

TOWER TALK

[Become a Member](#) | [Make a Gift](#) | [Articles](#) | [Events](#)

Contribute to the Inspiring Story of UCR Retirees by Completing the CUCRA Survey!

By Andy Plumley



Every four years, the Council of UC Retiree Associations (CUCRA) conduct a survey of all UC retirees. This survey tells a story of UC Retirees and their institutional knowledge, experience and talent that they contribute to the UC and surrounding community in retirement.

You have received an email asking you to participate in a brief, 10 minute online survey of your activities and contributions since working at UCR. The results from this survey will:

- Enable CUCRA, its member retiree associations, and retiree centers to advocate more effectively on behalf of UC retirees.
- Help the UC Office of the President and our campus administrators better understand the contributions made by retirees to UC and the broader community.
- Assist UCRRA to create and improve upon programs for retirees.
- Provide retirees with comprehensive information about their collective contributions and achievements.

Retirees will have until November 1, 2024 to complete the survey. **To begin the online survey now, follow this link:**

https://ucdavis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6fIXP6eV8tOEREy

To view the previous 2020 CUCRA Survey Report, please visit the CUCRA website at: <https://cucra.ucsd.edu/surveys/>. We had 78 UCR retiree responses in 2020 and we hope to have a greater response from UCR!!

CUCEA Emeriti Survey Coming Soon!

The Council of UC Emeriti Associations (CUCEA) Emeriti Survey will be distributed this fall with a goal of developing an inventory of the teaching, research, creative work and community service of UC emeriti. We kindly ask UCR emeriti to look out for communications in mid October.

Save the Date for 2025 Benefits Open Enrollment

Benefits Open Enrollment begins on Thursday, October 31, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. and ends on Friday, November 22, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

To help retirees and emeriti prepare for open enrollment, UCnet has put together a webpage on frequently asked questions about UC retiree health and welfare benefits. Please visit the UCnet webpage at:

<https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/employee-news/get-ready-for-open-enrollment-with-these-benefits-basics/>

Please look out for more information later this month which will be shared via email and on the retiree and emeriti website. If you know of a UCR retiree or emeriti who would like to receive these communications and are not on our mailing list, please have them email the Retirement Center Director at retirees@ucr.edu.

Table of Contents

Announcements - P. 2-3

- Presidents' Messages
- In Memoriam

Upcoming Events - P. 3-6

- Mystery Book Club, 10/8, 11/12, 12/10
- Main Library and Civil Rights Institute Tour
- Caregiving Support, 10/22
- Eat Well Series, 10/10 - 11/14
- UC Retiree Travel Trip Preview
- Lawnbowling, 11/1
- Retiree and Emeriti Reception, 11/15
- Tech-tips, 11/12, 12/10
- Scott Fedick's Dickson Presentation, 11/19
- Holiday Luncheon, 12/6

Articles - P. 5-8

- UCREA Departmental Liaison Program
- UCRRA Committees
- UCREA Emeriti and Graduate Student Awards
- UCRRA Scholarship
- FIRST Lego League Volunteer Opportunity

Retirees' Association Officers

President

Andy Plumley, andy.plumley@ucr.edu

Vice President

Sheryl Hayes, sherylucr@gmail.com

Treasurer

Mike Donovan, mike.donovan@ucr.edu

Secretary

Kathy Blondel, kathyblondel@yahoo.com

Events & Programs Director

Patricia Smith-Hunt, patricia.smith-hunt@ucr.edu

Communications & Outreach Director

Jorge Sanchez, jorge.sanchez@ucr.edu

Immediate Past President

Mary Johnson, maryjohnson1954@gmail.com

Emeriti Association Officers

Co-Presidents

Darleen DeMason, demason@ucr.edu

Raymond Russell, rrussell@ucr.edu

Vice President

Jose Wudka, jose.wudka@ucr.edu

Treasurer

Bradley Hyman, bhyman@ucr.edu

Secretary

Linda Tomko, linda.tomko@ucr.edu

Retirement Center

Director

Cristina Otegui, retirees@ucr.edu
(951) 827-5008

Office Hours: Tuesdays through Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (currently working remotely)



UCR Retirees' Association

Andy Plumley
UCRRA President

Hello UCR Retirees' Association Members!

I hope had enjoyable summers and were able to beat the heat. I look forward to another year filled with programs and activities. Our first program is our Fall Luncheon which will be on Friday, October 4, 2024. This is a great opportunity to be back on campus, see old friends, meet new people, and engage with a thoughtful presenter.

