

TimesOC

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OCMA gives insight on its future



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

JEN KIM and her son, Paxton, 3, peruse the exhibit "An Earth Song, a Body Song," featuring the work of Kori Newkirk at the Orange County Museum of Art on Thursday.

The Orange County Museum of Art reopened this month and plans to honor artist Kori Newkirk at its Oct. 3 virtual gala as well as provide attendees with a look at the future plans of the museum.

A PIECE CALLED Hutch, 2004 by Kori Newkirk, is part of "An Earth Song, a Body Song" exhibit at the Orange County Museum of Art.



BY VERA CASTANEDA

A reopening. A virtual gala. A nationwide search for a director. A new building.

After months of vacant galleries and virtual programming, Orange County Museum of Art's fall calendar is filling out, and its 2021 plans are starting to take shape.

The museum reopened its doors once again on Sept. 12 after Orange County moved from the purple tier to the red tier in the state's coronavirus guidelines. In the red tier, businesses like restaurants and places of worship can resume indoor operations at 25% or 100 people.

Sarah Jesse, the museum's inter-

im director and CEO, said the team has put a lot of measures in place to create a safe environment such as plexiglass barriers at the front desk, limiting attendance, requiring face masks, contactless hand-sanitizer dispensers, visual social-distancing reminders and a daily cleaning schedule. The pool of frontline staff who were furloughed since the museum closed in March have the option of working again.

Inside, visitors can find the work of Kori Newkirk on display in the exhibit "An Earth Song, a Body Song: Figures with Landscape from the OCMA Permanent Col-

See **OCMA**, page R9

Addressing a lack of culturally sensitive healthcare

Orange County organizations are looking for ways to deal with the mental health needs of members of the Cambodian and Vietnamese communities.

BY AGNES CONSTANTE

This is the third story in a three-part TimesOC series "Improving Healthcare Access for Cambodians and Vietnamese," supported by the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism 2020 California Fellowship.

Paul Hoang makes it a point to talk about mental health whenever he can, from appearing on Vietnamese television to giving talks at high schools and universities.

Hoang is the founder of Viet-CARE, a group of mental health professionals working to end the stigma attached to mental health and address mental health disparities in the Vietnamese American community.

A primary barrier, community leaders and members say, is a lack

of a bilingual and bicultural workforce. The problem is one the Cambodian community also faces.

Yet mental health is not a field that Hoang sees younger Vietnamese pursuing.

Over the past few years, he has organized the statewide Asian and Pacific Islander Mental Health Empowerment Conference, which draws a wide range of attendees, including providers and representatives from non-profits.

Last year, the conference saw nearly 50 high school students in Fresno County, who Hoang hopes will consider entering the mental health profession.

"I try to appeal to their sense of community because everyone I spoke to, they've either experi-

enced mental illness or have been impacted by someone else's mental illness," he said. "In our community, it's very prevalent."

At the very least, he hopes those who are exposed to the field can start conversations about their own misunderstandings or fears about mental health.

Orange County, according to the 2010 census, is home to approximately 200,000 Vietnamese and about 7,000 Cambodian residents.

According to a 2018 study of Asian Americans in O.C., released by Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Orange County, the county only had one Khmer-speaking doctor.

The lack of Cambodian pro-

See **Care**, page R8



Courtesy of the Cambodian Family

A HEALTH PROGRAM director at the Cambodian Family, helps a client fill out paperwork. Many community organizations help bridge the gap between community members and healthcare providers.

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Garden Grove approves a \$1.8M contract outsourcing jail security

The council's 3-year deal is with G4S, an international company with a controversial past.

BY VERA CASTANEDA

Garden Grove is switching its jail security services from one private company to another.

On Tuesday night, the City Council approved a \$1,815,556.69 three-year contract with G4S Secure Solutions USA, Inc., a large private security firm with offices in more than 100 countries and a controversial past uncovered in a 2019 news investigation.

Starting in June 2000, the city had contracted GEO Group, Inc. to provide 24-hour jail booking services for the police department.

Although the council renewed a three-year contract with that company in 2019, the police department received notice that GEO is ending jail operations in California and will terminate the contract on Nov. 1.

GEO is a private prison firm that owns and operates two ICE facilities, three prisons and two detention facilities in California. This year the state planned to end two contracts with GEO for two prisons after Assembly Bill 32, a law barring renewal of contracts with private prisons, went into effect on Jan. 1.

Lt. Brian Dalton of the Garden Grove Police Department said Tuesday, "On average it takes police officers approximately two hours to handle a prisoner through the entire booking process. Using the GEO contract services, this processing time has been reduced to approximately 15 minutes, allowing police officers to return to the field more quickly."

Dalton also said over recent years the amount of crime has increased along



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

A COMPANY spokesperson said that G4S provides jail support services to 15 Southern California police departments throughout Los Angeles San Bernardino and Orange counties including local cities Irvine, Buena Park, Fullerton, La Habra, Westminster and Costa Mesa.

with arrests made by the police department. In 2019, officers made 7,575 arrests for felony and misdemeanor crimes compared to 5,619 arrests in 2014.

Garden Grove city staff recommended "piggybacking" on the existing jail services contract between Westminster and G4S approved in March 2020.

G4S offered to hire the 10 current GEO employees working in Garden Grove's jail located in the police department building at 11301 Acacia Parkway.

The 10 custody workers would have to pass an updated preemployment screening.

According to a service document compiled by G4S, the screening includes identity verification through Social Security, a variety of criminal searches, a review of seven years of employment, unemployment or education, a driver's license check, drug screening, a physical exam and a psychological evaluation.

