

Time for some Easter 'Egg-Citement' this Saturday

Costa Mesa real estate company Torelli Realty is proud to announce its annual Egg Hunt, "**Egg-Citement**" will take place this Saturday, March 26 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Tanager Park.

Torelli Realty has sponsored this event for over 25 years and it is a highlight of the spring season for children and adults alike.

Egg-Citement offers an Egg Hunt that is broken down into age groups for the children. The first round of the egg hunt for children from 2-4 starts at 10 a.m. and each successive age group goes for 15 minutes, grabbing candy and toys, until everyone gets through. There will also be pony rides, a petting zoo with small live farm animals, coloring and jellybean contests, and a bounce house.

The Easter Bunny himself will also be present and available to take photos with all attendees.

Besides being a highly anticipated event that brings the community together, Egg-Citement also gives local schools a chance to do some much needed fundraising. The event and attractions are free, however several local schools/organizations will be selling concessions to raise money for their programs.

[Click here to see a flier about the event.](#)

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.”

City to address School Zone Traffic Calming soon

The Costa Mesa Public Services Department will soon be initiating the construction phase of a much-needed school zone traffic calming project.

This project will target multiple locations throughout the City. The project will include replacement of all school zone warning flashers with solar powered devices and improved intelligent technology, which enables them to be activated when children are in school.

The project also includes installation of 20 radar speed feedback signs that will have built-in technology to collect speed and volume data that will allow city staff to implement future safety upgrades and enable better planning of focused enforcement in and around Costa Mesa schools.

Other improvements include installation of 220 pedestrian count down heads at various signalized intersections in the vicinity of Costa Mesa schools.

Award of a contract for this project by City Council is anticipated in April 2016. Installations would follow in Summer of 2016.

Parks and Community Services presented with prestigious award

Costa Mesa Parks and Community Services staff attended that California Park & Recreation Society (CPRS) annual conference in Long Beach to pick up a big statewide award during the closing gala.

The Costa Mesa staff was one of only seven agencies presented with an “Award of Excellence” for creating community through innovative programming.



The city won the award for its Ranch Afterschool Program, which is a collaboration with the OC Fair & Event Center and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District.

During this unique after school experience, students focus on agricultural concepts like gardening, livestock, and leather working.

The students have a hands-on experience caring for animals on the Farm which includes: chickens, sheep, pigs, goats, llamas, cattle, and horses.

They learn responsible animal care by cleaning stalls, grooming, and exercising the animals.

Additionally, the Farm dedicates land for each student to create and maintain an individual garden. Students' gardening responsibilities include planting, watering, fertilizing, weeding, inspecting for pests and harvesting their plot.

Agricultural education helps children learn about healthy food

choices and teaches them different ways to access fresh fruits and vegetables. Most importantly, students begin to understand the deep impact agriculture has in their lives past, future and present.



“This free program is a true collaboration and would not be possible without the support of the Orange County Fairgrounds,” said Ashley Ocasio, the city’s assistant recreation supervisor. “This strategic partnership provides many Costa Mesa youth the opportunity to experience an unique after-school program, in which the focus in on agriculture and farming”

The California Park & Recreation Society awards program recognizes outstanding achievement in the areas of facility design, park planning, marketing and communication, and community improvement and programming through demonstrating the principals of resourcefulness, execution, accomplishment and alignment with the parks and recreation mission.

Veterans of all stripes attend Heroes Hall groundbreaking

On Wednesday morning March 16, several hundred civic, business and elected leaders, dignitaries and war veterans celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Heroes Hall veteran exhibit that have a permanent home at the OC Fair & Event Center.

“This is dedicated to the honor and sacrifices to those who served our country,” said Michele Richards, the vice president of business development for the fair and event center.



Richards was one of a number of speakers who included board members Doug La Belle and Nick Beradino and Bolton Colburn, who runs the Exhibits and Education Department at the fair and

event center.

The groundbreaking duties for what will be the county's first museum dedicated to veterans fell to those who served in wars from Afghanistan to World War II.

