



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

RUBY GODINEZ is the family resource center coordinator at the Corbin Center in Santa Ana. "The community trusts us," Godinez said.

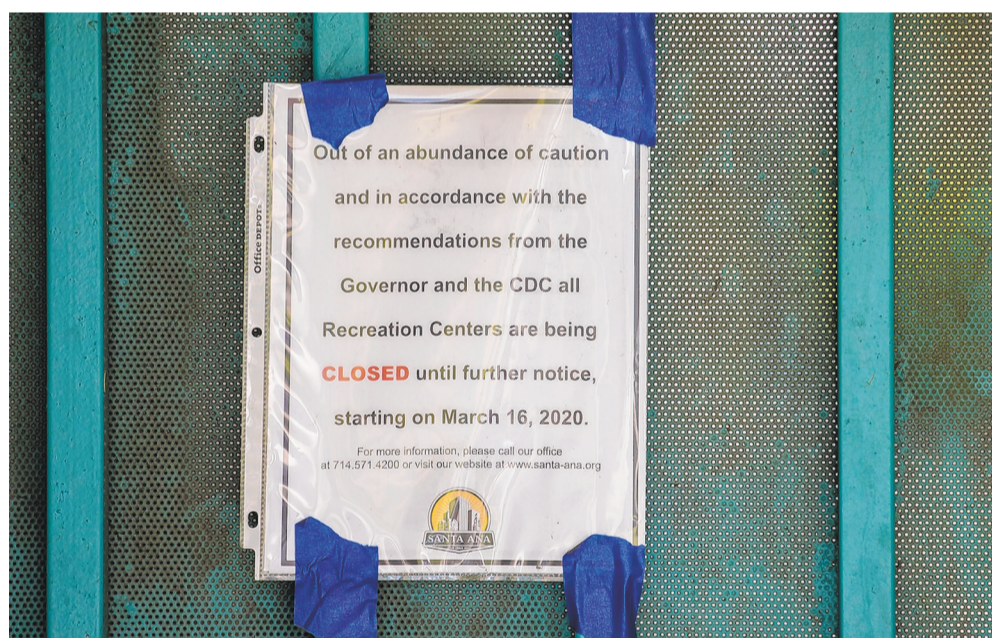
Corbin Center helps people to survive the shadow pandemic of domestic violence in Santa Ana

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMAN

A bilingual advisory from the city of Santa Ana is taped to the locked gates of the Corbin Center, a green-trimmed building nestled beside Jerome Park. The notice stating that all such facilities remain closed due to the coronavirus pandemic may seem alarming at first, but residents in need now more than ever have not been abandoned.

Corbin continues to operate remotely, ready to help those trapped in the shadow pandemic of domestic violence, a social issue already prevalent in Santa Ana prior to the unprecedented challenges brought forth this year.

Rosa, one such survivor, is a recent success story. The mother of three suffered injuries at the hands of her ex-husband during a domestic violence incident. Through services offered at Corbin, she became employed, gained a protective court order against her abuser, sought counseling and finally reunited with her children, who stayed with a



See **Corbin**, page R4

THE CORBIN CENTER in Santa Ana is still operating, but the building is currently closed.

Irvine mayor to focus on pandemic economy

Newly elected Farrah Khan says she wants to keep city economically stable and steer it toward a green future.

BY BEN BRAZIL

Newly elected Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan will focus on keeping Irvine economically stable through the pandemic and steering the city toward a green future.

Khan, a Democrat, unseated Christina Shea, a Republican who has served in the Irvine City Council for 26 years. She will be sworn in on Dec. 8 along with newly elected council members Larry Agran and Tammy Kim.

"I think one of the biggest issues that our city, along with many other cities are facing, is not only surviving this pandemic but the economic crisis that's come along with it," Khan said. "And for that, I developed an economic recovery plan that includes several task forces that I'm working through and getting people on board, and that'll include a COVID-19 task force, a business task force and a resident advisory task force."

Khan was elected to the City Council in 2018. She served on the Community Services Commission prior to the council.

Khan received about 47% of the vote while Shea received about 36%.

Khan said the environment has been a particularly big focus for her on the council and will continue to be during her mayoral term.

A major part of her term will be getting a community choice energy program up and running in the city. Khan said she's been working on getting the program approved for years.

The program enables the city to have local control over its power, giving residents the ability to use more renewable energy.

"You know, we just started our CCE program, which I'm really excited about, and that was one of the boldest steps that we've taken toward sustainability."

See **Irvine**, page R5

How 2 O.C.-based directors documented rural U.S.A. in 'Hometown Proud'

BY VERA CASTANEDA

When directors Naida Osline and Tyler Stallings learned that Archer Altstaetter, who lived openly gay for the last 30 years in Orange County, grew up in a rural community he described as white, straight and conservative Christian, they were intrigued.

Altstaetter was raised in Botkins, a small village about 50 miles north of Dayton, Ohio. He left for California a day after his high school graduation to pursue a career in dance and opened a studio in Irvine during the late '90s.