After a summer hiatus, we recently had our first meeting of the UCRRA Board with our retirement partners the UCR Emeriti Association, and I am happy to report there is much going on. I hope you explore this publication and get involved in anything that interests you ... I think there is something for everyone. And please contact me if you don't find what you're looking for.

We will soon send out information regarding our UCRRA Scholarship, which is for UCR undergraduate students who are related to UCR retirees or staff. We were able to award three students last year and I hope we have another great pool of candidates. So, if you have any relatives who are UCR undergraduate students, have them apply! Other UCRRA business includes attending the system-wide Council of UC Retiree Associations (CUCRA) in October, which will be held in person at UC Santa Cruz. We receive great information of what's going on at UCOP, which includes our retirement benefits. And like we do locally, CUCRA partners with the Council of UC Emeriti Associations. We will share information with the association after these meetings.

In closing, I want to encourage you to attend "A Reception Honoring Retirees and Emeriti", which will be held on Friday, November 15, 2024. We will be honored with a welcome from Chancellor Wilcox as we celebrate the valued impact you all have made to the campus and surrounding community. This event is for YOU, so I hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Andy



UCR Emeriti Association

Darleen DeMason and Raymond Russell
UCREA Co-Presidents



Dear UCR Emeriti Association Members,

Emeriti Association Graduate Student Travel Award

Thanks to past generous gifts, the Emeriti Graduate Student Travel Award expanded from a single award in 2021-2022 to one award per quarter beginning in 2023-2024. Since Winter 2024, UCR's Graduate Division has partnered with the UCREA to fund two Emeriti Graduate Student Travel awards per quarter. In Spring 2024, awards went to two Ph.D. candidates in Anthropology, Juan Carlos Chavez Quispe and Chi Ha. To support future Graduate Student Travel Awards, emeriti and friends are encouraged to make gifts to the current use fund or to the endowment fund that support this award on the [emeriti and retiree webpage](#).

Fall 2024 Events

At the Fall Luncheon on October 4, UCR Professor Emeritus of Physics and Astronomy José Wudka will explore the mysteries of "Dark Matter and Energy." The annual Chancellor's Reception for UCR Retirees and Emeriti will take place on November 15. This will be our last chance to thank Chancellor Kim Wilcox for his leadership and support over the past twelve years. On November 19, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and current Dickson Professor Scott Fedick will share the results of his recent research on "Ancient Maya Agriculture." At the Holiday Luncheon on December 6, UCR Professor of Biology Kimberly Hammond will discuss UCR's Natural Reserve System. Our Mystery Book Club and series of Tech Tips are holding monthly meetings throughout the Fall Quarter.

CUCEA Triennial Survey of Professional and Community Activity of Emeriti

In November and December, all UC emeriti will receive invitations to participate in a triennial survey of their professional and community activities sponsored by the Council of UC Emeriti Associations (CUCEA). Previous CUCEA surveys have shown that teaching, publishing, artistic productions and other professional activity by UC emeriti are equivalent to a virtual "11th campus" for the UC system. When you are contacted for this survey, please be sure to report your own professional and community activities for the years 2022-2024 and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Sincerely,

Darleen and Rusty





In Memoriam

We recognize and honor those who have passed that have been reported this 2024 - 2025 academic year.

Linda Hunt Bunnell, retired in June 2009
 Beverly Cox, retired in April 1991
 Donald Edwards, retired in November 1989
 Le Baron Ferguson, retired in January 2010

Margery Grant, retired in April 1983
 Carl Lentz, retired in March 2005
 Edward Perez, retired in November 1992
 Anna Richwine, retired in October 1988



Please email retirees@ucr.edu if you know of a UCR retiree or emeriti who is not listed here but has passed away this academic year.

Join an Activity!

UCRRA and UCREA members are welcome to join in on the club activities and details are noted below.



Mystery Book Club

Fall Book Activities

Club Leader: Club Members will be taking turns leading these engaging sessions.

When: Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Book Activity: *Extraordinary People* by Peter May

When: Tuesday, November 12, 2024

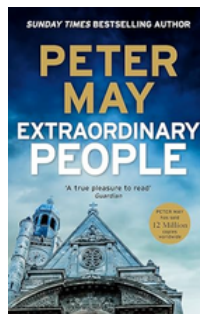
Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Book Activity: *The Long Call* by Ann Cleeves

When: Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Book Activity: *The Black Loch* by Peter May



Details: Interested retirees and emeriti who wish to join the book club may contact the Retirement Center by email with the subject line, "Mystery Book Club" at: retirees@ucr.edu.