Those veterans included one of the last remaining Tuskegee Airmen, Robert Friend, Korean War vet Robert Dugan, Vietnam vet Frank Orzio, Desert Storm vet Douglas Wooley and Claudia Acosta of the U.S. Army.

The OC Fair & Event Center was once part of the Santa Ana Army Air base, a 1,300-plus acre training facility that was active during World War II. That base is now home to the fairgrounds, Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa High School, Davis Elementary and TeWinkle Park.

"As the former home of the Santa Ana Army Air Base, the OC Fair & Event Center is a natural fit for the Heroes Hall Exhibit. We are honored to host this historic exhibit and look forward to seeing it become a reality in the coming months," the fair's CEO Kathy Kramer said in a statement.

The exhibit is expected to encompass more than 12,000 square feet with indoor/outdoor exhibit space. The former "Memorial Gardens" building will be relocated and reconstructed as part of the overall exhibit, which will also include memorabilia and tributes to California veterans.

Crews are expected to break ground in March with an expected completion date of Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, 2016. The exhibit is expected to attract more than 1.5 million visitors each year.

In 2015, the OC Fair & Event Center Board voted in favor of a

\$2 million contribution to start the funding efforts for Heroes Hall.

The Board also approved the creation of the Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation to lead in fundraising for the ongoing maintenance and operation of Heroes Hall.

The city of Costa Mesa donated \$25,000 toward the project, one of many local entities who have showed their support.

To learn more about how to donate and for periodic updates on the Heroes Hall exhibit [click here](#).

Mayor's award goes to longtime education leader Kirk Bauermeister

Life-long Costa Mesa resident and Newport-Mesa educator and coach Dr. Kirk Bauermeister received the Mayor's Award at the Tuesday March 15 City Council meeting.

In his 18 year career with the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, Bauermeister is the only person to serve as principal at all four of Costa Mesa's secondary schools, TeWinkle and Costa Mesa middle schools as well as Estancia and Costa Mesa high schools.

Prior to that, he was a coach and the athletic director of Costa Mesa High School.

"This was really an easy one to pick," said Mayor Steve

Mensing, regarding his choice of Bauermeister for this award. "I've never met somebody who is more committed to what he does. He gives us all inspiration."

Bauermeister, who was accompanied by his family, said from an early age he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and work in education.

"It's an honor to be recognized by a city that has done so much for me," he said.

That's A Wrap! Senior Center Bus Gets An Artsy New Makeover

The Costa Mesa Senior Transportation Program's bus has recently undergone a makeover. What was once a simple, traditional, white passenger bus is now a colorful piece of art that transports seniors to and from the Senior Center and to personal appointments throughout the City.

The bus has been coined as the "Costa Motion" and now bears the slogan of "Keepin' Seniors Moving."

The artistic design, which was created by City staff, incorporates an area for both City program advertising and Conference and Visitors Bureau advertising.

This is just another unique way to promote Costa Mesa as "the City of the Arts."

The Happy Feet Youth Running Club Sprints Back Into Action

The free fitness program for youth called the Happy Feet Youth Running Club allows local Costa Mesa youth to learn the basics in short and long distance running while participating in fun weekly practices and an end-of-season superhero themed 5K run through beautiful Fairview Park.

The program emphasizes teamwork, goal setting and healthy habits all while having fun exercising.



Each child will receive a free Happy Feet T-shirt as well as a complimentary entrance into the Costa Mesa Community Run.

The first practice and registration day are set to take place this Saturday, March 12 at Fairview Park.

How to deal with an increase in coyotes

With residents reporting a recent increase in the number of coyote sightings in Costa Mesa, we want to again share some tips on what to do to if a resident has a coyote encounter and how to make your home or backyard less inviting to these predators.

The public should keep in mind that historically, coyote attacks upon humans are extremely rare. In a study presented at the 2004 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, there were only 56 reported coyote-versus-human attacks resulting in injuries in Southern California in the previous 25 years.

This figure is extremely small when compared to an average 4.5 million people who are bitten by dogs nationally each year. While not normally a danger to humans, coyotes will display defensive behaviors if threatened or cornered. Therefore, it is important to leave a comfortable distance between you and a coyote.

