

CMPD employee awards breakfast honors the difference makers

There was plenty of praise and awards to go around as several members of the Costa Mesa Police Department received top honors in the company of their family, colleagues and top city leaders at the annual Employee Recognition Breakfast held Tuesday morning March 22 at The Crossing Church.

“Today’s award recipients all share a common thread,” Chief Rob Sharpnack said. “They are servant leaders, passionately driven toward their duty and responsibility to improve the community. They are driven by a sense of what is right and good. They are the difference makers in our organization and the community.”

The event, emceed by Sgt. Clint Dieball, recognized Volunteer of the Year George Villazuela; Explorers of the Year Celia Quijivix and Kimberly Velasquez; Civilian of the Year Community Service Specialist Jessica Peters; Civilian Supervisor of the Year Administrator Sandra Lozano; Sworn Supervisor of the Year Sgt. Stephanie Selinske and Officer of the Year Lance Healey.

After winning the award, Officer Healey took to the stage and gave a rousing speech to his fellow police department colleagues.

“My entire adult life I’ve been part of an organization that is bigger than myself,” said Officer Healey, who is a military veteran and a key trainer in the department’s pre-academy program. “We are a department that is on the way up. I can see it. And I’m proud to have been a part of that.”

To read more about the award winners [click here](#).



In addition to the staff members honored, the department named Mika Community Development Corp. as the Community Partner of the Year and paid tribute to all the newly hired and promoted personnel.

Dieball commended others who didn't receive awards but deserved special recognition, including Officer Kha Bao, who made 108 DUI arrests while on patrol, Tony Reitz, who recovered 88 stolen vehicles at a value of \$866,000, Officer Blake Clements was nominated for the Trauma Intervention Program award in 2015 for compassionate handling of an elder abuse case and veteran Lt. Keith Davis, who recently stepped down from the SWAT team after 24 years.

Also, in a new twist, Chief Sharpnack singled out the Wozniak murder trial as the Case of the Year and honored the detectives and investigators who went "above and beyond" on what he called "one of the most complex cases in the history of the Costa Mesa Police Department."



Sharpnack said while the police department is in a rebuilding phase today, the recruitment efforts are strong and he is working hard on a new five-year strategic plan that will outline the mission, vision and goals of the department.

“We have been galvanized as a team,” the chief said. “The future for the Costa Mesa Police Department is bright. We will solidify our position as the top of Orange County law enforcement agencies. I am truly honored to serve alongside members of the CMPD and the city organization as a whole.”