

Hellman Park Trail and Peppergrass Trail

— in Whittier

Walking down the hill.



Hello again!

To start this year, let's visit Hellman Park in Whittier. I want to give you an opportunity to hike, jog, or bike a trail, and Hellman Park has all those options available. Hellman Park is in Whittier/Puente Hills.

The 200-acre Hellman Park offers trails into some of the most beautiful habitats in the area. Hike past the double gate with the sign pointing to the trail and around a reservoir. Then go up either the first trail encountered just as you turn right, or up the larger one marked with another small sign. This very aerobic hike travels up the mountainside by switchbacks and then to the ridgeline overlooking Sycamore Canyon, a beautiful view.

Along the way, you will see a large collection of California brittlebush, a sunflower family member with large yellow flowers in the spring. On a good day, Catalina Island is observable. Keep going, and you reach the ridge where you now look down into Sycamore Canyon.

You can return the same way or take the other trail by the water tower down as both reach the same main gate. We basically came down the way we started, except for taking a few smaller trails, not just the main road. Special note: We did see gopher snakes and rattlesnakes on the trail, so stay on the trail and be very careful where you are walking.

The Trail: The Hellman Park trailhead can be found one block north of Beverly Boulevard on Greenleaf Avenue, just a few blocks north of Uptown Whittier. There is a small parking lot next to the water tank, and you can't miss the trailhead map that will be your guide as you hike through the many trails. Starting at Hellman Park, you have options to hike Hellman Park Trail, Peppergrass Trail and Mariposa Trail to Rattlesnake Ridge Trail at the top of the hill.

The trails intersect each other for a 2.9-mile loop. The trail is a little steep but very manageable for most; however, the trail is very wide and you can travel the road by just walking. Lots of people mountain bike up the trail, and some fitness people actually jog this trail.

My wife and two boys were really excited to enjoy another 'Be Alive' trail. The first time it seemed harder than it really is I think because it was our first time, and we were not sure of what to expect. The second time was a lot easier.

If you want to make the trail a bit more exciting, try and go up the smaller side trails. By the way, the snakes we encountered were all on the smaller trails. However, after going up the trails three times, I noticed that most people were aware of the snakes and were not bothered.

Many people were walking their dogs, and some dogs were actually off the leash. I guess it not that big of a deal for the locals in the area.

We were very lucky to go out on such a clear day; you could see all the way to the Hollywood sign.

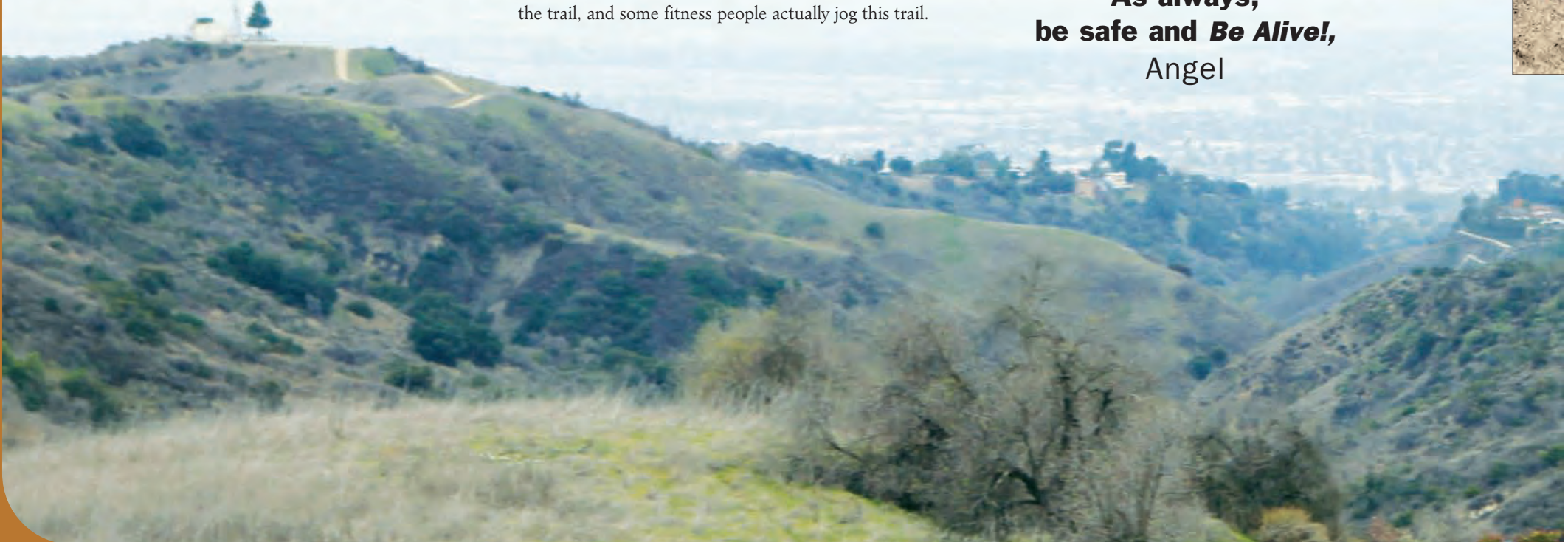
When you finally arrive at the water tank, you have gorgeous 360-degree views. We could see as far as San Pedro hill, and Catalina Island looked very close. We also were very surprised to see a small snake in the path. (Two days later, we met the "mommy snake" -- she was about the length of my arm and scary! My best advice is to stay on the trail and you will be fine. We also took our American bulldog Dakota, and she was breathing heavy the first time, too. The second time she had no problem and really enjoyed looking at all the other dogs.

