

PACIFIC **Currents**

SPRING 2024



FROGS: Facing a Changing World

The intriguing world of amphibians connects ecosystems, reflects a rich natural history, contains enormous diversity, and gives a glimpse at future environmental impacts.

Table of Contents

Letter from the CEO	2
Fresh Voices	4
Conservation Corner.....	7
Featured Article	10
Animal Updates	14
Philanthropy Highlights	20
Aquarium Accolades	23



LETTER FROM THE CEO

From Childhood Memories to Critical Conservation

Our CEO reflects on a personal experience with frogs, their cultural significance, and how the conservation work at the Aquarium can help amphibians in the wild.

My first memory of being alive is sitting in one of those little wading pools at age three as a frog jumped in to join me, and me being delighted as my dad chuckled. Frogs are my origin story.

It is only fitting that this spring edition of Pacific Currents features frogs and other amphibians. Just as spring is a time of renewal and rebirth, frogs have been viewed by many cultures as symbols of transformation, rebirth, and fertility. Ancient Egyptians revered Heget as the goddess of fertility. She was often depicted with a frog head, and frog amulets were worn by Egyptian women to invoke Heget's protection during childbirth.

The Aquarium's engagement with frogs is based on our commitment to their conservation and their remarkable diversity of adaptations to living in some of the world's most severe conditions. There is an Alaskan wood frog that can survive Arctic winters by having over half of its fluids freeze—sort of a frog popsicle. Most of us have heard of poison dart frogs—those brightly colored tropical frogs that are so lethal, that the toxin from one frog could kill ten humans.

Frogs worldwide are in peril because of the usual four horseman of conservation threats: habitat destruction, pollution, climate change, and harvest (or collection). This last threat is rarely discussed with amphibians but should be talked about more. At least 17 percent of amphibians are collected from the wild and traded, usually for the pet trade. When species are rare, this pet trade business can increase the likelihood of extinction.

But you ask then, where do we get our frogs? We obtain our frogs from captive breeding facilities or from reputable sources that responsibly and sustainably collect the frogs from the wild. As part of our commitment to sustainability, we are exploring options for developing our own captive breeding programs, which would allow us to supply our own species and share the animals with other zoos or aquaria.

In some cases, captive breeding in zoos or aquariums can be the best hope for reintroducing species into the wild. For example, the Panamanian golden frog, which you can see at the Aquarium, has not been seen in the wild since 2009. Because these frogs are maintained in zoos and aquaria, there is hope of someday reintroducing them into Panama.

If a frog jumps into your wading pool—laugh and take joy in its exuberance. When you visit the Aquarium, learn about our frogs, their adaptations, and conservation efforts. And be inspired by their remarkable life ability to transform themselves from a tadpole to a frog, and perhaps a prince or princess if kissed.

Peter Kareiva

Dr. Peter Kareiva joined the Aquarium of Pacific in August 2020. He holds a B.A. in zoology, M.S. in environmental biology, and Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology. He is committed to science that engages the public and believes that connecting to nature is the one thing that can overcome the deep political and social divides that plague the nation today.



FRESH VOICES

Melting Markers: A Glacial Reminder of Conservation and Community

While reflecting during a glacial hike, our new Community Relations Coordinator Tevykah Pouv is reminded of the connection between conservation and our communities.

In July 2023 I stood in awe at one of the largest glaciers I have ever seen. As I begin the short trail from the car to the base of the glacier, my eyes catch sight of a small blue marker a few meters away. It takes me a moment to reach it, but once I do, the words written on it become clear: “The glacier was here in 1992.” I think to myself, “Huh, that’s funny. That’s a very large distance away between the current toe of the glacier.”

As I keep walking, the years on the markers became closer and closer to the present day, and I finally read: “The glacier was here in 2006.” I read the inscription again, letting the weight of its message sink in. Glancing up from the marker, I estimated the distance between it and the current edge of the Athabasca glacier to be roughly 80-100 meters. The significance of this realization hits me with full force. In a little over two decades, the glacier has retreated significantly, leaving behind a marker of evidence of where it once was.

Reflecting on the impact of retreating glaciers reminded me about the connection between conservation and our communities. Talking with other visitors in the 30 or so national parks that I have visited, one thing became clear: our collective appreciation for the beauty of nature is deeply intertwined with our commitment to conservation.

