

Seniors have festive breakfast with Santa Claus

More than 150 seniors were treated to a free breakfast, gift cards and a visit by Jolly Old St. Nick at the annual Senior Center "Breakfast with Santa" event from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday.

"You look beautiful today," Costa Mesa CEO Tom Hatch told the festively dressed crowd. "My compliments to the crew. Everything here looks spectacular."

Costa Mesa police officers and fire fighters, including Chief Dan Stefano, served breakfast to the delighted crowd, each of whom were also presented with a \$5 gift card. The seniors were also treated to Christmas tunes and other melodies by local musician Tom Reich and his accompanist Valerie.

The cards were part of \$1,300 raised and donated by city employees.

In addition to a visit by Santa Claus, the seniors played games such as "Pin the nose on Rudolph" and a wreath toss to win raffle prizes.

"It's probably one of their favorite events," said Senior Center Program Administrator Yvette Aguilar. "They look forward to this all year long."

Aguilar also credited the Senior Center staff for the time and work they put in arranging the event.

City completes review of sport leagues

Four adult and one youth sports league will have limited access to Costa Mesa fields beginning in the fall of 2016, after they failed to meet the city's new local residential participation guidelines.

In July of 2015, the Costa Mesa City Council adopted a new Field Use and Allocation Policy to provide a clear and concise set of rules and regulations regarding field usage. Paperwork submitted by the five sports leagues failed to meet the guidelines set forth by the new field use policy.

In accordance with the policy, various users of both youth and adult sports must meet certain requirements in order to use the fields, one of which is verification of local residency and proof that a percentage of those who participate reside in the school district boundaries and/or attend a public or private school within the Newport-Mesa School District boundaries. Using this criteria, sports leagues are placed into six different groups that have priority for field use.

Youth sports groups that either pay coaches and administrators or hold tryouts instead of letting all children play have to meet a higher percentage of local resident participation than youth leagues that are largely recreational in nature.

"The policy was created to ensure that Costa Mesa residents and children who play in recreational programs are at the top of the list when it comes to who gets to use our fields and resources," said Travis Karlen, the manager of the city's Parks and Community Services.

Further, by making these field usage changes effective by next fall of 2016, the city is giving these sports leagues ample time to find other options.

“We are letting these groups know they are out of compliance now so that they have enough time to look for other fields for their participants to use,” Karlen said.

To ensure the leagues complied with the policy, city staff worked diligently in requesting rosters and verification documents from each organization to confirm that each one met the required percentage of local residency for the appropriate group classification.

While the original deadline to submit residency verification was Aug. 31, 2015, the deadline was extended to Oct. 30, 2015 to give applicants more time to meet the requirements.

All groups will be notified of the audit results and those who did not meet the guidelines will be given every opportunity to submit the proper paperwork for future consideration.

City staff and ambassadors will continue to enforce the Field Use and Allocation Policy and audits during the spring 2016 season and in subsequent seasons.

Fountain Valley Council postpones plans for new freeway sign

At its meeting Tuesday, the Fountain Valley City Council decided to postpone its consideration of a multi-story electronic billboard that Clear Channel Outdoor would like to

erect on the border of Costa Mesa near the intersection of the 405 Freeway and Santa Ana River.

Costa Mesa residents are concerned about the sign and expressed their point of view at a Fountain Valley Planning Commission meeting in August. The commission did not approve the sign and the council will have its chance tonight.

The Fountain Valley City Council will meet at City Hall at 6 p.m. City Hall is located at 10200 Slater Avenue Fountain Valley. To view Fountain Valley City Council agendas click [here](#).

Mike Tucker presented with CEO Leadership Award for December

At December's Meet and Greet at City Hall, Costa Mesa CEO Tom Hatch presented code enforcement officer Mike Tucker with the CEO Leadership Award for December.

Tucker was hired in January of 2000 as an Equipment Mechanic II.

In April of 2009, he transferred to a Senior Maintenance worker position and in September of 2012, he was promoted to Code Enforcement Officer and assigned to the Community Improvement Division. Tucker was given projects that were designed to address high priority concerns within the City's residential zones with the goal of achieving a higher quality of life for the City's residents. One such project was located

in the Mission/Mendoza area at the north end of the City.

Tucker, along with his team members, took a wider view of this residential neighborhood to determine what steps were needed outside of the normal code enforcement processes to achieve the City's goal. This led to an organized effort by property owners, tenants and City staff to address substandard conditions, property maintenance issues and capital improvements.

Continuing with this theme, Tucker was re-assigned to his current project, which is to combat the negative impacts of group homes in our residential neighborhoods.

This issue is new to code enforcement, but Tucker took on the task and self-educated himself about this industry. He has become our leading expert on this topic and continuously shares his knowledge with the rest of the team.

This is a high priority for the residents of Costa Mesa and with Tucker's can-do attitude, the code enforcement division has been successful in reducing those impacts.

