



November 14, 2018

MEDIA ADVISORY

Members of the Media Invited to a November 15 Tour of "The Link," Santa Ana's New Interim Homeless Shelter

*****EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00AM PACIFIC, NOVEMBER 15, 2018*****

Media Contact: Jorge Garcia, Assistant to the City Manager
(714) 586-6321 jgarcia10@santa-ana.org

SANTA ANA, CA - On Thursday, November 15, 2018, the City of Santa Ana and Mercy House jointly invite local and regional media to tour "The Link," a brand-new, interim 200-bed transitional shelter that will serve Santa Ana homeless men, women and families. The building houses four dormitories, family rooms, full bathroom facilities and more, which will enable individuals from the City of Santa Ana experiencing homelessness to focus on transitioning into permanent housing and opportunities for employment.

Event: Media Tour of "The Link," a brand-new, interim homeless shelter in Santa Ana
When: November 15, 2018 10:00am - 12:00pm (Media may enter site beginning at 9:30am)
Where: 2320 Red Hill Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92705

Members of the media will have access to the facility prior to The Link's official opening on November 15 when it will begin onboarding individuals experiencing homelessness. During the November 15 media tour, media outlets are welcome to explore the building, speak with key personnel who helped make the shelter a reality, and interview Santa Ana elected officials. For those unable to attend the media tour, the City of Santa Ana will make available video broll footage of the inside of the facility, as well as brief interviews with key personnel. A full Press Kit will be available online following the media tour (contact Jorge Garcia for website information).

U.S. District Judge David O. Carter has publicly labeled the creation of this shelter as a "role model" for the county, the state, and "maybe the nation." The City of Santa Ana and Mercy House recognize that Judge Carter's endorsement may result in local media, Orange County elected officials and the Santa Ana community wanting to tour the facility themselves. It is our combined hope that the November 15 media tour will minimize the number of drop-ins so Mercy House can conduct their business--and The Link's occupants can feel comfortable--without interruptions and attention.

Property owner VDC was instrumental in establishing The Link in such a short timeframe. VDC worked hand-in-hand with Mercy House on all aspects of planning, financial and procedural obstacles, and construction. Approximately 50 workers onsite were often working 16-hour days, 7 days a week in order to complete the build-out.

"The Link is a testament to the power of public-private partnerships and what can be done when you have the best interest of your community in mind," said Mayor Miguel Pulido. "We are incredibly grateful for the unique alliance between ourselves, the property owner and Mercy House to turn this concept into a reality in the span of just 28 days. I hope the lessons we have learned throughout this process will be helpful to other cities, even beyond Orange County, who are looking to provide better services and programs to the most vulnerable people in their own communities."

"Back in September, we promised to have this new interim shelter open by December 31. I am proud to say we have beat that deadline by almost a month and a half, by getting it designed and build in 28 days and fully operational in 41 days, thanks to combined efforts between the owner, operator and the City. This effort is unprecedented," said Mayor Pro Tem Michele Martinez. "Mercy House has worked with and housed more homeless people in Orange County than any other organization. Anyone from Santa Ana who comes to The Link seeking help will be treated with the utmost dignity and respect."

"Mercy House has a 28-year history with the City of Santa Ana--this City is our birthplace," said Larry Haynes, Executive Director of Mercy House. "Thank you to the City and the property owner for being such hard-working partners on this effort. It is amazing what all our teams have been able to accomplish together in such a short time, yet still produce a facility that is top-quality and will serve this community well."

About Mercy House

Mercy House provides housing and comprehensive supportive services for a variety of homeless populations which includes families, adult men and women, mothers and their children, persons living with HIV/AIDS, individuals overcoming substance addictions, and some who are physically and mentally disabled. They strive to assist residents in the areas of economic, emotional, and spiritual well-being in order to enhance self-esteem and a sense of personal pride. Mercy House values accountability, integrity, and self-sufficiency. The dignity of the individual person and the corresponding respect that follows is the guiding principle of their service to the homeless person.

About City of Santa Ana

Santa Ana is downtown for the world famous Orange County, California. As the County Seat, home to a vibrant evening scene and one of the most diverse communities in California, Santa Ana is gaining national attention for its efforts to innovate and address a changing County. Over 1,200 City employees work hard every day to deliver efficient public services in partnership with our community to ensure public safety, a prosperous economic environment, opportunities for our youth, and a high quality of life for residents. Learn more at <http://www.santa-ana.org>.

###