We all have a desire to protect these spaces for future generations. Every encounter with nature and every conversation about conservation has reinforced my commitment to this cause. And now, as a part of the Aquarium’s team, I am eager to channel this dedication into meaningful engagement with our community.

Since transitioning into my role as the community relations coordinator, I have had the pleasure of meeting numerous community partners—everyone with their own contribution to conservation. As a member of a generation acutely aware of the urgency of our environmental challenges, I am beyond excited to fulfill the Aquarium’s vision to foster an inclusive community that works together to create a sustainable future.

As a native of Long Beach, raised by Khmer immigrant parents, I deeply understand the significance of representation. To that extent, I have been diligently working on developing and distributing culturally relevant materials about the Aquarium and its educational, conservation, and volunteer programs.

Furthermore, I’ve organized several community outreach events, including our participation in Cambodia Town’s New Year Parade and Cultural Festival and the 2024 Long Beach Pride Parade. These initiatives aim to not only showcase the Aquarium’s

commitment to diversity and inclusion, but also to ensure that all members of our community feel represented and welcome.

Ultimately, the Aquarium's rich history of cultural festivals and commitment to conservation efforts directly align with my own vision for the future, and I am thrilled to be part of this incredible team!

Tevykah Pouv

Tevykah Pouv is the community relations coordinator at the Aquarium of the Pacific and a recent graduate of the global health master's program at UC San Diego. She has a passion for community outreach and has worked extensively with immigrant and refugee populations.



CONSERVATION CORNER

Responding to Wildlife Trafficking

The Aquarium serves as a sanctuary for animals seized from wildlife traffickers, including a recent pair of axolotls.

Species that are designated endangered, threatened, or protected in some manner need our help to survive. At the Aquarium of the Pacific, we are committed to the protection and recovery of these animals.

Most of our guests and members are familiar with how the Aquarium is contributing to the recovery of protected species with our breeding and head start programs. The Aquarium is currently helping white abalone, mountain yellow-legged frogs, and southern sea otters and has a history (and future) of working with many other species. Additionally, as needed, Aquarium staff members assist in the rescue and rehabilitation of animals found in distress in the wild, such as green sea turtles.

What many may not know is the Aquarium also serves this aid role for animals rescued by law enforcement from wildlife traffickers. Many species, including those that are protected under the Endangered Species Act, are not allowed to be traded or kept as pets. When law enforcement identifies a violation of these rules, the animals are confiscated. Often discovery occurs during travel, at airports, border crossings, and ports. Animals can be in a state of distress or poor health and require specialized care. Law enforcement then calls on zoos, aquariums, and other animal care organizations to assist.

The Aquarium of the Pacific is one that answers the call. We are a part of the Southern California Wildlife Confiscations Network, a partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and 19 animal care partners in the region. Launched in 2023, the network provides a coordinated system to ensure the care and welfare of confiscated wildlife. This network operates under the Wildlife Trafficking Alliance, which is a national program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

The Wildlife Trafficking Alliance is a coalition of over 90 nonprofit organizations, companies, and AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, working together to combat illegal wildlife trade around the world.

Wildlife trafficking is a significant problem both nationally and globally. In 2022 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service investigated over 10,000 wildlife trafficking cases. Globally, there are millions of incidents. Wildlife trafficking not only contributes to the decimation of species in the wild, but also fuels criminal networks, destabilizes governments, encourages corruption, and threatens human and animal health through the transmission of diseases.

A recent example of the Aquarium's response involved a pair of axolotls. In April 2023 California Department of Fish and Wildlife confiscated two juvenile axolotls. They were very young and in poor health upon arrival, including one missing a leg.

Aquarium staff members worked intensively to revive them, including hand feeding multiple times a day, extensive water changes, and closely monitoring other environmental factors. We did this work behind the scenes, in quarantine, as we do for all new arrivals to the Aquarium to protect the rest of our animals against any potential diseases. The pair was successfully restored to health last summer, and guests will be able to see them when our *FROGS: Facing a Changing World* exhibition opens.

The Aquarium responds to these types of incidents only a few times a year, and most often the animals do not become permanent residents with us. It's rare that the animals go back to nature since law enforcement often does not know where the animals were collected from, the animals have been habituated when kept illegally as pets, or other factors which prevent their release. Nonetheless we are happy to serve a role to rehabilitate these important individuals and care for them before they move to their permanent home.

