

# **THINK Together Founder Randy Barth receives Mayor's Award**

Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger presented the Mayor's Award to Randy Barth, the founder of THINK Together's Shalimar Learning Center on Costa Mesa's Westside, which for 22 years has helped tutor and teach young students in this low income neighborhood.

"You made such a huge impact on so many people," Mayor Mensinger said as he presented the award at the City Council meeting Tuesday Sept. 20. "We are grateful as a city to have people like you who make a difference. You are a true community partner and we are proud to have you in Costa Mesa."

THINK Together, the largest nonprofit after school program in the state, began on Shalimar Drive back in 1994 in response to a gang shooting in the neighborhood where some of the local moms asked for a safe place for their kids to study afterschool.

Working with community moms, Catholic priest Jerome Karcher and members of the St. Andrews Presybyterian Church, Barth was able to secure a room in an apartment complex and THINK Together was born.

Today THINK Together serves several hundred thousand children in after school programs in Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties as well as children in the Bay Area near San Jose. Barth announced Tuesday that his organization is beginning a capital campaign to build a new community center on Shalimar Drive.

"We appreciate the city's partnership through the years," Barth said. "It wasn't an easy project to get off the ground, but it's been, we think, mutually beneficial. We thank you for your leadership and support."

---

# **Residents urged to Sign up for AlertOC to get critical information during emergencies**

Because September marks National Preparedness Month, public safety officials are urging residents and businesses to prepare for the many hazards that threaten our daily lives and sense of normalcy – most often occurring in Southern California with little to no warning.

Whether it's wildfires due to the state's extended drought, mudslides, floods or massive earthquakes, disasters occur rapidly, forcing evacuations and road closures to neighborhoods.

AlertOC, the County's mass notification system, is a critical link for residents to immediately learn of any required actions, such as evacuating their homes during an imminent fire.

On Thursday Sept. 22, more than two million Orange County residents will receive a call to test AlertOC.

The drill will replicate a large scale, multi-jurisdictional emergency requiring thousands of numbers to be called simultaneously across Orange County's entire region.

This is the seventh annual regional test of the system and will include 26 participating cities as well as the County's unincorporated areas.

The distinctive feature of AlertOC is the ability for individuals to register multiple contact methods and addresses.

Registrations of cell phone and alternate numbers dramatically increase the ability to reach the greatest number of community members within minutes.

This enables landlines, cell phones and e-mail addresses to be incorporated into a single notification system.

Residents can do their part to prepare for emergencies by registering for AlertOC.

The time is now to self-register cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses to be a part of the regional test.

For more information or to register alternate phone numbers or e-mail addresses, visit [AlertOC.com](http://AlertOC.com).

---

## **City reports budget surplus of more than \$11 million from last fiscal year**

A combination of sound fiscal policy and a thriving retail environment, along with expenditures lower than anticipated for a variety of factors, has resulted in a significant budget surplus of an estimated \$11 million for the City of Costa Mesa.

At the end of the last fiscal year on June 30, 2016, the city's revenues totaled more than \$122.5 million while expenditures were \$111.4 million. That surplus represents 9 percent of the total revenues.

"We have made concerted efforts to keep our spending under control while still providing great customer service to our residents by rebuilding our older infrastructure, investing in new capital improvement projects and hiring top-level staffing in city departments," said Mayor Steve Mensinger.

The mayor called this a proud moment for the City of Costa Mesa.

"A significant amount of hard work, difficult decisions and favorable business conditions have resulted in this environment for success," he said. "Many people deserve thanks for their contributions, especially my fellow council colleagues, commissioners, city staff, the business community and Costa Mesa residents."

Indeed, the City Council now has the opportunity to determine where to allocate the surplus money and could follow its established policy of using surplus funds to increase reserves, reduce pension debt and increase expenditures on capital projects.

The process for the last two years has been for staff to bring a recommendation to the City Council's Financial Advisory Committee around November or December and the City Council review the Committee's recommendation as part of the council's Mid-Year Budget Review in February.

