



# Perris News

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## Perris Honors Community Volunteers

They coach basketball the City, assist local police, help out at community events, help run the senior nutrition program and perform a myriad of other behind-the-scenes but vital support to improve the quality of life for Perris residents.

And they do it for free.

The City last week honored more than 25 volunteers who donate thousands of hours of service to Perris, presenting them with plaques and certificates of appreciation for the many tasks they perform out of the spotlight.

"There's no way we could offer the wide range of programs without volunteer support," said Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin. "They help make it happen."

Entertainment for the annual awards ceremony came from the musical group, "Backbeat," a Beatles' cover band. Johnny Depp lookalike Danny Lopez sang the praises of the volunteers, calling them "true heroes." Lopez signed autographs for several volunteer award recipients and posed for pictures with them.

Louis Anderson earned Volunteer-of-the-Year accolades. The 1972 Perris High School graduate estimates he spends more than 500 hours a year teaching basketball fundamentals to youngsters between 5 and 18 years of age. He teaches everything from conditioning to layup drills to good sportsmanship.

"This is a very great honor," Anderson said. "I enjoy giving back to the community. I like to see the kids have fun."

Anderson said he started coaching at the encouragement of his nephews. Years later, he said he sees some of his young basketball players working at local markets and stores, taking the lessons he taught about hard work to the next level.

"It makes me feel good when they've made good," he said.

Another basketball coach, Alex Gil, said he's won several championships coaching 8 and 9 year olds in Perris. But the trophy he received for his volunteering means more than any other.

"I feel humble to receive it," Gil said.

Mike McAleavey, who received an award for work with the Perris Citizens Patrol, said the recognition honors the 20 men and women who in 2008 donated 2,900 hours worth of service to the City. The Citizens Patrol assists Perris Police at traffic accidents, looks for lost children, sets up barricades at special events and cordons off crime scenes.

The youngster volunteer is 18; the oldest, pushing 80. They patrol works nights and weekends, holidays and during inclement weather.

"We get to meet all sorts of different people," said McAleavey, who said he once met a couple from Australia who brought their children to ride Thomas the Tank Engine in Perris. "We have a lot of community spirit and we have a lot of fun."

City Councilmember Al Landers said volunteers "make Perris a great place to live and work." "They make City programs efficient and successful," Landers said.



City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and Johnny Depp lookalike Danny Lopez share a moment.



The band Back Beat, a Beatles tribute group, belts out a number during the Perris Volunteer Awards banquet.



City employees Rachel Rodriguez and Sarina Brannon flash peace signs.

[See photos from the event](#)

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