G4S is also responsible for annual training.

G4S activities include security for concerts, shopping malls, banks, prisons and healthcare facilities.

The company's career page shows about 17 jobs — mostly security, detention or custody officers — available across Orange County.

According to a G4S spokesperson, the company provides jail support services to 15 Southern California police departments throughout Los Angeles San Bernardino and Orange counties including local cities Irvine, Buena Park, Fullerton, La Habra, Westminster and Costa Mesa.

"Our longest local partnership dates back to 1992 with the city of Irvine and the Irvine Police Department. G4S is proud to partner and support these communities with qualified security officers so local police forces can focus on public safety," stated the G4S spokesperson through email.



Spencer Grant

ORANGE COUNTY sheriff's deputies in riot gear in 2017.

Formerly homeless veteran claims he was beaten, Tased by O.C. deputies

BY BEN BRAZIL

A formerly homeless veteran claims in a legal complaint that he was beaten and Tased by Orange County sheriff's deputies.

Jeremy Holloway, who now lives in Pennsylvania, is seeking damages to aid with his ongoing health costs allegedly exacerbated by the beating, his attorney Narine Mkrtychyan said.

The alleged incident occurred in January 2018, when Holloway was approached by deputies at his tent in O'Neill Regional Park in Trabuco Canyon.

Holloway, who was 41 at the time, was awakened by the deputies, who were following up on a report of domestic abuse, the complaint says.

Mkrtychyan said the sheriff's department received a call from someone who said a woman and man were involved in the dispute, yet the deputies zeroed in on Holloway, who's only companion was his dog.

Deputy Chad Renegar and another deputy searched Holloway's belongings in the tent without his consent, the complaint says.

Once the deputies left, Holloway spoke to the neighbors he believed may

have been responsible for the domestic abuse.

Mkrtychyan said the department then received another call of a woman screaming at the campsite. However, a police report said the caller indicated that a man was walking around the campsite searching for whoever called the police on him.

The deputies confronted Holloway at his campsite, who according to Mkrtychyan, was on informal probation for insurance fraud at the time.

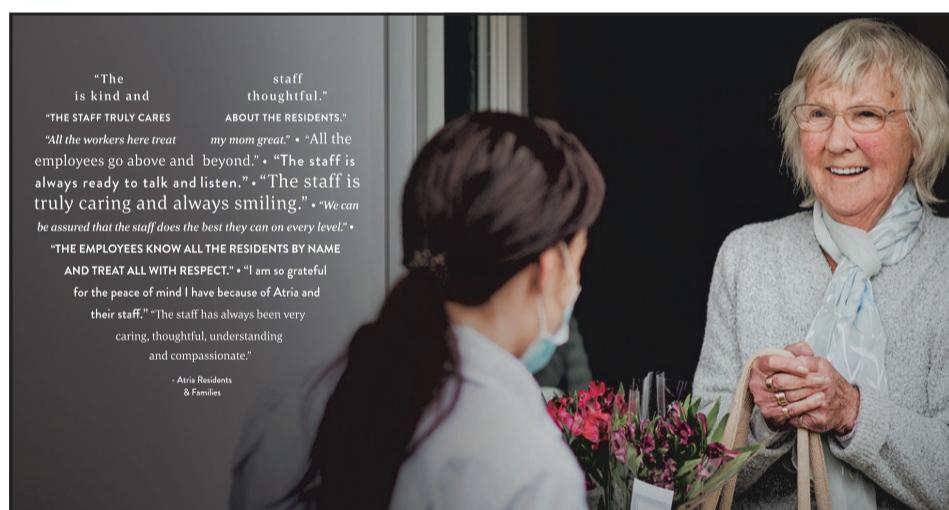
According to the complaint, Holloway complied with a deputy's orders to step away from the tent with his hands up.

"Suddenly and without provocation, at least one Defendant punched Jeremy on the left side of his face, causing him to fall to the ground," the complaint says. "Immediately after his fall, he had deputies get on top of him while choking him and kneeling him in the temple, maliciously causing him pain and suffering. While on the ground already detained, he was shot with a Taser approximately five times.

"As he lay helpless on the ground bleeding profusely,

See **Veteran**, page R9

See **Security**, page R7



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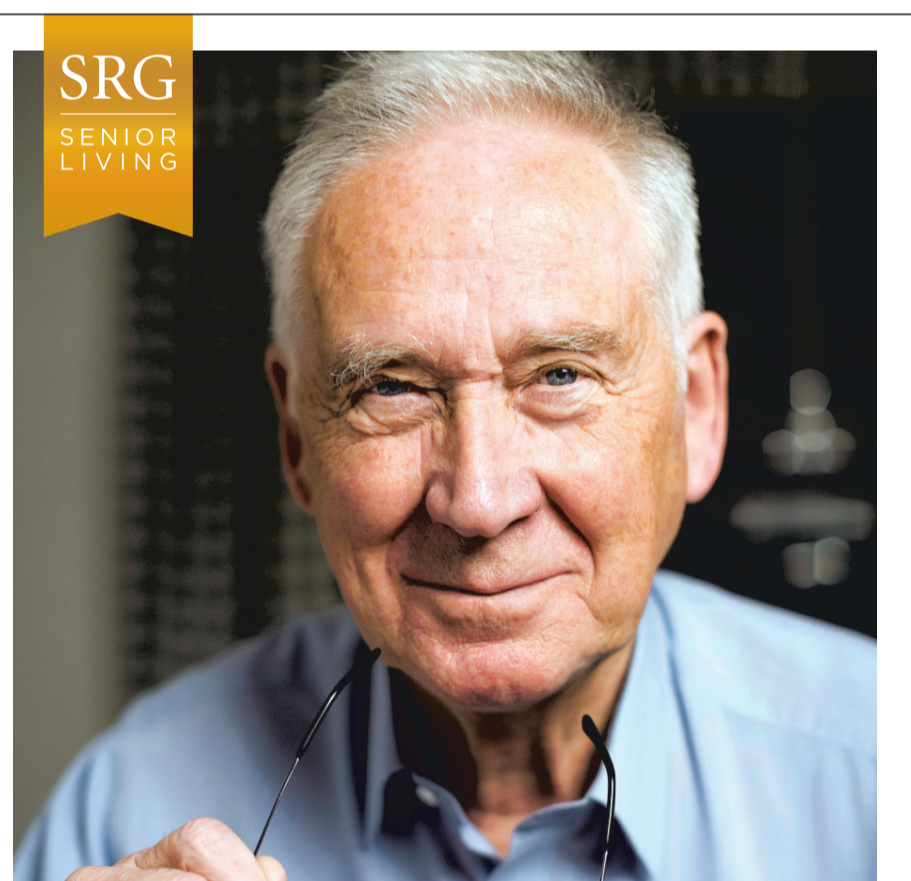
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Saddleback College considers getting rid of mascot