Based on the City Council's policy and based on prior budget discussions, staff will likely recommend that the committee increase the general fund reserves by \$2.66 million, which will immediately allow the city to reach the Council's \$55 million reserve goal.

The council can also recommend a number of measures, including paying down pension debt and other debt obligations as well as funding projects and enhancing various community priorities.

---

## **Costa Mesa police join the fight to combat human trafficking in county**

Speaking to a crowd of about 150 spectators in front of City Hall, Police Chief Rob Sharpnack announced that Costa Mesa will join other law enforcement and social services agencies in the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force to crack down on sex trade criminals who are leaving a wake of young victims throughout the county.

“It’s truly an honor for the Costa Mesa Police Department to join this effort,” Chief Sharpnack said as he urged members of the public to report incidents of human trafficking that they may witness through the National Hotline number at 1-888-3737-888. “You can be the one to help a victim find safety and new hope.”

Sharpnack announced that human trafficking is on the increase in Orange County and Costa Mesa Police will assign one full-time officer to the human trafficking detail.

“It’s the second largest criminal enterprise in the world and it is the fastest growing,” Chief Sharpnack said.

<https://youtu.be/xEoN2Rc4ZLI>

Chief Sharpnack was joined by Mayor Steve Mensinger, Anaheim Police Deputy Chief Julian Harvey, Director of Victim

Assistance Programs for Community Services Programs Lita Mercado and District Attorney Tony Rackaukus at a press conference in front of City Hall on Friday morning Sept. 9.

Also in attendance were Councilmembers Katrina Foley and Jim Righheimer and many law enforcement personnel from throughout the county.

“Costa Mesa will do everything in our power to combat human trafficking in our city, as well as support this important regional effort” Mayor Mensinger said.

Mercado’s group, the Community Services Programs based in Santa Ana, cofounded the task force in 2004, which consists of law enforcement personnel from Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, Irvine, the California Highway Patrol, the OC Sheriff, the FBI, Homeland Security, the U.S. Attorney and OC District Attorney office.

Since 2004, the task force has worked to identify the origin of the victims and how they wound up being part of this tragic trend. Only a little more than 20 percent come from Orange County, though much of the trafficking occurs here with the pimps using Beach and Harbor Boulevards as major corridors.

The task force aided and provided assistance to 580 sex and labor trafficking victims.

In addition the task force not only goes after the pimps who brutalize these young victims and exploit them as sex slaves, but also those who pay to have sex with them.

“We now have the purchasers of sex in our sights,” Anaheim Deputy Chief Harvey said. “We will be looking for you and you will go to jail.”

District Attorney Rackaukus also noted there was an uptick in violence against those kept captive and he provided gruesome details of some of the injuries these young women, and in some

cases children, receive. He said that his office has experienced more and more gang members, many from the Fresno area, taking part in these illegal activities and he vowed to put the perpetrators behind bars.

“We are working to get them the longest sentences possible so we can put them out of business,” he said.

Click [here](#) for more information and links to data on the OC Human Trafficking Task Force website. And click [here](#) for more information on Community Service Programs.

---

## **Players and coaches from Costa Mesa American Little League are big hit at council meeting**

At the council meeting this Tuesday on Sept. 6, Mayor Steve Mensinger honored the players and coaches of the Costa Mesa American Little League with the Mayor’s Award.

The award comes on the heels of the league knocking off its rival Costa Mesa National Little League in a two game sweep at the annual Mayor’s Cup.

The American League was not only looking to defend its title from last year, but also to avenge a 2-1 loss to the Nationals in the District tournament. The mayor and council honored both

teams on Tuesday.

“We have two great little leagues in Costa Mesa and we are not only proud of all the players and coaches, but of all the parents and volunteers that make Little League baseball such a great experience for the families of this community,” Mayor Mensinger said.

The Mayor’s Cup takes place every year following the District 62 All Star tournament where the two Costa Mesa leagues face off in a best of three series.

