



Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park

2025 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT A YEAR IN REVIEW





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A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Members and Community Stakeholders:

As the Board Chair for Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park, it gives me great honor to present our 2025 Annual Impact Report. Our park is thriving, and this year marked many notable milestones that we should all be very proud of. Thank you for your continued support!

2025 resulted in attendance at the park of 458,372, and we have stabilized the park's financial performance. We were recognized by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Visit California for our innovative programming, education, and offerings.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, our mission is to educate and inspire families, especially children, to appreciate horticulture and the importance of trees in our lives by providing fun and memories in a beautiful garden setting. Our Board of Directors has made a renewed commitment to our mission and purpose, and we have made important strides in securing a long-term business plan that will sustain the park for many years to come. Our strategy includes making new investments in our education programming, developing a capital campaign and gifting program, and furthering our partnerships with schools and community organizations.

In 2025, we hosted 3,959 students through our Natural Science Days program. We also welcomed over 10,000 guests through Gilroy Community Programs and joined our community's effort to revitalize the Gilroy Garlic Festival.

Also, through the generosity of our Members as well as individuals, grants, and corporate gifting, we experienced the highest level of giving in our 25-year history. We are grateful—and hope to foster and strengthen these relationships in 2026.

We look forward to welcoming you back to the park, where you and your family and friends will all experience the magic of trees, horticulture, and learning in a fun and inspiring park.

Dan Harney

Dan Harney

Board Chair



Dan Harney, Board Chair

Section I

ROOTED IN PURPOSE

As stewards of Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park, the Board of Directors is proud to champion an organization that is rooted in something much deeper than entertainment. More than just a theme park, Gilroy Gardens is a nonprofit educational institution, a “living classroom,” a beloved local treasure—and an important economic driver for the region.

Originally created and built by Michael Bonfante, the park is home to over 10,000 trees, including the iconic Circus Trees. Every pathway, garden, and water feature is intentionally designed to spark curiosity and cultivate a lifelong connection to the natural world.

Our mission is to educate and inspire families, especially children, to appreciate horticulture and the importance of trees in our lives by providing fun and memories in a beautiful garden setting.

Now more than ever, this mission requires partnership and support. Together, we can continue to grow Gilroy Gardens as a place where nature, learning, and play take root—and flourish for generations to come.

“Based on horticulture and trees in particular, I wanted to share the pleasure and experience of trees with young kids.”

– Michael Bonfante
Founder, Gilroy Gardens
Family Theme Park





Over the past 25 years,
Gilroy Gardens has welcomed
more than
9.6 million visitors!

Section II

EDUCATION IN THE PARK

At the heart of Gilroy Gardens is a deep commitment to hands-on, nature-based education. We strive to provide memorable experiences that spark curiosity and connect children and families to the natural world.

Natural Science Days, our premier educational field trip program, held each year on select Thursdays and Fridays in May, continues to grow each year.

In 2025, we welcomed 3,959 students, bringing total historical participation to **more than 29,500 students**. Participation was **up about 11% from 2024**.



Our 2026 Natural Science Days program will be strengthened by a grant spearheaded by Santa Clara County Supervisor **Sylvia Arenas**, a **Walmart Store 2002 Spark Good** local grant, and contributions from individual donors in 2025.



In 2025 we also expanded the educational opportunities at Gilroy Gardens with the introduction of two new experiences:

- **The Explorer Educational Field Trip Program** expands our structured group learning options for schools, camps, and organizations throughout the entire year. This self-guided program has students explore nature through immersive learning on a variety of topics, including the life cycle of butterflies and how plants sustain us with the food we eat every day. We welcomed 1,651 students and teachers during our inaugural program year.
- **Cherry Jubilee** was an all-new event held in June and July 2025 to celebrate the local cherry harvest. Two purpose-built interactive exhibits provided fun and interactive STEAM-based activities, connecting children to agriculture through hands-on exploration and play.

Cherry Jubilee won the distinguished IAPPA Brass Ring Award for Best New Food & Beverage Event.