My wife and boys loved the trail. We might go again in a week. You will like this trail very much, as there is lots to see and many friendly people to keep you coming back again.

The trail is just north of uptown Whittier. It is so close that we have already gone up multiple times. What I like the most is that you can start either way going up and still reach both water towers, and then cross from one mountain ridge across to the other. This trail is lots of fun and is a very good workout. Bring lots of water and snacks, too. If you noticed, we stopped to get some snacks.

I think anytime you can have your kids exercise and also learn about nature, you are really doing your kids a great service by opening their minds to all the beauty in the world, or at least our small piece of it.

**As always,
be safe and *Be Alive!*,
Angel**



Send your photos to me at agomez@cityemployeesclub.com. I would love to see them!

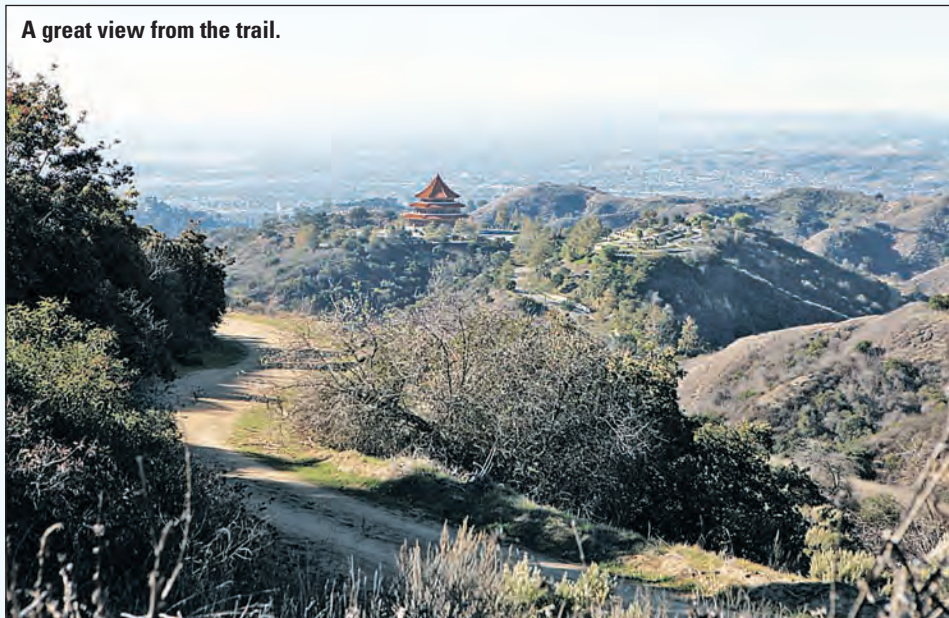
Angel's

Be Alive!