In addition, CEO Hatch welcomed 17 new employees and recognized seven employees who had been recently promoted and two retirees, crime prevention specialist Kelly Vucinic and animal control officer Art Beames.

Snow in forecast for Snoopy House grand opening

For the first time, the iconic Snoopy House display at City Hall will be accompanied by 10 tons of snow to play in at the

opening night of this free-to-the-public event this Saturday Dec. 12.

“Snow is definitely a rarity here in sunny Southern California,” said Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger. “So we are happy to do our part to add a nice winter touch to our annual Snoopy House display for the enjoyment of children and families.”

The 10 tons of snow will be delivered on the opening night Dec. 12 and another 10 tons is scheduled for delivery on Dec. 19, barring weather conditions.

Snoopy House, which features holiday scenes populated by “Peanuts” characters, is a free event available for viewing at City Hall from 5:30 to 9 p.m. nightly from Dec. 12 through Dec. 23.

The tradition started in 1966 when the Jordan family first created the display at their Eastside Costa Mesa home.



Family members and friends put together a series of Christmas scenes that eventually took up most of the front yard, side

yard and even the roof of their home. Since its inception, the display attracts an estimated 80,000 visitors annually.

The Snoopy House moved to Costa Mesa City Hall in 2011 when city officials learned the fate of the annual tradition was in jeopardy. The city of Costa Mesa agreed to host the display and provide other assistance and has been doing so every year since.

This partnership with the Jordan family has continued ever since and city personnel partner with Jim Jordan and his wife Linda, who work tirelessly on this labor of love each year. Since its arrival at city hall, additional features including nightly live music and free train rides for children. To complement the Snoopy House, the city also puts on a nightly light show on the façade of City Hall.

In addition to snow, Saturday's opening night will begin with a formal presentation by the mayor and city council members at 5:30 p.m.

Santa will also make special visits to the event each night between 7 to 9 p.m. beginning opening night, Dec. 12, through Dec. 23. Children and their families will have opportunities to receive free photos with Santa.

Several youth nonprofit groups will have booths at the Snoopy House display each night selling beverages and snacks. Visitors to the event can also donate to the city sponsored Spark of Love toy drive.

Learn more about Early College High School

Early College High School is hosting an informational night on Jan. 28, 2016 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room.

ECHS is for those students interested in an alternative to the typical large high school feel, those that are motivated, encouraged and ready for the challenge college classes bring. If this sounds like you, this program may be what you're looking for. [Click here](#) to see a flier about Early College High School.

After School program launches at Rea Elementary

The R.O.C.K.S After School Program announced that Rea Elementary is an official R.O.C.K.S site.

As of Nov. 16, the site has a total of 19 children registered.

Participants will partake in homework time, games, sports, enrichment activities, and arts and crafts. In addition, once a week, the Fitness Program will lead R.O.C.K.S participants in interactive and fun health, fitness, and nutritional activities to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Bark Park gets a new part-time staffer

The Parks & Community Services Department announced it has hired a new part-time staff member to who has been assigned solely to the Bark Park.

The staffer works 24 hours a week Monday through Friday. The Bark Park is a heavily-used park which requires daily maintenance and cleaning needs. The maintenance worker is able to fill holes daily to meet safety needs, clean chairs, sweep walkways, monitor public postings, empty trash cans and assess larger maintenance needs.

Having an increased staff presence in the park has also helped with gathering feedback from the regular users in regards to park enhancements as staff moves to create a master plan for overall park improvements.

Tanager Drive landscape renovation completed

Costa Mesa public service crews recently finished the Tanager Drive landscape near the Costa Mesa Country Club main entrance.

The work resulted in the removal and replacement of several hundred feet of tired chain link fencing and the declining woody vines, which blocked views to the Costa Mesa Country Club.

The entrance project, funded by golf course revenues, made a

tremendous improvement to the main access for the City's golf course and the clubhouse. The attractive plants, decorative stone treatments, accent lighting, and the new gold lettering of the new entrance quickly highlighted the poor condition of the remaining street-scape along Tanager Drive.

The installation of wrought iron fencing and a pedestrian access gate was finished off with a creative blend of water efficient plants in a meandering design. As the plant material becomes acclimated and begins to grow, the colorful blend of succulent plants with their wide variety of forms and textures will keep the small slope stable and provide an attractive frontage to the golf course.

ARTventure gets rave reviews

The opening reception of ARTventure, the Cultural Arts Committee's new signature event, took place on Friday evening Nov. 13 at the Cisco Home showroom in the SoCo Collection.

The evening included an exhibition of nearly 150 pieces of art that were displayed on and around unique furnishings, fixtures and home design elements.