You too can assist with averting wildlife trafficking. Not all animals make good pets. Amphibians face particularly high illegal trade as pets. Do your research prior to adopting a new companion to avoid inadvertently contributing to this global problem. Some simple steps can make a big difference.

1. Look up the protected status of the species with a simple Google search.
2. Make your purchase through a reputable vendor.
3. Ask the vendor where the animal came from. If they cannot tell you, refrain from the purchase.

Jennie Dean

Jennie Dean is the Aquarium's inaugural vice president of education and conservation. She focuses on the amplification and enhancement of the Aquarium's work in species conservation and learning for all audiences. Previously Dean was a program director at the University of California, Los Angeles' Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, where she oversaw programs engaging the private sector on corporate sustainability and consulted with island governments on sustainable development of their blue economy.



FEATURED ARTICLE

FROGS: Facing a Changing World

The intriguing world of amphibians connects ecosystems, reflects a rich natural history, contains enormous diversity, and gives a glimpse at future environmental impacts.

Frogs have captivated cultures around the world. They are the source of myths, stories, legends, and play a significant role in popular culture. They are colorful, diverse, and have a fascinating biology that reflects their unique vulnerability to our changing world.

Frogs and their amphibian relatives have a unique life cycle, living part of their lives in water and the other on land or underground with a few exceptions. These small vertebrates need water or a moist environment at some point in their lifecycle to survive. Wetlands, rainforests, rivers and streams, deserts, and mountains are all homes to amphibians. Most might imagine a frog or toad as

the typical amphibian; however, amphibians also include salamanders, newts, and the limbless caecilians.

Amphibians eat small animals while also being an important food source for fish, birds, and snakes. They connect the lower levels of the food chain to the higher levels, serving an important role in ecosystem health. Amphibians have many amazing adaptations. Some have the ability to breathe through their skin or secrete a mucus layer to stay moist, and some have specialized fingertips to climb.

We've been very fortunate to have so much diversity on our shared planet. We need to work hard to preserve it.

—ROB MORTENSEN, Aquarium of the Pacific's assistant curator of mammals and birds

Metamorphosis

Amphibians experience a spectacular series of changes in their life cycle, truly representing the word metamorphosis.

In the water, many amphibians lay eggs en masse of anywhere between 500 to 2,000 eggs. Two to three weeks later those eggs will hatch into tadpoles. The time is dependent on the temperature of the water and the species. Depending on the species, the tadpoles will transform into an adult. Many amphibians stay fully aquatic or underground and are built to move in and out of the water.

Tadpoles begin as small, free-swimming animals resembling fish. At this stage, the tadpoles have gills. Slowly skin grows over the gills. Next, the tadpole's teeth will grow, and hind legs begin to appear. It is beginning to look more like the adult amphibian. Finally, front legs grow in, and it becomes a juvenile or froglet depending on the type of amphibian.

At this young stage, most species will complete the metamorphosis process. However, some species, such as the axolotl, will remain at this larval stage called "neotenic" for their entire lives. Salamanders and newts retain their tails, while frogs and toads absorb their tails as they metamorphose into adults.

Ancients

Modern frogs as a group are estimated to be around 200 million years old, which means frogs lived alongside dinosaurs. During that time, the diversity of frogs was not very high, but they were widespread. They did not resemble frogs as we might identify them today.

Older frog species like the *Triadobatrachus* had more vertebrae but did have a skull like the modern frog with bones arranged in a lattice separated by large openings. After the dinosaurs went extinct, the diversity of frogs increased. During this period is when frog species like the tree frog made their appearance.

Around 180 million years ago, newts made their first appearance. Newts spend more time in the water than most frogs, toads, and salamanders and have well-developed webbed feet to help them move. Some newts can secrete a tetrodotoxin, which is the same potent toxin found in pufferfish.

Sixteen million years later, the salamanders began to crawl on land. Salamanders typically lack the webbing between the toes found in newts. The axolotl is a species of salamander that has evolved in recent evolutionary history, dating back to about ten thousand years old.

Changing World

The effects from climate change have impacted many amphibians. They are an indicator species, that is to say they can help determine the health of the ecosystem.

