

# Fire Capt. Fred McDowell receives February's City Manager Leadership Award

Assistant City Manager Tammy Letourneau presented Fire Capt. Fred McDowell with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet event on Thursday Feb. 28.

"It's because of leaders like Capt. McDowell that the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue team continues its longstanding reputation of excellence," Letourneau said. "As part of our core group of first responders who are on the front line of saving lives and property, I thank him for his service to our community."

McDowell joined the city of Costa Mesa as a firefighter in 1998 and was promoted to fire engineer in 2002 and fire captain in 2015. He is active on many committees and has a passion for teaching and training. He continues to serve with the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue honor guard, which he joined in 1995 prior to being hired, and is currently preparing to become a certified Battalion Chief. He was recently selected as the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue "Supervisor of the Year."

Prior to joining Costa Mesa, he interned at the Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach fire departments.

McDowell graduated from Cal State Fullerton in 1993 with a double major in education and music performance. As a musician, he worked throughout the Southern California area at such places as Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm.

It was while preparing to complete his teaching credential that he did a ride-along with the Santa Ana Fire Department that changed his life. He then went back to school at Santa Ana College and graduated from the fire academy.

In addition to honoring McDowell, Letourneau welcomed several new members of the staff as well as a new promotion.

The new staffers in the City Manager's Office include Management Aides Albert Ruiz and Ivis Torres, both of who support the City Council. Also introduced was new Chief of Staff Connor Lock

In Human Resources, Caroline Tse is the new office specialist II, and in Development Services, Monique Arredondo is one new code enforcement officer.

Kristin Stevens is the new management analyst in Fire & Rescue and Nicholas Spector the recreation leader II in Parks & Community Services. Jason Corlett and Judy Malouf are new police records technicians.

In Public Services, Mathew Ballew is the new Management Aide, Nader Noorani a new engineering technician II and Andrew Lucio is a new maintenance worker.

Finally, Letourneau honored longtime fire leader Chris Coates who has been promoted to battalion chief.

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## **Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue launches new Chaplain Program and hires new chaplain**

Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano announced that the Fire & Rescue department is launching a new Chaplain Program and Pastor Josh Harrison has been appointed as the department's fire chaplain.

"The Chaplain program is a long overdue addition for us and we

are very fortunate to have Josh and his family as a part of our fire family now," Chief Stefano said. "We look forward to the leadership and support Josh will share with us and the community."

Harrison, formerly the teaching pastor at Rock Harbor Church, was first introduced to the community at the opening of Fire Station No. 1 last year and he was immediately called upon thereafter to help provide support following the passing of Fire Capt. Mike Kreza.

The department's Chaplain program is another important step forward to actively support the mental health and wellness of the firefighters. The program will be managed by Fire Capt. Kevin Reddy, who was instrumental in developing the program and bringing it to life, and supported by a core team of Costa Mesa firefighters.

The new Chaplain program follows the introduction of the Firefighter Peer Assistance Program which was initiated in 2017, with Fire Engineer Mike Ruhl leading that program for the department. CMF&R has also participated in an annual fitness and wellness program through the regional fire academy (Santa Ana College), and will continue to increase efforts to better address cancer prevention and awareness for all fire service professionals.

Pastor Harrison lives in Costa Mesa with his wife, Heather, and their three kids, Buzè, Marta, and Elijah. They have lived in Costa Mesa for the better part of the last 25 years.

Harrison moved to Costa Mesa from northwest Montana in 1995 to attend Vanguard University and never left. He graduated from Vanguard with a bachelor's degree in English literature in May of 1999, and he and Heather (whom he met at Vanguard) were married a month later.

After graduating, Harrison began working at Vanguard as an IT Technician and stayed working in the IT department at the

university for the next eight years. During that time, he went to graduate school at Vanguard to work toward a master's degree in Biblical Studies, emphasizing Biblical languages. Also, during this time, he began working more directly with students, leading them on short-term service trips to Mexico and East Africa. In 2006, he and his wife moved to England, where Harrison studied at Oxford University and graduated with a master's degree in Jewish studies.