Angel Gomez, Director of Member Services



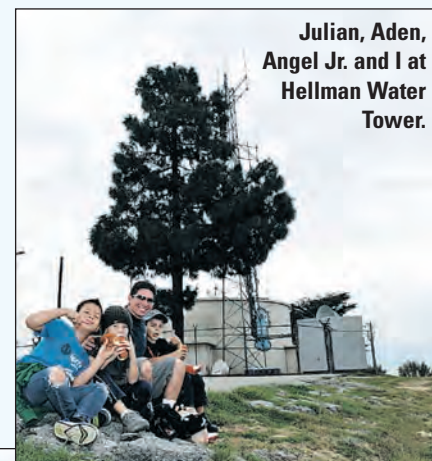
A great view from the trail.



At Hellman Park.



Julian, Aden, Angel Jr. and I at Hellman Water Tower.



Dakota, Kathy, Aden and Angel are nearly at the top.



There are lots of cacti along the trail.



Julian, Aden and Angel Jr. enjoy the hike.

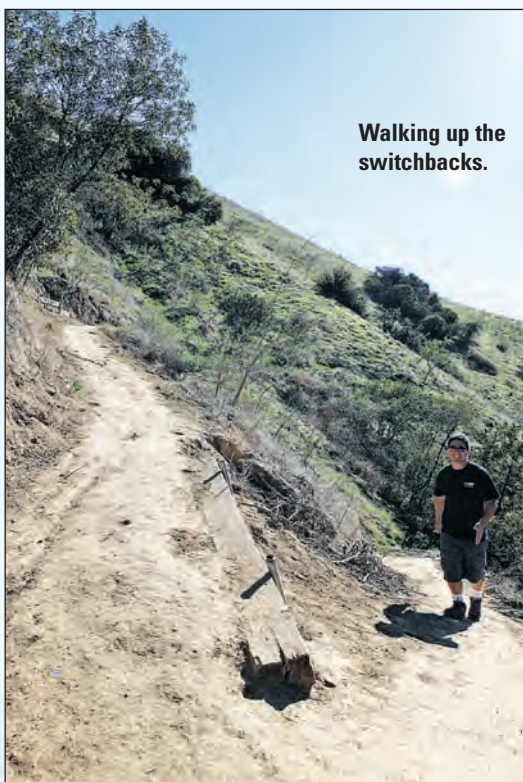


BELOW: Dakota and I at the second water tower.



Dakota and I reach the top with the famous Graffiti Water Tank behind us.

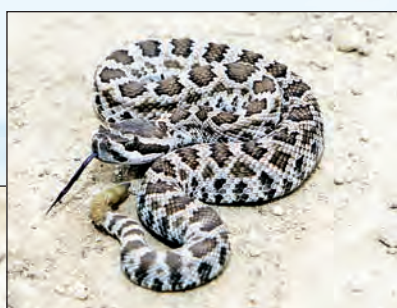
Walking up the switchbacks.



A gopher snake.



A rattlesnake.



Hellman Park

5700 Greenleaf Ave. • Whittier, CA 90601

HIGHLIGHTS: 360-degree views, a Buddhist temple, and views of Catalina Island, Downtown L.A., the Hollywood sign and Mt. Baldy.

DISTANCE: 2.9 miles (loop)

ELEVATION: 2,100 feet

APPROXIMATE HIKE TIME: 2.25 hours, depending on your pace

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

Directions:

From I-605, take the Beverly Boulevard exit (Whittier) and go east for two miles. Turn left on Greenleaf Avenue and drive two-tenths of a mile to the park entrance.

Parking:

Parking is free. There are approximately 10 parking slots in the small parking area at the beginning of the trail. If the parking lot is full, you can also park on the street.