Since they rely on both water and land to complete their lifecycle, amphibians are often one of the first animals to disappear when environmental effects begin to grip the ecosystem. The combination of extreme wildfires and rainfall Southern California experiences each year can decimate local populations, such as is the case for California's mountain yellow-legged frog.

Climate change has the largest, most widespread impact on amphibians and can be compounded by other impacts, including habitat destruction; a deadly disease caused by chytrid fungus;

invasive species that can eat, outcompete, spread disease, and hybridize with native species; and pollution, which can affect them in their aquatic and terrestrial phases.

The Aquarium of the Pacific's abilities and willingness to involve communities in local conservation is an invaluable tool in the effort to save species and habitat.

—ROB MORTENSEN, Aquarium of the Pacific's assistant curator of mammals and birds

Hope

Despite threats, there is hope for frogs and their amphibian relatives. We can all reduce the effects of climate change and reduce pollution.

Institutions like the Aquarium of the Pacific can help with species recovery. The Aquarium has already helped rear tadpoles and has released over 300 mountain yellow-legged frogs into their natural habitat in our local mountains, making a meaningful impact on saving this species from extinction.

FROGS: Facing a Changing World

There are many amphibians to learn and care about, which is the focus of the new exhibit *FROGS: Facing a Changing World* opening May 24, 2024, at the Aquarium.

Guests can connect to amphibians that live in our own backyard, including the mountain yellow-legged frog; discover vibrant habitats featuring colorful tropical frogs from around the world; peek behind-the-scenes to watch staff care for frogs from eggs to adults in a nursery; see a new exhibit space highlighting California and Baja frogs, their amphibian relatives, and reptile neighbors; and even paint your own virtual frog.

You will learn about the diversity of species and their unique adaptations, the threats they are facing, and how the Aquarium is helping to save them from extinction.



SPRING 2024

Animal Updates

Learn about the official arrival of our first releasable sea otter pup, our recent abalone workshop, and the spawning success of sunflower sea stars.

Successful Spawning and Cross-Fertilization Bring Hope for the Critically Endangered Sunflower Sea Star

Aquarium of the Pacific, Birch Aquarium at Scripps, California Academy of Sciences, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA), Sunflower Star Laboratory and partners continue work to save this species from extinction.

Love is in the water for the critically endangered sunflower sea star as a team in California successfully spawned and

cross-fertilized gametes from a male and a female, resulting in fertile eggs. This success marks another incredible step forward in an ongoing collaborative effort to save the species from extinction.

“It has been an amazing few years of collaborating and learning that led to this spawning. We have a huge team behind us, both national and international, working towards the conservation of the sunflower sea star. This is a milestone moment for zoos and aquariums and the SAFE program. The future of the sunflower sea star just got a little brighter,” said Jenifer Burney, Aquarium of the Pacific senior aquarist and co-chair of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) SAFE (Saving Animals from Extinction) Sunflower Sea Star Program.

This advancement took place at Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego, where their experts were joined by partners from the Aquarium of the Pacific, California Academy of Sciences, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA) and Sunflower Star Laboratory.

The team used three different sperm samples from the same male to fertilize the eggs. Through this approach, the team can identify optimal sperm storage techniques to enhance the chances of successful egg fertilization in future attempts.

- Fresh sperm from a male sunflower star at Birch Aquarium
- -80 sperm — frozen sperm stored in minus 80 C freezer
- Cryopreserved sperm stored in the SDZWA’s Frozen Zoo

Each sample yielded fertilized eggs, marking a monumental advancement in the collective endeavor to bolster the population and genetic diversity of sunflower stars in accredited zoos and aquariums.

Some fertilized eggs remained at Birch Aquarium, while the rest were transported to the Aquarium of the Pacific, California Academy of Sciences and additional partners throughout California. Each partner will leverage their expertise towards the goal of culturing these fertilized eggs to larvae and then adulthood.

This collaboration is part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) SAFE Sunflower Sea Star Program, co-led by the Aquarium of the Pacific and Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium. It also contributes to a comprehensive multi-faceted, multi-partner "Roadmap to Recovery" to help accelerate the recovery of this species along the West Coast.

Sunflower stars have been hit hard by sea star wasting disease that's swept across the West Coast for the past decade. It's estimated that more than five billion sunflower stars have died from this disease. Efforts like this are one of many to come, and this special star has a massive group working to save them and the ecosystems that depend on them.