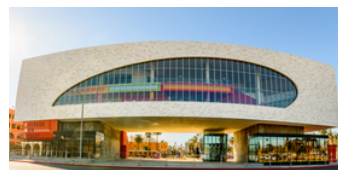
Walks, Talks & Tours

Activity: Riverside Main Library and the Civil Rights Institute

Cost of Entry: Free

When: Friday, October 25, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

Club Leader: Darleen DeMason



Details: Join us for a two part guided tour of the new Riverside Main Library and the Civil Rights Institute located in close proximity of one another in Downtown Riverside. To learn more about the library, please visit the Main Library website at: <https://www.riversideca.gov/library/hours-locations/main-library>. For more information on the Civil Rights Institute, please visit their webpage at: <https://www.inlandcivilrights.org/>.

Event Registration

Space is limited to 20. Please complete your registration by Friday, October 18, 2024 at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_24UuZYK484hJZdA

UC Retiree Travel Program

View all 2023-2024 planned trips on the Council of UC Retiree Associations (CUCRA) website at:

<http://cucra.ucsd.edu/travel/>



UCR Osher Program

UCRRA and UCREA members receive a \$20 discount on the Osher Annual Membership. Details on the Osher webpage at:

<https://palmdesert.ucr.edu/welcome-ucr-osher>

Caregiving Support through ARAG Legal

This webinar will explore how CareScout services can be utilized by retirees and emeriti who are in need of caregiving support. This is a great opportunity to learn about the various resources available to you and your loved ones. Individuals will have the opportunity to ask questions of the ARAG Plan Representative during the webinar.

Tuesday, October 22, 2024 from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_01G86fGeV2ERKEC



Eat Well Series Featuring UCR's Chef Val

Emeriti and Retirees are invited to join the Eat Well Series Featuring Chef Val via Zoom organized in partnership with the UCR Wellness Program, UCR Student Recreation Center and UCR Retirement Center. This five-week virtual series will include Chef Val preparing food and cooking healthy recipes for all to see and learn from while answering questions from attendees.

These Zoom sessions will take place from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Pacific Time

Thursday, October 10, 2024

- Session 1: Easy and Healthy Breakfast and Lunch
- Recipe: Overnight Oats and Chicken/Tofu Fajita Bowl

Thursday, October 17, 2024

- Session 2: Fancy and Delicious Healthy Dinner
- Recipe: Salmon Papillote (2 versions)

Thursday, October 24, 2024

- Session 3: Healthy Snacks and Knife skills
- Recipe: Tuna/Chicken Salad, Knife skills and Fresh Fruit Sorbet

Thursday, October 31, 2024

- Session 4: Soup Du Jour
- Recipe: Jamaican Sweet Potato Pumpkin Soup

Thursday, November 14, 2024

- Session 4: Questions and Answers
- Questions may be submitted on the online interest form



Register using the UCR Wellness online registration form at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0lwWlo0kSY6mkPc

UC Retirees Travel Trip Preview Webinar

UC Retirees Travel offers worldwide group tours for retired UC staff and faculty as well as their friends and family. UC Retirees Travel will preview the group's newest 2025 trips, including adventures to Italy, Japan, Northern Spain/Portugal, America's Cowboy Country (South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming), Africa, Canada, Scandinavia, The Azores, England, France, Niagara Falls, Cuba, and India, as well as a Danube River cruise. See details about upcoming trips at <http://cucra.ucsd.edu/travel/>.

Wednesday, October 23, 2024 from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Register on the UC Retiree Travel Program webpage at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZikdO6oqT4pGNwCbSXgdhKyLhEIATypqXKL#/registration>



Lawn Bowling at Fairmount Park



Back by popular demand, UCR retirees and emeriti are invited to join us in this outdoor activity at the Riverside Fairmount Park to learn how to play lawn bowling and to play a game. Members from the Riverside Lawn Bowling Club will lead our group and all skill levels are welcome to participate!

Friday, November 1, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

In-person at Fairmount Park located at 4020 Bowling Green Dr., Riverside, CA 92501

Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_800Y2xUo2ybjbbU

Retiree and Emeriti Reception

Chancellor Kim Wilcox will discuss the state of the campus while we honor retirees and emeriti and their years of service.