Through the studio, he produced costumes, sets and choreography for kid's dance as well as nightclubs with go-go dancers, strippers and drag queens. He also became an activist involved in the Orange County Equality

Coalition.

"I am the storm at the beginning of the rainbow," Altstaetter said in the opening scene of the documentary.

He was invited to perform in his hometown's beauty queen pageant and parade.

The feature-length documentary follows Altstaetter as he plans to dance in his own pride float with techno country pop playing in the background.

Interviews with Botkins' residents and Altstaetter's supportive family paint a portrait of what it's like to live openly LGBTQ in a conservative American town during a time when a presidential administration worked to dissolve LGBTQ legal protections at a national level.

The film debuted in the OC Film Fiesta in October, and

See **Proud**, page R4



ARCHER ALTSTAETTER puts the final touches on his DIY pride float.

Courtesy of Naida Osline and Tyler Stallings

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Courtesy of Radiant Health Center

MANNY MURO, Radiant Health Centers' prevention navigator, works at the Santa Ana satellite to administer HIV testing in a drive-through setup.

Group launches HIV drive-through testing program at Santa Ana office

BY VERA CASTANEDA

Radiant Health Centers launched a pilot drive-through HIV testing program in September. Since the service was successful, it became one of three ways the center conducts testing, and it plans on extending the drive-through hours soon.

"Across the nation, it appears that HIV-positive rates are falling, but we honestly believe it's because people are not accessing testing services at the same rate that they were previously," Philip Yaeger, Radiant Health CEO and executive director, said.

Orange County Health Care Agency reported that at the end of 2019 there were 6,449 people living with HIV in the county who were aware of their status. Santa Ana and Laguna Beach had the highest HIV-positive rates. The agency estimated 904 people are unaware of their HIV status.

Radiant Health, a nonprofit offering specialized medical care and social services to the LGBTQ community in Orange County, is continuing with in-person testing through its Irvine facility by appointment only, at-home test kits and drive-through testing services.

Manny Muro, prevention navigator, said the center has already diagnosed a few HIV-positive clients through the at-home test kits and drive-through service.

The at-home test kits are mailed out to people with a return service. But the center started receiving concerns about privacy as roommates or family members could see the center's package when it arrived. Then, the drive-through service was launched

catering to those who are uncomfortable coming into the clinic and receiving a mail test kit.

Clients can call to schedule a drive-up appointment at the nonprofit's Santa Ana location. Over the phone, testing staff conducts a quick sexual health survey and answers any client questions. Medical forms that require an electronic signature are sent out through email to minimize physical interaction. When clients arrive at Radiant Health's drive-through location, staff administer a finger-prick blood test while the client remains in their car. Results are available in about one minute, and treatment or prescriptions are also available that same day if necessary. The service also includes PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) counseling.

Other STI testing can be set up as in-person appointments at the Irvine clinic.

"Orange County has made great strides towards the end of the HIV epidemic but COVID-19 has really made health-related inequities more apparent," Muro said. "We needed to think outside of the box in developing innovative ways to ensure our community has access to health services."

Although Radiant Health initially started in 1985 with the focus on helping people die with dignity during the height of the AIDS epidemic, it has undergone multiple transformations as new effective medications were developed from protease inhibitors to PrEP and PEP.

The nonprofit rebranded from AIDS Services Foundation Orange County to Radiant Health and in 2019 expanded its med-

IF YOU GO

What: Radiant Health Centers HIV drive-through
Where: RADAR office, 2708 Westminster Avenue, Ste 110 Santa Ana
When: by appointment on Mondays between noon and 4 p.m. (Testing hours will expand soon)
Cost: Free
Info: radianthealthcenters.org or (949) 809-8764

ical care to address health service inequities in the LGBTQ community.

Yaeger said use of the nonprofit's food pantry, housing and mental health services have skyrocketed during the coronavirus pandemic. It ran a mental health campaign with the goal of raising \$50,000 and reached \$48,000. The center was able to hire a part-time counselor, who is now seeing clients who have been on a waitlist.

Though the center's ultimate goal is to no longer need to offer HIV services, for the time being Radiant Health has been able to meet the rising needs of clients through private funders, grants and coronavirus relief funds.

"We're doing what we have to do and, thankfully, the community has been there to support us as well," Yaeger said.

vera.castaneda@latimes.com
 Twitter: @vera_fyd

Concordia outbreak infects 49 students, 16 employees

BY LUKE MONEY

A coronavirus outbreak at Concordia University in Irvine has infected more than 60 students and employees, prompting campus officials to cancel athletic practices and urge against out-of-state travel for Thanksgiving.

The active cases — 49 on-campus students and 16 on-campus employees, according to the university's COVID-19 dashboard — were found through antigen testing that "was made available to our students who wished to be tested prior to returning home for Thanksgiving break," officials said.

The "large majority" of affected students and employees are asymptomatic, officials added, and all are isolating.