Charting the Next Five Years for the Endangered White Abalone

White Abalone Outplanting Workshop co-hosted by the Aquarium of the Pacific celebrated accomplishments and strategized the conservation efforts for the next five years.

On March 14 and 15, 2024, the Aquarium of the Pacific and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) welcomed 40 partners across 20 different organizations to a two-day White Abalone Outplanting Workshop. All the participants have been deeply involved in the conservation and recovery efforts of the endangered white abalone. The workshop was to not only celebrate the accomplishments made in the recovery of white abalone, but also discuss and envision the trajectory for white abalone conservation and recovery efforts in the next five years.

The first day was spent sharing the progress made with white abalone conservation. The second day was a series of collaborative sessions, where the participants formed breakout groups to

strategize the efforts for the next five years. This is the second workshop of its kind; the first was roughly six years ago in 2018.

“2023 marked one of our most successful white abalone outplant seasons to date, with an impressive release of 2,000 juvenile white abalone into the wild. Since the inception of this program, we’ve successfully released over 14,000 abalone, highlighting the positive impact of our initiatives.” – Johnathan Casey, Aquarium of the Pacific’s curator of fish and invertebrates.

White abalone (*Haliotis sorenseni*) were once abundant in Southern California’s kelp forests. They were collected as food and their shells were used as tools and for jewelry. Unfortunately, commercial fishing in the 1970s decimated the population. White abalone have been protected from fishing since 1997, and in 2001, they were the first marine invertebrate to gain protection under the Endangered Species Act.

White abalone reproduce by spawning, which means they release their tiny eggs and sperm into ocean waters where they drift until they meet and the egg is fertilized. Currently, there are not enough white abalone in the ocean for the tiny eggs and sperm to meet causing their population to decline. NOAA recognized the need to step in to create a captive breeding and release program. It all started as a collection of 20 abalone from the wild and turned into a partnership of scientists and educators from over a dozen government agencies, universities, and aquariums. The Aquarium of the Pacific is an early partner of the White Abalone Recovery Program.

For the First Time in its History, Aquarium of the Pacific Pairs Releasable Rescued Sea Otter Pup with Surrogate Otter Mom

The goal of the pairing is for the baby otter to learn the survival skills needed to return to the wild.

The Aquarium of the Pacific is welcoming a female orphaned sea otter pup, which was rescued off the coast of Santa Cruz County. This baby sea otter is the first surrogate-raised otter at the Aquarium of the Pacific, for potential release back to the wild, as part of a partnership with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Sea Otter Surrogacy Program. The pup is paired with an adult female sea otter at the Aquarium of the Pacific with the goal of being able to learn from her the survival skills needed to be able to return to the wild. These vital skills include foraging for food and grooming their thick fur to thrive in cold water temperatures.

Since it opened in 1998, the Aquarium of the Pacific has been providing a home for rescued sea otters deemed non-releasable to the wild by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “We are thrilled to be able to further help this threatened species recover by expanding our conservation programs to now help stranded sea otter pups get a second chance at returning to the wild,” says Brett Long, Aquarium of the Pacific senior director of birds and mammals. The Aquarium of the Pacific joined Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Sea Otter Surrogacy Program as a partner in 2020. As part of this partnership, the Aquarium of the Pacific built a behind-the-scenes facility for the surrogate mothers and these orphaned pups.

“We’ve been working with our partners at the Aquarium of the Pacific for more than three years to reach this moment, and we’re excited they’re now ready to welcome orphaned pups for surrogacy,” said Jessica Fujii, manager of the Sea Otter Program at Monterey Bay Aquarium. “Sea otters help maintain the health of kelp forests and wetlands on California’s coast. This milestone is advancing our work to help sea otters recover from being hunted to near extinction and help strengthen our coastal ecosystems.”

The surrogacy area at the Aquarium of the Pacific was built behind the scenes of its Molina Animal Care Center and will be able

to accommodate three to four rescued sea otter pups each year. The pups will be away from public view to limit human interaction to increase their chances of surviving on their own in the wild. Videos of rescued pups and signage located outside of the surrogacy facility will help educate the Aquarium's visitors on the surrogacy program and the significance of recovering southern sea otter populations. A grant from California's State Coastal Conservancy Sea Otter Recovery Grant Program supported the initial construction of the sea otter surrogacy facility.