Other educational experiences at Gilroy Gardens include:

- **The Green Barn:** Serving as the central hub of learning for thousands of our visitors, The Green Barn offers dynamic, hands-on experiences, including a Nature Exchange with high-powered microscopes, an Art Studio for nature-themed creative activities, and a cozy Reading Nook.
- **Engaging Exhibits:** Educational experiences can be found throughout the park, including the Monarch Butterfly exhibit, Hydroponic exhibit, Watershed station, and the Musical Market Show.
- **Talks, Tours and Demonstrations:** Our team of volunteer Docents host educational talks and activities throughout the year, including at our popular Camp Night events. The Welcome Center also provides pamphlets for self-guided tours including Agriculture, Gardens, History & Culture, and Water & Environment.

Education at Gilroy Gardens is ever-evolving. With each new program and partnership, we reaffirm our commitment to nurturing curiosity, fostering environmental stewardship, and inspiring the next generation to learn, explore, and grow.



Section III

EMPOWERING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Gilroy Gardens is proud to be a vital training ground for the next generation of community and business leaders. We are consistently one of the area's key employers, providing first jobs that build confidence, teamwork, and responsibility.

- **Job Creation:** We provided 600 youth jobs in 2025, bringing our cumulative youth employment to **more than 15,000 jobs since opening**.
- **Lasting Impact:** Our alumni have gone on to build successful careers across diverse fields. Former team members now serve as technology executives, middle school English teachers, registered nurses, and law enforcement officers—and often cite their time at the park as foundational to their work ethic and leadership skills.
- **Local Initiative:** Gilroy Gardens is a proud participant in the City of Gilroy's Rock the Mock initiative, helping to inspire civic engagement among local youth.



600
youth jobs
in 2025





Section IV

GROWING TOGETHER: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As a City of Gilroy–owned property guided by a dedicated local volunteer Board of Directors, Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park is deeply rooted in the community it serves.

While we take great pride in welcoming guests from across the region, we prioritize meaningful engagement with Gilroy residents so they feel a strong sense of ownership, pride, and connection to the park.

- **Membership:** We proudly maintain a robust base of **62,331 active members** of Gilroy Gardens, many of whom are Gilroy residents or live in neighboring cities.
- **Community Access:** We **welcomed over 6,600 guests** on the 12th annual City of Gilroy Residents Day in March 2025. Our *We Love Our Locals* initiatives provided an additional 3,593 Gilroy residents with discounted or complimentary admission throughout 2025.
- **Reviving a Gilroy Tradition:** In 2025, the Gilroy Gardens team was honored to collaborate with the **Gilroy Garlic Festival Association** to bring back the beloved Gilroy Garlic Festival after a multi-year hiatus.

“The partnership with Gilroy Gardens played a pivotal role in the return of the Gilroy Garlic Festival, providing a trusted and family-centered venue that allowed us to reintroduce this beloved tradition to the community. Their collaboration helped ensure the festival’s legacy continues to thrive.”

– Alex Misa, 2026 President of
Gilroy Garlic Festival Association

- **Inspiring Literacy:** Since 2012, the Gilroy Reads Program (in partnership with the Santa Clara County Public Library) has rewarded young readers with complimentary park admission. To date, over 9,200 community members have earned tickets through this initiative, including **751 guests in 2025** alone.

As part of our *Donate & Save* program in 2025, visitors **donated more than 330 books** to enhance The Green Barn Reading Nook and other community literacy programs.

In December, we hosted author Ken Christopher, who held readings of his book *Elephant Garlic* and distributed hundreds of books to children in the audience, thanks to a partnership with the Christopher Ranch Foundation.

“Gilroy Reads helps foster a culture of literacy in the Gilroy community by turning reading into a shared, rewarding experience—encouraging families to visit the Gilroy Library regularly, engage with books together, and build lasting reading habits. Reading proficiency is a primary predictor of long-term academic and life success, and programs like this are essential because they make literacy engaging and parent-modeled. Gilroy Reads ensures literacy is both valued and celebrated—because it creates opportunity, connection, and a stronger community.”

– Kelly B. Young, Supervising Librarian
Santa Clara County Library District

• **Civic Partnerships:** Gilroy Gardens actively opens our grounds for Parks and Recreation summer programs and for police and fire trainings. We also partner with the **Gilroy Chamber of Commerce** for its Annual Business Expo and Car Show. In addition, the Gilroy Gardens team serves our community in a variety of local organizations, boards and programs.

• **Nonprofit Partnerships:** We are proud to have partnered with numerous nonprofit organizations throughout 2025. We **donated 4,600 complimentary tickets** to local nonprofits. We also re-introduced Scarecrow BOO-levard and Christmas Tree Lane programs to encourage creativity and provide exposure and additional visits for thousands throughout our fall and winter programming.

