

Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter Partner Profile: Serve the People

Serve the People is a private non-profit organization located in Santa Ana that provides health care services to people who struggle to find a doctor, dentist, optometrist or a counselor for care. Their mission is to provide the physical, mental, emotional and mentoring needs of the poor, children, sick, needy, uneducated, oppressed and lost people regardless of race, religion or gender.

Last week Serve the People coordinated the visit of a Mobile Vision Clinic at the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter where shelter clients were provided free vision tests and glasses.



Partnerships with organizations like Serve the People allow the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter team to better serve those experiencing homelessness in Costa Mesa.

Many volunteer opportunities are available at the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter. These opportunities are an easy way for the public to take an active role and help create positive change in the community. For more information, please contact AlyssaS@mercyhouse.net.

Management and Analysis of City Budget Pays off for Haston

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison presented Amber Haston with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet at City Hall on Thursday Aug. 22.

“Amber has proven to be a critical member of the Finance and greater City team,” Farrell Harrison said. “I am very impressed with all she does and appreciate her hard work and dedication and I know her colleagues do as well. Congratulations to Amber for a job well done.”

Haston joined the Costa Mesa team in May of 2017 as a Management Analyst in the Public Services Department. She transferred into the Finance Department in December of 2018.

Upon her arrival in Finance, she has reinvented the role of the Finance Department Management Analyst, focusing on key special projects and performing complex financial analysis and forecasting. Additionally, she continues to provide budget support to all budget liaisons, as well as assistance in forecasting as part of the surplus/deficit projections for FY 2018-19. She served as a critical lead budget team member, and worked with Public Services to develop the Capital Improvement Program budget.

Concurrently, due to her purchasing experience, she was also asked to step in, along with Purchasing staff, to serve as the Buyer and dedicated Management Analyst for procuring items for the temporary Bridge Shelter in order to meet the City Council goal of opening the shelter by April 2019. Her

involvement was instrumental to the successful opening.

Some of her other key responsibilities include developing and managing the Finance Department's budget and procurements, reviewing all City staff reports for fiscal impacts on behalf of the Finance Department, and work on special projects. Some of these special projects include the Citywide Fee Study and Cost Allocation Plan, updating the Capital Asset Needs Ordinance, implementing vendor and bid management software, and preparation and implementation of an electronic signature policy.

Haston attended Colorado State University and holds a bachelor's degree in business management with a specialization in Public and Non-Profit Management.

In addition, City Manager Farrell Harrison welcomed Jackqueline Nguyen as the new Buyer and Louis Li as the new Budget Specialist in the Finance Department.

In Parks & Community Services, Caitlin Huerta and Wendy Pacheco are new Community Services Leader III working at the Senior Center.

Also in Parks and Community Services, Emily Pulaski has been promoted to Recreation Specialist and Amir Ardan has been promoted to Senior Lifeguard at our Downtown Recreation Center.

Bridge Shelter Success: Samuel's Story

When the Network for Homeless Solutions first contacted Samuel

in 2014, it was learned that he suffered from a traumatic brain injury and depression exacerbated by chronic drug use. At one point, Samuel was able to maintain housing in the City and also participate in a variety of odd jobs and volunteer church activities.

But soon things took a turn for the worse. The cumulative effects of his chronic drug use caught up with him. His erratic behavior caused his roommates to evict him. He eventually lost his apartment and became estranged from his family. He became violent and blacked out after excessive drinking and drug use, to the point where others could not be around him.

Fortunately for Samuel, his link to County Mental Health made him eligible to get a housing voucher. After he lost his apartment, he was able to enter the Bridge Shelter and begin working on stabilizing his behavior and getting treatment for his chronic drug use.

Additionally, while his case manager was working hard on behavioral interventions to try to reverse negative behaviors, Samuel also found an apartment unit where vouchers were accepted. Samuel was able to move into the apartment last week with the help of Bridge Shelter partners and NHS members Trellis and Fresh Beginnings Ministries, who emptied out his storage locker and helped to move his furniture.