---

## **Two versions of the 2016-2017 City Budget can now be viewed on City website**

Residents interested in learning about the City of Costa Mesa’s approved Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Budget can now see an electronic version by clicking [here](#).

For those who want a shorter version of the budget, click [here](#) to read a Budget in Brief.

---

# Chief Sharpnack welcomes newest officer to the department at swearing-in ceremony

Police Chief Rob Sharpnack on Monday Aug. 29 welcomed Nicholas Dempkowski to the force, the latest police officer to leave another department and join Costa Mesa's men and women in blue.

"This is yet another bright spot for Costa Mesa PD," Sharpnack said as he introduced officer Dempkowski. "Nick is going to be a great addition to our department. He is committed to public service and law enforcement and we are glad to have him aboard."

Attending the swearing in ceremony were Mayor Steve Mensinger and City CEO Tom Hatch as well as several staff members from the Police and Fire Departments and City Hall.

Dempkowski comes to Costa Mesa by way of Fullerton, where he joined that force in 2013 and trained as a K9 officer.

Prior to that, he worked as a reserve officer for the Long Beach Police Department after graduating from the Fullerton College Police Academy. He also has a background in off-road racing.

In addition to Officer Dempkowski, Sharpnack introduced new academy graduate Cory Montgomery as well as three new hires for Communications/Dispatch division, Erin Cedillo, Nydia Robles and Jennifer Rosenberg.

He also congratulated several police officers for the great restraint they showed during an incident on Friday night, where a man armed with a knife was trying to commit suicide-by-cop. The man was detained safely, despite making threatening gestures toward police.

Sharpnack noted this is a particularly proud time for him as he rebuilds the department with the best and the brightest and bulks up staffing in speciality areas like detectives and community policing.

He thanked the efforts of recruiters such as Sgt. Jerry Hildeman and training assistant Jody Gonzalez for their efforts in bringing in top talent and he commended his officers for doing great work, even in the lean times.

“We have not dropped our service levels at all,” Sharpnack said. “We continue to provide a high level of service to the residents of Costa Mesa.”

---

## **Brumbaugh recognized with CEO Leadership Award for his work on city improvement**

Costa Mesa City CEO Tom Hatch thanked Code Enforcement Officer Mike Brumbaugh for his extensive community work by presenting him with the CEO Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet employee meeting on Thursday on Aug. 25.

Brumbaugh, who has been a part of the city's Community Improvement Division since 2012, has tackled a number of nagging issues, namely cleanup of the multi-family properties in the city's Mission/Mendoza and Coolidge/Fillmore neighborhoods.

"Through Mike's efforts, a number of gang and graffiti issues were exposed, as well as illegal garage conversions," CEO Hatch said. "He organized community clean up days that restored pride to the neighborhoods and drew accolades from many who call that neighborhood home."

With homelessness and homeless issues on the rise, Brumbaugh moved to that area and has been working with private property owners and businesses to combat the problems and provide them with the tools necessary to enhance their properties and enforce trespassing laws.

Brumbaugh has become the go-to person to locate and address illegal encampments and works with County and State authorities to resolve those matters. His duties have taken him to every corner of the City and he, along with the Community Outreach Workers, have grown to be invaluable resources for other City departments and the public in terms of successfully addressing the homeless problem.

Brumbaugh has exemplified collaboration and innovation in his approach to dealing with a very complex issue by effectively communicating with the Police Department and members of the City's Network for Homeless Solutions.

Most recently, Brumbaugh worked with a homeless veteran to help him find housing after 15 years of homelessness.

In addition to Brumbaugh, CEO Hatch welcomed new additions to the CEO Department who will be working on homeless issues. They are Intern Dariel Flores and Recreation Leader Ameera Ghaznavi. Also recognized were new Fire Department interns Micah Gallardo, Moises Vaca and Kevin Wiggins; from the Police

Department new communications officers Grace Camacho and Erin Cedillo; from new Public Services intern Linda Chun, and new Maintenance Assistant Irving Santos and newly promoted Maintenance Assistant Alejandro Martinez.