2025 also saw the launch of our *Donate & Save* program, which rewarded guests who donated to various causes with discounted admission to the park.



Section V

AN ENGINE OF ECONOMIC VITALITY

Gilroy Gardens is a powerful economic driver for the region, generating a “ripple effect” of direct, indirect, and induced spending that fuels local employment and supports small businesses.

- **Regional Tourism:** As a premier destination, the park draws 93% of its visitors from outside of Gilroy, driving consistent tourism spending to local hotels, restaurants, and gas stations. The park hosted **458,372** total visitors in 2025 and more than **9.6 million** since 2001.
- **Economic Impact:** The park contributed an estimated **\$2.56 million** in economic impact in 2025, bringing our cumulative lifetime economic impact to **\$52.56 million**. The Park also provided over \$200,000 directly to the City of Gilroy to support municipal services in 2025.



Estimated
458,372
total visitors
in 2025



What Gilroy Gardens Means for Tourism

“*Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park remains one of the most important economic drivers in Gilroy because its impact reaches far beyond the park itself. For many visitors, Gilroy Gardens is the primary reason they choose to come to Gilroy, and once here, those visitors often stay overnight, dine locally, shop, and support a wide range of businesses throughout the city.*”

- Eric Gebhardt, Hampton Inn & Suites Gilroy

What Gilroy Gardens Means to the City of Gilroy

“*Gilroy Gardens represents the heart of our community—offering families a place to connect, learn, and have fun, while also supporting our local economy and providing impactful employment opportunities for Gilroy’s youth.*”

- Kelly Ramirez, Gilroy City Council

“*Gilroy Gardens is an iconic brand that showcases so much of what Gilroy is as a community.*”

