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"We are committed to enriching lives by providing parks, facilities, programs, and people dedicated to providing healthy recreation and cultural programming in our communities."

At the Department of Parks and Recreation, we are committed to enriching lives by providing parks, facilities, programs, and people dedicated to providing healthy recreation and cultural programming in our communities.

Last year saw the completion of more than \$30 million in capital projects, including the new Castaic Sports Complex Aquatic Center, the Interpretive Center at Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park, the reopening of an upgraded pool at Eugene A. Obregon Park, and renovation of the community center at Del Aire Park, where we also dedicated California's first urban public fruit orchard.

We were thrilled to break ground on both the new Rowland Heights Community Center at Pathfinder Park and a host of improvements, including a universal playground at El Cariso Community Regional Park. The community celebrated with us at the opening of the Eastern Ridgeline at Kenneth Hahn Park — the first segment of the planned "Park to Playa" trail from Baldwin Hills to the Pacific Ocean.

Our commitment to building community continued with the summertime Parks After Dark program, which offers extended park hours and special programming aimed at giving families a safe environment in which to take part in fun, healthy activities in their own communities.

In addition, we launched SMORES, which stands for "Start Mentoring Outgoing Resourceful Environmental Stewards". This grant-funded program brings hundreds of young people to some of the County's most breathtaking natural areas, with a goal of helping them establish a deeper connection to nature, and providing basic tools that will enable them to sow seeds of environmental stewardship for generations to come.

Our hope in the coming year is to continue serving all 10 million residents of Los Angeles County, who can monitor our efforts by following us on Twitter, Liking us on Facebook, watching us on YouTube, and remembering one simple truth that serves as our guiding principle: Parks Make Life Better!