

Jessica Mejia gets February CEO Leadership Award

At the February Meet and Greet last Thursday Feb. 25, City CEO Tom Hatch presented Deputy City Clerk Jessica Mejia with the CEO Leadership Award.

“The City Clerk’s Office is right on the front lines of City Hall,” Hatch said. “We have a great team in that office who help the public with all their requests on a daily basis and Jessica is a big part of that team.”

Mejia has been with the City of Costa Mesa for a year and a half. Prior to coming to Costa Mesa she worked for the cities of San Dimas and Monterey Park.

She graduated from Cal Poly Pomona with a Bachelor’s Degree in English. When she’s not helping manage the City Clerk’s office and marathon council meetings, she is running marathons.

She is an avid runner and over the last two years she has run 28 half marathons, and two full marathons, the L.A. Marathon and the San Francisco Marathon.

Mejia has been very helpful assisting all the new Committee and Commission secretaries on how to prepare agendas, comply with legal requirements and run the meetings.

She serves as a positive role model as she provides guidance, leadership and assistance to the secretaries.

In addition to Mejia, the city paid tribute to 10 newly hired employees as well as 11 who received recent promotions.

Private Costa Mesa School Teacher named as one of the top 25 in county

Mariners Christian School of Costa Mesa announced that its beloved fourth grade teacher, Kristin Knecht of Mission Viejo, was chosen as one of the Top 25 Teachers in Orange County for 2016 by OC Parenting Magazine.

The surprise announcement came in Knecht's classroom, who received balloons, flowers, and cheers from fellow teachers, administrators, and her students.

Knecht has over 20 years of teaching experience in fourth grade, four of them at MCS.



“Mrs. Knecht is dedicated to the idea of fostering creativity, imagination, and finding ways to apply content to the real world to motivate her students. She desires to know the unique dreams and aspirations of each student in the classroom in order to make learning come alive,” said Elementary Principal Reggie Biancalani.

One of Knecht’s educational commitments is to model for her students what it means to be a “lifelong learner” by pursuing professional development opportunities as often as she can.

From attending the California Math Council Conference so that she can teach her students to think like mathematicians, to the latest training on Literacy from Columbia University Teacher College Reading and Writing Program, Knecht is ready to implement top teaching strategies to benefit her class.

She understands the importance of assessing growth as vital data to ensure students are increasing their level of achievement.

Recently she helped implement a new national standardized assessment program called MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) geared towards identifying students' strengths and weakness in the math, reading, and language.

This year, Knecht served on the school's accreditation steering committee, the admissions committee, and she is instrumental in co-leading a group of 130 parents and 4th grade students to Sacramento and San Francisco each spring to make social studies come alive.

In addition to being a wife of 17 years and mother to her daughter Riley (an MCS student), teaching is truly Knecht's passion, and it is not uncommon to find students from years past visiting her classroom for a hug and pep talk.

Developers break ground on new luxury living project at 580 Anton

To celebrate its soon-to-be-constructed 250-unit luxury apartment building, executives from Legacy Partners joined together with city and business leaders on Thursday Feb. 18 for a mid-morning Groundbreaking Ceremony at the 580 Anton Blvd. South Coast Metro location.

Standing in front of the active construction site complete with bulldozers, Timothy O'Brien, the managing director of

Legacy Partners hailed the virtues of this new project and all it stands to offer the residents who will live within walking distance of world-class dining, shopping and entertainment.

“We set out to design something that is timeless, classic and beautiful,” O’Brien said. “This is a fantastic place to develop a project.”

O’Brien, a lifelong Costa Mesa resident who attended Estancia High School, also complimented the city employees who assisted him in getting this project approved, and he even went as far as calling Costa Mesa’s staff the best in the state.



Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger and Councilwoman Sandy Genis also attended the event and heaped praise on the project and what it will mean to Costa Mesa.

“This project stands to create tens of thousands of jobs,” Mensinger said.

When complete, the building will yield more than 200,000 square feet of rentable space, which will have luxury

amenities and appliances as well as a fully fitted clubhouse, a concierge entry, a dog-wash station, a fitness center with a lake view, a wine bar and much more.



Legacy Partners, a privately held real estate firm based in San Francisco, acquired the former retail center in May of 2015 in a joint venture with Prudential Real Estate Investors. The development is set to complete by fall of 2017.