- Tom Cline, Gilroy City Council



Estimated
\$2.56 million
economic impact
in 2025



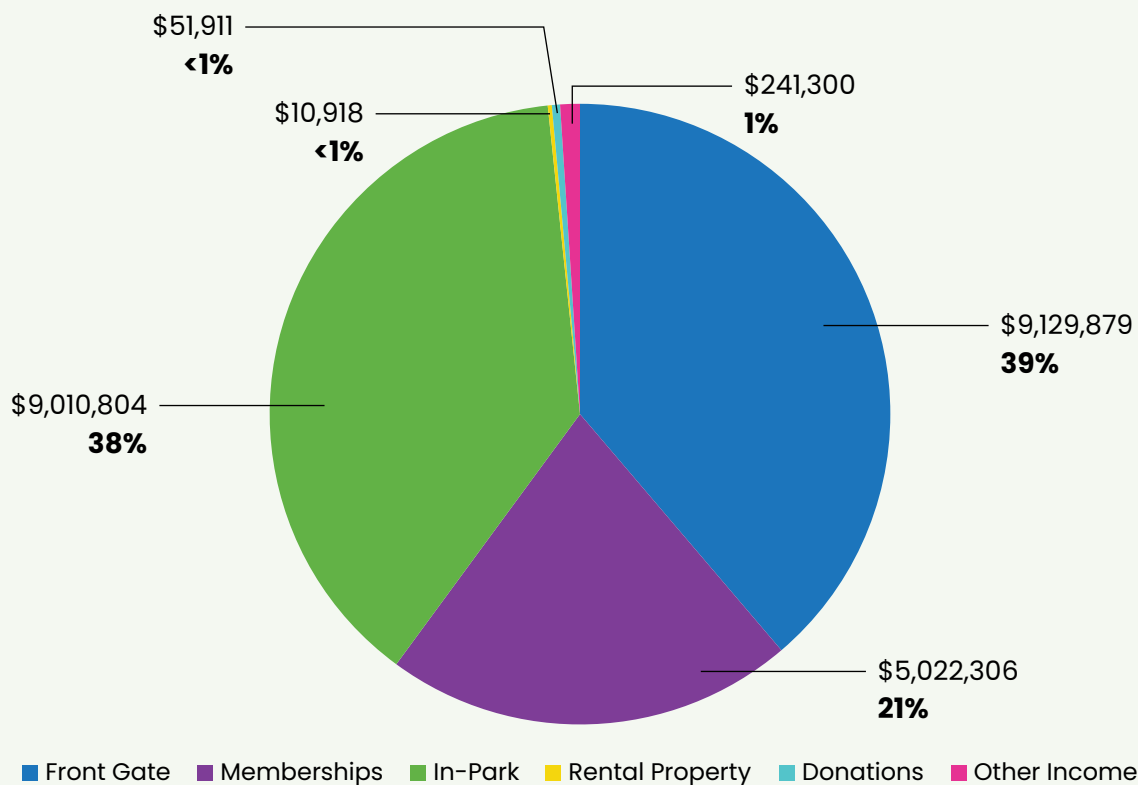
Section VI

2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

As a nonprofit organization committed to transparency and long-term sustainability, we believe it is important to clearly share how Gilroy Gardens is funded and how those resources are stewarded.

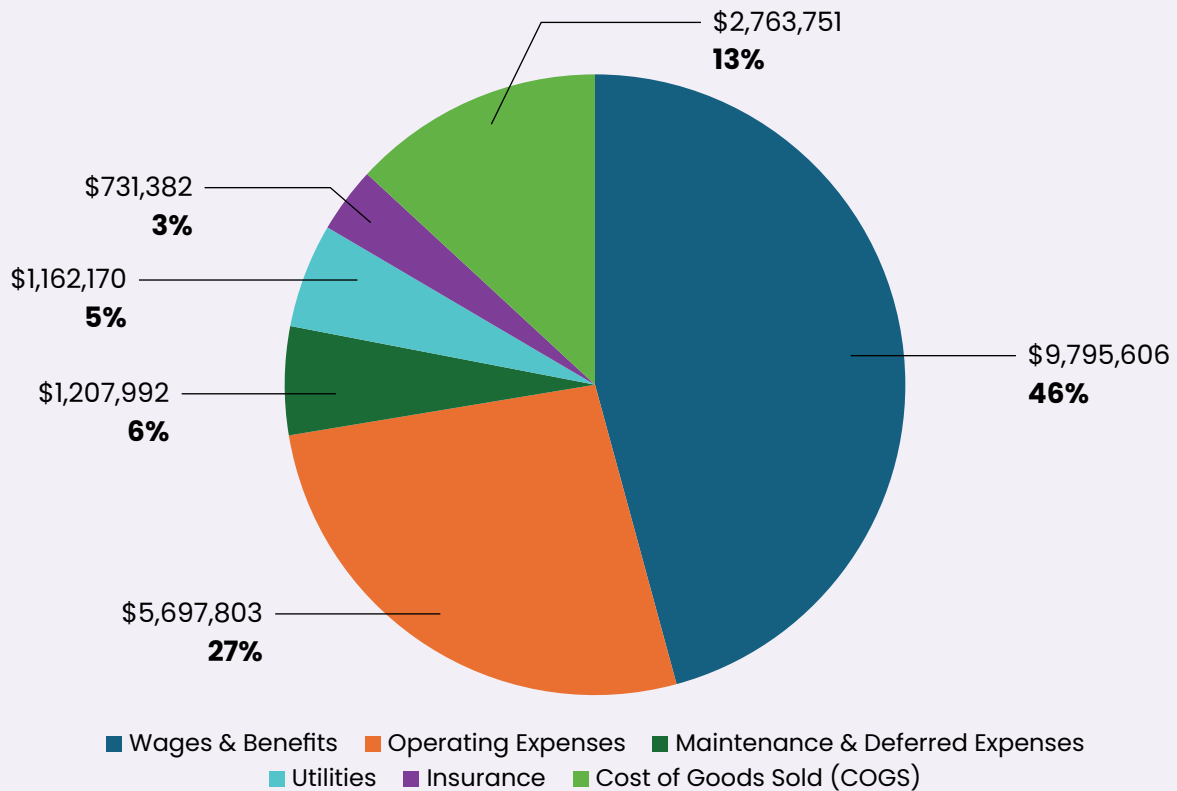
The following overview provides a snapshot of our annual financial picture, highlighting both the sources of income that support our mission and the essential expenses required to operate and grow the park.

