands of job types at Universal and countless opportunities, pursuing something new may seem intimidating, but we have a secret to share. Help is just a phone call or email away.

The Universal Orlando Career Network offers a multitude of services including career discussions, resume review, mock interviews, and more. “Sometimes, you might be applying for positions and not getting any calls,” says Elise Griffith (Sr. Representative, Talent Acquisition). “The reason could be related to your resume and we can provide feedback. Or, maybe you’ve landed some phone interviews, but are not getting past that phase. We can sit down and discuss your interviews and offer tips. Just know that if you take the initiative, we are a great resource.”

The Career Network Team has also introduced a new program, Career Connector, a resource for internal recruitment. Christopher Porch (HR Representative, Career Connector) works with Leaders and HR Business Partners who connect him with Team Members who have backgrounds, skills and interests in areas outside of their current division.

“Temporary Career Connector assignments and exposure to Leaders can provide Team Members with hands-on professional work experience and networking to identify and build an internal talent pipeline” says Christopher Porch.

HOW TO GET STARTED
Visit: UOTeam.com/yourcareer
Call: 407-224-6677
Email: CareerNetwork@universalorlando.com
What was the first step you took to grow your career at UO?
The first step for me was simply letting my leaders know my goal: to pursue a career in Marketing. I also contacted the Career Network for tips on refining my resume and searching the Internal Application site – a huge help. When a position became available, the Career Connector Program reached out to my management team to find interested candidates. Since they already knew my goal, it was easy for them to suggest me!

What role did Career Connectors play in your career path at UO?
Christopher from the Career Connector Program came to my location to chat about the open position, which aligned perfectly with my goals. Unfortunately, the project I would have been hired to work on was postponed and so was the position. So, I continued in my role at Guest Services for a few months before I noticed that the position had reopened. After a phone screening and two in-person interviews, I was selected to join the Brand Management team within Marketing & Sales!

What has the opportunity of the new role offered you?
I have been learning so much – even beyond what I learned in school – and I have had opportunities to network within my new department, as well as other areas across the company. My team has been so welcoming and has provided projects and coaching to help further develop my professional skillset.

What advice would you give a Team Member who is interested in growing their career at UO?
Be proactive! And don’t be discouraged if something doesn’t work out at first – we really do work in a Universe of opportunities.

What led you to the Career Network?
Although I gained valuable experience as a Cook, I had a background in finance and wanted to pursue a position where I could apply those skills. I first came across the Career Network on UOTeam.com and reached out for help with my application. I also wanted to improve my resume and the chance to be contacted for an interview.

What role did the Career Network play in your career path at UO?
A very important role. They helped me enhance my resume, understand the culture at UO, get feedback from past interviews, and a lot more. With their support, I was able to set a plan and start working on areas for improvement to help me achieve my goal to get back into a career in Finance.

Tell us about your experience with the Career Network. Who did you meet with and what was it like?
I was connected with Elise who was incredible every step of the way – I could not be more grateful. She set up mock interviews with Recruiters who gave me great feedback and took time to have several Finance leaders review my resume and provide advice from their point of view. I was able to apply what Elise and others taught me and was hired for my current, temporary position in Finance – a great opportunity and huge step in the right direction for me.

What advice would you give a Team Member who is interested in growing their career at UO?
Don’t hesitate to contact the Career Network – they are here to help you grow at UO!
BRAVO recognizes and rewards overall excellence in job performance and is celebrated on a monthly basis.

Congratulations to our recent winners!

Alan Hirschman  
Marketing & Sales UOR

Bayley Steinwehr  
Event Operations UOR

Marissa Brown  
Event Operations UOR

Brian Barton  
Security USF

Patricia Cassinelli  
Security CW

Erik Galganski  
Attractions Operations I OA

Brian Langteau  
Attractions Operations USF

Gregory Christlieb  
Attractions Operations USF

Altame Se Wilson  
Park Services USF

Elijah McMillan  
Park Services UOR

Mathew Utsch  
Premium Services VB

Fernando Santana Cancel  
Operations VB

Kyle Haak  
Merchandise USF

Daniel Doak  
Merchandise UOR

Wousselande Laventure  
Merchandise IOA

Christopher Benitez  
Food & Beverage CW

Nicholas Lipman  
Food & Beverage CW

Christopher Esposito  
Entertainment UOR

Todd Buono  
Entertainment UOR

Kristyne Larsen  
Entertainment UOR

Adam DelMedico  
Entertainment IOA

Jeffrey Mast  
Technical Services UOR

Eric Bacon  
Technical Services IOA

James Barnette  
Shared Services UOR

Arran Daugherty  
Food & Beverage USF

Lucas Gonzalez  
Food & Beverage IOA

Roberto Rodriguez Perez  
Food & Beverage IOA

Anna Ecoff  
Legal UOR

Michelle Glass  
Marketing & Sales UOR

To learn more about Universal Orlando’s Team Member recognition programs, visit UOTeam.com/recognition

“Marissa is a reliable team player and can be counted on to handle any situation at hand with care.”