Chief Sharpnack names Jennifer Ruffalo as new Communications Supervisor

The Costa Mesa Police Department continued a trend of new hires and promotions this Wednesday Feb. 17 as Chief Rob Sharpnack announced the promotion of Jennifer Ruffalo to

Communications Supervisor at a swearing-in and badge-pinning ceremony outside his office.

“These promotions are so uplifting for our department,” Chief Sharpnack said.

Sharpnack noted that the department’s communication staff answered more than 120,000 calls for service last year. And he had high praise for Ruffalo, who began her career with Costa Mesa police in 2004. Two years later, she was already a training officer and shift lead.



“You gain such an appreciation for what these folks do day in and day out,” Sharpnack said. “Jennifer is a team player who always puts the organization first.”

In 2009, Ruffalo was working with a trainee who had taken a call from a person in distress who was unable to speak. Working closely with the trainee, they were able to assist the caller with their emergency situation.

Later that year, the trainee was given an Award of Recognition

at the State 911 level for exemplary performance, and that 911 call is still used in the department's communication's training program.

Ruffalo had her badge pinned on her by her sister Courtney as several high-ranking officers, city staffer and members of the communications team looked on.

"I thank you all for your support," she said.

City of Costa Mesa encourages donating not dumping unwanted goods

Several 40-yard dumpsters sit along the north and east walls of the City of Costa Mesa Corporation Yard.

Some bins hold green waste such as branches, flowers, grass and leaves; others contain appliances, also known as "white goods."

But one particular bin is filled to the brim with unwanted furniture, toys, and other household items that have been illegally dumped in alleys, parks, and other areas in the public right-of-way and collected by the city's maintenance services staff.

The haul is in response to residents who are leaving behind items that ultimately are taxing city resources and staff who have to retrieve the items and keep them from accumulating on public property.

"We have one full-time senior maintenance worker and one part-

time maintenance assistance assigned to pick up illegally dumped items five days a week and on-call for special needs or emergency situations,” says Maintenance Services Manager Bruce Hartley. “It takes strict commitment to keep the city streets clean.”

Dumping like this happens daily and citywide but is most prevalent around the 1st and 15th of the month when residents are moving and rental leases are expiring.

Staff members drive around town in a two-ton dump truck to collect items and fill a 40-yard dumpster measuring 8-feet wide by 6-feet tall by 20-feet deep every one to two days.

The City of Costa Mesa contracts with Ware Disposal Co., Inc. for hauling and disposal of all waste collected by the staff. Furniture and daily park trash are hauled once a week while green waste is hauled monthly. Appliances are retrieved every other month.



Shopping carts retrieved by staff are returned to the owners, and carts containing personal property are inventoried by Costa Mesa police personnel.

Alleys most affected by illegal dumping are located in the southwest area and predominantly in high-density residential neighborhoods.

Staff has seen a recent increase in property being left in the public right-of-way. However, there are multiple options available to residents for disposing or donating unwanted goods.

The Costa Mesa Sanitary District is responsible for waste collection and transferring recyclable materials for single-family residences in the city.

Through CMSD's contract with CR&R, single-family residences with up to four units are eligible for large item pick-ups three times a year at no cost.

There is a limit of 10 items per call or a combined total of 30 items per calendar year.

Residents may call CR&R Customer Service at (949) 646- 4617 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to schedule a large item pick-up.

Residents living in multiple-family units that use dumpsters are not eligible for the program through CR&R and must contact their contracted waste haulers for pick-up of unwanted items. Contact information can be found on dumpsters or by contacting property management.

In addition to disposal, residents are encouraged to donate clean, usable items to local charities. The following is a list of local organizations that may be interested in your items:

- Fresh Beginnings Ministries (to benefit Costa Mesa

homeless residents who have been placed in housing and are in need of furniture and household goods), Pastor Bill Nelson, Fresh Beginning Ministries, bill@freshbeginningsministries.com

- Project Hope Alliance (to benefit Costa Mesa homeless families placed in housing), 1945 Placentia Ave., Suite 202, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, (949) 722-7863
- Salvation Army Family Store and Donation Dropbox, 2126 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, CA, 92627, (949) 642-3636
- Assistance League of Newport-Mesa, 2220 Fairview Rd, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, (949) 645-6929

City joins in celebration of Tet Festival and Lunar New Year at OC Fair and Event Center

Council Member Sandra Genis and members of the city staff attended the opening of the 35th Annual USVA Tet Festival this past weekend at the OC Fair and Event Center.



