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WAYMAKERS' LAGUNA BEACH YOUTH SHELTER SERVICES RELOCATE TO TUSTIN AFTER NEARLY FIVE DECADES

Community invited to celebrate legacy at “Cheers to Laguna” block party on August 29

LAGUNA BEACH, Calif. (August 18, 2025) – After serving in the Laguna Beach community for nearly 50 years, local nonprofit Waymakers is relocating its Laguna Beach Youth Shelter beds, staff and youth services to its Tustin Youth Shelter location.

To celebrate the legacy of the Laguna Beach Youth Shelter, Waymakers will host a “Cheers to Laguna: It Takes a Village” community gathering on Friday, August 29, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The casual celebration will include community leaders, including Mayor Alex Rounaghi, Laguna Beach Police Chief Jeff Calvert, and a representative Tony Strickland's office. Longtime Laguna Beach Shelter Advisory Board Member Kelly Cornwell will be honored with a Crystal Heart Award for more than three decades of volunteer service and leadership to this important program that has benefited 5,000 youth.

Guests will enjoy light refreshments, view archives and memorabilia displayed throughout the shelter and witness a special dedication of a beloved memento to the City of Laguna Beach.

New Location, Same Commitment to the Youth of Orange County

“This is a new chapter for our Youth Shelter program,” said Ronnetta Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, Waymakers. “Our mission has always been about creating safe places for youth to find stability and hope, and that will remain the same.” Carol Carlson, Director of Shelter Programs, stated, “Our commitment to this community—and youth across Orange County—remains as strong as ever as we continue to provide shelter services in Tustin and Huntington Beach. While the beds are moving, Waymakers’ deep connection to Laguna Beach remains unchanged.”

The move comes in response to recent statewide funding reforms that now prioritize housing-linked behavioral health programs for adults. As a result, programs like Waymakers’ Youth Shelters, which focuses on youth struggling with mental health issues, severe family crisis, and homelessness prevention for minors, now operate within a narrower funding landscape.

Founded in 1979, the Laguna Beach Youth Shelter has provided 24-hour crisis intervention, shelter and support for thousands of youth ages 12–17. Over the decades, it has become a grassroots cornerstone of care and compassion in South Orange County.

The transition will allow Waymakers to invest in its two existing sites in Tustin, ensuring long-term stability and continuity of service. This change reflects Waymakers’ commitment to adaptability and longevity, ensuring Waymakers continues to be a trusted leader in residential services for youth in crisis.



For more information about the relocation or Waymakers' youth shelter services, visit www.waymakersoc.org or call the Tustin Youth Shelter at 714-714-0780.

About Waymakers

Waymakers is a lifeline for countless individuals throughout Orange County who are seeking hope and healing after experiencing trauma. The staff and volunteers focus on creating an environment where individuals can make choices that lead to strength and stability. Waymakers has been sheltering children, supporting victims, counseling families, resolving conflicts and educating communities since 1972. Learn more at Waymakersoc.org.

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