

THINK Together Founder Randy Barth receives Mayor's Award

Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger presented the Mayor's Award to Randy Barth, the founder of THINK Together's Shalimar Learning Center on Costa Mesa's Westside, which for 22 years has helped tutor and teach young students in this low income neighborhood.

"You made such a huge impact on so many people," Mayor Mensinger said as he presented the award at the City Council meeting Tuesday Sept. 20. "We are grateful as a city to have people like you who make a difference. You are a true community partner and we are proud to have you in Costa Mesa."

THINK Together, the largest nonprofit after school program in the state, began on Shalimar Drive back in 1994 in response to a gang shooting in the neighborhood where some of the local moms asked for a safe place for their kids to study afterschool.

Working with community moms, Catholic priest Jerome Karcher and members of the St. Andrews Presybyterian Church, Barth was able to secure a room in an apartment complex and THINK Together was born.

Today THINK Together serves several hundred thousand children in after school programs in Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties as well as children in the Bay Area near San Jose. Barth announced Tuesday that his organization is beginning a capital campaign to build a new community center on Shalimar Drive.

"We appreciate the city's partnership through the years," Barth said. "It wasn't an easy project to get off the ground, but it's been, we think, mutually beneficial. We thank you for your leadership and support."

