

City Council approves new government and global education partnership with EF Education First

On Tuesday Dec. 17, the Costa Mesa City Council approved an agreement with EF Education First, an international language education company that offers language learning, travel, and cultural exchange programs, to occupy and improve the former home of Trinity Broadcast Network.

The proposed project, recognized globally for its unique English language immersion program, could serve up to 1,374 students from all over the world and add 70 education jobs to Costa Mesa.

The agreement brings in \$1.8 million to the City over a 15-year period for infrastructure improvements in the vicinity of the project. EF Education First will also provide a Competitive language immersion Scholarship Program for up to five high school students annually who live in Costa Mesa for the next 10 years.

“Costa Mesa is already a world class destination for the arts and shopping,” Mayor Katrina Foley said. “Now we will earn a place on the world stage as an international destination for learning. Our new community partners already demonstrated their civic-minded intentions by engaging our residents to gather support for their project and by investing in our local students and our active transportation infrastructure. This project helps boost our local economy with millions in annual revenue from tourism, shopping, dining, and new property taxes. I’m excited for them to join our Costa Mesa community.”

EF Education First will renovate the existing three-story

building into a campus with 50 classrooms, a student services area, cafeteria, and faculty/staff offices, new dormitories and outdoor recreational facilities including a pool with a pool house; and landscaping. It will generate less traffic as it is a development that will focus on active transportation.

Prior to voting for the agreement, Mayor Pro-Tem John Stephens spoke passionately about his experiences as a foreign exchange student. He noted that the agreement potentially results in \$500,000 in additional revenue to the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, increased construction jobs, \$80 million pumped into the local economy and \$3 million to host families in Costa Mesa

EF Education First is an international education company founded in 1965. For the past 50 years, EF has provided people of all ages with learning opportunities around the world, from educational travel to language training, academic degree programs and cultural exchange.

“EF Education First is excited to develop a world-class international education campus in Costa Mesa and bring thousands of students from around the globe to experience this beautiful city while learning English,” said Shawna Marino, the vice president of EF Education First. “We look forward to putting down roots in the City of the Arts and showing the world all that Costa Mesa has to offer. We believe that 15 months of extensive community outreach improved our design and operations, and we appreciate the Planning Commission and City Council approving this project.”

Marino also said the organization was fortunate to work with excellent City planners and City leadership, including Development Services Director Barry Curtis, on this project.

City Hall to close for the holidays

We want to remind the public that this year City Hall and the Corporation Yard will be closed from Monday, Dec. 23 through Wednesday, Jan. 1.

We will reopen these facilities to the public on Thursday, Jan. 2.

As usual, essential services such as public safety, inspection, maintenance and field services will still be available.

Have a happy and safe holiday season.

Maintenance Supervisor Dan Jojola Snoops out the City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison presented Maintenance Supervisor Daniel Jojola with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet on Dec. 12.

“I have heard nothing but great things about Daniel,” Farrell Harrison said. “His dedication to his work here in Costa Mesa is well known and respected by his co-workers and I personally want to thank him for all the work he has done over the last few weeks to help us prepare Snoopy House for the community. It’s a job well done and recognition well earned.”

Jojola is responsible for effectively planning, organizing, supervising and participating in the work of subordinate staff members engaged in all aspects of building maintenance operations. Jojola has exhibited excellent leadership, dedication and hard work to see that work is completed on time, within budget and to the highest standards.

This time of year, Jojola transforms into an event planner helping create Snoopy House. He is in charge of loading in the various props, stringing of the various Christmas lighting and electrical circuits. When the event is over, he is in charge of breakdown and load out of all things Snoopy House. The residents of Costa Mesa have come to love this annual tradition.

Jojola began his career with the City of Costa Mesa in 2007 as a Building Maintenance Technician. In 2015, Jojola was elevated to his current position of Building Maintenance Supervisor.

Jojola attended Long Beach City College where he earned an Associate of Science Degree with an emphasis on Electrical Science and theory. It is at Long Beach City College where he learned about the job opening at the City of Costa Mesa.

In addition to honoring Jojola, Farrell Harrison congratulated several new hires, the newly promoted and two retirees.

New hires include Genesis Jimenez a new Office Specialist working in the City Clerk's office, Zihui Lei a new Intern working in the Planning division of our Development Services Department, Naomi Oosterhof a new Permit Processing specialist working in the Building division of Development Services.