As staff has found in the past, getting into housing is only the beginning from those facing both mental health and substance abuse challenges. A program offering wrap-around support by both Costa Mesa outreach workers and community partners is essential for ensuring future housing stability.

Costa Mesa's outreach team is hopeful that Samuel will have many happy years in his new apartment. NHS outreach staff and volunteers are dedicated to ensuring that his housing remains stable by offering weekly visits and assistance in managing

treatment and other mental health programs.

Best of luck to Samuel as he continues on this road to recovery. He is just one of many successful clients who is benefitting from the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter and Network For Homeless Solutions, which are changing lives for the better every day.

For more information on Costa Mesa's efforts to aide individuals experiencing homelessness, please visit our website [here](#).

Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter Partner Profile: Community Action Partnership of Orange County

The Community Action Partnership of Orange County works to strengthen individuals and families by providing health services, workforce development and community engagement programs.

The organization also operate a 58,000 square-foot food bank complete with commercial grade refrigerators and freezers capable of handling 20 truckloads of perishable food. Volunteers receive and package about 26,000 boxes of food each month for distribution to 50 sites across the county.

Fresh Beginnings Ministries and Community Action Partnership have entered into an agreement to provide fresh produce and dry goods every week to Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter residents.

Prior to receiving food from the Community Action Partnership, there were several health code inspections that needed to occur. The Fresh Beginnings warehouse, the kitchen at the Bridge Shelter, and the Senior Center kitchen (where shelter volunteers cook many of the meals) all received A-plus ratings from health inspectors to clear the way for this program to begin.

Over the next two weeks, six volunteers will be trained as certified shoppers by the Community Action Partnership and will be trained on correct procedures at Orange County food banks.

The Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter team is always looking for new ways to innovate, create partnerships and better serve those experiencing homelessness in Costa Mesa. If you would like to be a part of the team and test out your culinary skills, please contact Bill.Nelson@costamesaca.gov.

Additional volunteer opportunities are available and an easy way for you to take an active role and help create positive change in your community. Volunteer opportunities available include preparing and serving meals, hosting games and social gatherings, offering a unique skill set to shelter guests and more. For more information please contact AlyssaS@mercyhouse.net.

A volunteer application is available [here](#).

Not ready to volunteer but still want to help? The city is currently accepting in-kind and cash donations to assist individuals in the community experiencing homelessness. To make a financial donation or for a list of accepted items please visit [here](#).

Costa Mesa police join federal and state law enforcement in large opioid investigation

The Costa Mesa Police Department was one of just a few local agencies involved in a large investigation into the illegal distribution of opioids beginning in late 2018.

Because of these efforts, a local opioid dealer and his accomplices are facing criminal charges after a major collaborative investigation led by the Federal Department of Justice and a team that included Costa Mesa Police and federal and state law enforcement agencies.

The investigation resulted in the arrest of a Huntington Beach resident indicted for reportedly shipping as many as 2.6 million fentanyl pills nationwide.

[Click here to read the press release from the U.S. District Attorney's Office.](#)

"We are aggressively confronting the opioid crisis through our partnership with law enforcement," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "Thank you to Costa Mesa police and our law enforcement partners for the excellent work to expose and root out these modern day drug dealers in our community. We will continue to hold these individuals who prey on our residents accountable."

Costa Mesa Police Capt. Bryan Glass credited his officers for working to stem this major drug crisis.

"We are proud of the work and efforts our officers continuously put towards these types of crimes, which directly affect our community and the nation," said Costa Mesa Police

Capt. Bryan Glass.

In addition to Costa Mesa Police, the case is being investigated by the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Western Cyber Crimes Unit, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the United States Marshals Service, the United States Department of State, the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation and the Chamberlain Police Department.

This successful investigation is one of the many ways the City of Costa Mesa is holding illegal businesses accountable.

In April of 2019 the City of Costa Mesa filed a lawsuit against the manufacturers and distributors of pain medications who are the root cause behind the national opioid crisis.