The Aquarium of the Pacific also has a public fundraising campaign to support its work with rescued sea otter pups through this program. Anyone interested in getting involved and providing support of this important conservation work can visit [pacific.to/save-sea-otters](https://www.pacific.aquarium.org/save-sea-otters) and make a gift online or call (562) 951-1701.

Southern sea otters (*Enhydra lutris nereis*) are marine mammals in the weasel family. They are currently found along the North American west coast from Half Moon Bay just south of San Francisco to Point Conception in Santa Barbara County, a fraction of their historical range. Sea otters play the important role of ecosystem engineer for their ocean habitats. Sea otters were hunted to near extinction in the early 1900s. Now a protected species, California's sea otters have grown from a group of fifty in 1938 to nearly 3,000 today. Despite this progress, their population growth has stalled in recent years and they continue to face serious risks, including oil spills, pollution, and climate change.

Through its Pacific Visions area, visitors to the Aquarium of the Pacific can learn how climate change is impacting the ocean, its inhabitants, and people, along with what can be done to work toward a more sustainable future. The Aquarium also serves as a facility for rehabilitating and releasing sea turtles, raising endangered mountain yellow-legged frogs for release, and spawning and releasing endangered white abalone.



SPRING 2024

Philanthropy Highlights

Read about the enduring support of the Glass Guild and our education supporters.

Glass Guild Offers Unique Philanthropic Opportunity

The Glass Guild features the Aquarium's iconic biomorphic glass panels and stands as a testament to the enduring support of our donors. Each panel, reflecting light uniquely throughout the day and sparkling in rainy weather, offers a perpetual philanthropic opportunity for individuals, corporations, and foundations.

A special thank you to our Glass Guild members, whose contributions fuel our conservation endeavors, sustains our animal welfare initiatives, and enriches the educational experiences of countless students.

Long-standing Pacific Circle member Elizabeth Pearson and sister Kate Higgins have brought their children to the Aquarium for many years. They wanted to commemorate and support the importance of an organization that holds special memories for their family.

“It’s always been a place where we could take them, and they love everything about the Aquarium. It’s a great way to learn to effect change in our world and be mindful. Every time they go [to the Aquarium] they know they are a part of it.”

Join us and leave an everlasting legacy of philanthropy. [Explore the transformative impact of the Glass Guild online.](#)

Aquarium Thanks Education Supporters

Thank you to the Aquarium’s education supporters who continued to provide grants and donations in 2023.

- American Honda Motor Co., Inc.
- Appleby Foundation
- Applied Medical
- Attwood-Williams Charitable Foundation
- Behr Paint Company
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- Windsong Trust
- The Winnick Family Foundation
- Tommy Wong
- Whitney Young Children's Foundation



SPRING 2024

Aquarium Accolades

Read about Aquarium honorees from our community.

Festival of Human Abilities

Long Beach Councilmember Mary Zendejas was honored at the 21st annual Festival of Human Abilities with the Glenn McIntyre Award. She represents the First District, which includes downtown where the Aquarium is located.

Born in Mexico, Zendejas was diagnosed with polio at 8-months old. She later came to the United States with her family in search of better healthcare and a brighter future.

She made history in 2019 when she was elected to office as the first Latina wheelchair user in the nation. For the City of Long Beach, she is the chair of the Arts, Culture & Tourism Committee. She also serves on the Metro Gateway Cities Service Council, and

is a board member of For the Child, Un Mundo De Amigos, and vice president of Ms. Wheelchair America.

She is an inspiration for others and an advocate for people with disabilities.

“It’s all about...really, really embracing the human abilities that we all have.”

—Councilmember MARY ZENDEJAS

African American Festival

Shirley Raines was honored at the 22nd annual African American Festival with the Heritage Award.

She is the founder of Beauty 2 the Streetz, which provides life essentials to individuals who are homeless in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles and beyond. Beauty 2 the Streetz provides hair and makeup services, food, clothing, hygiene, and safety items.

Eight years into providing essentials for the homeless, Raines is active on social media platforms to share each of the special moments to remind people that, “...a lack of a home does not mean a lack of humanity.”

“...change the narrative of what homelessness is [with] growth and knowledge...”

—SHIRLEY RAINES