After a year overseas, they moved back to Costa Mesa and shortly after returning adopted their daughters from Ethiopia. Upon returning to the area, Harrison got another job at Vanguard University, this time as the Mission Director, recruiting, equipping, training, and pastoring students through short-term service teams sent both locally and globally.

During this time, he worked with a variety of charitable organizations across our community, many of which are based in Costa Mesa. After four years of serving in this capacity, Harrison left Vanguard University and began working at Rock Harbor Church in Costa Mesa, where he served as the teaching pastor throughout most of last year.

Throughout his tenure at Rock Harbor, he was involved in the local community in a variety of ways: pastoring community members, praying at Costa Mesa City Council meetings, working with charitable organizations in the City, and now preparing for his next pastoral role.

The Harrisons and their kids love the city of Costa Mesa and spend the vast majority of their time here. Heather Harrison serves as the Middle School Principal at Mariners Christian School.

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# Erosion from rain storms forces temporary Fairview Park trail closures

With the recent heavy rains and expected additional storms, the bluffs at Fairview Park are experiencing substantial erosion, which has created a health, safety, and environmental hazard and is now forcing the city to close off the bluff trail beginning Tuesday Feb. 26 through Friday March 8.

At its Feb. 5 meeting, the City Council approved emergency funding to support installation of a temporary berm along the bluff trail . The berm will prevent further erosion and will keep water on the mesa and in the vernal pools, instead of draining off the bluffs.

The project is now at the construction phase, which will require closure of the trail between Pacific Avenue and the stairs leading to Talbert Park.

Heavy equipment and workers will be on site along the trail daily (M-F) from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Additional trails in the park are seasonally closed because of protected species in the vernal pools.

Due to these closures, park visitors cannot walk the entire loop of the park on the mesa.

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# Agreement Finalized to Rent Lighthouse Church for Bridge Shelter

The City of Costa Mesa has reached an agreement with the Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene to operate a 50-bed temporary interim bridge shelter on a portion of their property located at 1885 Anaheim Avenue.

The City Council voted to approve the terms of a lease agreement with the church at its Feb. 19 council meeting. Representatives from the Church of the Nazarene then agreed to the terms of that lease agreement on Thursday Feb. 21.

“This is a great first step toward the cleanup and restoration of our Westside neighborhoods, while at the same time addressing the humane option of helping individuals up and out of homelessness,” Mayor Katrina Foley said. “We look forward to this productive partnership with Lighthouse Church that is truly in the best interest of both parties.”

Establishing this bridge shelter option for those experiencing homelessness will provide the number of necessary shelter beds that the City of Costa Mesa is expected to create based on a proposed settlement agreement in the OC Catholic Worker lawsuit that in turn would restore the city’s ability to enforce trespassing and anti-encampment ordinances.

The new bridge shelter basically expands what is an already existing inclement weather shelter into a reservation-based, high-security temporary solution to offer shelter beds to those in need.

The temporary Lighthouse Church bridge shelter will be run by a combination of city outreach staff and staff from Mercy House, an experienced, well-respected operator who will ensure

the facility is a reservation-based model along with 24-hour security and neighborhood management covering a half-mile radius.

The agreement between the city and the church provides upgrades including creating security fencing around the facility, increasing lighting in the area, cleaning and sanitizing streets, sidewalks and parks where necessary, and adding modular trailers for restrooms, storage of personal belongings, and space for shelter beds.

Additionally, unsheltered individuals will be offered resources for job training and placement services, mental health assessments, health and dental care, substance abuse treatment and connections to permanent housing all while working on their plan to obtain housing.

The city continues to pursue commercial property for a permanent bridge shelter in the northeast portion of the city near John Wayne Airport.

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## **Estancia Adobe officially recognized as historical site by city and county historical commissions**

Morning rain cleared way for clear sunny skies just in time for the unveiling of bronze plaque, commemorating the Diego Sepulveda Adobe's historic and cultural significance to Costa

Mesa.