Friday, November 15, 2024 from 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.
In-person at the UCR Alumni & Visitors Center

Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9p2BPwGjDag3lWu



**First 100 to register
will receive a UCR
branded gift.**



Tech-tips HEART Program

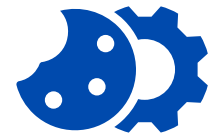
UCR Information Technology Solutions (ITS) will share their expertise with retirees and emeriti on various technology topics. Each session takes place on the second Tuesday of the selected months within the quarter from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. and will have a themed topic but is formatted as an open forum for participants to ask questions.

November 12, 2024 Understanding Google Drive

December 10, 2024 What are Internet Cookies and How to Handle Them

Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cCvorKfGZw4gpcq



The Edward A. Dickson Emeritus/a Professorship Lecture Series



"Ancient Maya Agriculture: The Intersection of Archaeology, Soil Science, Ethnobotany and Traditional Ecological Knowledge "

Dr. Scott L. Fedick, UC Riverside Emeritus Professor of Anthropology

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. with Reception to follow

Presentation delivered in-person at University Extension Building Room 1101 and Livestreamed via Zoom

Description

The ancient Maya of southeastern Mexico and Central America were one of the most accomplished civilizations of the New World, well known for their architecture, art, astronomy, and writing system. One enduring mystery of the ancient Maya is how they managed to feed very large populations in a tropical

environment with land resources that have long been characterized (by an outsider perspective) as hostile and challenging for agriculture. For decades, it has been suggested that Classic Maya civilization (ca. 250-900 CE) "collapsed" due to environmental degradation resulting from unsustainable agricultural practices, or agricultural collapse due to catastrophic droughts, or some combination of those contributing factors. Scott Fedick's research during his 25 years at UCR, and continuing since his retirement in 2014, has sought to dispel inaccurate and biased perceptions about the environment of the Maya Lowlands, and to uncover the many ways in which the Maya sustainably managed the forest and agricultural production for thousands of years. Fedick's most recent research, funded by the Dickson Emeritus Professorship, has taken him back to Belize, where he conducted his dissertation work in the 1980s. Field research undertaken in 2024 was a collaborative effort involving modern Maya forest farmers, a soils crew from Mexico, and long-term archaeological collaborator Dr. Anabel Ford of UCSB. The team made use of the latest LiDAR remote sensing imagery that has revealed the "bare-earth" terrain and over 2,000 structures within a 20 square kilometer area around the ancient Maya center of El Pilar, on the Belize-Guatemala border. The goal of the research was to model, at a very fine geographic scale, how the ancient Maya organized their pattern of settlement and matched the soil preferences of 31 species of crops now known to have been used by the ancient Maya to the diverse soil resources found in the area. The old notion of ancient Maya agriculture assumed it to be dependent on slash-and-burn cultivation of maize, beans and squash in a uniform and hostile environment. There is a growing appreciation and understanding of Maya ecological knowledge, both ancient and modern, that provided a diverse assortment of indigenous food crops tailored to a "managed mosaic" of land resources and cultivation technologies that successfully sustained large populations.

Register

Priority registration is given to UCRRA and UCREA members who must register by October 18, 2024. Registration will open to the public on October 19, 2024. Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage to receive in-person or Zoom instructions at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7WogHTXjs4odj02

Holiday Luncheon "UC Natural Reserve System"

Dr. Kimberly Hammond
UCR Professor of Biology and Director of the Riverside Natural Reserve System
Friday, December 6, 2024 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

In-person at the UCR Alumni & Visitors Center

Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b7uy7NUwt1jKmpw

Floral Centerpiece
Luncheon Raffle!
Proceeds go to the UCRRA
Scholarship.

Assorted wines will
be provided



UCR Emeriti Association Launches Departmental Liaison Program

By Raymond Russell



In recent years, Emeriti Associations at several UC campuses have designated one retired faculty member in each department to function as a liaison between that department and the Emeriti Association. This year, UCR's Emeriti Association is starting a departmental liaison program for the UCR campus. As of September 2024, liaisons with the Emeriti Association have been appointed in seventeen academic departments and two professional schools (Education and Engineering).