From Fire & Rescue Amy Ellard is a new Office Specialist II assigned to Community Risk Reduction and Herlinda Flores is a new Intern also assigned to Community Risk Reduction.

In Parks & Community Services, Joseph Murguia is a new

Community Services Leader II working in Youth & Sports, Maria Pascua is a new Community Services Leader III working at the Downtown Community Center, Crystal Pineda is a new Community Services Leader II also assigned to our Downtown Community Center, Stephanie Smith is also a new Community Services Leader II assigned to the LEAP program, Clayton Vranic is a new Community Services Leader II assigned to Youth & Sports and Stefanie Da Silva is a new Community Services Leader III assigned to the ROCKS program.

Finally, Albert Ricci is a new Police Aide at the Police Department.

Those promoted include Ines Galmiche to Assistant Planner in the Development Services Department, Jason Arita to Community Services Specialist at the Police Department and Elena Polyakova White as the new Engineering Technician I in Public Services.

Those retiring include Bart Mejia, who started with the City in July 1991 as Contract Administrator and in June 2016 assumed the role as City Engineer. His accomplishments as City Engineer included Fire Station 1, Lions Park Library, City Council Chambers, and Arlington Bioswale and Trail.

Also, Code Enforcement Officer Barbara Zwart is retiring after being part of the Costa Mesa family for over 11 years. She started her journey with the city as a temporary worker in the Development Services Department in 2007.

Street sweeping cancelled for

Thanksgiving holiday

Due to the observation of the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be no residential street sweeping Thursday, Nov. 28 and Friday Nov. 29.

The street sweeping hiatus coincides with residential trash collection being pushed back one day due to the Thanksgiving holiday. This results in residential gutter lines being cluttered with trash cans making it impossible for street sweeper operators to do an efficient job.

Street sweeping will resume back to normal schedule the week of Dec. 2.

For more information, residents can call the city's street sweeping hotline at (714) 327-7471, which has been updated with this information.

Outreach Success: Sharon's Story

Sharon is a senior citizen who spent many a day on a bus bench in Costa Mesa. But thanks to the help of Costa Mesa's outreach team, a local tattoo parlor owner and a local faith-based nonprofit, Trellis, she's now off the streets and living on her own.

But getting there was a long journey with many pitfalls along the way. Originally from the Los Angeles area, Sharon found her way to Costa Mesa where she said the motels were more affordable. The outreach team often found her sleeping on the

sidewalk on Harbor Boulevard

When outreach asked about her situation, she said she had money coming in from out of the area. It wasn't true. When outreach and police officers talked to her about entering the Bridge Shelter, she declined the offer.

Outreach continued to engage with her weekly, normally after she had used all of her money for a motel.

After a few months of conversation and missed appointments, Sharon asked about housing, and outreach workers began a housing assessment. Coincidentally, the owner of the Life After Death Tattoo parlor on Harbor Boulevard had contacted city outreach workers regarding Sharon.

Outreach staff worked in tandem with the tattoo parlor owner to support her. They encouraged her to show up at her appointments, finish the housing assessment share how she became homeless, and they started discussing possible solutions.

She finally admitted, after months of these one-on-one encounters, that one of the reasons she had been evicted from housing was due to a chronic health condition.

Her last landlord asked her to leave because she couldn't control her condition, and she gave up looking for a room since the situation seemed hopeless.

During this time, a local church member who had also encountered Sharon while she was on the street reached Trellis to see if they could help.

Sharon began looking for rooms to rent and she felt encouraged that there were three entities helping her end her homelessness.

Today, Sharon has a place to live and settling in to her new home. She is using her monthly income to pay her rent and a

local church assisted with her first month rent and moving costs. She is still in need of rental help and needs furnishings.

The tattoo parlor owner is working to find a long-term, permanent solution and is hosting a fundraiser called “Faces for Costa Mesa” on Sunday Nov. 24 at 7 p.m. at the Life After Death Tattoo shop located at 3011 B Harbor Blvd. Funds received from the fundraiser will go into a special account and be used solely for to help sustain Sharon’s stability.

It has been a real team effort to help Sharon get off the concrete bus bench and into a warm bed under a roof. The amazing unsolicited collaboration has changed her life for the long term. It is a true example of how government, an outreach team, businesses, and the faith community can work together to help someone move off of the streets.

