

A day of gratitude and giving thanks

It was Thanksgiving Day 2015.

Katlyn Soltys crawled her way out of the Santa Ana riverbed, where she had been living near the corner of Hamilton Avenue and Brookhurst Street, and into Costa Mesa's Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene.

She was approaching her 26th birthday and had already racked up 14 brutal years of addiction to alcohol, heroin, crack and meth. A Michigan native, she had let drugs destroy her relationship with her family.

But it was on this day of gratitude and giving thanks that she realized she needed to end the cycle of destruction.

So a friend took her to the Lighthouse for breakfast where she met church staff members Tim Brown and Ronnie Steen. She instantly felt love at the church. She thought that this is where she needed to be to get her life back

"It was the kindness I felt from everyone," she said. "It had been a real long time since anyone had been that nice to me."

But Brown and Steen had bad news for her. They told her the Lighthouse was a men's only facility. She left the church dejected and sad but after wandering the streets of Costa Mesa, she returned later that day with this message for the church staff.

"I looked at Tim and said, 'I'm going to die if you don't let me live here,'" Soltys said.

So the two Lighthouse workers prayed about it and decided to let her stay. They set up a little cot in their sanctuary

kitchen area where Soltys stayed and did whatever work they wanted her to do. She cooked and attended their meetings.

"I'm just thankful that during this time in my life their doors were open for me," she said. "I felt like I was a person to them. Even though I was a woman in a men's facility I felt just as equal. My heart felt full."

For Lighthouse Church Pastor Phil Eyskens, who works daily with the city's Network for Homeless Solutions, Soltys is just one of many his ministry touches on a regular basis.

"When I was first assigned as pastor of the Lighthouse over seven years ago, I soon came to the conclusion that this unique church was more than just a church, but it was also a mission," said Pastor Phil Eyskens. "Katlyn's story is one of the many success stories we have realized here at the Lighthouse, as we strive to offer a hand-up approach in this rubber-meets-the-road ministry. Go Katlyn, go!"

Through Soltys' connection at the Lighthouse, she met another church worker, Lindah Miles, who helped her get into a sober living facility in Palm Springs. That ended up being a life-changing and lifesaving moment and Soltys has never looked back.

After spending 90 days in the Palm Springs rehab facility, Soltys moved into another one in Garden Grove called Gabe's Home, named after the son of Pastor Joe Furey of His Place Church in Westminster who died of a heroin overdose. She now lives in a Huntington Beach apartment with her fiancé, who also got clean after years of addiction.

Soltys ended up in California at the age of 23 after her mom kicked her out of their Michigan home and sent her to a rehab facility in Temecula that she eventually also got kicked out of.

She spent three years bouncing in and out of rehab homes and

living in Oceanside, San Diego and Costa Mesa before giving up drugs for good on that Thanksgiving Day in 2015. But for someone who had spent more than a decade hooked on alcohol and drugs, the pathway to sober living and a life off of the streets was more difficult than imagined.

“I was kind of shell shocked,” she said. “The readjustment of coming back and having a roof over my head was really uncomfortable. I didn’t know what to do. You don’t get that many success stories from homelessness. What is life after homelessness? I felt that overwhelming feeling.”

Then she got busy. She got a sponsor through Alcoholics Anonymous. She got a job at a law firm in Irvine and would take the bus every morning to work at 5 a.m. She said even though it was long hours, the job gave her a safe place to be every day and she was grateful to have the opportunity.

She worked there a year and a half and then her life changed again. Her son Levi was born.

“I look at Levi now and I think how could I ever see a life without him,” she said. “I love my family and I realize how much love my family has for me and I couldn’t imagine ever going back.”

Indeed, after years of emotional trauma, after years of distrust and anger, she has mended fences with her family and now speaks to her mother every day and says her mom is her best friend. She credits that to her sobriety and how former addicts look back at the damage they have done and instead become what she called “other-centered.”

“I can’t imagine what I put my family through,” she said. “If I have a bad day and I ever think about getting high, I think about my family and I wouldn’t want to put them through that again.”

Today, Soltys feels the drive to help others who are in the

shoes she once was in. She says the best part of her sobriety is that she can be a sponsor in AA. She helps women go through the 12 steps. She hopes that someday the Lighthouse Church will have a place for women to seek help from addiction and she also hopes someday to make a career out of helping others.