BY BEN BRAZIL

Saddleback College is considering whether to replace its mascot amid calls from faculty and students that it perpetuates a racist stereotype.

The college has been under fire for its mascot, the Gaucho, for at least a decade.

Amid a renewed national movement against racism and police brutality, the Mission Viejo school has been holding discussions with faculty and students to determine whether to get rid of the gaucho, which is an Argentinian cowboy.

The debate is not far off from the Washington Football Team ending in July use of its "Redskins" branding, which included a logo and mascot many considered to be racist.

A group called Retire the Gaucho has listed several reasons on its website why the mascot should be changed.

For one, the mascot plays into a stereotype of Latino men that has been perpetuated in movies and other forms of entertainment in the U.S., the group says.

The group also contends that the use of the gaucho is a form of cultural appropriation. "... We have no right to objectify and represent an entire culture as a stereotype for our own purposes and benefit," the group's website



Courtesy of CleanPNG.com

THE ORIGINAL MASCOT of the Saddleback College Gauchos.

says.

The school stopped using the original gaucho image in 2018. This year, a group at the college had been working on redesigning the Gaucho.

Various new versions were expected to be sent out for a vote this fall, but those plans were set aside after criticism of the mascot intensified after the killing of George Floyd provoked nation-

wide protests against police brutality and racism. The school has also eliminated many traces of the mascot on campus, including two large murals.

Faculty members formed the Retire the Gaucho group and started a petition that collected more than 200 signatures. They are calling for the gaucho mascot to be scrapped completely rather than redesigned.

In response, Saddleback College President Elliot Stern sent a letter to all employees at the beginning of the fall semester in August that announced his decision to pause the mascot redesign and that the school would hold a series of Zoom discussions with employees and students about whether to get rid of the mascot.

In his letter, Stern mentioned that although the school has sought to rid the campus of the original gaucho image, not everybody's on the same page.

"I, myself, have also seen and heard from others who have seen employees who continue to wear the offensive depiction on clothing," Stern said. "It seems that the attempt to save the Gaucho by repairing the damage done by its racist depiction was not fully embraced across our campus."

The letter stated that there would be four discussions. The third meeting was held on Tuesday.

Jennie McCue, director of marketing and communications at the college, said there will possibly be another meeting, but it is not yet certain.

Students were required to reserve a space in the Zoom meeting by Friday. Those without a reservation were unable to access the meeting, and the discussion was not recorded by the school. Ahead of the meeting, Debi

Gold, commenting on a Saddleback College Facebook post inviting the public to the meeting wrote that it was "sad to take the mascot away."

Gold wrote she had Latino friends who attended the school, and "they think getting a new mascot will be taking away their heritage. They do not feel it's racist at all, and it's white people going overboard creating racial injustices that don't exist."

"We will endeavor to create a safe space for all of us to speak, listen and process," Stern said in his letter. "I hope that we can listen and respond to each other with open hearts and minds, not merely opine and tune out other views and perspectives. (We do way too much of that in modern society.)"

"I am hopeful that these discussions will be healthy for us and will help us decide not just the Gaucho's fate, but will model for our students how we discuss even polarizing topics with respect and love for one another and make decisions by listening to and learning from each another. Whether we are Gauchos or not at the end of these discussions, we are Saddleback, united by common values and shared mission."

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Irfan Khan | Los Angeles Times

ONE OF NUMEROUS luxury homes in Yorba Linda is left to burn in 2008 as a perfect storm of wind and dry air made for poor firefighting conditions.

O.C. fire watchers go virtual

BY BEN BRAZIL

Fire watchers tasked with helping prevent wildfires in Orange County will use virtual monitoring due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Orange County Fire Watch is using the virtual program in conjunction with its normal in-person monitoring activities.

OC Fire Watch is managed by Irvine Ranch Conservancy for OC Parks and the cities of Irvine and Newport Beach.

Tony Pointer, the conservancy's fire watch manager, said the new system is crucial to keep volunteers safe, while maintaining adequate wildfire monitoring.

"This year, because of the COVID challenges, we wanted to recognize that there were individuals who needed to shelter at home and be safe at home while they still wanted to volunteer," Pointer said. "We had been using the alert wild-fire cameras for the past couple of years in the operations center for situational awareness."