---

## **Five Questions with ‘The Age of Love’ Director Steven Loring**

*On Aug. 24 from 4:30 to 7 p.m., the Costa Mesa Senior Center will offer a free screening of the movie “The Age of Love,” which was produced and directed by Steven Loring. The film, which aired at the Newport Beach Film Festival in 2014, follows 30 seniors in Rochester New York who sign up for a first-of-its-kind speed dating event exclusively for 70- to 90-year-olds. Loring, who will answer questions from the Senior Center crowd afterward, via satellite, answered some questions we had about the film.*



**Director Steven Loring**

**Where did you get the idea for *The Age of Love*?**

This project was actually a personal journey for me. Just before I began, my dad suddenly passed away, and my mom, who was nearing 70, was left without the partner and the emotional intimacy she'd counted on during a half-century of marriage.

That same year, my 78-year-old uncle met an 80-year-old woman, and they fell madly in love. They basically locked the bedroom door—as if they were in high school again. Trying to understand the hearts of people so close to me, I was surprised to find almost nothing in popular media that looked honestly into the emotional lives and needs of that generation. TV and movies were filled with dated stereotypes and jokes about older adults' desires. So when I heard about speed dating for people over 70—and especially when I heard everyone's laughter at the idea—I thought, wow, what a perfect hook for a film into the hearts of that generation. Who knows what I might find?

**What do you hope to accomplish with the film?**

To break old stereotypes and attitudes about aging, and to bring new opportunity and growth to our booming older population worldwide. The film, being about our lifelong search for love, seems to speak to all generations. Older people find the film empowering and validating, in that it brings their true, overlooked voices and feelings to the screen for the first time. Baby Boomers tell me they watch and think about talks they should have with aging, single parents, who are rarely asked about their hearts and emotional needs.

Also, with people living so much longer, Boomers wonder what the future holds for them in terms of love, with perhaps 40 or more years to look forward to. And younger people, suddenly realizing that the 70 plus generation can feel the same hopes and fears when it comes to seeking companionship, tell me, 'I'll never look at my grandparents the same way again!'

**Tell us a little bit about the directing process and how you decided who and what you were going to film?**

The speed dating event I followed in the film was a real event for people 70 and older, and everyone had signed up without imagining they'd be part of a documentary. No one was 'cast', they were all real people from the World War II generation who decided to take a chance and enter the trendy dating scene of the new millennium.

I actually came to the project with my own preconceptions and assumed the speed daters would probably be embarrassed and not want to be in a film. After all, they might not have told their friends or children, and they certainly wouldn't want their faces on movie screens all over the world.

But, when I called the first woman on the list and explained I was filming a doc on older people's search for love, she stopped me and said, "Let me tell you something: I'm 74 and my children love me; they take care of me; we celebrate birthdays; we talk every day. But even my own children never

ask me what's in my heart at this stage in my life. It's like I've become invisible to the world. So I'd be happy to talk with you." I was really amazed that all 30 people gave me permission to film.

So then I plunged in and filmed all 30 participants during the preparation period, at the speed dating event, when they received their results and then on several real-world dates that resulted. I ended up with over 168 hours of footage that were edited down into a 78-minute film.

**Do you think these people were looking for the same kind of love as they had when they were younger?**

A big question on my mind throughout filming was: Does love change as we age? And, if so, how? There's a general assumption, when we talk about older people, that they're only looking for 'companionship', as if that's some sort of diminished form of true, youthful love.

But, over the course of filming, it became clear to me that the need to connect with another person, to be truly 'seen' and appreciated, and to have someone who 'sees' and appreciates you, is the essence of love regardless of age. When we're young, we're thinking about building a home and career and family and how the kids will be brought up and physical beauty and cars and money and whatever else goes into selecting a partner. But, if you take all that away, isn't what's left essentially companionship? Having someone who will look at you and listen to you and understand you so that you're not alone? I think love when you're older is the same, just with the youthful concerns of creating a family and career stripped away.