"All the students have transitioned into isolation housing, and all are presently awaiting confirmation of the positive results through PCR testing," Concordia's COVID-19 response team wrote in a campus update Saturday. "Contact tracing, quarantine and subsequent testing of close contacts is ongoing."

Another 15 students "have been placed in quarantine in accordance with the university's health and safety protocols," officials said, adding that "all students in isolation and quarantine are receiving daily health checks, meals service delivered to their rooms and access to laundry service."

As a precaution, all athletic practices have been canceled for the rest of the year, according to the university.

Officials also urged students and employees to abide by the terms of California's recently issued travel advisory and remain in the state for Thanksgiving.

Word of the outbreak — which accounts for the vast majority of the 80 cumulative cases confirmed at the campus throughout the course of the pandemic — comes just days after Orange County officially moved into the strictest "purple" tier of the state's coronavirus reopening road map.

As a result, many businesses and other public facilities had to suspend or severely limit their indoor operations.


Concordia, a private Lutheran university with more than 4,000 students, previously announced that most of its classes would move back to online instruction as of Monday.

LUKE MONEY is a staff writer with the Los Angeles Times.

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Could 'tiny houses' help solve county's housing deficit?

BY BEN BRAZIL

Much like the rest of the state, Orange County is facing a substantial housing shortage.

The Orange County Business Council said in a 2019 report that the county's housing deficit would grow from 58,000 to 115,000 units by 2045. As the COVID-19 pandemic causes job loss and likely decreased tax revenues for cities, the housing deficit could be even worse than previously predicted.

One proposed method of alleviating that housing shortage is accessory dwelling units, which are smaller homes built on the grounds of a master dwelling.

Accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, are not a novel concept. They've been referred to as "granny flats" and have become more commonplace in the last few years since California relaxed the rules for obtaining ADU building permits in 2017.

As the ADU industry grows, the technology homebuilder's use is evolving.

The Oakland-based Mighty Buildings, which 3D-prints its ADUs, will have a home on display in Garden Grove until the end of November.

The pop-up home, at 9672 Garden Grove Blvd., is open for virtual tours.

The fledgling company started

in 2017, but spent much of that time developing its construction technology.

Sam Ruben, the company's co-founder and chief sustainability officer, said he believes the building technology his company developed will be beneficial as a tool for the ADU industry. The homes start at \$183,000. The company said it doesn't disclose production costs.

Nick Marantz, UC Irvine assistant professor of urban planning and public policy, said the housing affordability crisis is not just about a shortage of supply but about a shortage of housing options.

"So, if you can't afford a family home — in many parts of Orange County, you don't really have any alternative in terms of the type of use," Marantz said. "ADUs can contribute to addressing both of those problems by increasing the supply of housing but also increasing the variety of types of housing units that are available."

While officials say more affordable housing is needed in Orange County, those developments can be difficult to move forward due to pushback from residents.

Sarah Thomaz, a UC Irvine Phd student who has been working on a study of ADUs in Los Angeles, said the units are a way to work around the objections of residents



A 3D-PRINTED accessory dwelling unit will be on display through November in Garden Grove.

Courtesy of Mighty Buildings

who oppose affordable housing projects.

"So in California, if you want to build low-cost housing or a huge apartment complex in a community, you need the community members' approval," Thomaz said. "So a lot of those end up getting shut down because people don't want to densify the neighborhoods. But ADUs have no such restriction on them. So if you can get enough people to adopt this, this is a really good way to get more density without sort of needing that community approval."

Thomaz said that, although there is no formal research, some

suspect ADUs may also be better for the environment. With higher density in the city, one theory suggests, fewer people will commute from the suburbs.

"The only issue that you could run into with ADUs is that, you know, they will drive up housing prices," Thomaz said. "So if you're looking at having more people be homeowners, you're actually making houses harder to afford. But I don't think that's the case in California."

"I think the case in California right now is that people need affordable housing, even if that is rental. And if you're looking for a rental supply, I do think ADUs are

a good source of supply for affordable rental housing."

Thomaz also said that a concern may be that ADUs could lower property values for nearby residents.

She said there isn't currently any research to suggest that's the case, but it is a "valid concern."

Thomaz said there are about 11,000 ADUs in Los Angeles County and roughly 360 ADUs in Orange County's unincorporated areas. The county did not have data on the rest of the cities in Orange County.

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com
Twitter: @benbrazil

Orange County Animal Care continues to find homes for animals during pandemic

BY BEN BRAZIL

Orange County Animal Care has made a number of changes since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to find homes for the animals in its care.

"We're still seeing a lot of homeless pets come in, and they need homes," said Jessica Novillo, spokeswoman for O.C. Animal Care. "It's important that we know that this is a community that we don't forget."

The county shelter has rehomed 2,920 animals since it transitioned to holding virtual events and appointment-only adoptions in March.

Novillo said the number of adoptions has been normal considering the county has seen a drop in its intake numbers.



Courtesy of Orange County Animal Care

ORANGE COUNTY Animal Care has rehomed thousands of pets since the beginning of the pandemic.

The shelter currently has about 100 cats and 120 dogs, which is fewer than normal.