The Costa Mesa Historical Society, Costa Mesa Historical Preservation Committee, and the Orange County Historical Commission all worked in collaboration on the County's Historical Site Plaque Program to designate the Adobe as Orange County Historical Site No. 56.

More than 75 community members were joined by Mayor Katrina Foley, Mayor Pro Tem John Stephens, Council member Sandy Genis, members from the Orange County Board of Supervisors, and a representative from the office of US Congressman Harley Rouda and Parks and Recreation Commission Chair Liz McNabb, also a representative for Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris.

The event opened with a Native American blessing given by Adelia Sandoval and was followed by Anthropologist Steven O'Neil who gave a historical talk on the Adobe. Docents provided guided tours of the Adobe as guests enjoyed refreshments provided by Raising Cane's.

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## **Costa Mesa residents sought to serve on city committees**

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking residents to serve on the following city committees:

**Animal Services Committee:** This committee meets monthly and assists with the planning of animal related events, explores and provides recommendations to improve animal services, and promotes pet licensing within the City. The City is recruiting for a 2-year term for three regular members. For further information, please contact Recreation Coordinator Tracy



Habiger at (714) 754-5128.

**Bikeway & Walkability Committee:** This committee meets monthly and assists with the review, update and implementation of the city's Master Plan of Bikeways and pedestrian pathways in order to make recommendations for their improvement to the City Council. The City is recruiting for a 2-year term for eight regular members. For further information, please contact Transportation Services Manager Jennifer Rosales at (714) 754-5180.

**Cultural Arts Committee:** This committee meets monthly and works to promote the City motto, "City of the Arts." The committee works to establish programs, events and information that help residents access the arts in many different venues. The City is recruiting for a 2-year term for five regular members and two alternate members. For further information, please contact Recreation Supervisor Ashley Thomas at (714) 754-5052.

**Fairview Park Steering Committee:** This committee meets every other month and provides advice to the City Council regarding the implementation of the Fairview Park Master plan and impacts of Measure AA on Capital Improvement Program projects, maintenance and activities. The City is recruiting for a 4-year term for three regular members and one alternate member. For further information, please contact Fairview Park Administrator Cynthia D'Agosta at (714) 754-5135.

**Finance and Pension Advisory Committee:** This committee meets monthly and provides advice to the City Council regarding events and issues which may affect the financial status of the City. It also evaluates annual and long-term pension and financial impacts from changes in CalPERS contribution rates and/or actuarial schedule changes. The City is recruiting for a 2-year term for five regular members and a 1-year term for two regular members. Applicants shall have pension knowledge or shall be residents or individuals that conduct business

within the City and have a background that includes experience in securities trading, financial planning, banking, auditing, accounting, or a closely related and relevant field. For further information, please contact Management Analyst Amber Haston at (714) 754-5227.

**Historical Preservation Committee:** This committee meets monthly and serves to maintain, preserve, educate and promote the city's historical resources. The City is recruiting for a 2-year term for five regular members and a 1-year term for one regular member and two alternate members. For further information, please contact Assistant Recreation Supervisor William Lund at (714) 754-5083.

**Housing & Public Service Grants Committee:** This committee meets on an as-needed basis and helps to promote community understanding of the community development process and activities funded by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD), and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) with a focus on social service grants. The City is recruiting for a 2-year term for five regular members. For further information, please contact CDBG Consultant Mike Linares at (714) 754-5678.

**Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee:** This newly created committee will meet quarterly and address mobile home park issues and concerns in Costa Mesa. The City is recruiting for a 2-year term for two park owners or their representatives, two mobile home resident owners and one independent citizen at-large who has no affiliations or relationships with mobile home parks; and a 1-year term for one park owner or his/her representative, two mobile home resident owners and one independent citizen at-large. For further information, please contact City Clerk Brenda Green at (714) 754-5225.