Small pets can easily become coyote prey. Cats and small dogs should not be allowed outside alone, even in a fenced yard. It is highly recommended that small pets always be accompanied by their owner. Though coyotes generally hunt between sunset and sunrise, they can be observed at all hours of the day and will not pass up the opportunity for an easy meal. A dog or cat left in a backyard can be taken in a matter of moments.

Many steps can be taken to protect you and your property from nuisance animals like coyotes and other wildlife:

- Fence off animal enclosures (fully enclose if possible).
- Keep cats and small dogs indoors or in the close presence of an adult.
- Feed pets indoors.
- Store trash in covered heavy-duty containers.
- Keep yards free from potential shelter such as thick brush and weeds.
- Enclose the bottoms of porches and decks.
- Eliminate potential food and water sources, such as fallen fruit and standing water.
- Eradication and/or relocation of the urban coyote is not effective. These programs actually provide a vacuum in nature, causing these animals to have even larger litters, ultimately increasing the coyote population.
- Practicing these measures will help minimize the nuisances and losses caused by urban coyotes.
- If you locate an injured or potentially dangerous coyote in Costa Mesa, call CMPD Dispatch at 714-754-5252, or for general inquiries leave a message with Costa Mesa Animal Control Services at 714-754-5311.

For even more information, we encourage residents to watch the following Public Service Announcement regarding coyotes and ways to discourage them.

Rea Elementary Named First NMUSD School to Become AVID

Affiliate

Rea Elementary will be the first school in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District to convert to an AVID Elementary and Technology School.

Beginning in the 2016/17 school year, Rea Elementary with the adoption of the AVID program will better prepare its students for college and career success in a global society.

Advancement Via Individual Determination is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to preparing all students for college and other postsecondary options. AVID brings research-based strategies and curriculum to educational institutions that develop students' critical thinking, literacy and math skills across all content areas throughout the entire campus.

Key components of AVID include: student success skills, organizational skills and partnerships. Areas of focus include communication, note-taking strategies, critical thinking, time management and goal setting.

To prepare for the AVID implementation and refinement, Rea Elementary teachers will participate in various training courses and continue to collaborate weekly throughout the academic year.

Specifically they will address content areas in reading, writing and math and the alignment to WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading) lessons with a strong emphasis on formative data collection to ensure students are meeting their individual goals.

Along with implementing the core AVID components into lesson plans, Rea Elementary will continue to focus on enrichment opportunities in Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art and Math (STREAM), Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) and Leadership, aligning all learning opportunities to preparing

Rea students for college and career readiness.

For more information, please contact Rea Elementary Principal, Dr. Kalim Rayburn, at 949-515-6905 or krayburn@nmusd.us.

Residents Are Warned To Beware Of The Invasive Tiger Mosquito

With the arrival of the Asian tiger mosquito or Aedes species in the county, the Orange County Vector Control District has issued an alert and is urging residents to protect themselves and their families from mosquito bites. Aside from being itchy and annoying, the bite of an infected female tiger mosquito can spread dengue, chikungunya, or Zika virus.

The district advises residents to use mosquito repellent and mosquito-proof homes by dumping standing water both inside and outside, discarding water-holding containers not being used, and making sure all window and door screens are in good repair.

Click [here](#) for more information, including an interactive map to locate infested areas. Also, literature about this health advisory is available at City Hall.

Prostitution Crackdown Results In 32 Arrests, Mostly At Local Motels

Costa Mesa PD Special Investigations Unit (SIU) made 32 arrests for prostitution over the last two weeks, according to Police Chief Rob Sharpnack.

The majority of these arrests have come from the Vagabond Inn and the La Quinta, Sharpnack said.

These arrests involved both in-person solicitations and meet ups secured through online advertisements, he said.

Additional investigation has shown the prostitutes have left for other cities and the word from multiple interviews is that the Costa Mesa Vice Unit is cracking down and Costa Mesa is not a safe haven for prostitutes.