O.C. Animal Care replaced its in-person adoption events with virtual

events to connect people with low-cost adoptions. Those in-person events usually attract big crowds.

The shelter recently partnered with county Supervi-

sor Doug Chaffee for a "Forever Thankful" virtual adoption event. For the event, 100 low-cost adoption vouchers were given out to families, who have 60 days to redeem them.

O.C. Animal Care also partnered with Animals for Armed Forces for a Veterans Day event and handed out 100 vouchers to current and former members of the military for that event.

The shelter is holding a "Family Fur-st" drive-through pet food pantry on the second Saturday of every month in its parking lot at 1630 Victory Road, Tustin. The shelter passes out dog, cat and rabbit food that was donated from the community to residents who need it.

O.C. Animal Care is still holding its low-cost clinic

on the fourth Tuesday of every month, though it's now drive-through only.

The clinic's services include dog and cat vaccines, microchipping, de-worming and flea and tick treatment.

O.C. Animal Care went through some turmoil earlier this year after its former director, Mike Kaviani, resigned after a CBS Los Angeles investigation revealed that the county agency had withheld dog bite histories of dozens of adopted dogs.

Some owners were attacked by the pets. The report also cited records that showed the shelter "drugged" some dogs with the antidepressant Trazodone.

Andi Bernard was named the interim director as the county began a search for a

permanent director. She had been serving as the human resources manager for Orange County Community Resources.

Bernard will continue to lead the agency through the pandemic after being named the permanent director in September.

"Ms. Bernard has served as the interim director since January and brought strong leadership to guide the experienced team of O.C. Animal Care employees," Novillo said.

For more information on how to adopt an animal, visit petadoption.ocpetinfo.com/Adopt/.

To schedule an adoption appointment, call (714) 935-6848.

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com
Twitter: @benbrazil

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FAMILY LAW ATTORNEY HELPS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS NAVIGATE COMPLEX LEGAL LANDSCAPE

BY VERA CASTANEDA

Pro bono work for a lawyer isn't a California state bar requirement, but one firm has made it part of its mission to encourage its attorneys to take on some domestic violence cases without charge.

Farzad & Ochoa Family Law Attorneys, a firm with Santa Ana and Mission Viejo locations, exclusively practice family law.

Most of its clients seek out the firm for complex divorces and custody work. But like local domestic violence resource centers, the firm has experienced an uptick in calls from victims of domestic violence — one to two calls per week has risen to about four to six — during the coronavirus pandemic.

Robert Farzad, the firm's managing partner, said there are three common cases: ongoing victims whose abusers have escalated violence, victims with no history of domestic violence experiencing it for the first time during the pandemic, and spouses or parents who live together but have gotten so sick of each other they ask the firm what may qualify as domestic violence in order to initiate a separation.



Courtesy of Bradford Rogne Photography

ROBERT FARZAD, managing partner of Farzad & Ochoa Family Law Attorneys, volunteers his time at Human Options as a pro bono attorney.

The first two types of cases hit home for the 50-year-old attorney. He witnessed domestic violence in his household while growing up in Iran.

Farzad said it impacted his adulthood and eventually influenced his career.

"I saw an opportunity to help abuse victims become survivors and to also protect children from the abuser," Farzad said. "As the firm grew and we developed the resources to increase our pro bono work,

helping those victims of domestic violence became nearly the exclusive focus of the firm's pro bono department."

The firm works with Human Options' clients once a week at their emergency shelter to deal with restraining orders, custody, divorce and police reports.

Human Options, one of Orange County's domestic violence resource centers, has offered legal advocacy services for victims and survivors for more than 20 years. Legal advocates are stationed at emergency shelters and pro bono clinics (or free consultations with lawyers) held once a week to navigate complex legal problems.

Maricela Rios-Faust, CEO of Human Options, said the main obstacles in seeking legal services are cost and understanding the process.

Farzad estimates that a straightforward restraining order that can be wrapped up in one hearing can cost from \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on the attorney's hourly rate. A highly contested case can cost \$10,000 or more.

"Without the access to the administration of justice, there really is no justice," Farzad said.

"Many victims of domes-

tic violence have minimal access to financial resources to pay normal attorney fees. If law firms don't step up and provide the pro bono work on a consistent basis, who's going to do it? We are the most qualified to do the work."

Before the pandemic, lawyers would go to a confidential location and meet with people who signed up for the pro bono clinic. They would flesh out the facts of their client's case, explain their options, prepare documents to submit to a court and offer information about what to expect as they continue the legal process on their own.

Human Options' clinics have been held over the phone or online since the pandemic — much like O.C. courts, which are largely continuing to run remotely.

In some situations, lawyers take on cases and represent clients for free. They serve the paperwork, go to court to handle hearings, interview witnesses and put together exhibits.

"It's hard sometimes to say no to people, but what we want to do is help the ones that are truly victims of domestic violence and do not have the financial

means to do that, especially when children are involved," the firm's partner, Yvette Ochoa, said about choosing pro bono clients. Rios-Faust notes that for some abuse victims, a legal response or a figure in the court system who can validate their experiences becomes critical.