**Application Process** – Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Committee Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or

from the City's website ([www.costamesaca.gov/apply](http://www.costamesaca.gov/apply)). The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; faxed to (714) 754-4942; emailed to [cityclerk@costamesaca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@costamesaca.gov); or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

The deadline is 5 p.m., Wednesday, March 6, 2019. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the March 19, 2019 City Council meeting.

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## **Council votes to contract with Mercy House to operate planned bridge shelters**

On Tuesday Feb. 5, the Costa Mesa City Council approved a \$1.45 million annual agreement with Mercy House for professional shelter operator services at both the City's temporary interim and long-term bridge shelters.

"This is another step to restoring the safety and security to families and businesses in Costa Mesa," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "And those families include people who are experiencing homelessness in Costa Mesa."

District 5 Council Member Arlis Reynolds was also in support of contracting with Mercy House to operate the shelter.

"I'm confident we can make this work and I'm really proud of everyone, the staff, council and public who has contributed to this and shaping what can be a robust plan," she said. "The fact that this operator is someone that many members of the

community trusts is very important to going forward.”

Establishing this bridge shelter option for those experiencing homelessness will provide the additional 50 shelter beds that the City of Costa Mesa is expected to create based on a proposed settlement agreement in the OC Catholic Worker lawsuit.

On Tuesday Jan. 15, the City Council also directed staff to enter into negotiations with the **Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene** to operate a temporary interim bridge shelter on a portion of their property located at 1885 Anaheim Avenue. This would expand what is an already existing inclement weather shelter into a reservation-based, high-security temporary solution to offer shelter beds to those in need.

The City sought operator proposals from Mercy House, Salvation Army and the Illumination Foundation, but it was only Mercy House who submitted a proposal to Costa Mesa.

Established in 1989, Mercy House provides housing and comprehensive supportive services to homeless populations and is a long-respected shelter operator. Mercy House currently operates the county’s Bridges at Kraemer shelter that has a similar security and reservation-based model.

Mercy House operators will work in tandem with the city’s existing community outreach staff members to manage the shelter on a 24-hour basis.

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## **OCTA postpones Fairview Road**

# lane closures that are part of 405 Improvement project

The Fairview Road traffic shift, which was previously anticipated to begin Saturday Feb. 2, will not take place this weekend due to rain and is now scheduled to begin as early as Saturday Feb. 9 through Sunday Feb. 10 (weather permitting).

The traffic shift, which will move traffic to the westside lanes only, is anticipated to occur under a 12-hour closure from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m.

The work is part of the broader 405 Improvement Project in which OCTA, in cooperation with The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is widening the San Diego Freeway (I-405) between State Route 73 (SR-73) and Interstate 605 (I-605).

[Click here](#) to read more information on this project.

The project will improve 16 miles of I-405 between the SR-73 freeway in Costa Mesa and I-605 near the L.A. County line. The project includes adding one regular lane in each direction between Euclid Street and I-605 and making improvements to freeway entrances, exits and bridges. In addition, the project will add the 405 Express Lanes, incorporating the existing carpool lanes and a new lane in each direction between SR-73 and I-605.

The 405 Express Lanes will give solo drivers the choice to speed up their commute for a toll and give options for carpoolers to use the lanes for free. When the express lanes open, two-person carpools will pay a toll only during peak hours and carpools of three or more will be free at all times.

For an interactive map of the project go to [www.octa.net/405map](http://www.octa.net/405map).

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# **Public encouraged to attend Open House to learn more about proposed bridge shelter**

The City of Costa Mesa is inviting the public to attend a special Open House on Wednesday Jan. 30 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Costa Mesa Senior Center to discuss a temporary bridge shelter at the Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene at 1885 Anaheim Ave. Participants will have the opportunity to review proposed bridge shelter plans, share thoughts and provide input, and hear from City staff, public safety, community partners and shelter operation experts.

The meeting is a result of the Costa Mesa City Council voting unanimously on Tuesday, Jan. 15 to move forward with a plan to partner with the Lighthouse Church and expand what is an already existing inclement weather shelter into a high-security, temporary facility.