Mechanic Ian Carter receives July's City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison joined Assistant City Manager Tammy Letourneau to present Ian Carter, Equipment Mechanic III, with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet on Thursday July 25.

“Ian sets a great example as a dedicated and hard-working Costa Mesa city staff member,” Farrell Harrison said. “As one of only two fire mechanics, he works long hours to keep our fire equipment and city fleet in top condition. I am grateful that he is on our team.”

Carter arrived in Costa Mesa in 2013 and has 20 years of

experience as a heavy equipment mechanic. As the primary fire mechanic, he is responsible for maintaining all Fire Apparatus, ambulances and other fire equipment.

When the city lost several mechanics in 2017, Carter stepped up during the staffing shortage to manage the city's fleet of more than 350 vehicles. Carters' knowledge, skill level and professionalism was evident right away and he has proven to be an invaluable asset to the City of Costa Mesa and the Equipment Maintenance Section

In addition to honoring Carter, Letourneau welcomed several new employees, including new City Manager Farrell Harrison, and celebrated one retiree leaving after 30 years of service.

In Parks & Community Services, Joe Huynh is a new Senior Community Services Leader. Connor McMurdo is a new Senior Lifeguard working at the Downtown Recreation Center. Venci Vilchis and Yuridia Zarate are two new Community Services Leader II.

Kenneth Tu is a new Police Officer, and Casey Chu and Michelle Nguyen are new Interns working in the Public Services Department in the Transportation Division.

Executive Secretary Corrie Viera is retiring after a 30-year career, in which she started as an Office Specialist I for Public Services Department in the Transportation Services Division. Corrie has a great relationships with all staff she has encountered while working for the City. Enjoy your retirement, Corrie!

Bridge Shelter Success: Cindy's Story

Removing barriers such as substance abuse and legal challenges is something that is happening daily at the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter, thanks to the physical and emotional support provided by shelter case managers.

Cindy, a young woman filled with anger, recently received that help at the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter.

She had lost her car and wanted to get a job. However, due to recovery issues and loss of transportation, she was overwhelmed emotionally, unable to get work and had no idea how to begin a new 12-step program to help combat her addiction.

Additionally, Cindy was unfocused and dealing with many legal problems and medical issues. She wanted to return to her home state of Washington but was unable to come up with a suitable plan.

With the help of volunteers and thoughtful case management, Cindy was able to go before a judge and have her tickets and citations bundled and reduced.

Cindy is now getting her resume together and getting the confidence to look for work. She has also expressed interest in seeing a counselor to help get her back on her feet.

These simple, yet very important steps, are critical elements of Cindy's housing plan.

Thanks to the caring case manager staff and the shelter operator staff, Cindy is now on a path to a better life, and is encouraged to continue working towards securing housing.

Federal judge issues ruling affirming Costa Mesa's victory in sober living lawsuit

The City of Costa Mesa sealed its victory in the groundbreaking case involving Yellowstone Women's First Stop House, Inc. and two other entities after Federal District Judge James Selna ruled in the city's favor.

This latest ruling punctuates the city's resounding victory in December of 2018 when a jury disposed of most of the Yellowstone case by unanimously agreeing the city's sober living ordinances are not discriminatory and do not violate the Fair Housing Act.

"This ruling by the Honorable Judge Selna, determining the enforceability of our local laws, allows us to continue to protect patients and the public from those operators who are more concerned with profits over patient care," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "It confirms once again that investing in the litigation and fighting to keep our ordinance was the right thing to do not only for our Costa Mesa community, but others as well."

In the court case, the City of Costa Mesa was represented by lead trial attorney Jennifer Keller of Keller/Anderle LLP.

"The Costa Mesa City Council stood tall and refused to be intimidated by the Plaintiffs," Keller said at the time. "These victories are not just for the people of Costa Mesa and those in recovery homes, but also for every city in

California.”