"It's interesting to watch victims who may not have the support to get the legal finding or the legal action that they need. Unfortunately, what they hear is that it must not have been bad enough or it must not have been really happening," Rios-Faust said. "It becomes really important to find the support that will help them get the justice and the changes that they need to help them move forward."

One of the challenges Farzad has come across during initial meetings is people who dismiss or understate domestic violence in households because of cultural norms or who don't categorize non-physical abuse as domestic violence.

"Domestic violence also includes financial, emotional, mental abuse. Someone who has to control everything and doesn't let a person leave their

home, continually berates them and puts them down," Ochoa said. "It doesn't have to be where you are being physically touched or sexually abused to be considered domestic violence."

Although Farzad saw a lot of public information about domestic violence, it was spread out through multiple locations. He wanted to create an accessible guide capturing legal and emotional components.

The free guide, about 11,000 words long, includes definitions, statistics, laws and resources related to domestic violence. It's available online through the firm's website in English. A Spanish version will be published online soon.

Farzad and Ochoa, who have also established pro bono work in the Los Angeles branch of the firm, plan to expand it in the firm's San Diego office as well.

"The frustrating thing is that there aren't enough lawyers doing pro bono work. I'm hoping my colleagues will read this and get serious about paying it forward," Farzad said.

vera.castaneda@latimes.com
Twitter: @vera_fyd

CORBIN

Continued from page R1

trusted relative in the interim.

At the onset of stay-at-home orders in March, victim advocates feared a rise in domestic violence cases like Rosa's. "We anticipated it was going to get really busy," said Ruby Godinez, a coordinator at Corbin. "All of the stressors that could lead up to domestic violence were all happening at once."

The pandemic forced many out of work as schools turned to remote learning. Teachers, as first responders, could no longer identify bruises and other markers of physical abuse on students attending class over video conferencing apps. Fears mounted that victims would be trapped at home with their abusers while a dangerous virus spread in the community.

But for the first several

weeks, all seemed eerily quiet at Corbin, a family resource center overseen by the Children's Bureau, a nonprofit leader in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

"There was a lot of silence," Godinez said. "Most of the needs that came from the community changed and didn't even focus on domestic violence."

Prior to the pandemic, residents either walked into or called Corbin for help in domestic violence cases. Godinez, a longtime staffer, reviewed such requests and assessed their urgency before providing timely assistance, often in tandem with partnering organizations.

Human Options, an Irvine-based nonprofit that works with Corbin, saw an initial flood of concern on how to respond to abusive situations amid the pandemic.

"We saw calls to our hotline double," said Maricela Rios-Faust, CEO of Human Options. "In the first couple

weeks, we heard questions about restraining orders the most. We heard questions about what to do if the abusive partner no longer wanted to bring the kids over for visitation and was using COVID as a reason."

And then, like at Corbin, the calls quieted down.

Long before Santa Ana became a hotspot for coronavirus cases in Orange County, its share of domestic violence-related reports per capita routinely outpaced other large cities in the state.

According to data from the California Office of the Attorney General, such reports tallied 3,594 last year, averaging nearly 10 per day and marking Santa Ana's highest peak since 2012.

More recent data from the Santa Ana Police Department shows that domestic violence-related reports during the pandemic have been fewer every month through September, a 13% decrease from the same period last year.

On the social services side, the expected tide of people seeking help for domestic violence through Corbin and other organizations appeared to arrive by summer, when coronavirus cases began to surge in California as the state relaxed its stay-at-home orders and more businesses reopened.

In any given week, Godinez said she receives about 20 referrals, enough to overwhelm Corbin's capacity.

"We used to keep all of our referrals," she added. "Now half of my referrals go out to other family resource centers because we don't have enough staff to service everyone in a timely manner."

As the pandemic heads into what health experts fear will be a difficult winter, Godinez braces herself. Whatever the next challenge looks like, she and fellow staff remain vigilant. It's what the surrounding working class community has come to expect.

"In the first couple weeks (of the pandemic), we heard questions about restraining orders the most. We heard questions about what to do if the abusive partner no longer wanted to bring the kids over for visitation and was using COVID as a reason."

— Maricela Rios-Faust
CEO of Human Options

Named for Norman Corbin, a late African American reverend and civil rights activist in both the Black and Latino communities in Santa Ana, the family resource center remains a pillar since first opening in 1972.

"At Corbin, it's the trust that residents have with the staff that creates this opening to share stories and needs," Rios-Faust said. "Once that connection occurs, it's an opportunity to link them to needed resources."

As a child, Godinez's family lived across the street from Corbin. During her childhood in the 1980s when Jerome Park was too dangerous for children like her to play at, she attended Corbin's after-school activities.

Now, life's come full circle. "The community trusts us," Godinez said. "It doesn't feel like work. It feels like you really do make a difference every day."

GABRIEL SAN ROMAN is a contributor to TimesOC.