**What was the outcome for the seniors who attended the event?**

Every speed dater who marked "Interested" on their card for at least one other person got a date – there were 48 follow-up dates that resulted from the event – and it was fun to see how open and excited everyone was. There wasn't anyone involved

who didn't come up to the organizers afterward and ask, "When can we do this again?"

Even better, everyone who came left empowered to see themselves as someone with the potential to find new love. One character says near the end, "I haven't found the love of my life yet, but I haven't stopped looking – and I feel more aggressive now." These people gave themselves permission to see themselves as potential lovers in a way that they hadn't before. That's a big message of the film: Regardless of age, given the opportunity, people still have the desire to be wanted and to connect in a deep emotional way.

---

## **Chiefs Take Part in Motor Home Madness Demolition Derby at the Fair**

On Thursday Aug. 11, Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano and Chief Rob Sharpnack participated in the Motor Home Madness Demolition Derby at the 2016 Orange County Fair.

The pair were also joined by Newport Beach Police Chief Jon Lewis. The money raised at the event goes to fund breast cancer awareness.

The first to enter the race was Chief Sharpnack.

Just after 8 p.m. Sharpnack, No. 44 (our department's designated number) entered the arena in a painted black and white RV, with the words police and SWAT painted on the sides and with police lights mounted on the top.

As the crowd cheered and began to get excited No. 51 Chief Stefano entered. Making his way around the arena, Stefano entered in a red and gold RV with flashing lights making a few laps round before parking on the opposite side of Sharpnack.

Before the event began all participants exited their RV's and ran around the arena waving their arms and getting the crowd pumped up. Stefano ran around with two fire extinguishers, which set the crowd off.

Unfortunately, Sharpnack and Stefano got knocked out the first half, but it was an exciting event that offered a fun and light-hearted vibe drew in thousands of spectators.

---

## **City looks to fill vacancy on Senior Commission**

The Costa Mesa City Council is accepting applications to fill one vacancy on the Senior Commission.

Applicants must live in Costa Mesa.

The Senior Commission serves as an advisory body to the City Council in matters related to the operation of the Costa Mesa Senior Center.

There is one vacancy with a term expiration of February 2021.

For further information on the commission, please contact Parks and Community Services Recreation Manager Justin Martin at (714) 754-5065.

Those interested must complete a Commission Application Form

from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website ([www.costamesaca.gov/apply](http://www.costamesaca.gov/apply)).

The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; faxed to (714) 754-4942; or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

The deadline is **5 p.m., Friday, Sept. 2, 2016**. Appointment is tentatively scheduled for the Sept. 20, 2016 City Council meeting.

For further information, please contact the City Clerk's office at (714) 754-5225 or [cityclerk@costamesaca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@costamesaca.gov).

---

## **Visitor Bureau rebrands itself as Travel Costa Mesa while also moving into new home**

The Costa Mesa Conference and Visitor Bureau announced this week that it has officially changed its name to Travel Costa Mesa, and the organization relocated to a new and updated office across the street from South Coast Plaza.

"We felt it was time to make our name more impactful and recognizable," said Paulette Lombardi-Fries, President of Travel Costa Mesa. "We wanted to ensure that website visitors and readers who saw our name knew exactly what our purpose was, to inform about and encourage travel to the city of Costa

Mesa.”

The official name now matches the website address, [www.travelcostamesa.com](http://www.travelcostamesa.com).

“We’ve also added ‘California’ to our updated logo, to let prospective visitors seeing our marketing programs know we are the official City of the Arts, in the amazing state of California,” said Lombardi-Fries.

Travel Costa Mesa’s new and updated address is 940 South Coast Drive, Suite #265, Costa Mesa, California, 92626. The phone number remains unchanged – 888.588.9417.

Visitors to the city are welcome to visit the new office for additional information about attractions and activities in the city of Costa Mesa.