In this season of Thanksgiving, please join the community at the Life After Death Tattoo parlor to help raise funds for Sharon. Click the website here <http://www.lifeafterdeathtattoo.com>.

For information about the City of Costa Mesa’s ongoing outreach efforts and Bridge Shelter, please visit www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness.

County executive Susan Price named as Costa Mesa’s next

Assistant City Manager

Costa Mesa City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison is pleased to announce she has chosen Susan Price, Director of Care Coordination for the County of Orange, to be the City's next Assistant City Manager.

Price, often referred to by the media as Orange County's "Homeless Czar" quickly rose to the top of a talented pool of 67 candidates vying to be the City's second-in-command. Costa Mesa is one of the very few cities in Orange County to open an emergency Bridge Shelter, and she will be instrumental in its operations and management.

"Susan is a highly respected leader and trailblazer in addressing homelessness in Orange County," Farrell Harrison said. "Her outstanding credentials and past leadership roles make her a great fit for Costa Mesa. I look forward to her joining our exceptional leadership team and working with her to solve some of the City's biggest challenges."

Mayor Katrina Foley echoed that sentiment. "It's great to hear that Susan Price will be joining our Costa Mesa team," Mayor Foley said. "Her diverse experience in finding successful cost-efficient solutions to end homelessness will help us transition seamlessly to oversee our shelter and homeless outreach programs. She also brings needed expertise in developing plans for Veterans housing and identifying partners and funding sources to build a quality workforce and affordable housing for families. Her leadership skills and background in these areas are critical at this time. I'm excited to welcome her to our Costa Mesa team."

Price arrived in the County of Orange in May of 2016 amid much fanfare as she had previously led successful efforts in the City of Long Beach's Health and Human Services Department to address high-profile issues like homelessness, housing and

public health.

During her tenure in Orange County she has designed, developed and implemented 600 emergency shelter beds to help address the encampment crisis, influenced a culture change in the county to effectively address homelessness and created unique strategies to effectively respond to homelessness in one of the largest counties in the country.

“Costa Mesa appealed to me because it’s an innovative and dynamic city,” Price said. “It was the perfect set of circumstances for me. With my expertise in mobilizing and coordinating a multitude of stakeholders to improve the quality of life for Orange County residents, I can see myself contributing to Costa Mesa in a significant way.”

She cited her 17 years of government experience, work in master planning for walkability and bike-ability and her decades of experience in managing homeless services, housing programs and community health initiatives as the reasons why she is a great fit for Costa Mesa.

Price has spearheaded capital improvement projects, tracked legislative priorities and managed complex, grant-based budgets during her career in government.

Price holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Applied Psychology and a Master’s Degree in Social Work from California State University, Long Beach. Price is expected to begin her tenure at Costa Mesa on Jan. 6, 2020.

Assembly Member Petrie-Norris presents City Council with \$1 million check for Lions Park

At the Nov. 19 City Council Meeting, Assembly Member Cottie Petrie-Norris presented the city with a check for \$1 million.

The funding is earmarked for the Lions Park Project, an ongoing revitalization effort by the City for the Donald Dungan Library, and the Neighborhood Community Center.

Mayor Katrina Foley expressed her gratitude for the Assembly Member's support.

"We appreciate the collaborative efforts by our Assemblywoman and her team to help us with our budget and legislative priorities," Mayor Foley said. "Helping to fund the new playground at Lions Park will improve the quality of our community and assist our Westside Restoration efforts. I'm looking forward to meeting to discuss next year's budget requests. We finally have an advocate to fight for funding for us in the state budget process."

Petrie-Norris said she was happy to fight for these funds to help the Costa Mesa community.

"With this funding, we believe we're supporting an important project in the community," Petrie-Norris said. "The funding will expand on current resources for the community, including adding onto existing park space. Green renovations will also ensure Lions Park operates under reduced greenhouse gas emissions – a critical goal for all of our communities. We're delighted we were able to work with our Costa Mesa City colleagues to make this happen."

To learn more about the Lions Park Project, please visit the

As storm season begins, sandbags are available for residents at City Hall

Throughout the winter storm season, the city's maintenance service crews will patrol potential flooding spots to make sure catch basins are clear of debris and operational. Crews are also ready to respond to other weather-related incidents.

Please report flooding issues to 714-754-5250.