PROUD

Continued from page R1

screenings are continuing through the Anchorage Film Festival (Dec. 4 through 13).

In this edited interview, Osline and Stallings talk about how the film came to be and what it's like shooting in a rural American town.

Q How did you meet Archer?

A Naida Osline: I met Archer about nine years ago through an art residency I was doing in Santa Ana at the Grand Central Art Center. We became friends, and he became my assistant on projects where it's required that I have somebody that's very outgoing, which Archer is.

Tyler Stallings: As I got to know Archer through Naida, some things I saw when we visited him in Santa Ana is that he had this funky costume shop at one time because he had a big dance studio so he was selling costumes he made. He's very DIY. He still performed at nightclubs. He was a gay rights activist in Santa Ana. He was this kind of amalgam of all these different things. And thinking of him back in his hometown of almost 1,200 people was really intriguing.

Q At what point did you decide this is going to be a film? What was the thinking behind deciding to follow Archer?

A Osline: I have this project where for the last two years, I've been driving around the country asking Americans to tell me a joke on video. So I have about 300 jokes. Archer has been my helper on that because we set up in these public spaces. So I said to Archer, "I'll drive you back

to Botkins, Ohio, and you can work on your mom's house for a month if you help me with this project." Archer talked a lot about this hometown back in Ohio. Knowing Archer, we just couldn't imagine him in this town. He knew we were interested in pursuing some kind of film. During that time, he was invited to dance in the Miss Carousel Pageant the following year, so I immediately called Tyler and I said, "This is the narrative arc for the story." We were thrilled. I stayed about a month with Archer and did a certain amount of interviews with people like the mayor, the history guy and the woman who runs the pageant. We collected some material in 2018. Then we went back again in 2019 and that's when the story unfolded in terms of the actual events.

Q There are a couple of story lines taking place — Archer's story, his niece's story and it's also the story about the town. How did you decide who to interview?

A Stallings: That's the fun of it in the editing process. We had 40 hours of footage, between interviews and out in the field. One of the story lines that evolved over time was seeing the family, in many different respects.

Osline: The whole thing was an organic process. We worked through the family, and then there's obvious people to interview like the mayor. The film is about the town, the family, rural America. But for me it's also about the unspoken suppression of anybody that doesn't fit into the narrow lanes of identity defined in a small town or a family. It's about the personal shrapnel that such an experience leaves behind that can lead to things like suicides, substance abuse and isolation.

Q During one of the interviews the pageant director, Patty, gets emotional talking about the town. She says that Botkins is full of good people who help each other out while others have a very different take. What do you think was so emotional about the subject for her?

A Osline: That "good people" comment is very interesting to me just based on what we're hearing nationally — there's good people here and there. Everybody thinks they're a good person. She became emotional during the interview because I told her Archer is gay, he dances in nightclubs, he's an activist and I asked her how she thought that would fit into the Carousel Pageant and the town. We didn't include a lot of what she said but she didn't want to say the word gay. She finally did, but in a roundabout way. She ends up saying God loves everyone. It was an emotional response to an unanticipated question. Nobody [in the film] really comes out with outright homophobia or racism. It was an uncomfortable moment for her.

Stallings: By being in a small rural community where most people are white, straight Christian — it's a lack of being introduced to diverse people. Suddenly when it's kind of put forward to you in an overt way, it can feel surprising a little bit. We were very careful not to make it an indictment on the town. At the same time, some of the comments speak for themselves.

Q One of the repeated phrases when talking about Botkins is "People are accepting up to a point." We see that point shift in generations through Archer and his niece who identifies as a



Courtesy of Naida Osline and Tyler Stallings

ARCHER ALTSTAETTER wraps a mini van in rainbow printed paper to create his own LGBTQ Pride float.

lesbian and was a high school student at the time of filming. Archer does question what could cross the line when planning the pride float. Were there any consequences for Archer in his family after the parade?

A Osline: There was a certain amount of anxiety that Archer personally felt about doing this. He was very relieved that nobody yelled a slur at him. People didn't want to be on camera talking to us. We saw some looks, but we also saw people cheering.

Stallings: We initially thought it was going to be an activist moment. As we were immersed in the community and then during the editing process, we realized that this is about the importance for Archer to achieve this individual goal and have his family support him. Just by doing the film and Archer being there provided an opportunity for a very public presentation, and the film provides that platform for dialogue.

Osline: But [his nieces] still didn't join Archer during the parade.

Q Did they say why they didn't join the parade?

A Stallings: Archer made it open that he would like them to join and he invited people. Even though there is a shift, and people

have learned to be more outwardly polite, it doesn't mean that the attitudes have shifted in a deeper way. The suppression still exists so that may be why. Archer is visiting his hometown, but his nieces still have to live there. Maddie certainly has done some very brave things and is very open. Michelle certainly has interesting lightness about how she approaches her [queer identity], so there is that generational shift.

Osline: What's brave in L.A. is different than what's brave in a small town in rural Ohio. It was very brave for Archer to do what he did, even though there was this line that he felt like he couldn't cross.