“From the effectiveness of Brian’s training style to making new-hires feel welcomed, Brain has been a valuable asset to the Security team ever since he joined.”

“Never one to say no, Chris does anything that is asked of him with a smile on his face and more often than not, while dancing to the beat of his own song.”
To learn more about Universal Orlando’s Team Member recognition programs, visit UOTeam.com/recognition

**Naomi Rigby**
Wardrobe UOR

“Naomi is not afraid to jump into or give up on any situation that she is tasked with and does an excellent job of being an example to her team.”

**Sabrina Adbullah**
Entrance Operations USF

“Sabrina is a fixture to the USF exit gate and each and every shift gives 100% to the team and our Guests.”

**Roseanna Koppinger**
Merchandise UOR

“Roseanna takes a great deal of ownership in the tasks at hand, and she always remembers to have fun.”

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**Addison Satmary**
Attractions Operations USF

**Brian Juvers**
Environmental, Health, & Safety UOR

**Brynn Morton**
Food & Beverage CW

**Cheri Graziani**
Marketing & Sales UOR

**Christopher Rangel Almazan**
Technical Services UOR

**Cristi Heard**
Food & Beverage USF

**Cristina Imparato**
Food & Beverage USF

**Debra Konner**
Entertainment UOR

**Ellen Rosette**
Premium Services VB

**Erick Torres Morales**
Marketing & Sales UOR

**Ezequiel Gonzalez-Hildago**
Health Services UOR

**Gianfranco Ciambarella**
Food & Beverage USF

**Harmony Brown**
Entertainment UOR

**Herbert Mangold**
Park Services IOA

**James Shiver**
Technical Services UOR

**Kaitlyn Walters**
Food & Beverage CW

**Kate McGinn**
Entertainment UOR

**Matthew Burdges**
Entertainment UOR

**Mia Reedy**
Attractions Operations USF

**Morgan Buck**
Merchandise VB

**Nadine Qronfleh**
Attractions Operations IOA

**Naomi Rigby**
Wardrobe UOR

**Rames Ali**
Entertainment Operations UOR

**Robert Mathias**
Parking & Transportation UOR

**Rosalba Rodriguez**
Merchandise IOA

**Roseanna Koppinger**
Merchandise UOR

**Sabrina Adbullah**
Entrance Operations USF

**Veronica Grant**
Merchandise USF

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**MARCH 2019**
The prestigious Excellence in Leadership Award recognizes salaried Team Members below the Director level who show outstanding leadership skills critical to the success and development of Team Members and the business of Universal Orlando Resort. These Team Members were selected by their division’s leaders based on these skills and how well they live the UO Values and role-model our world-class service behaviors.

Matthew Aguerre
Food & Beverage

Angelica Aguilar
Park Services

Leilani Batty
Parks Technology

Nicholas Carpenter
Technical Services

Donna Doktorcik
Marketing & Sales

Caitlin Elliot
Entertainment

Steven Gryckowski
Blue Man Group

Haley Herman
Premium Services

Maria Kazaros
Merchandise

Eleanor Lea
Human Resources

Edward Lopez
Food & Beverage

Andrew Marek
Technical Services

Michelle Mikenas
Entertainment

John Morrison
Finance

Mathew Rea
Merchandise

Paige Stuck
Human Resources

Katherine Tower
Attractions Operations

Anthony Thorpe
Technical Services

Karla Werst
Security

Divisions Announce Their Excellence in Leadership Award recipients by the end of: MAY 1st Quarter • AUGUST 2nd Quarter • NOVEMBER 3rd Quarter • FEBRUARY 4th Quarter

KNOW SOMEONE WHO DESERVES TO BE NOMINATED FOR THE EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD? Visit the ‘Recognition’ page on myUO or contact your HR Representative.
Congratulations to all Team Members who are celebrating their anniversary with the company!

Chef Steven Jayson
VP-Executive Chef, Food & Beverage

“Too many wonderful memories over the last 30 years to pick one, but just so proud to be part of it all and work with such an amazing team to do it everyday. It doesn’t get better than this!”

Howard Everson
Chief Technician, Volcano Bay

“In all my 25 years, all the fantastic people I’ve worked with have made my job the best. They are my favorite memories.”

30 YEARS
- Steven Jayson
- Loren Anderson
- Melody Arroyo
- Nelson Bauza
- Sabrina Bunell
- Gilberto Colon
- Eugene Cruz
- Lisa Culham
- Maurice Dottin
- Michael Dreier
- Lee Everitt
- Lisa Fearn Colon
- Miti Gatica
- Vincent Gomes

25 YEARS
- Emby Gonzalez
- Lisa Hickey Scott
- Johanna Holmberg
- David Hughes
- Casey Johnson
- Christopher Jordan
- Maria Kazaros
- Aida Kilgore
- Eric Klokis
- Aleisa Leyva
- Rachel Little
- Marcos Magalhaes
- Paes de Barros Filho
- Marcia March
- Elmer Montgomery
- Rene Ramos
- Steven Redmon
- Benjamin Rowe
- Luis Ruiz
- Wyatt Scott
- Patricia Sernier
- Jessica Silva
- Stephanie Slevie
- Carmen Symes
- Jerald Trott
- Dexter Valmond
- Philip Wood
- Paul Wood
- Ethan Murray
- Jerry Orr
- Matthew Ray
- Kristina Whigham
- Krystal Wright