"We expanded the role of those cameras to assign volunteers different camera feeds for them to be able to monitor at home and report off the camera feeds if they saw smoke or

fire activity."

There are about 350 fire watch volunteers. Fire watchers are used on red flag warning days, which are issued when temperatures, humidity levels and strong winds increase the risk of a fire.

OC Fire Watch volunteers monitor 36 different locations throughout the county from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In-person watchers take two-hour shifts and virtual watchers take four-hour shifts.

Pointer said there are about 50 volunteers out in the field at any given time during a red flag warning. Now, there will be 10 to 15 virtual fire watchers in addition to those 50.

Virtual watchers can use computers or tablets to monitor the camera feeds. Pointer said the method for monitoring is much different when done virtually.

Only some of the cameras rotate. They also are not zoomed in and take a more broad view of the area.

Virtual fire watchers will monitor up to four camera feeds, normally from different areas.

"We encourage them to not have additional distractions," Pointer said. "It is key for them to, if they see smoke or fire, they can potentially locate that

without having to wait for the camera to swing back around, which could take a minute or two."

This year's fire season has already been the worst in California history, with six of the state's largest fires ever recorded.

Pointer said that while Orange County, like the rest of Southern California, doesn't have any big timber like more northern parts of the state, it poses just as big a risk as other counties for significant wildfires.

"Given the growth, the wildland-urban interface with the residential and business areas that are interspersed amongst our open space, we are just as susceptible to these types of fires that are happening throughout the state," Pointer said.

Pointer said fire watchers are crucial in spotting and reporting fires before they spread. Fire watchers in the field also regularly report medical emergencies, as many in the field are located at trailheads.

"Already the counties around us have had fairly sizable fires and Orange County has not," Pointer said. "Every few years, Orange County has a sizable or catastrophic fire."

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Newport Beach City Council adopts resolution to support department's firefighters as they help out across the state

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Nearly 30 firefighters have been deployed from the Newport Beach Fire Department to help fight some of the 26 remaining major wildfires burning up and down the state.

State fire officials said Wednesday that since the beginning of the year more than 8,000 wildfires have collectively burned over 3.6 million acres in California. Since Aug. 15, there have been 26 fatalities and over 6,000 structures destroyed.

"These last couple of months, our fire season has grown beyond anything like we've ever seen in the state of California," Newport Beach Fire Chief Jeff Boyles said.

The department has four firefighters in Los Angeles County fighting the Bobcat Fire, which the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection reported Wednesday is at about 38% containment. Two firefighters are also deployed in Fresno and one in Mendocino. The department employs 118 fire personnel.

City officials said the first call for mutual aid was on May 31, and over the course of a 43-day period between the end of July to

early September, 26 fire personnel and one civilian from the department had responded to 13 wildfires.

The City Council unanimously adopted a resolution elaborating on its support for the department. Firefighters and their families were in attendance in person at Tuesday's council meeting.

"This is something that the council obviously takes very seriously," Mayor Will O'Neill said. "We look constantly at the budget every year and within that budget, it's important what line items mean. They mean the people not only there, but the families that are with them."

"This is something that a lot of people, often times when they see the rigs rolling through town ... you wear uniforms," O'Neill said. "The whole point of a uniform is to look uniform, but each of you are individuals. Each of you have families at home."

Mayor Pro Tem Brad Avery spoke to the struggles of the pandemic, describing the pivot from pandemic woes to wildfire as shifting from an "invisible threat" to a "visible one" all over the state.

"There is, to me, a purity in the mission of this fire department and all re-

sponders to this very visible threat," Avery said. "There was no indecision. There's no politics. It's duty, it's bravery, it's brotherhood, it's sisterhood and then you've got the support of family, friends and certainly your community."

"In a way, it's a beautiful thing. We've got a society right now that's really struggling in so many ways," Avery said. "Having something so pure going on, it's absolutely selfless."

Council members conveyed their thanks to the department, with Councilman Jeff Herdman describing his feelings as "awe."

"It's such a hard emotional as well as physical endurance that you're going through," Councilwoman Diane Dixon said, "and it's just so important for all of us — and for all of you to realize how all of us value and respect and honor what you're doing to keep our community healthy and safe during the pandemic and to protect other communities."

"It's just noble work, and it's an honor we could call our Newport Beach Fire Department our own," she said.

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The Pacific Symphony's 2020-21 season has been postponed, but leaders say the music will continue

BY SARA CARDINE

It was on March 8 at around 3:30 p.m. when “Of Love and Rage”—a performance of the American Ballet Theatre accompanied by the Pacific Symphony orchestra — concluded to thunderous applause in Costa Mesa’s Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

Audience members filed out of the cool, dark concert hall and into the afternoon sun as musicians packed up instruments and dancers congratulated one another on another stellar production.

Few among them could have known the matinee show would likely be one of the last full-scale performances to grace the stage in a year that would become dominated by the coronavirus pandemic. The 46,000-square-foot Segerstrom Concert Hall would soon close to the public and fall into a protracted period of silence.

“It just feels like something’s missing,” said Joann Leatherby, who’s gone to Pacific Symphony events since she and her husband of 26 years attended a concert on their third date, and who now sits on the board of directors. “The symphony has been part of our lives for a long time — it’s very personal.”

Earlier this month, leaders announced the entire 2020-21 Pacific Symphony concert season, a series of performances set to run from Sept. 24 through June 13, would be postponed to 2021-22.

“We are not canceling our season,” Chief Executive John Forsyte clarified Thursday. “We are essentially reprogramming the 2020-21 season. And the programs we promised are moving forward a year. We’re not going dark.”