ANNUAL INCOME	
Front Gate	\$9,129,879
Membership	\$5,022,306
In-Park	\$9,010,804
Rental Property	\$10,918
Donations	\$51,911
Other Income	\$241,300
Total	\$23,467,117





ANNUAL EXPENSES	
Wages & Benefits	\$9,795,606
Operating Expenses	\$5,697,803
Maintenance & Deferred Expenses	\$1,207,992
Utilities	\$1,162,170
Insurance	\$731,382
Cost of Gold Sold (COGS)	\$2,763,751
Total	\$21,358,704



Section VII

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Philanthropy Goals to Keep the Magic Growing

To ensure Gilroy Gardens remains a thriving, sustainable asset for future generations, our financial model must evolve.

- **Our Current Model:** While we have operated successfully for 25 years, our current financial model relies almost entirely on earned operational revenue generated at the gate (through admissions and in-park spending).
- **The Need for Philanthropy:** Peer institutions, such as Happy Hollow and the Santa Barbara Zoo, generate significant annual support through donations and grants to fund operations and growth. To fully realize our potential, we are working to grow our philanthropic support to \$1–2 million annually.
- **Funding the Future:** Increased investment will allow us to move away from a gate-dependent model and direct vital funds toward critical infrastructure enhancements, expanded access for underserved schools, and the growth of educational programs and exhibits.

By growing our base of donor, sponsor, and grant support, Gilroy Gardens can align more closely with peer organizations and unlock the resources needed to expand our mission, enhance the guest experience, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Platinum
Transparency
2025

Candid.

In 2025, Gilroy Gardens received the Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency.

This recognition highlights our ongoing commitment to sharing clear, comprehensive information about our work, our finances, and the impact we create. For our donors and community partners, it serves as a trusted signal that we operate with accountability and purpose.



Section VIII

OUR SUPPORTERS

We are deeply grateful for the generosity and partnership of all those who supported Gilroy Gardens in 2025.

Our more than 62,000 Members are at the heart of Gilroy Gardens. Membership provides a vital and reliable source of funding that helps sustain daily operations, care for our gardens, and create meaningful moments for every guest who walks through our gates.

In addition, the following individuals, organizations, and community partners, through both financial contributions and in-kind donations, have played a vital role in advancing our mission and enriching the experiences we provide for families and children.

IN-KIND DONORS

- Bart Canada
- Christopher Ranch
- Headstart Nursery

SPONSORS

— Official Beverage Sponsor —



— Official Print Sponsor —



FINANCIAL DONORS

- American Online Giving Foundation, Unspecified Donors
- Christina Andres
- AWS via Change X Donation Funds
- Margaret-Ann Bowe
- Michael Cornacchia
- Tracey Fry DeBell
- Jon F. Dick II
- Yunge Du
- Dan Harney
- Tiffany Huynh
- Sandy Le
- Roger D. Little
- Benjamin Joyce
- John and Delores Kent
- Genevieve Laroche
- Ernest and Carol Marques
- Cassandra Renes
- James and Constance Rogers
- Albert Sendejas
- Mirra Shernock
- Andrea Smith
- Jonathan Stahlman
- UK Online Giving Foundation, Unspecified Donors
- Patrick and Lindy Ward
- Julee Wood
- DLTW K Wong
- Trevor Wilson
- Chenhui Yin