Sand bags are available for free to Costa Mesa residents in the southeast corner of the City Hall parking lot at 77 Fair Drive and at the Costa Mesa Sanitary District Maintenance Yard located at 174 W. Wilson St.

Both locations are self-service so please remember to bring a shovel. The number of sandbags is limited to 15 sandbags per household. No commercial use please.

- Also in preparation of the rainy season Maintenance crews will have:
- Flooded signs ready to be placed at known potential flooding locations.
- Additional sand and sand bags ready to be stocked at City Hall and Fire Station No. 4.
- Two portable trash pumps ready to go if required.
- Street sweeping will be canceled if rain is consistent, at this time street sweeping will continue as scheduled.

Judge's ruling in favor of Costa Mesa's sober living ordinances marks city's fourth victory

The City of Costa Mesa continues to rack up legal victories as Federal Judge James Selna on Nov. 4 denied a motion by California Women's Recovery, Inc. ("Lynn House") and the Sober Living Network, Inc. to set aside a jury's ruling last year that rejected a challenge to the city's sober living ordinances.

"It's time for these sober living home operators to stop fighting our local laws and realize that we are on the right side of history when it comes to protecting both neighborhoods and patients from the industry's bad actors," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "We will continue to enforce our laws. I am positive they will withstand these challenges as reasonable and a model for other communities."

This is the fourth legal victory for the City's laws, passed in 2014, that regulate sober living home operators in single family neighborhoods, limiting the number of residents to six or fewer and maintaining a 650-foot buffer between non-licensed sober living homes.

The laws also regulate sober living home operators in multi-family zones, requiring a separation requirement to avoid converting neighborhoods into institutional-like settings. The City implemented the laws to protect the entire community from operators of unlicensed facilities which exposed residents to dangerous conditions and created public nuisance concerns.

In September, Judge Selna denied a motion for a preliminary injunction against the city's group home ordinances filed by sober living home operator SoCal Recovery, a for-profit corporation that operates sober living residences in Costa Mesa.

Judge Selna issued a ruling in July of 2019 that rejected a challenge to the city's group home ordinance by Yellowstone LLC.

Further, a jury unanimously ruled the same thing in December of 2018, rejecting claims by Yellowstone, along with another sober living home operator and an industry trade group, that the city's ordinances are discriminatory and violate the Fair Housing Act.

Code Enforcement Officer Winston Karuga receives the City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison presented Code Enforcement Officer Winston Karuga with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly employee Meet and Greet event on Oct. 31.

"As a Code Enforcement Officer in our Community Improvement Division, Winston is tasked with taking on tough issues like group homes and illegal dispensaries," Farrell Harrison said. "Winston's work and leadership in this area has been a tremendous achievement in maintaining the high standards expected by the City's residents."

Karuga joined the Costa Mesa team in 2016 as a Code Enforcement officer. In late 2017, along with his regular duties, he was assigned to investigate illegal sober living/group homes. He understood this assignment was one of the City Council's top priorities.

Karuga hit the ground running and quickly applied his experience and education to this new assignment. Due to his team attitude and work ethic, approximately 83 code enforcement cases were generated that have led to the closure of approximately 20 non-permitted or illegal locations, the compliance of 10 locations, and nine referrals to the City attorney's office for additional review.

Additionally, during this assignment Karuga developed specific investigative techniques, which he then shared with his fellow employees that brought about a higher quality of work within the Community Improvement Division.

Born in Kenya, Karuga was a year old when he moved to United Kingdom with his parents and sisters. He attended Wellingborough International High School and Leicester De Montfort University where he received his associates degree in "Regeneration/Sustainable Communities."

He started his career in 2008 at 18 years old as an apprentice housing officer in Northampton, England. He managed HUD- style housing for the local council (City). He was also involved in many community redevelopment projects as well as projects to help the homeless. He was part of a team that started up a shelter and supported housing projects called the Oasis House.

In addition to honoring Karuga, City Manager Farrell Harrison recognized several new employees and congratulated others on their promotions.

Elisandra Alcala, Spencer Ewertz and Caelan Gambrel are three new Community Services Leader II working out of our Balearic Center and Gilberto Davila is a new Community Services Leader

III assigned to the Senior Center.

Jacob Wigal is a new Engineering Technician I working in our Transportation Division of Public Services.

Getting promotions are Kelly Dalton, who has been promoted to Associate Engineer in our Public Services Department and Hector Soriano has been promoted to Assistant Engineer also in our Public Services Department. Carlos Diaz has also been promoted to Sergeant at our Police Department.