The City’s law, passed in 2014, was written to balance the rights of all citizens – including residents of group homes – to live in and enjoy Costa Mesa’s single-family neighborhoods. The City implemented the law to protect the entire community from operators of unlicensed facilities which exposed residents to dangerous conditions and created public nuisance concerns.

Yellowstone, another sober living home and an industry trade group brought the original suit in the Central District of California in 2014. Numerous city employees and officials testified before the eight-person jury.

They spoke about the need for the law and discussed the City’s efforts to help those rendered homeless after being kicked out of sober living homes, including many people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction who had been enticed to Costa Mesa from out of state.

Several neighbors of poorly run recovery homes testified about the way these facilities mistreated recovering addicts and the impacts they had on the community.

After a four-week trial before Judge Selna, the jury deliberated for half a day before returning the verdict on all counts in favor of the City of Costa Mesa.

The verdict and Judge Selna’s ruling on July 16 are big victories for Costa Mesa as it means the city can continue to enforce its ordinance, which regulates sober living home operators in single family neighborhoods, including limiting the number of residents to six or fewer and maintaining a 650-foot buffer between non-licensed sober living homes.

Bridge Shelter Partner Profile: Clothing the Homeless

Clothing the Homeless is a ministry of Journey Christian Church, which is now helping Costa Mesa's Bridge Shelter clients regain dignity and improve their lives.

While the majority of homeless related clothing programs require vouchers and/or are often a bus ride or more away, Clothing the Homeless is unique in that it comes onsite due to its ability to be a mobile clothing distribution system.

The organization's goal is to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness with adequate clothing for different seasons and weather. They also want the clothing to be decent and clean to provide a boost to clients that often experience low self-esteem and to help them look presentable when appearing at job interviews.

Last month, Clothing the Homeless set up shop here in Costa Mesa and was able to provide new and gently-used clothing and accessories to both shelter guests and neighbors.

With its initial success, Clothing the Homeless now plans to serve shelter guests one weekend per month!

We are thankful for this partnership as it directly benefits those in the community that are experiencing homelessness by ensuring that shelter guests have the opportunity to choose fresh clothes as many of them embark on their housing and even employment plans.

It's because of organizations like this that we are able to continue to work towards changing lives for the better by putting Bridge Shelter clients on a path to personal and professional success.

To find out ways you can help Costa Mesa's Bridge Shelter clients call 714-836-7188 ext. 222 or visit our website at www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness

Tamara Letourneau to take City Manager job in Laguna Niguel

Tamara Letourneau, who has been the Assistant City Manager in Costa Mesa for the past five years, has accepted the job to become the new City Manager of Laguna Niguel.

Letourneau's Costa Mesa career began in 2011 when she was hired as a consultant working for the Management Partners firm before being hired full-time in 2014. Most recently, she has served as the Acting City Manager since November of 2018.

"It's great to see so many more women achieving top leadership roles in the county," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "No doubt we will continue to partner with her on regional issues. I'm grateful for all the extra work that Ms. Letourneau performed during the last seven months as interim. She simultaneously helped us open a new library, park and homeless shelter. We wish her much success in her new position as City Manager."

New City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison also thanked Letourneau for her leadership and her accomplishments during

her time with Costa Mesa.

“I am excited for Tammy and her new role in Laguna Niguel and grateful for the good work she accomplished during her tenure as Acting City Manager and leading a great team of city staff,” Farrell Harrison said. “I know this great city of Costa Mesa will continue to grow and prosper in the year’s ahead.”

Letourneau is currently the Assistant City Manager of Costa Mesa and has previously served as the City Manager of two Southern California cities. Through a combination of direct local government experience and consulting work, she has gained expertise in leading organizations to successfully complete high-profile projects and deliver high-quality, day-to-day services. She has experience in financial management, economic development, strategic planning, teambuilding, labor relations, organizational effectiveness and streamlining, and contract negotiations.

She graduated from California State Polytechnic University at Pomona with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration. She also holds a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from California State University Long Beach.