Q There was this dialogue in the film about how people who are LGBTQ or different than most people who live there, eventually just move. What is the latest update on Archer's two nieces and their friend Maddie?

A Osline: Both Crystal and Michelle are going to college. They're going to Ohio State. But Maddie has a very interesting story. She's taking care of her two siblings and her grandmother. Maddie is really sweet and dedicated to her family. Even though Maddie

said she's going to get out of there as soon as she can, I anticipate that Maddie will probably stay in the community for a while. One of her goals is to send her siblings off to college and they're under 10 right now.

Q Have they seen the film and has it been shown in Ohio?

A Osline: Maddie shared it with her mom. She really loved it. Crystal loved it. Michelle, I think, felt a little embarrassed, but overall the response is very positive. We were sad that we weren't able to go back this year and share it with more people. We would have probably shown it in the town if it weren't for COVID.

Stallings: Right now, we're reaching out to a lot of the LGBTQ organizations in Ohio to try to make it free to their members to view for a limited time. There's a big community in Dayton, an organization called Stonewall Columbus.

Osline: I'm very interested in doing more films about this gray area in the idea of community and suppression. I've always wanted to say this — I worked a number of years for local government in Huntington Beach. I left that job about 10 years ago and I swore I would never use the word "community" again. The reason I say that is because I often saw the word deployed as a term of exclusion, in terms of what the community didn't want. In local politics, you could see how people would be able to resolve their differences because you're looking right at the person and eventually you have to come to some kind of resolution. But national politics as it is today with neighbors pitted against neighbors, it's going to be a real challenge.

vera.castaneda@latimes.com
Twitter: @vera_fyd

Make-A-Wish alumni return to grant wishes

BY VERA CASTANEDA

Brothers Keane and Shaun Veran launched OURA, a wellness company, on the day Keane was declared a cancer survivor in 2017. But the idea for the business started nine years prior.

At 10 years old, Keane was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

"One of the biggest things that my family and I realized was how dirty things can be — everything from hats to your clothes," Keane said. "Being immunosuppressed means that you're more susceptible to any and all types of bacteria that can lead to infections or a one way trip to the ICU."

When Keane's hair started falling out during treatment, he searched for a machine-washable or antibacterial hat and realized it wasn't available in the market. A couple of years later, he took a shot at creating a hat with Shaun, who is a microbiologist currently working for one of the COVID-19 test kit suppliers — Zymo Research Corp.

OURA expanded to create facial cleansing products and aprons. The best-selling items in 2020 are face masks.

Shaun said OURA's antimicrobial technology is different from that of other companies. Instead of coating the products with antimicrobial technology, OURA embeds it into the threads of the fabric allowing the mask to effectively kill 95% viral and bacterial particles after 100 washes. The masks are also available with an optional NIOSH-approved N95 filter.

The company was working on creating masks before the coronavirus hit the United States but accelerated its plans to start selling masks by April.

OURA's antibacterial hats are closer to the heart of the company's social-impact mission. For every 1,000 hats sold, the company grants a wish for a kid from Orange County or the Inland Empire through Make-A-Wish.

The company logo of a crane (a design also embedded on the hats) was inspired by the Japanese legend of folding 1,000 origami cranes to receive a



ABOVE: Brothers Shaun and Keane Veran are cofounders of OURA, a wellness company specializing in antimicrobial clothing and accessories. *Courtesy of OURA*



LEFT: In 2011, Make-a-Wish granted Keane and his family a trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with President Barack Obama in the Oval Office. *Courtesy of The White House*

wish.

"We always knew that we wanted to make the company and be able to give back," Shaun said.

The impact Keane's cancer diagnosis had on the family, along with their experience with Make-A-Wish, influenced their business model and volunteer work.

In 2011, Keane's wish was granted. He and his family took a trip to meet President Barack Obama in Washington, D.C.

"It took two years for the wish to be granted but even during that period of waiting for my wish to come true, it gave me something to hope for and look forward to," Keane said. "It really helped me just get through the treatments and the chemotherapy."

That time period was difficult for Keane's family

too.

"I felt so scared and nervous at the time," Shaun said. "It's not just in that one moment. It stretches through all the way to the point of remission. We had to make a lot of changes and sacrifices as a family to get through that time. Make-A-Wish was such an incredible breath of fresh air to get away from how frightening treatment could be for someone undergoing cancer."

Some wishes related to travel may be on indefinite hold because of the coronavirus pandemic, but the work to grant wishes continues.

Gloria Jetter Crockett, O.C. and Inland Empire Make-a-Wish CEO, said wishes like gifts or virtually meeting people are still taking place.

Make-A-Wish receives funding from events, corporate partners and individual donations. With events canceled, the nonprofit lost more than \$1 million.

"We need individuals more now than ever because we are still granting wishes. When we come out of COVID and it's safe, we need to be prepared to grant the wishes that were on hold too," Crockett said.

The average wish costs about \$7,500.