Costa Mesa was once again home the world's largest Tet Festival, attracting over 60,000 guests to the three-day event.

Featuring culturally enriching attractions, live entertainment, festive games and rides, a variety of ethnic foods, and a spectacular firecrackers show, the festival celebrated the Lunar New Year and the "Year of the Monkey."

UVSA is a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-partisan, community-based organization founded in 1982 to bring together Vietnamese American youth including students from different colleges and high schools throughout Southern California.

The festival serves as a vehicle to help develop student volunteers in the community to become well-rounded leaders with a strong sense of cultural awareness and civic responsibility to improve their communities.

Over the past 15 years, UVSA's members have awarded over \$1.25 million of festival proceeds as community grants to non-profit organizations across Southern California.

New bus shelters and benches coming thanks to grant money city received

In 2014, the city captured a Measure M2 grant to improve three bus stops located at Harbor Boulevard/Victoria Street, Harbor Boulevard/Wilson Street, and Wilson Street/Harbor Boulevard.

Unique Performance Construction, Inc. has been awarded a contract in the amount of \$79,820 to complete the work.

The work to be performed consists of the installation of new bus shelters, bus benches and associated amenities.

Also included is the removal of the existing sidewalk and installation of a new decorative sidewalk.

Coordination with Edison and AT&T has taken place regarding adjustments to their facilities and work is now scheduled to begin.

Construction is anticipated to take approximately one month.

Costa Mesa High School's Mesa Minute

Mesa Minute is being distributed through the High School's Peachjar program. If you have a student registered at CMHS/MS,

you are automatically getting this bi-weekly newsletter to the parent emails established in the CMHS/MS database. Click on the button on the right to be linked to the rest of the newsletter. They will be available on schoolloop. Please email vhatch@nmusd.us for any subscription issues. Mesa Minute can also be viewed on cmhs.schoolloop.com.

No School

There will be no school on:

February 15th–19th for Presidents Recess

Mesa High/Middle School Newsletter

Lunch & Learn Engineering & Manufacturing

February 24, 2016 during lunch in the library

Enjoy pizza while you hear about the various career pathways available in engineering and manufacturing from professionals who have the up-to-date insight

RSVP with Ms. Allie Hatch or Mrs. Mary Harrison (schoolloop, in person, phone) to reserve your pizza!

COSTA MESA ZONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

CMHS/MS Tutoring

Tutoring is available Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. in the Room 146. Students interested in applying to be a tutor can get an application in the College & Career Center and the Community Service Office. For questions please contact Allie Hatch.

COSTA MESA ZONE SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN THE HOUR OF CODE!

All of the schools in the Costa Mesa Zone participated in the Hour of Code on December 9, 2015. All students had the opportunity to do computer programming. Computer programming is important for our students. It will help them learn the skills needed for their future.

A BIG “SHOUT OUT” GOES TO DAVIS MAGNET SCHOOL STUDENTS!

A Shout Out is the new form of positive reinforcement that is

- GPA 2.0 or higher
- Plan to enroll as a full-time student at an accredited institution or as a part-time student if employed
- Demonstrate a strong pattern of community involvement, such as volunteer work and active participation in school clubs, church, etc.
- Financial need may be considered. If you choose to not enter financial information you may enter a "0"

See this link to find out about the eligibility criteria and complete the

application:<https://oc-cf.academicworks.com/opportunities/886>

For the rest of the list, please see the Naviance website <https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=costamesastudent> sign in is the same login that they use for the school computers. If you are a parent and do not yet have a Naviance Parent log-in you can email Allison Hatch and she can get you a username and password.

Seniors

4 year university pathway: close attention to your emails so you don't miss any important or information. Don't forget to send your SAT/ACT and AP scores.

Community College pathway: It is time to apply! Go to cccapply.org to start your application. If you apply to Golden West, Orange Coast, or Coastline you can take the placement test here on our campus! See the attached form for directions on how to register.

FAFSA/Dream Act: All seniors thinking about going to any kind of higher education need to apply for either the FAFSA or Dream Act. Complete the application by March 2, 2016.