“It helps me to help them,” she said. “They are helping me more than I’m helping them and they don’t even know that. I’ve done a lot of fun things in sobriety.”

Things continue to look brighter and brighter for her. After eight years without a driver’s license she got hers reinstated this past February, and the next day her fiance’s boss gave her a car.

She attributes all of this to a higher power.

“My story is much related to God,” she said. “I didn’t plan to stop using that day. I didn’t plan to leave the riverbed that day. I really enjoyed being homeless. I really enjoyed using drugs. I’m telling you it was God.”

Maintenance Tech Brendan Carpenter honored with City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Tom Hatch presented Senior Maintenance Technician Brendan Carpenter with the City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly employee Meet and Greet on Thursday Feb. 22.

“I appreciate Brendan for his hard work and being a great

contributor to the city team,” City Manager Hatch said. “He is efficient, has a can-do attitude and always keeps the best interest of Costa Mesa residents his first priority.”

Carpenter has provided five years of professional and dedicated service to the City of Costa Mesa, starting in 2013 as a part-time General Aide. He was hired full-time in 2015 as a Maintenance Worker, and was promoted to Senior Maintenance Technician in 2016.

With the recent departure of the Maintenance Supervisor in the Streets and Traffic Section, the street maintenance staff has had to step up to assist with daily operations to ensure the high level of service that is expected proceeds uninterrupted.

Carpenter has taken on the responsibility of managing the daily work of the city’s sign shop and processing work orders generated by the Transportation Services section. He eagerly accepted the challenge while continuing to fulfill his daily duties manufacturing and replacing signs.

He is managing projects and overseeing the in-house roadway painting program. Some of his recent accomplishments include the replacement of the old-style coyote warning signs with the City’s new updated signs, the Pacific Avenue improvements where the street dead ends at Fairview Park and setting up the field crews that recently completed the installations of the bike sharrows on East 19th Street.

In addition to honoring Carpenter, City Manager Hatch welcomed five new employees and congratulated three others for recent promotions.

The new hires include Fanni Acosta, a new Human Resources Analyst, Waqas Khan a new Plan Checker in Development Services, Franklin Rodriguez a new Recreation Leader II in Parks and Community Services, Martha Robbins a new Police Department Crime Analyst in Public Services, Fady Ashamalla a new Engineering Technician III.

Hatch also honored Ruben Salas and Juan Santos, who were both promoted to Maintenance Supervisors and Janet Zuazo, who was promoted to Recreation Leader IV.

Mayor Genis honors business leader Janet Krochman with Mayor's Award

Costa Mesa Mayor Sandy Genis presented longtime local business leader Janet Krochman with the Mayor's Award at the Feb. 20 City Council meeting.

"Janet has been actively volunteering in Costa Mesa for years, initially getting involved while supporting her son's activities at school, Boy Scouts and youth sports," Mayor Genis said. "Janet's long list of community involvement includes working with veteran's groups, non-profit organizations and most recently assisting local businesses mitigate the impact of homeless on their businesses."

Krochman said she was very touched when she learned she was going to be presented with this award.

"Thank you all very much," she said. "Hopefully I will have another 40 years in the city and continue to do good things."

City Outreach team details achievements by the Network for Homeless Solutions

As a result of the City of Costa Mesa being named in a lawsuit filed by Orange County Catholic Worker vs. the County of Orange and Santa Ana and Anaheim regarding homeless encampments, city outreach staff compiled a summary of achievements from the city's Network for Homeless Solutions.

The Network for Homeless Solutions is the only city-sponsored homeless outreach division within the county with three full-time equivalent outreach workers and partnerships with over 50 social service, governmental and private agencies for housing those experiencing homelessness in Costa Mesa.

Below are some of the highlights:

HOUSING

- 101 housed in 2017
- 270 housed since the network began in 2013
- 80 clients placed in permanent supportive housing via Coordinated Entry program

RECONNECTIONS

- 41 reconnected in 2017
- 112 reconnected to date

MEDICAL LINKAGES

- 245 in 2017
- 772 since 2012

SOCIAL SERVICE LINKAGES

- 191 in 2017

- 386 to date

MENTAL HEALTH LINKAGES

- 235 in 2017

OC HEALTH CARE AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTACTS 2017

- 752 total contacts
- 483 self-disclosed homeless

PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM CONTRACTS

- 221 total contacts
- 47 self-disclosed homeless



The Network for Homeless Solutions collaborates with the County of Orange, the Department of Social Services, Social Security and Department of Motor Vehicles on homeless issues.