Prizes were awarded to the artists by judge Kirby Piazza, in front of the more than 650 event attendees. The second day drew in a crowd of nearly 400 art lovers and included two live culinary demonstrations by Bistro Papillote and St. Patisserie, four musical performances including a flamenco

guitarist, a jazz duo, a youth string quartet and a duo of dueling guitarists. An edgy graffiti artist demonstration ended the day.

The final day of the event was geared towards youth and families and included a saxophone soloist performance, four dance performances by Halo Dance for Autism Foundation, a techy robotics demo provided by Strategic Kids, a performance by the All American Boys Chorus and an afternoon with the author segment that featured child author Ryan Rector. About 300 people visited the event on this final day.

Seniors share life stories with friends and families

Fridays at the Costa Mesa Senior Center are a lively and busy time with volunteers, staff and patrons going about their daily activities.

This particular Friday, Oct. 16 is no different. In addition to the usual ballroom, card playing and fitness classes, there is, however, a special presentation taking place in the Grand Hall 2 room; a Guided Autobiography: Family and Friends Storytelling event.

Hosted by the Costa Mesa Senior Center and Volunteer Action for Aging, an organization centered on engaging seniors through volunteerism, this was the grand finale of a month-long adventure of reflection, writing, remembrance and most of all storytelling.

Costa Mesa Senior Center was given the opportunity to participate in this rare occasion. The Guided Autobiography is described as “a semi-structured process for life review that

incorporates individual and group experiences with autobiographical writing.”

Participants attended a two-hour class every week for a month. Through guided instruction, in-class exercises and homework, the participants created their own stories; their autobiographies. The process was simple: show up, write and share, but the outcome was so much more. A written legacy for families, written stories from the heart and a month-long class that influenced, enriched and helped a population to remember, to share with others and for many, to share publicly.

During the grand finale, a Guided Autobiography: Family and Friends Storytelling event, one-by-one people like Patty, Marilyn, Rueha, Rochelle, and mother and daughter duo Mary and Barbara told their story. There were stories of life, death, family, marriage, adoption and triumph.

Every story was different and every story was compelling. More importantly, everyone had a story.

Remembering the olive colored skin tone and dark black hair of her mother, “I remember the day mother dyed a bleach streak in her dark hair,” Patty mentions. She begins to get teary eyed as she remembers the way this made her feel.

And as one presenter stated, “Everyone has a story to tell, here is mine.”

City is gearing up for new

ARTventure weekend event beginning Nov. 13

The City's Cultural Arts Committee and Parks and Community Services Department have set the stage for a unique, three-day arts event that will feature more than 100 pieces of art submitted by local community members.

The artwork will be displayed alongside one-of-a-kind pieces of furniture and vibrant home décor inside of the Cisco Home Showroom located in the SoCo Collection design center.

"This inaugural ARTventure event is primed to become an annual signature event that highlights and signifies why Costa Mesa is known as the City of the Arts," said Justin Martin, the city's supervisor of Parks and Community Services, which is overseeing the event.

The new ARTventure event, founded by the city's Cultural Arts Committee, is free to the public and will run Friday, Nov. 13 through Sunday, Nov. 15.

This one-of-a-kind juried exhibition of art will showcase the work of local artists in a non-traditional gallery style format that pairs individual artwork with furniture, fixtures, home décor and unique design elements.

Accepted submissions include a variety of media, including oil, watercolor and acrylic paintings, graphite drawings, metal sculpture, fashion, photography, fiber art, mixed media as well as literary art.



To enhance the atmosphere of the event there will be live entertainment featuring strolling vocal and instrumental musicians, dance performances, and literary and culinary demonstrations. Youth performances and youth art coming from K-12 Costa Mesa schools will also be part of the event.

Friday's event begins at 5:45 p.m. with a welcome from city leaders and members of the Cultural Arts Committee. Awards covering several categories will be presented to selected winning artists. Food and beverage will be part of the festivities as well as entertainment by the Irvine Jazz Trio.

Saturday and Sunday's event will both begin at 11 a.m. and run until 5 p.m. Saturday's event will feature displayed artwork as well as culinary demonstrations by Bistro Papillote and ST Patisserie, and a special musical performance by Ruben Gonzalez of Pasion Gitano, provided in thanks to the Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

Sunday is family day and will feature displayed art, demonstrations from the Strategic Kids Lego Engineering and Robotics Team from Davis Elementary School, an interactive animation station with special guest animator Lynn Okimura, a performance by the All-American Boys Chorus and an afternoon reading and discussion with 10-year-old child author Ryan

Rector.



Ryan Rector

All submitted entries will be screened, juried and displayed at the Cisco Home venue. The art will then be judged by Kirby Piazza, Costa Mesa High School's ACE Academy Visual and Performing Arts chair.

In addition to Cisco Home, the SoCo Collection design center and the Segerstrom Center for the Arts are sponsors of the event.

The SoCo Collection center is located at 3303 Hyland Ave, Costa Mesa.