Senior Exit Project Internship: If you haven't completed your 20 hour job shadow/internship yet you need to start thinking about it.

Stop by the College & Career Center ASAP to get help

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Juniors

If you are interested in applying to 4 year universities remember you need to complete the A-G requirements, have a 3.0 or higher (see eligibility index for CSU with 2.0), have C's or higher, and complete at least one SAT or ACT test.

It is recommended that you take at least one SAT or ACT test the spring of your junior year and one the fall of your senior year.

Utilize Naviance for career and college exploration and planning!

For more information check out:<http://cmhs.schoolloop.com/collegeandcareercenter>

Stop by the College & Career Center to make an appointment to discuss college & career options

Reminders!!

Follow Counseling on social media and get updates and reminders about important events deadlines!

www.cmhs.schoolloop.com/costamesa

Instagram @cmhsnextsteps

Facebook www.facebook.com/cmhsnextsteps

Remind 101 Text Messages Text message @cmhs15-16 to the number 81010 to get text message reminders

Featured ROP Student – January–Susan Bravo

Susan Bravo is one busy senior. She is currently enrolled in the ROP Certified Nursing Assistant course and upon completion will be taking the State CNA test for her license. She has registered for EMT in the spring and will have the opportunity to take the state EMT test at the same time that she graduates from CMHS. Wow! A CNA and EMT license. That is pretty amazing! As if that wasn't enough on her resume, she has completed the ROP Animal Healthcare class and interned at a local animal hospital/clinic. She says that experience was quite interesting and fun as she worked with pigs, ferrets, chickens, and exotic birds.

After graduation, Susan has applied to several colleges in hopes of continuing her education in the medical field, possibly as a nurse practitioner.

Susan says the ROP classes have offered her a hands on experience and that her CNA internship has taught her much. In caring for these elderly patients she has discovered that, "It's not like a job. I look at it like I am carry for someone's family member. And someday, it could be one of mine." Susan is definitely a stand out student and person! Many ROP spring classes are still open for enrollment and several will be offered during the summer. Come into the career center today and pick up a catalog. Susan Bravo

Students at College Park Elementary participate in the Hour of Code on December 9th.

ASB made great signs to hang on the library walls and lined the sidewalk to the gym!

Residents sought to serve on city committees, deadline is Feb. 19

The Costa Mesa City Council wants you to get involved and is seeking residents to serve on the following city committees:

Bikeway and Walkability Committee: This 15-member committee assists with the review, update and implementation of the city's Master Plan of Bikeways. The committee, which meets monthly, also assists in the evaluation of bikeways and pedestrian pathways in order to make recommendations for their improvement to the City Council. It has three (3) regular member vacancies, for one-year terms. For further information,

please contact Raja Sethuraman at (714) 754-5032.

Cultural Arts Committee: This 11-member committee, which meets monthly, works to promote the city's slogan, "Costa Mesa City of the Arts." The committee supports local cultural arts programs and brings art awareness to the residents of Costa Mesa by establishing programs, events and initiatives to better help residents access the arts. It has three (3) regular member vacancies and one (1) alternate member vacancy, all for two-year terms. For further information, please contact Justin Martin at (714) 754-5065.

Historical Preservation Committee: This 11-member committee, which meets monthly, serves to maintain, preserve, educate and promote the city's historical resources. It has five (5) regular member vacancies and two (2) alternate member vacancies, all for two-year terms. For further information, please contact Justin Martin at (714) 754-5065.

Finance Advisory Committee: This 11-member committee, which meets monthly, provides advice to the City Council regarding events and issues that may affect the financial status of the City. It has nine (9) regular member vacancies for two-year terms. For further information, please contact Kathy Ulrich at (714) 754-5243.

Housing and Public Service Grant Committee: This 11-member resident advisory committee, which meets on an as-needed basis, helps to promote community understanding of the community development process and activities funded by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD), and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Additionally, the committee rates and ranks applications for CDBG public service grants, ultimately developing funding recommendations for City Council consideration. It has four (4) regular member vacancies, two (2) for two-year terms and two (2) for one-year terms. For further information, please contact Mike Linares at (714) 754-5678.