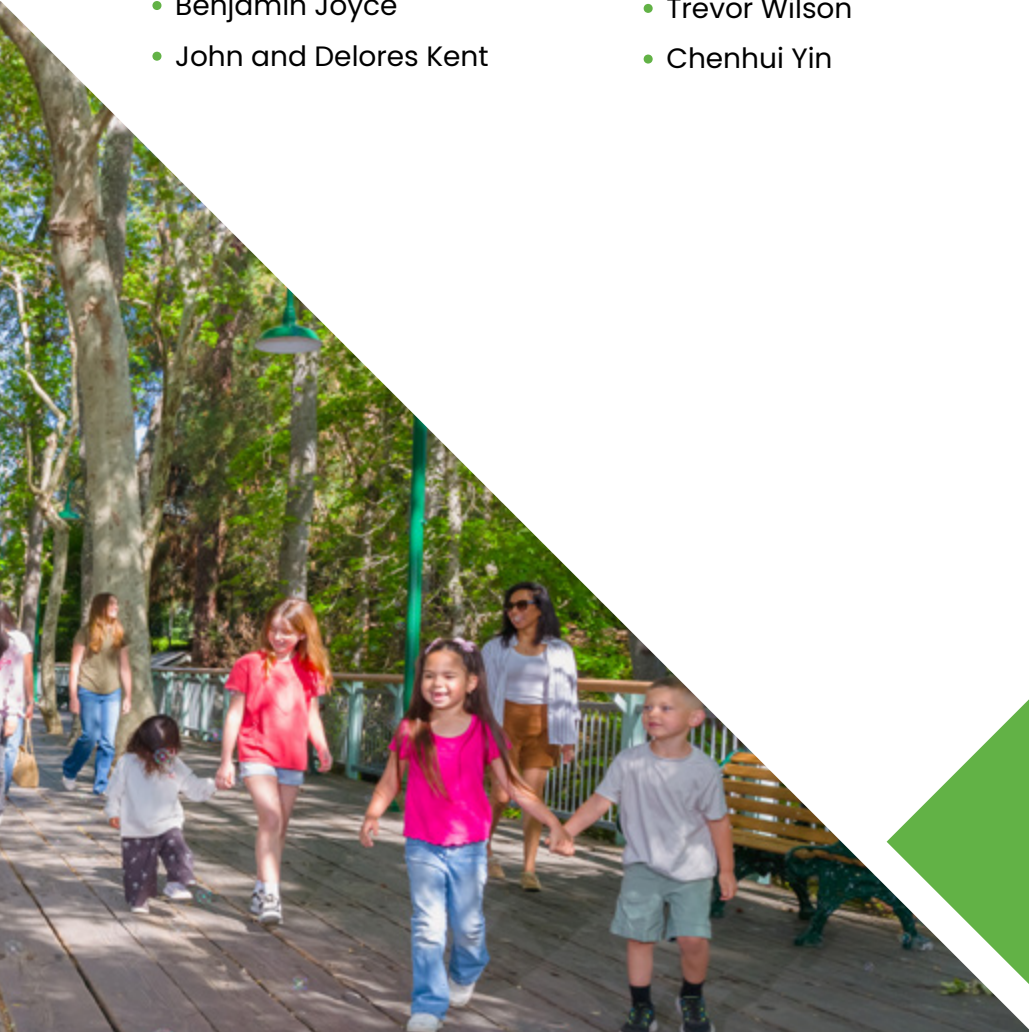
- County of Santa Clara County



- San Jose Barracuda Chuck-A-Puck Program



- Walmart Store 2002 Spark Good Local Grant



Section IX

THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteers at Gilroy Gardens play a vital role in bringing our “living classroom” to life by enhancing educational experiences, supporting daily operations, and helping create a welcoming, inspiring environment for every guest.

We are proud to offer two primary pathways for volunteers: Student Volunteers and Docents. We also welcome the support of volunteers from other local community organizations.

- **Student Volunteers:** Our Student Volunteer Program provides young people with valuable hands-on experience and fosters responsibility, teamwork, and a deeper connection to nature and community.

In 2025, students logged over 320 volunteer hours. Over the years, more than 330 youths have volunteered 5,000+ hours in support of our educational mission.