20 YEARS
- Loren Anderson
- Melody Arroyo
- Nelson Bauza
- Sabrina Bunell
- Gilberto Colon
- Eugene Cruz
- Lisa Culham
- Maurice Dottin
- Michael Dreier
- Lee Everitt
- Lisa Fearn Colon
- Miti Gatica
- Vincent Gomes

15 YEARS
- Howard Everson
- Chief Technician, Volcano Bay

10 YEARS
- Kenneth Dixon
- Shaun Duncan
- Jason Kenyon
- Neuschka Santiago

5 YEARS
- Sandra Barrett
- Heather Brighindi
- Pamela Ellison
- Howard Everson
- Mary Grant
- Vivian Hubbard
- Jennifer Julian
- Christopher Kapalla
- Nairina Maatoug
- Audrey Racewich
- Robert Scarpell

2 YEARS
- Jose Amaia
- Carl Baker
- Susan Berlinger
- Joseph Bianchini
- Vicky Bowlin
- Dorrine Brittain
- Ezie Bryant
- John Ciprianca
- Brieann Carroll
- Nivia Donat
- Gregory Fausette
- Jamila Francis
- Margarita Frias
- Joseph Gaston
- James Grant
- Michael Grosskinsky
- Jason Jackman
- JoAnna LaNave
- Doug Leman
- Caroline Lengley
- Harrison Loathman
- Christopher Martin
- Berna McClain
- Robert McDonald
- Ryan Miller
- Alex Montout
- Heidi Murdock
- Nancy Olschafski
- Eun Park
- Hina Patel
- Carmen Pearce
- Kelli Phanes
- Viktor Quero
- Stacie Reid
- Yadira Santana
- Myra Scott
- Jason Skidmore
- Antonio Soto
- Jennifer Taylor
- Amy Tine
- America Villanueva
- Jennifer Walton
- Shane Warder
- Andrew Warren
- Kevin White
- Ira Whitehead
- Shirley Williams
- Megan Williams
- Debra Wood
- Stephanie Berth
- Elizabeth Bely
- Sharon Chiles
- Teodora Cortez
- Shannon DeLong
- Christopher Esposito
- Celine Filius
- Alexis Gabino
- Wayne Hardy
- Tony Ivory
- Brad Jarrett
- Anthony Mercado
- Veronica Montalvo
- Amy Quesinberry
- Thomas Schuemann
- Bruce Setzer
- Anthony Woods
- Teairra Neal
- Max Sales-Ortiz
- Walter Stacy
- Glennon Taylor
- Benjamin Thompson
- Anthony Thorpe
- Joshua Wiley

MOST YEARS in FEBRUARY

MOST YEARS in MARCH

MARCH
Earth Day is April 22, and being green is all the rage. But, being eco-friendly isn’t about just one day—it’s a way of life. Earl the Squirrel prides himself on being an eco ambassador – his home is a tree, afterall. Earl can’t do it alone – he needs your help to create a more sustainable world.

Below are his tips for simple ways to green your daily routine when you’re at work:

Choose to Reuse with Washable Plates & Utensils

Dining in at Team Member Grills? Go green and choose dishes – reusable tableware is the most eco-friendly option. Earl sometimes needs some help with his plate, but the Grill team is happy to assist.

Flip the Switch

Don’t forget to turn lights and monitors off when you leave a room and when leaving for the day. It’s just nuts not to!

Consider Eating More Plant-Based Food

Did you know? Consuming less animal-based protein helps reduce your carbon footprint and improve your health. Earl is partial to acorns, but if that doesn’t sound appealing to you, may we suggest checking out our new plant-based dishes on page 13?

Use Designated Recycling Containers

Even if it takes a few extra skips; Earl goes out of his way to recycle. Want to know what’s recyclable and what bins to use? Check out the ‘Recycling and You’ flyer on the UO Green Site on myUO (“Team Member Center,” “Our Culture,” ‘Green is Universal’), accessible from any on-property computer.

Celebrate Earth Day at GreenFest on April 22

Don’t miss GreenFest to discover more ways to be green. Interact with teams from Park Services, Horticulture, EHS, and more and learn firsthand how Green is Universal. Plus, enjoy snacks, giveaways, and a special photo op with the loveable Earl the Squirrel!

Don’t Miss Out – Visit UOTeam.com/events for the Latest Team Member events!
Thank You to Everyone Who Participated in the #ColoringBayou Contest!

Check Out the WINNING MASKS!

@christmaswinter78
@allisonsegal2
@jgperkins
@hayleejamie

Celeste Ogletree
E.T. Adventure
@freee_sha_vaca_do

Gabriela Gutierrez
Costume Services
@minion.prince

Shalini Singh-Smith
Guest Contact Center
@shalini_beauty
Team Member Screening COMING SOON!
Stay tuned to UOTeam.com/events for details