In addition, the Network has partnerships with local non-profits including Mercy House, Collette's Children's Home and Families Forward.

In addition, the Network for Homeless Solutions partners with

the Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene in the Westside of Costa Mesa, which serves as a homeless service center and periodic shelter for extremely vulnerable individuals.

The Network regularly delivers bus passes to homeless and recently housed individuals for medical, job and housing appointments and in addition provides taxi rides to homeless individuals needing transportation for reconnections, housing or medical appointments.

Highlights of the NHS partnerships include the following:

- 51 individuals helped by Mercy House over three years.
- 79 individuals helped by Collette's Children's Home over three years.
- 58 individuals helped by Families Forward over two years.
- 580 collaborative actions in 2017 with non-profit housing providers for the purpose of providing housing support to recently housed clients.
- 294 field support actions assisting both Costa Mesa Police Department park rangers, police officers and residents with homeless individuals seeking assistance.
- 41 emergency housing placements in 2017.

Arlington Drive Improvement

Project reaches another milestone

The Arlington Drive Improvement Project reached another milestone.

The curb and gutter delineating the roadway along the south side of the street is complete and the pavement along the south side from the Davis School site entry to Newport Boulevard has been base-paved.

Two-way traffic on Arlington Drive is now restored and will remain open through the project's completion.

Nearly all the underground work is complete and the contractor will finish base-paving the remainder of the street later this week.

Lastly, work on the bioswale, landscape improvements, and construction of the bicycle trail will begin soon.

Construction to take place on Bristol Street beginning tonight Feb. 16

As part of the on-going Bristol Street Improvement Project, Sully-Miller Contracting Co. will begin grinding existing deteriorating pavement on Bristol Street, between Baker Street and Randolph Avenue, on Friday, Feb. 16 beginning at 8 p.m.

On Saturday, Feb. 17, from 6 a.m. to early afternoon, Sully-

Miller will be installing new pavement on Bristol Street, between Baker Street and Randolph Avenue. Adjacent businesses have been notified of this scheduled work and access to them will be maintained.

Please expect intermittent delays during the construction. The median curbs on Bristol Street between Baker Street and Newport Boulevard will be completed in the next two weeks and the landscaping by the end of March 2018.

[Click here](#) for a map of the area under construction.

The improvement project includes roadway resurfacing, new storm drain catch basins, new landscaped medians, new traffic signal installation and a storm water diversion project.

This project represents more than \$6.5 million in improvements with funding coming from various sources including Federal, State and County agencies, gas tax and local funds.

This project will provide a smoother ride along this stretch of Bristol Street, better operational conditions for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and improve the water quality of the Back Bay area by providing treatment for some of the storm water runoff.

New construction forces entrance to close at Lions Avenue

Park

The construction fencing around Lions Park was expanded on Wednesday Feb. 14, resulting in the closure of the parking lot entrance on Anaheim Avenue and limiting parking availability at the Donald Dungan Library and the Downtown Recreation Center.

The entrance from Park Avenue will be open for park visitors. The parking spaces in front of the portable trailers will be reserved for personnel working on the Lion's Park Project but may be used by staff and the public on the weekends.

Additionally, the parking spots adjacent to Fire Station No. 2 may be reserved for Donald Dungan Library staff. Street parking on 18th and Anaheim will remain unaffected by these changes. This fencing will remain in place for four to eight weeks.

During this closure, vehicles may not double park or stop anywhere in the parking lot for pick-ups/drop-offs, or any other reason, as the added congestion may pose a safety issue and inhibit or prevent emergency vehicle access to the lot.

Lions Park is currently undergoing a \$36 million upgrade that will result in a new library and community center. [Click here](#) for more information.

No street sweeping on President's Day holiday

Due to the observation of the President's Day holiday on Feb.

19, there will be no residential street sweeping.

In addition, no parking enforcement will be done the entire week per city policy.

Street sweeping will resume back to normal on Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2018.

For more information, residents can call the city's street sweeping hotline at (714) 327-7471, which has been updated with this information.

[Click here](#) for more information on the city's website.

