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County Opens First Year Round Homeless Shelter and Service Center in Anaheim

Santa Ana, CA (May 5, 2017) — Today the County of Orange opened the doors to its first year-round emergency shelter and service center. The shelter, named Bridges at Kraemer Place, will ultimately provide year-round shelter and services to 200 individuals each night who are experiencing homelessness.

In June 2015, the Orange County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a purchase and sale agreement for the property. In 2016, the County broke ground on renovations to the building. The Board voted in December 2016 to phase construction at the shelter.

Phase One, now complete, provides bed space and services for up to 100 single men and women. Phase Two, expected completion in summer 2018, will add an additional 100 beds, along with an onsite kitchen, interior restrooms and showers and a multi-service center with a health clinic.

“Bridges at Kraemer Place is much more than a shelter; it provides a bridge from homelessness to self-sufficiency,” said Supervisor Todd Spitzer, who championed the location of the center in his Third District. “It’s a two-way street. Program participants will get the help they need, with access to health and addiction assessment, employment counseling and permanent housing assistance. People in the community have the opportunity to reach out and contribute to the solution. Bridges at Kraemer Place will be a model for future homeless centers in Orange County.”

With onsite services, meals, laundry, restrooms and showers, Bridges at Kraemer Place is designed to be a facility where clients stay up to 180 days. During that time, onsite assessments will connect the individual to employment and housing navigation services.

“This shelter brings tangible resources to the system of care we are building in Orange County,” said Chairwoman Michelle Steel, Second District Supervisor.

“The County is taking a forward-thinking approach with coordinated services to offer a helping hand to our homeless,” said Vice Chair Andrew Do, First District Supervisor. “We are leaning in to provide resources and shelter in a way no Board has done before.”

Bridges at Kraemer Place has a “good neighbor” policy that will maintain a strict, no walk-up policy and individuals will be brought to and from the shelter by shuttle at designated times. Clients will be referred through partnered program providers with preference given to individuals who have ties to North Orange County cities.

“While this shelter will be a valuable resource for those experiencing homelessness, the County cannot be expected to solve Orange County’s homelessness crisis alone,” said Supervisor Shawn Nelson, Fourth District. “It will take a collective effort between the County, cities, nonprofits and faith-based organizations to see real change.”

Funding for Bridges at Kraemer Place comes primarily from the County, with \$10 million approved by the Board for renovation of the shelter. In addition, the cities of Anaheim, Fullerton, Brea and La Habra have contributed funds, along with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD.)

“We have an opportunity to make a lasting effect on the lives of individuals who need it most,” said Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District. “The County of Orange is focused on providing sustainable solutions for those experiencing homelessness.”

The shelter operator, chosen by the Board after a competitive proposal process, is Mercy House Living Centers, Inc. The annual operating cost for the shelter, which will be funded by the County, is expected to be \$1.8 million.

Bridges at Kraemer Place is an important part of the County’s system of care that includes a wide range of services and strategies to meet people where they are and provide bridges to permanent housing.

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