Latest ruling on needle exchange proposal is another victory for Costa Mesa and the county

San Diego Superior Court Judge Joel R. Wohlfeil ruled on Friday Oct. 25, that the Orange County Needle Exchange Program and the State of California cannot operate a mobile needle exchange program in Costa Mesa and other cities in the county unless the state's California Department of Public Health complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This is a great victory for Costa Mesa residents, visitors and businesses, whose safety would have been put at risk with operation of a mobile needle exchange program.

"Protecting the public health includes complying with CEQA," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "Evidence of more than 200,000 needles in the public space creates an environmental hazard not analyzed by the state. It's unfortunate that local

entities had to expend taxpayer funds to force compliance with laws intended to protect the public. This is similar to the state's sober living home rubber stamp licensing. We need better oversight from these state agencies."

The most recent ruling comes nearly one year after the Superior Court for the County of San Diego issued a preliminary injunction against both the Orange County Needle Exchange Program and the California Department of Public Health.

It was in July of 2018 that the state Department of Public Health granted the Orange County Needle Exchange Program the right to distribute needles in Costa Mesa on 17th Street, from the intersection of Whittier Avenue and west to the edge of the city boundary at the Banning Ranch property each Wednesday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The state also granted the group the right to operate needle exchange programs in the City of Orange, Anaheim and Santa Ana.

In response to those approvals, the Costa Mesa City Council voted unanimously to pursue legal action and joined those three cities and the County of Orange to seek a temporary restraining order/temporary injunction and to put a halt to the approved mobile needle exchange program.

The Orange County Needle Exchange Program had previously operated a needle exchange program at the Santa Ana Civic Center but that operation was shut down by city officials who revoked OCNEP's permit after a massive increase in needle litter that posed a threat to public safety. Several people were pricked by discarded needles, including members of the Santa Ana Police Department. The city of Costa Mesa received written and photographic evidence of the needle litter.

Prior to the state's approval of the needle exchange program, the Costa Mesa Police Department and the City Attorney's

Office submitted evidence and statements to state officials that chronicled the substantial risks to public health the program presents to the Costa Mesa community and asked that the application be denied.

[Click here to see the city's responses.](#)

City wins coveted Helen Putnam award from League of California Cities for SMART Camp program

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison accepted the Helen Putnam Award for Excellence CCS Partnership Intergovernmental Collaboration Award for the summer SMART Camp program from the League of California Cities at its annual conference in Long Beach.

“We are very honored to receive this prestigious Helen Putnam Award from the League of California Cities,” City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison said. “The camp has touched the lives of thousands of youth and provided the opportunity to enrich their lives . We thank the Costa Mesa City Council and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District board for their support of this joint venture.”

The 2019 SMART Camp served approximately 490 participants. Approximately 266 participants registered for the sports session, and 94 participants registered for the music and 127 kids in the arts sessions.

Registration indicates that students from 4th grade through 8th grade in multiple elementary and middle schools across Costa Mesa participate in the camp.

The SMART Camp program demonstrates an innovative and replicable example of collaboration amongst the City, the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, and other partners to bring important services to children and families.

“With our SMART Camp, we create summer jobs for young coaches and teachers who participate,” Mayor Katrina Foley said. “We provide free summer camps for students in fourth through eighth grade that benefit all families regardless of income and reduce the likelihood of at-risk teen conduct during summer. Engaging students and keeping them active through our SMART Camps benefit the entire community while fostering creativity, critical thinking, logic and communication skills; and in the long run developing well-rounded citizens.”

SMART Camp typically lasts for four weeks from early July to August. Students are introduced to a variety of athletic sports (aquatics, baseball, basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer, softball, tennis, volleyball and wrestling), music, and art programs (visual 2D, 3D, and acting).

Kirk Bauermeister, Newport-Mesa School District’s Executive Director of Secondary Education and a former principal and coach, said the program has been invaluable.

“The partnership with the city has turned into a collaborative effort between the City of Costa Mesa and the school district,” he said. “This summer, district teachers and coaches will work with close to 1,000 kids from the City of Costa Mesa. Our high school coaches and high school players help out at the camp for community service hours and because of that the youth of Costa Mesa have a high-quality summer sports camp. The variety of sports offerings means many students are exposed to new sports as well.”