

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.”