Her employment agreement will be considered at the July 16, 2019 Laguna Niguel City Council meeting. It is anticipated she will assume the role of City Manager on Aug. 12.

Fire & Rescue team member Jon

Neal promoted as city's new Fire Marshal

Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano announced that Jon Neal has been appointed to the position of Fire Marshal.

"Jon has been a highly valued addition to our team," Chief Stefano said. "We are pleased to announce that he will be overseeing the entire Community Risk Reduction Division and holding the rank of Fire Marshal, a position we have been working to formalize and reestablish for many years."

Neal has been a member of the Fire & Rescue team since 2015 and works in the Community Risk Reduction Division.

Prior to his work with Fire & Rescue, Neal was hired in 2008 as the City's Storekeeper.

During his tenure with the City of Costa Mesa, he has filled numerous positions.

In 2012 he was promoted to Code Enforcement Officer as part of the Development Services Department's Community Improvement Division.

In 2017, Neal was promoted to Assistant Fire Marshal.

In this role, he is responsible for the coordination and review of building plans and analyzation of statistical data relating to new code provisions. He is the lead in coordinating fire and life protection activities alongside staff from building and planning divisions and various utility companies.

Neal serves as President of the Orange County Fire Marshal section of the Orange County Fire Chief's Association and serves as Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue's liaison to the City's Network for Homeless Solutions, Group Home Work and

Development Review Committee.

Right after graduation from high school, Neal enlisted in the United States Coast Guard where he served as a firefighter on the USCGC Alert, a 210-foot cutter in addition to a multitude of other assignments. Upon completion of his active duty, Neal worked as the inventory control manager at Active Ride Shop, followed by his service as a logistics manager for Invisible Children in Gulu, Uganda.

Neal has earned several California State Fire Marshal Certification in addition to a Bachelor's of Fire Science Management from American Military University.

When not working, Neal enjoys spending time with his wife Zana and spending as much time traveling and participating in outdoor activities including but certainly not limited to, skateboarding, surfing, snowboarding, mountain biking and hitting the trails.

Former Navy Corpsman sets sail on new course with Costa Mesa Network for Homeless Solutions

Meet Paul Mahoney, one of the newest members of the city's team who helps Bridge Shelter clients on a daily basis to get out of homelessness.

Paul served a stint in the U.S. Navy until 1992, where he was a Hospital Corpsman.

He used his medical background from that service and got a job as a vocational nurse and was studying to be a registered nurse. However, he realized nursing wasn't his destined vocation, so he changed paths and chose to major in the field of psychology.

Paul graduated with a Bachelor in Psychology from California State University Long Beach. Since then, he worked with the developmentally disabled population in various roles including independent living skills, and management.

Shortly after graduation, he began a 12-year career with the Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center in downtown Los Angeles. His role was a Service Coordinator specializing in the senior population, overseeing skilled nursing and assisted living facilities that housed Regional Center clients.

In 2009 his focus shifted to forensic cases. At this time, Paul became involved in working with the court system, parole, probation and legal matters. Housing clients became difficult due to the inability to house felons with the state law restrictions so Paul became adept at housing navigation.

Paul continued his education and later received his Master in Business Administration with an emphasis on Health Care Administration and Finance from Brandman University.

In 2017, after 12 years at Regional Center, Paul left to take a position with Illumination Foundation. His primary duties and responsibilities included ensuring that all spending, staff allocation, budget allocation, planning and requirements for housing and compliance were being adhered to as per HUD requirements on several different federal, state and county contracts.

He also oversaw the case managers and housing navigators to ensure units were located, developed and maintained. Additionally, he was responsible for retention of the individuals placed in housing.

Paul bring to Costa Mesa a vast portfolio of education and experience and his impact can already been felt and seen as he works daily with some of the most vulnerable clients at the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter.

Thank you Paul for your hard work and dedication to the City and to the clients of the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter.

For more information and/or to volunteer or donate to the Bridge Shelter, visit our website www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness, or contact the shelter operators by calling 714-836-7188 ext. 222.