Other than financial donations, Keane became a wish ambassador — speaking on behalf of the nonprofit by telling his story. Shaun became a wish granter, who helps guide families through the entire wish process. He's guided kids through shopping sprees, trips to Japan and meeting the cast of the "Into the Badlands" TV series.

Make-A-Wish has also amped up its communication with kids who are waiting by sending them messages of hope and support.

"There's so many of us that are going through a variety of emotions and change," Crockett said. "To have a critical illness on top of it — we need to make sure that we provide that hope for wish kids and their families now more than ever."

vera.castaneda@latimes.com
Twitter: @vera_fyd

IRVINE

Continued from page R1

Khan said. "We're one of the first cities in Orange County. And now we've got other cities looking at us and wanting to join in. So, again, that's going to be a beacon."

"This is something that is going to help us convert over to renewable energy in a very short amount of time."

Khan said she decided to run for mayor after Shea reacted controversially to Black Lives Matter protests that were held outside City Hall following the death of George Floyd during an arrest by Minneapolis police in May.

Shea criticized protesters and blocked Black Lives Matter supporters on her Facebook page, which resulted in a lawsuit.

Shea also reported Khan to the city for "demanding" that Irvine Police Chief Mike Hamel take a knee during a Black Lives Matter protest.

"For me, I wasn't even planning on running for mayor until I just felt that the words coming out of our leadership, out of Shea, was not reflective of our community," Khan said.

"... When you hear a mayor talk about the BLM protests as being violent or twisting facts about me and others that were there, that's not leadership."

Khan said she started roundtable discussions with local Black community leaders following the protests, and they've been continuing to meet on Zoom.

Khan said she is working on a diversity, equity and inclusion resolution, though she described it as a "work in progress."

"We are looking at how to incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion into all aspects of city govern-



Courtesy of Farrah Khan

IRVINE MAYOR-ELECT Farrah Khan will focus on the environment during her term.

ment," Khan said.

Shea, who's final council meeting was on Tuesday, said in a phone interview that her loss is likely owed to a rising number of Democrats in the city.

"It just is a change in how our city thinks, we're much more progressive-thinking in many ways," Shea said. "So, I wasn't shocked about the out-

come."

Shea said she's looking forward to restarting her real estate business.

She said she will still be involved politically and may start a community group with other residents.

Shea has served on the council for more than half of the city's 49-year existence.

"So I just love Irvine, I've lived here since 1977," Shea said. "It's just a city that's changed dramatically over the many years ... In many ways to the good, in some ways not to the good."

She said her most proud accomplishment was bringing forward a proposal in 2016 to make Irvine one of the first cities

in the county to use only organic pesticides.

She may consider running for council again in the future.

"Certainly I would consider it," Shea said. "It just depends on where we are in two years. What the dynamic is in our city. If we have a lot of unrest and some of the difficult polarization that I've noticed in

our city over the last year and a half or so, I don't think I would want to do that.

"But if there's a reason, and I feel like it would be good for the city for me to come back, then yes I would certainly consider it."

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com
Twitter: @benbrazil

TimesOC

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CONTACT US

Erik Haugli
Deputy Editor
erik.haugli@latimes.com

Raymond Arroyo
Advertising Director
(714) 966-4608
ray.arroyo@latimes.com

Online
timesoc.com
Social Media
@timesocofficial

Address
10540 Talbert Ave.,
Suite 300 West,
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Business Office
(714) 966-4600
Newsroom
(714) 966-4699
Email
dailypilot@latimes.com
TCN Classifieds
800-234-4444

TCN Legal Phone
888-881-6181

TCN Legal Email
LALegal@tribune.com

COMPANY INFO

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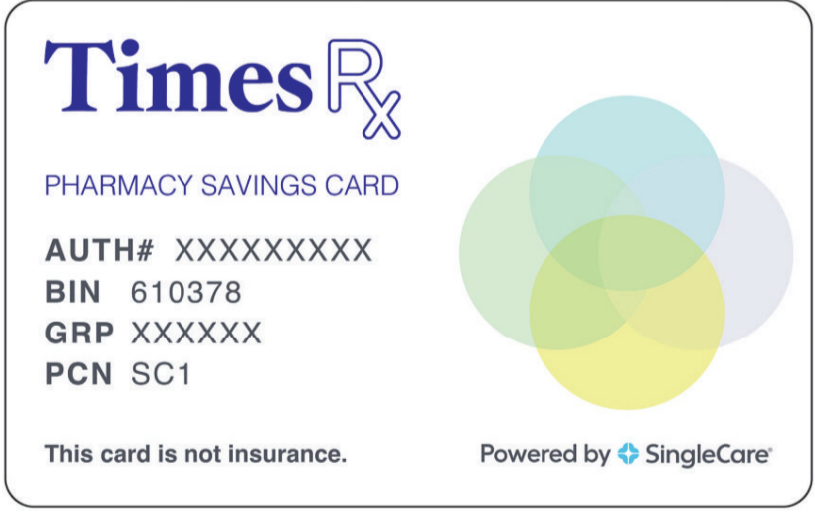
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