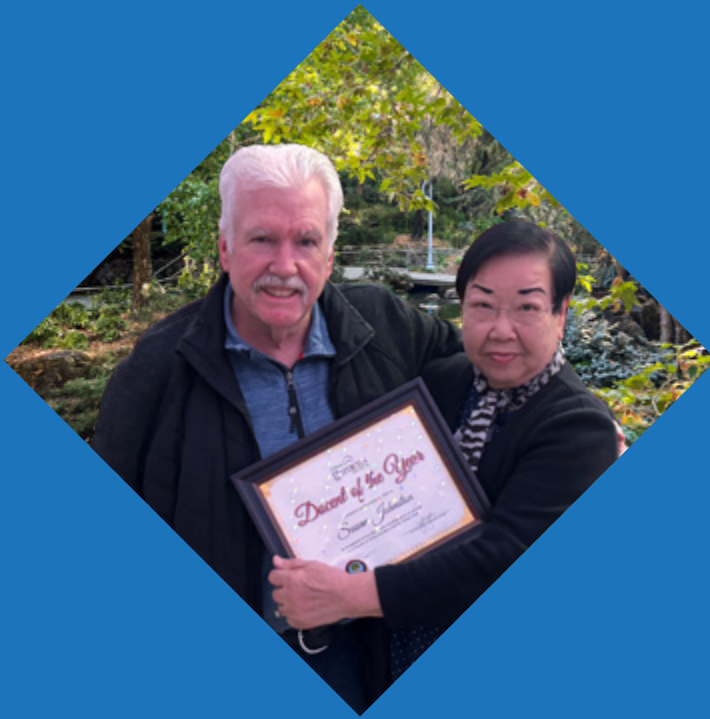


Over 320 student volunteer hours and 12,500 docent volunteer hours in 2025



- **Docent Program:** In 2025, **130 active Docents** volunteered more than 12,500 hours through various programs in support of Gilroy Gardens. 1,600 of those hours were spent incorporating environmental themes into meaningful learning moments for our signature educational program, Natural Science Days.

DOCENT AWARDS RECOGNIZED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN DECEMBER 2025



- » **DOCENT OF THE YEAR:**
Susan Johnston has had a lasting impact at Gilroy Gardens, volunteering for 19 years and contributing more than 106 volunteer hours in 2025 alone!
- » **5TH YEAR VOLUNTEERING:**
Ronald Ayala, Barbara Bohlig, Rose Hernandez
- » **10TH YEAR VOLUNTEERING:**
Laura Spaeth
- » **15TH YEAR VOLUNTEERING:**
Brenda Gillot, Linda Grazul, Kevin O'Keefe, Nicholas Parent, Sean Parent
- » **20TH YEAR VOLUNTEERING:**
Ellen Loring
- » **25TH YEAR VOLUNTEERING:**
Virginia Pizarro, James Rogers

- **Community Organizations:** The Board of Directors also thank the following organizations for their project-based volunteer hours over the course of 2025.
 - » Gilroy Rotary Club
 - » Gilroy Garlic Festival Association

Section X

PARK LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gilroy Gardens is guided by a dedicated volunteer Board of Directors whose leadership, expertise, and passion help shape the vision and future of the organization. As stewards of this unique nonprofit organization, the Board provides strategic direction, champions our mission, and ensures that Gilroy Gardens continues to grow as both a community asset and an inspiring place of learning and play.

In 2025 we warmly welcomed two new Board Members: Kurt Michielssen and Carla Lynch. Their perspectives and experience will be invaluable as we continue to advance our mission and build for the future.



Board of Directors



DAN HARNEY

Board Chair



JANE HOWARD

Secretary



JAY BASKA

Treasurer



MAYOR GREG BOZZO



FRANK JOHNSON



STEVE PEAT



KURT MICHELSEN



CARLA LYNCH

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The success of Gilroy Gardens is made possible each day through the dedication of our senior park management team. They help bring our mission to life while guiding operations, shaping guest experiences, and fostering a culture rooted in education, stewardship, community—and fun!



Welcome June Mallory Aiello, Chief Advancement Officer

Gilroy Gardens is pleased to welcome June Mallory Aiello, who serves as the senior executive responsible for building, leading, and expanding all philanthropic, fundraising, community engagement, and external relations strategies at Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park.

June brings over 25 years of experience in grant management, resource development, volunteer recruitment, donor cultivation, and strategic planning and management for a number of different nonprofit agencies and organizations, including Second Harvest Food Bank, School Health Clinics of Santa Clara County, Habitat for Humanity, and Boys & Girls Clubs. She earned her B.A. in Fine Arts from California State University Bakersfield and currently resides in Gilroy.

Executive Team



HOA MINH LE

President & General Manager



JUNE MALLORY AIELLO

Chief Advancement Officer



ALEX VILLALOBOS

VP & Assistant GM



TREVOR WILSON

VP, Strategy & Business Development



TOM MENDEZ

VP of In-Park Revenue



SANDY LE

Director, Marketing & Sales



JIMMY LE

Assistant Director, Event Production

Section XI

GET INVOLVED!

Join us in cultivating a brighter, greener future for Gilroy Gardens and our local community!

Whether you make a donation, become a sponsor, or volunteer your time and energy at the park, we welcome any contribution that helps us preserve this unique community treasure for generations to come.



Become a Member



Make Monetary, Stock, or In-Kind Donations



Become a Corporate Sponsor



Become a Partner in Education



Volunteer as a Student, Docent, or through another Organization



Serve as a Community Director or Join an Advisory Panel or Work Group

For more information on any of these opportunities, contact us at 408-556-0994 or Giving@GilroyGardens.org.

