

# 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](#).

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## **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.

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## **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!

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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](http://www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness)

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## **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.

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## **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.

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# 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](http://www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness), or contact the shelter operators by calling 714-836-7188 ext. 222.

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**Bridge Shelter Success:**

# Jerry's Story

Jerry arrived at Share Our Selves in bad condition and in need of help. He had been living in his van for two years when he was assaulted, resulting in a local hospital stay. During that time, his vehicle was impounded by a neighboring police department.

He was referred to the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter shortly after this and immediately expressed interest in working towards housing opportunities. To get things started, Jerry worked with his assigned case manager to get new Medicare and Medi-Cal cards.

Unfortunately, Jerry struggled with addiction and had difficulty following through on even simple tasks which were exacerbated by the fact that most of his days were spent away from the shelter.

Because the City and Mercy House operate the Bridge Shelter with a 'Housing First Model', Jerry's case manager had a heart-to-heart talk with him and told him that if he didn't commit to meet on a regular basis, that he wouldn't successfully meet his housing goals and risk losing his bed at the facility.

After several false starts, Jerry agreed to a more consistent program and followed through with his case management action plan.

He confessed that he struggles with addiction and is tired of the life he has led. He knows that a new way of life is the only way to ensure that he does not end up in prison again.

Jerry was advised to attend outpatient clinics until a residential rehabilitation program could be arranged by case management.

Through the collaborative efforts of his case manager and his parole officer, Jerry has taken the first step toward independent living and has enrolled in a 90-day treatment program.

The compassionate team at the Costa Mesa Bridge Shelter will continue to monitor Jerry's journey to recover from addiction and help guide him on his path to independent living.

For more information and/or to donate to the Bridge Shelter, visit our website [www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness](http://www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness) or contact the shelter operators by calling 714-836-7188 ext. 222, or [click here](#).

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## **New City Manager takes office in Costa Mesa**

Lori Ann Farrell Harrison was sworn-in as the City Manager of the City of Costa Mesa during an Oath of Office ceremony at the start of the workday on Monday July 1, 2019. She is Costa Mesa's eighth City Manager and first woman appointed to the city's top position.

"I am grateful to the Costa Mesa City Council for this opportunity and excited to get to work. Costa Mesa is a great community and I look forward to working together with Council, staff, residents and businesses to continue moving Costa Mesa into the future while focusing on fiscal responsibility, public safety and improving neighborhoods and quality of life."

Farrell Harrison, a local government expert with 28 years of experience in the public and private sectors, had been the



Assistant City Manager in Huntington Beach since 2017. In that role, she was responsible for coordinating complex initiatives in many aspects of city government with an emphasis on fiscal sustainability, transparency and process improvement. She also worked with the City Manager in the daily oversight of the city's 10 non-elected departments including police, fire and public works.

Additionally, she served as chief advisor to the City Manager, the seven-member City Council and the elected City Attorney, City Treasurer and City Clerk. She has also been a leader in citywide homelessness efforts, and has led successful labor negotiations with the city's eight employee associations covering 987 full-time employees.

Prior to her role as Assistant City Manager, Farrell Harrison served as the Chief Financial Officer for the City of Huntington Beach for seven years, overseeing a total budget of \$344 million. She was instrumental in helping the city reduce its unfunded liabilities.

"Ms. Farrell Harrison's extensive background working in government and the private sector prepared her for the challenges ahead to ensure Costa Mesa plans for a fiscally sustainable future, with quality services and facilities for the community," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "We look forward to working with her to restore our neighborhoods and parks, make our community safer, develop plans for economic stability and environmental sustainability, and increase community engagement."



Prior to Huntington Beach, Farrell Harrison served as the City Controller, and later as the Chief Financial Officer, for the City of Long Beach, the sixth largest city in California. In that capacity, she was responsible for working with 23 department heads in managing a city budget of \$2.3 billion.

Earlier in her career, she worked for the State of New York and later the City of New York's Administration for Children's Services overseeing the \$2.0 billion budget for child protective, adoption and day care services.

Farrell Harrison holds a Master's of Public Administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and a Bachelor's Degree from Barnard College of Columbia University. She is fluent in Spanish.

photos courtesy Matt Fitt Photography

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# Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue adds OES engine to the fleet

On Friday, June 28, 2019 the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Department officially took possession of CAL OES Fire Engine no. 302 from the State of California, Governor's Office of Emergency Medical Services, Fire and Rescue Division. Fire Chief Dan Stefano, Captain Joe Noceti, Captain Chuck Torres, and Engineer Steve Savage traveled to the Garden Grove Fire Department to pick up the engine in an agreement facilitated through CAL OES Region Fire Chief Dave Stone. The engine will be housed at Fire Station no. 4 located at 2300 Placentia.

"We appreciate this highly valued opportunity to take on the assignment of an OES engine," said Chief Stefano. "We have been in close contact with CAL OES over the course of many years making both formal and informal requests for this assignment, and today marks the day this expanded partnership with CAL OES begins. This is a very special day for Costa Mesa."

The State of California Governor's Office of Emergency Services has responsibility for administering the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan. This plan, in which the City of Costa Mesa participates, provides emergency resources to be shared throughout the state during major emergencies, which exceed the capability of a local jurisdiction to mitigate on their own. This includes emergencies such as wildfires, floods, and earthquakes. As part of the statewide mutual aid system, CAL OES has purchased fire apparatus and equipment for responding to incidents in furtherance of the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid Plan.

These fire apparatuses are assigned, through agreement, to fire departments throughout the state to be staged for CAL OES purposes and for use by local jurisdictions.



In Orange County, CAL OES fire engines are currently assigned to Anaheim Fire & Rescue, Fountain Valley Fire Department, Huntington Beach Fire Department, Laguna Beach Fire Department, and now the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Department.

For questions please contact Captain Joe Noceti, Public Information Officer of Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue at (714) 754-5091.