

City Council OKs Police Department Youth Diversion Grant program

The Costa Mesa City Council on Tuesday, Feb. 18, accepted a Youth Reinvestment Grant that will be used by the Costa Mesa Police Department for juvenile diversion programs.

The \$1 million grant will be administered through a partnership between Waymakers and six police departments, including CMPD. Waymakers, a non-profit community based organization, has a 46-year history of working with law enforcement agencies in Orange County. The CMPD, La Habra Police Department, Orange Police Department, Newport Beach Police Department, Tustin Police Department, and Westminster Police Department will be participating in referring juvenile diversion cases to Waymakers.

“Kudos to our police department for taking a proactive approach to help young people,” Mayor Katrina Foley said. “One bad decision as a teenager shouldn’t destroy your life. Kids deserve the chance to get their lives back on the right track. It’s a creative approach to law enforcement and I’m happy that we are the City taking the lead.”

The overall objective of this grant is to reduce recidivism rates of juvenile offenders, strengthen protective family factors, limit the impact of juvenile offenses in the community, repair harm to victims and/or the community, and ease administrative duties of the court system and police departments.

Waymakers’ Juvenile Diversion Program offers practical, individualized, and cost-effective early intervention, restorative justice activity components such as individual and family counseling, case management, victim-offender mediation,

Peer Court, community service and restitution, career and education support, legal awareness, practical parenting skills, drug and alcohol awareness, anger management, service learning projects, truancy reduction, social skills, decision making, and 24-hour help lines and specialized services linkage.

The program is an alternative to the juvenile justice system and gives youth the opportunity they need to get back on track and make things right. The overall goal of diversion programs is to reduce reoffending or the occurrence of problem behaviors without having to formally process youth in the justice system. For more information on Waymakers, visit waymakersoc.org.

“We are proud to partner with Waymakers on providing juvenile diversion services through the Youth Reinvestment Grant Program,” said Acting Police Chief Bryan Glass. “These services are an alternative approach to assist juveniles and their families. The program not only benefits the community of Costa Mesa, but communities of the other participating agencies and cities within Orange County.”

The funds allocated for the YRG come from the State of California Board of State and Community Corrections and will be used to service the Orange County Central Area. The 44-month grant will be provided through February 2023.