The newly appointed liaisons are intended to improve communication between retired and active faculty in multiple ways. For active faculty who are in the process of retiring, emeriti and UCR's Retirement Center can provide access to information and support. For the many emeriti who remain professionally active after retirement, continued interaction with working faculty can be of benefit to both.

Emeriti who act as liaisons can serve their departments by (i) informing faculty members close to retirement about the resources available for successfully completing the process and helping them navigate and access the facilitating support mechanisms; (ii) informing faculty of the activities and benefits of the Emeriti Association; and (iii) facilitating research collaboration between active and retired faculty.

Names and departmental or school affiliations of emeriti who have agreed to serve as liaisons will be posted on the Emeriti Association website. After the liaisons have been functioning for a few months, program coordinator and Emeriti Vice President Jose Wudka will organize an informal meeting at which interested liaisons can share their experiences and learn the best answers to commonly asked questions. If your department does not yet have a liaison and you might be interested in serving as one, contact Jose Wudka at jose.wudka@ucr.edu.

By Andy Plumley UCR Retirees' Association Committees

Later this month, the UCRRA will be sending out a call for UCRRA members to volunteer for one of our committees. We need volunteers and hope you'll consider joining one of our committees. Time commitment is minimal and most work is done via zoom.



Our standing committees are:

- **Nominating Committee.** This committee prepares a slate of recommendations for Executive Board Officers. Work begins in March.
- **Membership and Outreach Committee.** Led by our Communications & Outreach Director, this committee helps with outreaching to future members and increase UCRRA visibility of to the campus and community.
- **Events and Programs Committee.** Led by our Events & Programs Director, this committee assists with our quarterly luncheons and other activities.
- **Scholarship Committee.** Led by our Vice President, this committee is responsible for selecting one or more recipients for our UCR Undergraduate Scholarship.

Interested? Go to the UCRRA webpage to sign up at: https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2aYI5D5RztNPGey.

R'Card Benefit

UCRRA and UCREA members interested in receiving a new R'Card may complete the R'Card Benefit Interest Form in the retirement center webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3F8XtK5dEs9x45U



Benefits include:

- 10% discount to the Bookstore
- Validate your status to access the library and purchase an "All Sports Pass"



UCREA's Distinguished Emerita-Emeritus Award

2024-2025 Call for Nominations

By Dallas Rabenstein

The Executive Board of the UCR Emeriti Association is pleased to announce the call for nominations for its 2024-2025 Distinguished Emerita-Emeritus Award. This award will be bestowed upon one or more retired faculty who have set a high standard of achievement in research, teaching or service during her/his years since retirement.

Nomination Process

Nominations, including self nominations, along with two letters of support, should be sent to the Director of the UCR Retirement Center at cristina.otegui@ucr.edu by November 1 for consideration by the UCREA Executive Board.

Selection Process

The Distinguished Emerita-Emeritus Award Committee will review the nominations and make a recommendation to the full UCREA Executive Board for a final vote at its December or January meeting.

Recipient/s of the Award

The Award Recipient/s will be announced at the joint UCREA and UCRRA February Luncheon and will be awarded a plaque. Distinguished Emerita-Emeritus Award Recipient/s will be invited to speak at one of the joint UCREA-UCRRA Luncheons or as part of the UCR Osher Program. An announcement of the Distinguished Emerita-Emeritus Award recipient/s will appear in Tower Talk, with a photo and write up summarizing the recipient's achievements.

UCRRA's Undergraduate Student Scholarship

2024-2025 Call for Student Applications



The UCR Retirees' Association (UCRRA) is excited to invite UCR students to apply for their UCRRA Undergraduate Student Scholarship in the amount of up to \$5,000. Thanks to the countless contributions from retired staff of UCR, the UCRRA and its members feel honored to offer this scholarship for undergraduate students to support their education goals and success at UCR. Below you will find the scholarship criteria and deadline to apply. We ask that you kindly share this scholarship opportunity with interested students.

Scholarship Criteria

1. Preference will be given to the children and grandchildren and/or close relative of UCR non-Senate staff members and retirees.
2. The recipient(s) is a current undergraduate student, who has a cumulative 3.0 GPA or higher. First year students or transfer students without a UCR GPA should have a cumulative high school or transfer GPA of 3.3 or higher.
3. As part of the application process, the UCRRA Scholarship Selection committee is interested in understanding any financial need. Applicants agree to have the UCR Financial Aid Office release their financial aid information to the UCRRA Scholarship Selection Committee.
4. At the discretion of the UCRRA, the Financial Aid Office will determine the recipient(s) based on the above criteria and in coordination with the Office of Human Resources.