Ticketholder seats will be secured for next year, and credit for previously canceled concerts will remain on members’ accounts until June 2022 and can be applied to upcoming alternative performances or other shows in the 2021-22 season.

Organizers are meanwhile working to reimagine the season ahead. Using archival footage, interviews and solo performances, symphony leaders have been curating a rich catalog of offerings that members and the public can access virtually.

On Wednesday at 8 p.m., thanks to a collaboration with KCET and PBS SoCal, fans can catch the de-



Courtesy of Pacific Symphony

ORGANIZERS ANNOUNCED the 2020-21 Pacific Symphony concert season would be postponed a year, as concert halls remain closed during the pandemic.

but episode of a four-part series “Southland Sessions Presents Pacific Symphony,” featuring replays of masterworks from the archives and newly recorded original performances as well as artist and conductor interviews. The series will be hosted by Pacific Symphony Musical Director Carl St.Clair.

Symphony leaders are also collaborating with UC Irvine to determine how musicians might come together in small groups to play for recordings or perform outdoor concerts for reduced and distanced audiences as declining Orange County coronavirus rates lead to a loosening of restrictions.

“The idea is to bring musicians to work, either in the concert hall or iconic locations in the city, to record pieces of music we can use in virtual concerts we’re doing until audiences can come back,” said Eileen Jeanette, senior vice presi-

dent of artistic planning and production.

“We’re working with UCI Health so when they do come to work, everything is safe and we’re taking into account all of the precautions,” she continued.

After the closure, Pacific Symphony leaders did what they could for the more than 80 contracted musicians and conductors who rely on full calendars not only for their livelihood but as a means of artistic expression.

“We made a very fast decision to ensure compensation for the orchestra through the end of the month,” Forsyte recalled. “We were worried shutting down would have a horrible economic impact on them — but we didn’t know this would last for months and months and months.”

The organization secured \$2.1 million in Paycheck Protection Program loans through the

federal CARES Act that allowed musicians to continue to work virtually and on solo projects that could be shared with members and the public in an online clearinghouse.

Symphony leaders, reeling from a staggering loss in ticket sales and corporate and individual donor contributions, later offered a summer stipend to keep orchestra members playing and recording as long as possible.

From last fiscal year, the typical annual operating budget has shrunk from about \$22 million to just \$10.5 million. When the organization began to implement furloughs and staff cuts, Forsyte and St.Clair both volunteered to reduce their pay 25%.

Remaining optimistic, staff members say Pacific Symphony has entered a period of “strategic resilience” as they work with musicians to forge new creative path-

ways that will allow the music to continue for children and adults.

“There is a current we’re swimming against, but we’re making progress,” Forsyte said. “We have an increased opportunity to test a lot of things we’d not had the chance before to test. There’s a lot of work that’s going on in different ways I hope will carry on to the future.”

Leatherby, who was averaging about 30 shows each year before the March closure, said she and others can’t wait to return to the concert hall.

“Our concern now is to make sure we can get through this,” she said. “Everybody wants to do what it takes to make sure we can come back and be strong as ever and move forward with the plans we have.”

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Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

THE GARDEN GROVE City Council met on Tuesday to approve a \$1.8-million three-year contract for jail services with G4S Security Solutions. The controversial private security firm has been plagued by scandals in the United States and overseas.

SECURITY

Continued from page R2

Mateen worked for the company for nine years despite other G4S guards who said they warned supervisors Mateen may be dangerous. Later, G4S was fined by Florida officials for hundreds of faulty psychological questionnaires, including Mateen's.

The questionnaires were signed by a psychologist who stopped working with the company two years earlier.

When asked about the 2019 reports that the com-

pany hired guards with violent pasts, the spokesperson wrote, "The writers built their stories by selectively identifying former employees, out of hundreds of thousands who have worked for G4S over the course of 15 years, to misrepresent our labor force as untrustworthy. In reality G4S employees, nearly a quarter of whom are U.S. military veterans, are brave men and women who devote their lives to protecting the public by saving lives, preventing robberies and keeping individuals out of harm's way."

"G4S is committed to hir-

ing and retaining quality employees and understands the trust customers place on us as a leading security solutions provider. Our screening process is rigorous with only 6% of applicants for armed officer positions meeting our stringent selection criteria."

After three years, Garden Grove has the option to extend the contract an additional two years as well as the ability to cancel the contract at any time if the city determines G4S failed to perform its services.

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Dori Holnagel, M.B.A.
Vice President of Clinical Institutes
Hoag Family Cancer Institute

CARE

Continued from page R1

viders is a difficult issue to address because it requires efforts to ensure that the community obtains a higher education, said Vattana Peong, executive director of the Cambodian Family.

Seventeen percent of Cambodians hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 30% of the total U.S. population.

Lee Lo, former California policy manager at the civil rights nonprofit Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, said providers don't need to share the same ethnic background as the patients they're serving to provide culturally sensitive care.

But it's important that providers understand the nuances of the cultural dynamics, values and religious beliefs.

"It's a matter of understanding how we can utilize this to improve their care," she said.

HOW LOCAL GROUPS HAVE BEEN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

At the county level, the Orange County Health Care Agency has taken some steps to ensure Cambodians and Vietnamese receive the health information they need.

Tamarra Jones, division manager of health promotion and community planning at the agency, said in an email to TimesOC that one way the agency does this is by partnering with several community-based groups: the Cambodian Family, Nhan Kao, APAIT and Southland Integrated Services.

For the Cambodian community, which doesn't meet the population threshold to receive translated materials from the county, the Cambodian Family serves a crucial role in disseminating health information.

