

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.