Establishing this bridge shelter option for those experiencing homelessness will provide the 50 shelter beds that the City of Costa Mesa is expected to create based on a proposed settlement agreement in the OC Catholic Worker lawsuit that in turn would restore the city's powers to enforce trespassing and anti-encampment ordinances.

The Lighthouse Church shelter will be run by a combination of city outreach staff and an experienced, well-respected operator who will ensure the facility is a reservation-based model along with 24-hour security and management covering a half-mile radius.

Through this temporary shelter arrangement with the Lighthouse

Church, the city will invest in the property creating security fencing around the church, and adding portable buildings for restrooms, storage of personal belongings, offices and space for shelter beds.

Unsheltered individuals will be offered job training and placement services, mental health assessments, health and dental care, substance abuse treatment and connections to permanent housing.

Costa Mesa has been a leader on this issue since 2013, with the inception of the Network for Homeless Solutions – which includes City staff and representatives of faith-based organizations and local non-profits. The network meets weekly to discuss specific cases and developments in our efforts to reduce homelessness in Costa Mesa and has helped to house more than 300 individuals as well as reconnected about 90 with family or loved ones.

To learn more, please join us at the Open House or visit our website at [www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness](http://www.costamesaca.gov/homelessness).

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## **Doug Lovell receives the City Manager Leadership Award for January**

Acting City Manager Tammy Letourneau presented Maintenance Superintendent Doug Lovell with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet event on Thursday Jan. 24.

“Doug is a hard worker and highly respected by all who work with him,” Letourneau said. “He always puts the interests and

safety of Costa Mesa employees and residents above himself. We are so fortunate to have him on our team.”

Lovell joined the Costa Mesa team in 2003 as the Lead Maintenance Technician in the Facilities Section of the Public Services Department. He was quickly promoted to Maintenance Supervisor in 2007 where he began managing large projects, organizing building modifications and running the Facilities Sections daily operations.

In 2015, Lovell was promoted to Maintenance Superintendent, where he has continued to grow and provide the City with a high level of service.

Lovell works tirelessly to keep projects, contractors and staff on schedule and in line. Some of his recent accomplishments include: the emergency generator installation project and the replacement of the cooling towers at City Hall. He is currently working on are the 2nd floor remodel, the 5th floor remodel, the new community room, resurfacing and fencing project, the elevator modernization project while preparing the Facilities Section’s budget, building modifications and Capital Improvement Project requests.

And recently, he willingly worked days and nights through the holiday closure, moving projects forward while limiting the impact of the construction on Costa Mesa residents and staff.

Prior to joining the city, Lovell was the Chief Operating Engineer at the Westin South Coast Plaza.

In addition to honoring Lovell, Letourneau welcomed several newly hired employees and congratulated several who received promotions.

The new hires include Kevin Do, a new Recreation Leader III in the Parks & Community Services Department.

Also newly hired are David Brito and Jorge Patino, two new



Maintenance Assistants working in the Public Services Department.

Also new to public services is Carlos Henriquez, an Equipment Mechanic II and Alejandro Lopez Alejandro and Jose Solis-Ponce are new Senior Maintenance Workers.

Those newly promoted include Ashley Armenta, Taylor Stack and Julie Suguitan who move to Recreation Leader III and Joseph Loubet to Senior Lifeguard.

In the Police Department, 28-Year CMPD Veteran Keith Davis has been promoted to Police Captain. And Christopher Walk has been promoted to Police Sergeant

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## **Building activities continue brisk pace in Costa Mesa**

Building activities continue to boom in the City of Costa Mesa.

During the calendar year 2018, permits issued, plan checks and inspections performed by the Building Division are at about the same level as 2017 and 2016 with no sign of slowing down in Costa Mesa, even with national concerns over a recession and slowdown in real estate markets overall in Orange County.

During 2018, the Building Division issued 3,031 permits compared with 2,991 in 2017. The most common permits were for commercial alterations, alterations and additions of single family dwellings, re-roofs and new single family dwellings.