Cindy Sicheang Phou, program coordinator at the organization, noted that many Cambodians are illiterate. And even when materials are available in Khmer, they tend to be too technical.

"They trust in our understanding," Phou said. "We're culturally and linguistically aware of our Cambodian population and the different connotations and context needed in order to explain such matters."

The County of Orange Social Services Agency in an email said it provides Vietnamese and Cambodian language lines through which residents can request medical interpreters when needed, and that Medi-Cal recipients are provided with a brochure to help them identify their language needs.

Steps to accommodate the needs of Vietnamese patients in Little Saigon can also be seen at medical facilities.

The physician-led 360 Healthcare, founded by Dr. Tony Nguyen, caters to the geriatric population in Orange County and serves predominantly Vietnamese patients.

At Fountain Valley Regional Hospital and Medical Center, where Vietnamese account for an estimated one-third of the patient population, more than 75 of its physicians are Vietnamese and more than half of its nurses speak the language, said Kristin Christophersen, chief nursing officer at the hospital and center.

She added that the facility also offers health education programs in Vietnamese that cover a range of conditions and topics, including diabetes, heart health, nutrition, childbirth and smoking cessation.

Heart disease and cancer are among the top three leading causes of death among Cambodians and Vietnamese in California, according to a report by civil rights nonprofits Southeast Asia Resource Action Center and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles.

CHALLENGES TO SECURE MORE ACCOUNTABILITY AND FUNDING

At the legislative level, advocates in 2019 lobbied for a California bill, AB512, that would have increased accountability for cultural competency in mental health services for disenfranchised groups, including communities of color,



Courtesy of Tenet Health

OPERATION BE KIND delivered about 1,000 N95 masks to Fountain Valley Regional Hospital & Medical Center in April.



Courtesy of Paul Hoang

PAUL HOANG, founder of Viet-CARE, gives a talk about mental health in order to help reduce stigma in the Vietnamese American community, as well as encourage youth to enter the mental health field.



Christina House | Los Angeles Times

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS like Khmer Arts Academy serve the Cambodian American population in Long Beach and Orange County.

the LGBTQ community and the undocumented.

Counties in California are required to submit cultural competence plans to the State Department of Health Care Services every three years, but plans aren't reviewed at the state level, said Lee Lo, former California Policy Advocate at the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center.

She added that these plans often have minimal input from stakeholders who serve the communities the plans are created for, and that there is no state oversight.

"How AB512 came to be was really wanting to provide our partners at the local level with much more opportunity to provide input and have it be taken into serious consideration for mental health programs to be implemented," Lo said.

The bill would have funded three staff to provide oversight by reviewing cultural competency plans submitted by each county and developing strategies to reduce mental health disparities overall, she said.

California's legislature approved the bill, but it was vetoed by Gov. Gavin Newsom. In his veto message, Newsom cited funding concerns, though he expressed support for the intent behind the bill.

"We were really disappointed with the governor's decision to veto, given that the funding would simply fund staff to provide oversight," Lo said.

Lo also noted that many counties go each year with unspent mental health funds.

Orange County had more than \$241 million of unspent funds in fiscal year 2015-16, according to a 2018 report by the California State Auditor, the second highest unspent amount out of California's 59 local mental health agencies.

The report cited a lack of oversight on the funding that agencies receive as a reason for unspent funds and the lack of guidance on the approval process of certain mental health funds as a possible culprit.

"It's very alarming given there are such drastic needs in multiple communities, Southeast Asian American communities for sure," Lo said.

A NEED TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS THAT HELP BRIDGE GAPS

Lo said there needs to be a greater emphasis on public partnerships because the way to provide culturally sensitive healthcare in the Southeast Asian community is to go through specific trusted messengers in the community.

Many times, these messengers are community-based organizations in their area, she said.

The Cambodian Family is one of those groups.

Until educational attainment is addressed, the agency depends on health navigators. It has nine who also serve as case managers. They provide clients with interpreting services, assist them with navigating the healthcare system and offer emotional support.

"Counties that are not specifically investing in the community-based organizations there are not investing and outreaching to the Southeast Asian communities because that is the only resource that community members specifically go to as a one-stop shop for everything," Lo said.

"So whether they may be there for their immigration papers, they are also talking about their mental health concerns, as they are sitting down, and [they are] so much more familiar with folks who look like them, speak like them and understand their cultural prac-

tices."

Peong echoed Lo's sentiment. "To get awareness and education about the services, people would look to places that they trust," he said. "We have a relationship with most of our clients for over 40 years. That cannot be taken away."

There are also other nuances to consider.

My Nguyen, 25, who moved from Kansas City to Orange County in 2018, said he was unable to build a connection with a Vietnamese therapist who did not understand his LGBTQ identity, so he decided to stop attending therapy sessions.

But finding the group Viet Rainbow of Orange County, a nonprofit founded by Vietnamese Americans with a diverse range of sexual orientations and gender identities, was more helpful to his mental health than the previous services he received.

He remembered being asked to lunch by the organization's founder during his first meeting with the group.

"Just that one lunch time talking to him made me feel more connected than any counselor that I've been to," he said.

"I think being in a space I could identify with had really helped me because it went from, 'This is why I am' to 'This is what I'm going through and this is what help I need,'" he added.

COMMUNITY-DEFINED PRACTICES

One of the efforts to reduce mental health disparities in the state is the California Reducing Disparities Project.

Established in 2009, the project aims to achieve mental health equity in the African American, Latino, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander and LGBTQ communities by funding 35 organizations to conduct and evaluate community-defined mental health practices.