Pension Oversight Committee: This nine-member committee, which meets monthly, focuses on long-term pension and financial matters as it pertains to the city's CalPERS retirement, unfunded pension obligations and unfunded medical liabilities. It has one (1) regular member vacancy, for a one-year term. For further information, please contact Ray Hull at (714) 754-5227.

Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Committee Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website (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, Feb. 19, 2016. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the March 15, 2016 City Council meeting.

For further information regarding committee appointments, please contact the City Clerk's office at (714) 754-5225 or cityclerk@costamesaca.gov.

Longtime Costa Mesa Tennis Center Pro wins prestigious

award

Hank Lloyd, a longtime Orange County tennis professional who has run the Costa Mesa Tennis Center since 1999, received the Southern California Tennis Associations' Curt Condon Spirit Award on Monday Feb. 1.

Given to an individual who has gone above and beyond in their promotion of tennis, the award was presented at the SCTA's annual meeting in the Straus Clubhouse at the Los Angeles Tennis Center on the UCLA campus, just west of Pauley Pavilion.

Lloyd said winning the award was especially meaningful to him because it was named after his longtime friend Curt Condon.

"He was inspirational and very spiritual," Lloyd said.

Lloyd grew up in Fullerton and played tennis at Sunny Hills High school. He spent 1977 and 1978 on the Pro Circuit tour after graduating from San Jose State University.

"I can't imagine doing anything else," he said of his tennis career.

Trevor Kronemann, the SCTA's director of junior tennis, wrote Lloyd in a letter informing him of the honor.

"You have set by virtue of your exemplary conduct, leadership and expertise while coaching, directing tournaments and organizing events has earned you this substantial honor. Your favorable example has provided today's players with an environment in which they can compete and excel."

Ranch Afterschool Program recognized for excellence

Costa Mesa's Parks and Community Services Department has been chosen for the 2015 California Park & Recreation Society Award of Excellence for Environmental Stewardship for its Ranch Afterschool Program.

The Ranch Afterschool Program's collaboration with the OC Fair & Event Center, the City of Costa Mesa, and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, aids in providing a unique after school experience in which students focus on agricultural concepts like gardening, livestock, and leather working.

"The Parks and Community Services Department is honored to receive the California Parks and Recreation Society's (CPRS) Award of Excellence in Environmental Stewardship, for the Ranch After-School Program," said Ashley Ocasio, the city's assistant recreation supervisor. "Children enrolled in this unique program learn first-hand what it means to be a farmer through lessons learned by cultivating farm land, gardening, raising and caring for livestock and creating leather crafts."

The students have a hands-on experience caring for animals on the Farm which includes: chickens, sheep, pigs, goats, llamas, cattle, and horses. They learn responsible animal care by cleaning stalls, grooming, and exercising the animals.

Additionally, the Farm dedicates land for each student to create and maintain an individual garden. Students' gardening responsibilities include planting, watering, fertilizing, weeding, inspecting for pests and harvesting their plot.

Agricultural education helps children learn about healthy food choices and teaches them different ways to access fresh fruits and vegetables. Most importantly, students begin to understand the deep impact agriculture has in their lives

past, future and present.

“This free program is a true collaboration and would not be possible without the support of the Orange County Fairgrounds,” Ocasio said. “This strategic partnership provides many Costa Mesa youth the opportunity to experience an unique after-school program, in which the focus in on agriculture and farming”

The California Park & Recreation Society awards program recognizes outstanding achievement in the areas of facility design, park planning, marketing and communication, and community improvement and programming through demonstrating the principals of resourcefulness, execution, accomplishment and alignment with the parks and recreation mission.

The presentation of awards will take place at the annual Awards Recognition Banquet scheduled for Friday, March 11, 2016 at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

City joins with South Coast Plaza officials to kick off Lunar New Year

Mayor Steve Mensinger and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Righeimer and members of the city staff attended South Coast Plaza’s opening celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year on Wednesday Feb. 3 at South Coast Plaza.

Deemed the “Year of the Monkey,” this is the seventh year that South Coast Plaza has chosen to celebrate the event that was headlined by the shopping center’s head of international

marketing, Werner Escher.

Also attending from South Coast Plaza were Anton and Sally Segerstrom, David Grant and Debra Gunn-Downing as well as dignitaries from around the county, including county supervisor Lisa Bartlett and Michelle Steel.

The festivities included samplings of traditional Chinese cuisine and formal Chinese dragon dancers.