Deadline

Eligible UCR students may submit their online application using the link below by Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

Application

Interested UCR students, please go to the online application at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cMHFVAInl8F1846

This application includes a 500 word essay explaining their financial need and how this award will help them realize their educational goals.

Emeriti Graduate Student Travel Award Updates

By Darleen DeMason

Last spring we had our third competition for the 2023-24 Academic year for travel funding. Ten students submitted requests and the committee, consisting of Dallas Rabenstein, Linda Tomko, Byron Adams and me, reviewed the proposals. Juan Quispe from the Department of Anthropology was our top candidate. He is studying the bioarcheology of the pre-Columbian Tiwanaku people who lived between AD 500-1100. He will set up a biological database and determine migration patterns of this group in the Bolivian Andes. This past summer he visited museums in Tiahuanaco, La Paz, Oruro and Puqui to take data on artifacts, bones, teeth and artificial post cranial modifications. And, in fact, he is studying his own ancestors. He has received \$2,000 from us to help his pay for his research trip.

Emeriti Graduate Student Travel Award Updates Continued

In addition, we found another very worthy Anthropology student; Chi Ha. She is currently in Viet Nam studying how the traditional textiles of the Hmong minority have interested modern eco-fashion designers in Viet Nam and the interactions between the two groups. Chi Ha is interacting with individuals in both groups in three sites in North Vietnam and in Hanoi. Because the Graduate Division provided additional funding for a second student in the Winter competition, we asked if money might be available for a second student in this round. The Graduate Division has graciously agreed to provide \$2,000 for this student as well.

Juan Quispe will be present at the Fall Luncheon on October 4, 2024 to receive his certificate and Chi Ha has supplied a video tape to be presented since she is still in Viet Nam. We are anxious to become personally acquainted with these outstanding students.

Volunteer to Support the FIRST LEGO League Tournaments

By Mitch Boretz

Continuing expansion of FIRST LEGO League (FLL) in the Inland Empire has brought a milestone in 2024: two tournaments on the same day. This, in turn, brings a challenge: recruiting enough volunteers to make these events fun and memorable for the children who compete.

In FLL Challenge, teams of children ages 9-12 build robots from Lego bricks and program them to carry out a series of missions. They also prepare a presentation on their engineering design choices, and they study and propose a solution to a need related to the year's theme, which this year is undersea exploration.

The first two tournaments of the season will be on Saturday, November 2, 2024 in Riverside and Perris. Each event will run from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and volunteers should plan to stay the entire time. No knowledge of robotics or undersea exploration is necessary.

Most volunteers will work as referees, scoring the robot performance, or as judges, reviewing the teams' presentations and their demonstration of FLL Core Values: discovery, innovation, inclusion, impact, teamwork, and fun. Other volunteer roles include timekeeping, scorekeeping, supervising the practice tables, and keeping teams on schedule. All volunteers are trained online beforehand and briefed on the morning of the event, and volunteers work in teams so first-timers are never on their own.

For the first time since the pandemic, UCR will not be the site of a first-round Qualifying Tournament. The QTs on November 2 will be at California Baptist University and the Val Verde Unified School District headquarters. UCR will be the site for the larger Regional Tournament on December 14. Volunteers will be needed for that as well.

FLL has strong youth protection policies, so volunteers must register and be vetted in advance. To begin the process, go to firstinspires.org, create an account, accept the privacy terms, and authorize a background check (at no cost to you). Approval typically takes a couple of days, and then the volunteer can use the "My Dashboard" feature to sign up for events and roles.

UCR has been a supporter of FLL for many years, and California Baptist University has become an enthusiastic partner in the past few years. Val Verde is a relative newcomer, hosting only its second event. Your service can make these events a positive and memorable experience for up-and-coming scientists and engineers in the Inland Empire, and their families. It's a lot of fun, and a day well spent.

For information or questions, please contact Mitch Boretz, UCR retiree and FLL head referee for Southern California, at (909) 200-8583 or mitchboretz@gmail.com.



Explore Resources on the Retiree and Emeriti Website



The UCRRA and UCREA website has great information and resources for life in retirement. Be sure to check out retirees.ucr.edu and explore the resources webpage which includes recordings from past events at: <https://emeriti-retirees.ucr.edu/ucrcara-welcome/program-resources>.