Among grantees is the Cambodian Advocacy Collaborative, a group of five Southern California organizations: The Cambodian Family, Cambodian Assn. of America, United Cambodian Community, Families in Good Health and Khmer Parent Assn.

The collaborative is in its third year of a community wellness program for which it has received a five-year grant and has already seen promising results: 57.7% of participants reported reductions in the effects of past trauma, while 69.3% of those with depression-related symptoms reported reductions in symptoms.

"The fact that we see improvement at all just shows how effective the program really is," said Pari Sabado, lead evaluator of the collaborative's program and director of community engagement and evaluation at the Center for Health Equity Research at Cal State Long Beach.

Social activities are one component of the program. They include culturally specific ones like water blessings, as well as activities suggested by participants. Incorporating feedback from participants has helped with program re-

tention, Sabado said.

"They feel like they're being heard when they suggest different activities, and by catering it to and by being a little flexible in terms of listening to participants and designing activities around that, it definitely helps in keeping people interested and engaged in the program," she said.

Addressing health disparities also requires examination of social determinants of health, said Peong, executive director of the Cambodian Family.

A report by the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles highlighted that Southeast Asian Americans continue to face socioeconomic insecurity across multiple measures.

Some of the findings the report highlights are that Cambodians and Vietnamese are less likely to have health insurance, have lower per capita incomes and lower rates of higher education compared to the overall U.S. population.

"Our agency has realized that we can't be more successful if we don't integrate the social determinants of health," Peong said. "Even though we are not providing direct housing support or direct food assistance, we know where the places are. We know how to refer and we want to make sure they're able to access those services."

YOUTH-LED CHANGE

Throughout a series of TimesOC listening sessions, 46 Cambodian and Vietnamese healthcare providers and community members identified a number of barriers and offered suggestions on what culturally sensitive care would look like.

Some solutions suggested included more trauma-informed care (given high rates of PTSD in the community); education for youth and families about sexual assault (an occurrence that several Cambodian young adults said is prevalent in the community); education about self-care; spaces for refugees to share their stories and experiences; facilitation of dialogue about gender identity; and education about the Southeast Asian conflicts that caused refugees to flee.

Many also suggested more wellness centers.

From 2015 to 2016, youth involved with Long Beach nonprofit Khmer Girls in Action led a campaign to bring a wellness center to the community. The efforts emerged from needs highlighted in a 2011 report published by the organization based on a survey of about 500 youth in Long Beach.

Many respondents reported depressive symptoms. About one-third said they knew someone who has been deported or is facing deportation, an occurrence that has spiked in the community in recent years and can affect families' economic, familial and housing stability. Many experience high rates of racial profiling.

The wellness center campaign was a platform for Cambodian youth to address physical, emotional

and mental health barriers they face, Joy Yanga, communications director of the nonprofit, said in an email.

The organization worked with The Children's Clinic to bring a school-based health center to an elementary school across Long Beach Polytechnic High School, where most of its youth members are enrolled.

Youth played a crucial role in creating a center that served teen needs, Yanga said. They collected nearly 1,500 surveys to see what hours worked best for teens to use a wellness center and find out where they believed the Long Beach Unified School District should allocate funds.

As a result of youth advocacy, the center accommodated teen-only hours, allowing students to receive confidential support during hours that were accessible for them, Yanga said.

She added that the campaign amplified student voices and demonstrated the importance of youth experiences and solutions.

"Teens and transitional age youth are often stigmatized or overlooked, especially low-income youth of color," she said. "Cambodian youth felt seen and acknowledged as leaders in their community. Other Long Beach youth enjoyed the activities and also felt that a school-based wellness center would help them with their mental, physical and emotional health and [provide] a resource to help them stay in school and graduate on time."

A SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN ISSUE THAT EXTENDS BEYOND O.C.

Cindy Sangalang, an assistant professor at UCLA whose research focuses on health and well-being in immigrant and refugee communities, said when it comes to addressing the needs of the Southeast Asian American community, it's important to consider America's role in the conflicts refugees fled from.

"I guess this is kind of controversial to say, but I think it's important to think about the ways in which the U.S. is sort of implicated in some of the challenges that these populations face," she said.

"For us to address the health, education and other needs of these populations, it's really a way to think about the consequences of the war in that region and how it's had these ripple effects, and why it's important for us to address these needs."

The United States carried out a bombing in Cambodia over a 14-month period as part of its efforts to fight communism that it at the time kept hidden from Americans. The bombing created an instability in the country that paved the way for the rise of the Khmer Rouge regime, under which more than 2 million people died.

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. supported South Vietnam, but when North Vietnam claimed victory in 1975, hundreds of thousands fled to escape the communist regime.

Sangalang said Southeast Asian refugees have endured trauma at multiple points in their lives: before they migrated; when they arrived in the United States, adjusting to a new country; in the present with a rise in deportations; and in moments throughout, with the challenges of continued socioeconomic insecurity.

"When we're thinking about vulnerable populations in the U.S., sometimes the needs of these communities go hidden to many Americans," she said. "It's important to highlight these challenges and think about the connection of the U.S. to the region and why they're here."

The USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism's engagement editor, Danielle Fox, contributed engagement support to this story, including setting up four listening sessions with 46 members of the Cambodian and Vietnamese American communities.

TimesOC will host an online community forum to continue these conversations about ways to improve healthcare access for Orange County's Southeast Asian population. Follow @timesofficial on Twitter for updates.

AGNES CONSTANTE is a contributor to Times OC.