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:

Access Building, Fire and Housing Board of Appeal: This committee advises on matters pertaining to building construction. The board meets and hears appeals on an as-needed basis. There are five regular member vacancies and two alternate member vacancies with a term expiration of April 1, 2022. Minimum qualifications should include: Civil Engineers, Structural engineers, Fire protection engineers, Electrical/mechanical engineers, Architects, Certified Access Specialists (CASp), and related state or federal licensed professionals, such as fire marshals. Residents or individuals that conduct business within the City are encouraged to apply. For further information, please contact Building Official Issam Shahrouri at (714) 754-5604.

Bikeway & Walkability Committee: This committee, which meets monthly, assists with the review, update and implementation of the city's Master Plan of Bikeways and pedestrian pathways in order to make recommendations for improvements to the City Council. There are seven regular member vacancies with a term expiration of April 1, 2020. For further information, please contact Transportation Services Manager Jennifer Rosales at (714) 754-5180.

Cultural Arts Committee: This committee, which meets monthly, works to promote the city's slogan, "Costa Mesa City of the Arts." The committee works to establish programs, events and information that help residents access the arts in many different venues, and through multiple sources. There are three regular member vacancies and one alternate member vacancy with a term expiration of April 1, 2020; and one alternate member vacancy with a term expiration of April 1, 2019. For further information, please contact Recreation Supervisor Ashley Thomas at (714) 754-5052.

Finance and Pension Advisory Committee: This committee, which meets monthly, 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. There are six regular member vacancies with a term expiration of April 1, 2020. 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 Ray Hull at (714) 754-5227.

Historical Preservation Committee: This committee, which meets monthly, serves to maintain, preserve, educate and promote the city's historical resources. There are four (4) regular member vacancies and two alternate member vacancies with a term

expiration of April 1, 2020. For further information, please contact Recreation Supervisor Ashley Thomas at (714) 754-5052.

Housing & Public Service Grants Committee: This committee, which meets on an as-needed basis, 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). There are four regular member vacancies and one alternate member vacancy with a term expiration of April 1, 2020. For further information, please contact CDBG Consultant Mike Linares at (714) 754-5678.

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). 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; or hand-delivered to the City Clerk’s Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

The deadline is **5 p.m., Thursday, March 1, 2018**. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the March 20, 2018 City Council meeting.

Public Services completes parkway, sidewalk and trail

projects

Public Services recently completed the installation of new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant wheelchair ramps at the intersection of Carnegie Avenue and Swarthmore Lane.

This was part of the city's ongoing effort to enhance citywide accessibility and meet ADA requirements. In addition to installing wheelchair ramps, the project also included reconstruction of the cross-gutter and splash pad to improve drainage at this location.



Public Services also recently completed the reconstruction of the parkway drain at Wellesley Lane near Fairview Road (see before and after photos). The project entailed demolition of the deteriorated parkway culvert and reconstruction of a parkway drain to meet the city's standards. In addition to improving drainage conditions in the cul-de-sac, the project also included minor improvements to deteriorated sidewalk to eliminate displacements.

Improvements to the Harbor Boulevard Cornerstone Bicycle Trail at Fairview Development Center was also completed recently. The improvements included the Fairview Developmental Center planter reconfiguration that reduced the planter size and the installation of concrete in its place to ultimately provide a larger turning radius for bicyclists.

First pet adoption through the city's new animal care system is a success

The city's move to the new Newport Center Animal Hospital for shelter services has so far yielded favorable results and improved customer service.

As part of this new operation, the city has also partnered with Priceless Pet Rescue to handle pet adoptions because Newport Center Animal Hospital is currently not set up to do adoptions.

City staff facilitated the first pet adoption out of the shelter through the no-kill Priceless Pet Rescue. Jack the schnauzer mix was adopted by Danielle Rudd, pictured above on the right.

"Already Jack is fitting in perfectly and is loving going to the park for walks and getting tons of cuddles," Rudd said. "Words cannot express how thankful I am to welcome Jack in my life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for working tirelessly to ensure she was placed in an awesome home with me and my mom."

Residents interested in adopting pets can visit [this page](#) for more information

Gisler Park playground gets freshened up

Public Services Maintenance staff recently began its annual winter renovations that include citywide preventative and routine maintenance at city parks. The Gisler Park playground was the first of this season to receive a fresh layer of playground chips.



Thirty-five yards of this material were spread throughout the playground by Brightview (formerly Marina Landscape), the city's landscape maintenance contractor. The additional playground chips provided an overall aesthetic and safety improvement to the park.