The Building Division performed 28,024 building inspections and served 10,544 customers at the counter with an average

wait time of less than 15 minutes.

Even with the persistent heavy workload for the last several years, the Building Division continues to perform inspections within one business day of request and turns around most plan checks in less than five working days.

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## **Council takes historic vote to address homelessness with new bridge shelter at Lighthouse Church**

The Costa Mesa City Council voted unanimously at its Tuesday Jan. 15 meeting to move forward with a plan to partner with the Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene and expand what is an already existing inclement weather shelter into a high-security temporary solution to offer shelter beds to those in need.

In addition, the council announced to a packed house gathered at the Costa Mesa Senior Center for the meeting that it will explore the possibility of a permanent shelter and is already looking at one location at 3115 Redhill Avenue.

“In a move to protect the residents and taxpayers of Costa Mesa, last night we authorized a temporary bridge shelter at Lighthouse Church and directed staff to work with the county on a permanent shelter near the airport,” Mayor Katrina Foley said. “This means, we will be able to clear parks and residential areas from the impacts of homelessness while offering a humane response to this growing crisis.”



“Three main reasons exist to move forward with the bridge shelter and permanent sheltering plan,” Foley said. “One, a federal judge mandated this so we can again enforce our anti-camping ordinance and other laws to move people off the streets. Two, it costs less to shelter individuals than to manage the impacts of people living on the streets, in our parks and even on private property; and finally, it’s morally right.”

Mayor Foley said the goal is to restore the safety and security of the neighborhoods. She noted the plan for the temporary and permanent shelters will be to operate them in such a clean, safe, secure, and responsible manner, that it’s hard to tell they even exist.

Establishing this bridge shelter option for those experiencing homelessness will provide the 50 shelter beds that the City of Costa Mesa is expected to create based on a proposed settlement agreement in the OC Catholic Worker lawsuit that in turn would restore the city’s powers to enforce trespassing and anti-encampment ordinances.

The Lighthouse Church shelter at 1885 Anaheim Ave. will be run

by a combination of city outreach staff and an experienced, well-respected operator who will ensure the facility is a reservation-based model along with 24-hour security and management covering a half-mile radius.

“The approved temporary bridge shelter at Lighthouse Church is part of an overall Westside Restoration Plan, including many infrastructure improvements and the opening of our new library in April 2019,” Foley said. “These infrastructure improvements, coupled with reduced homelessness and its impacts, should improve the quality of life and property values on the Westside. In addition to the infrastructure projects already planned, additional lighting and fencing at the Church, we are soliciting input from the community for additional needed improvements to restore the safety and character of the neighborhood.”

Through this temporary shelter arrangement with the Lighthouse Church, the city will invest in the property creating security fencing around the church, and adding portable buildings for restrooms, storage of personal belongings, offices and space for shelter beds.

Unsheltered individuals will be offered job training and placement services, mental health assessments, health and dental care, substance abuse treatment and connections to permanent housing.

By embarking on this solution to homelessness, Costa Mesa joins the broader efforts of the cities of Anaheim, Santa Ana, Orange, Tustin, Fullerton and Buena Park and the county of Orange in taking an active solution to combatting the crisis of homelessness throughout the county and beyond.

A 2017 study conducted by the University of California Irvine, United Way and Jamboree Housing estimated the annual cost of homelessness in Orange County to be \$299 million, \$120 million of which is shouldered by cities.

Costa Mesa has been a leader on this issue. Since 2013, the Network for Homeless Solutions – which includes City staff and representatives of faith-based organizations and local non-profits – meets weekly to discuss specific cases and developments in our efforts to reduce homelessness in Costa Mesa.

Costa Mesa outreach workers make contact daily with individuals experiencing homelessness and the city spends approximately \$1 million each year on this effort. Funds are expended on outreach workers as well as police officers assigned to our Community Policing Unit.

Since its inception, the Network for Homeless Solutions has helped to house more than 300 individuals as well as reconnected about 90 with family or loved ones.