VETERAN

Continued from page R2

he was ruthlessly attacked from all sides, and could feel the right side of his face get kneed and his head get kicked multiple times ...”

Holloway was left with bruised ribs and legs, a head injury, a severely bleeding and swollen face, loss of vision, severe pain in his back and periodic loss of consciousness, the complaint says.

Holloway is receiving treatment at a Veteran’s Affairs hospital near him in Pennsylvania for vision loss, headaches, backache and severe emotional distress, the complaint says.

The police report describes a much different picture, with Holloway refusing deputies’ orders leading to the violent arrest.

Sheriff’s spokeswoman Carrie Braun declined to comment because the department does not comment on pending litigation.

Braun did confirm that Renegar is on administrative leave, though she declined to provide any other information. It’s unclear whether the administrative leave is related to an investigation or the incident with Holloway.

Mkrtchyan said that she is seeking more information on Renegar.

“While no citizen should be subjected to such inhumane treatment by officers, the sacrifices Jeremy has made to serve his country make the mistreatment he experienced all the more reprehensible,” the complaint says.

Mkrtchyan said Holloway served as a Marine in Iraq.

In a July 2018 letter sent to Mkrtchyan, Sheriff Capt. Sheryl Dubsky said that an investigation was conducted by the department in order to determine whether the conduct of the deputies violated policy.

“While I do not believe the deputy violated any policy or procedure, I do feel the situation may have been handled better,” Dubsky wrote.

Mkrtchyan said the department said that Holloway provoked the attack by resisting arrest and making threats toward the deputies. She said the district attorney’s office decided not to pursue a case against Holloway.

When reached for comment on the case, a D.A. spokeswoman redirected to the sheriff’s department for comment.

Mkrtchyan said the case is set for a jury trial starting in January.

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Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

A PIECE BY Maryrose Cobarrubias Mendoza is on exhibit at the Orange County Museum of Art. The museum is looking for a new director.

OCMA

Continued from page R1

lection.”

Newkirk will also be the honored artist in the museum’s gala on Oct. 3. The event will be held virtually with live and pre-recorded elements. Attendees will see a tour of the construction site of the new building at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa, exhibitions at the current OCMA space in Santa Ana and the Los Angeles studios of Newkirk and Kyungmi Shin.

“I am so honored and flattered that they even thought to ask me. We started this back in December or January. So it’s been a long time and an interesting journey as we have worked together to figure out how to have a gala at such an intense and crazy time,” Newkirk said.

Jesse called Newkirk’s work a “favorite” at the museum.

Although Newkirk is from the Bronx, he has lived in Southern California since the ’90s when he attended grad school at UC Irvine.

His first interaction at OCMA was as a viewer and in 2004 the museum acquired some of the beaded curtain work that he is most identified with — long

strands of synthetic hair strung with decorative pony beads, often used in braided hairstyles.

He’s said, in the past, that coverage of Venus Williams in 1997 at the U.S. Open and Stevie Wonder’s hair in the ’70s were inspirations for the beaded work.

Over the last 15 years, his pieces have been included in six exhibitions by six different curators at the museum.

“Our curators are really drawn to his work. Our audiences are really drawn to his work,” said Jesse. “I think because people really respond to the fact that he’s able to have this rich conceptual idea — a social commentary, but on the surface you have this really beautiful work.”

The museum commissioned a sculpture edition from Newkirk that will be raffled off during the gala — Pink Pearl eraser hair clippers.

“I like the idea that the hair clippers erase my hair when they’re used or anybody’s hair,” Newkirk said. “Hair, being in some way, markers of identity and the same way that perhaps handwriting can operate with the function of the eraser. So that marriage of these two utilitarian objects just seemed perfect.”

Other items guests will automatically be entered to win in-

clude artwork by John Baldessari and Robert Rauschenberg, a Gucci handbag, luxury hotel stays and a private harbor cruise. Proceeds from the event will go towards future exhibitions and education programs at the museum. Last year’s event recognized artist Larry Bell and raised \$610,000.

Three days after the gala, OCMA will hold a virtual topping-out ceremony live on Instagram commemorating the placement of the final structural beam in the new building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis. The construction for the \$73-million, 53,000-square-foot structure continued throughout the state quarantine period and is set to open in late 2021.

In July, Todd DeShields Smith, left his director and CEO role to become executive director of the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art in North Carolina. Smith was in charge of overseeing the OCMA’s new building and there is pressure to move quickly in a search for a new director because it’s a pivotal moment for the museum.

When asked what OCMA is looking for in a director, Jesse said they “will need to continue the momentum that we’ve had in terms of growing and expanding

our audience. That has been the most important priority for us because we really want to let people know what a community asset the museum is. So we’ve used our time at OCMAExpand in our temporary space to really show and demonstrate to people what a valuable resource we are to their daily lives. We want to continue that momentum of growing and diversifying our audience.”

The museum moved from Newport Beach to its current temporary space in Santa Ana. Jesse said being centrally located in O.C. allowed the museum to serve the entire county, and they began seeing people from all 34 cities visit OCMA.

“The role of these institutions — even though they can be problematic, they still have important roles to play in our communities. I just hope people can still remember that and can see the importance of it,” Newkirk said. “It’s so amazing that they’re getting a new building, and I liked the idea of being able to be a part of the next phase of their growth, and that’s super interesting and important to me to be able to play a role — whatever way I can do that.”

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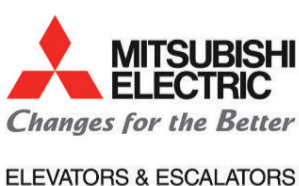
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