



*JAN. – FEB. 2019*

# Orange County Cemetery District

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## The County of Orange Transfers 283.3 Acres to the Orange County Cemetery District for New Cemetery Development

For more than a decade, the Orange County Cemetery District has been scouring Orange County in search of property suitable for new cemetery development. Until now, it has been a fruitless search. Every parcel explored was either too expensive, too small, too close to residential areas, zoned incorrectly, or had insurmountable topographical or access issues.

For the District, the issue of land was becoming an urgent problem. Of the three District cemeteries serving Orange County residents, Anaheim Cemetery is currently sold out of full casket space. Santa Ana Cemetery has such limited inventory of full casket spaces that it is only selling plots to families who have an immediate need for burial. The District estimates that Santa Ana Cemetery will be sold out of full casket interments within two years. El Toro Memorial Park is estimated to be sold out by 2033. In order to continue offering the residents of Orange County an option for affordable full casket burials into the future, the only solution was to find more land.

Thanks to the foresight of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, that problem has been addressed. At the December 4<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisors Meeting, Chair Andrew Do and Supervisor Todd Spitzer put forth a request to transfer 283.3 acres of County owned land known as "Mountain Park" to the Orange County Cemetery District. During the meeting, both Supervisors, as well as Supervisor Shawn Nelson gave impassioned statements in support of the transfer, stating that it is simply the right thing to do. Supervisor Do related his experiences coming to the United States and how grateful he is to our nation's veterans for their service and sacrifice. The motion supporting the transfer was unanimously approved by the Supervisors.

The land, which is located adjacent to Gypsum Canyon Road near the junction of CA State Route 91 and the 241 Toll Road, was a part of 2,500 acres of open space donated to the County of Orange by the Irvine Company. While the County of Orange is giving the 283.3 acres to the District at no cost, the transfer does



### The future site of a new veterans cemetery and a fourth Orange County public cemetery.

come with some conditions. The District must begin using the property as a cemetery within ten years; and at least half the developable acreage must be reserved for the development of a state veterans cemetery. If either of these conditions are not met, the property shall automatically revert to the County. In addition, any operational plan for any cemetery must first be approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors prior to any cemetery operations on the property.

Since the Orange County Cemetery District has always been in full support of a veterans cemetery in Orange County, the idea of developing a much needed fourth public cemetery alongside a state veterans cemetery, is a perfect union that fits well with our vision and mission statement.

Orange County residents, however, should not expect the new cemeteries to be up and operational in the immediate future. It will be a huge undertaking to simply make the parcels ready for development. The site, which in the past had been used as a quarry, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 5.**



# Hundreds Attend Anaheim Cemetery Dia de los Muertos Celebration



**Madison Romero of Rhythmo Mariachi Academy performs with fellow students in front of the Community Mausoleum. (All Photos by Jared Funk)**

Every year on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Anaheim Cemetery hosts a Dia de los Muertos Celebration. This was our third annual event and it just seems to get bigger and better every year. This event ran from 6 to 8 p.m. and between 500 to 600 people came out to enjoy the family-friendly festivities.

The evening began with a brief Dia de los Muertos service conducted by Father Carlos Leon of Saint Anthony Mary Claret Catholic Church in Anaheim. Following the blessing, visitors were entertained by students from the Rhythmo Mariachi Academy and Ballet Folklorico Donaji. Founded by Gabriel Zavalas, Rhythmo Mariachi Academy is dedicated to preserving, teaching and helping youth to appreciate the history, art and music of the Indian and Hispanic cultural heritage. Ballet Folklorico Donaji is a local Anaheim dance troupe that teaches students traditional dances with talented performers ranging in age from 4 to 21.

Since marigolds are an important decoration for Dia de los Muertos, the District gave out 150 free, small bouquets with baby's breath until supplies ran out. Creativity was on display at the children's craft table, which was busy all night, offering an assortment of free crafts. Mila Berumen with Eternity Memorials volunteered to provide free face painting for children. Guests were also treated to free coffee, desserts, hot cocoa, and Pan de Muerto prepared by La Ideal Bakery until supplies ran out. Our thanks to Jody Daily for providing the beautiful Dia de los Muertos artwork from the Anaheim Parade which graced the mausoleum, and to Jeannette Payne for lending us her life size figures from the movie, "Coco" which was a huge hit for children attending the event. We can't wait to do it again next year!



**Performers with Ballet Folklorico Donaji entertain the audience with traditional dances.**



**Father Carlos Leon delivers a Dia de los Muertos blessing.**



**Pictured Right, Maestro Gabriel Zavala, founder of Rhythmo Mariachi Academy, gives a smile of encouragement to Melody Cano.**



**Antonio Zuñiga, Oliver Zavala and Armando Salazar perform with Rhythmo Mariachi Academy.**



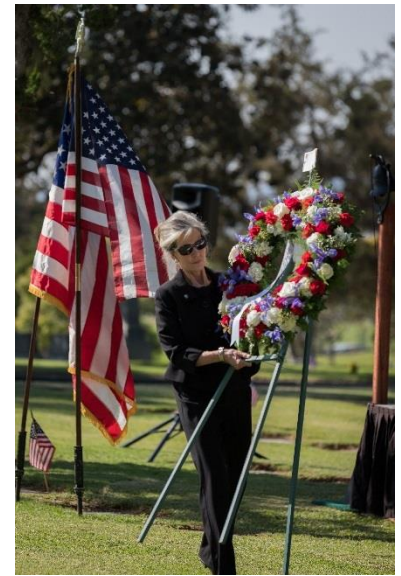
## El Toro Memorial Park Marks its 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Day Observance



**The VFW Edward J. Kearns Post 6024 Honor Guard**



**Keynote speaker, Yoshio Nakamura described his experiences serving in World War II with the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team. He enlisted in the U.S. Army even after his family was forcibly relocated to a Japanese internment camp.**



**Laguna Hills Mayor, Mel Carruth presents a wreath.**

On Sunday, November 11th, El Toro Memorial Park hosted its 30<sup>th</sup> annual Veterans Day Program. Judy Deeter, who was instrumental in the establishment of El Toro's Veterans Day programs, flew all the way from Ohio to serve, once again, as our Mistress of Ceremonies.

The observance featured keynote speaker, Mr. Yoshio Nakamura, who joined the U.S. Army after his family was sent to a Japanese internment camp. He served as an ammunition carrier on a mortar team in both France and Italy. He participated in the famous nighttime scaling of Mt. Folgorito to launch a surprise attack on the Nazis that helped break the Gothic Line. The 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team was comprised almost entirely of Japanese Americans, but it took the United States until 2011 before Congress honored their valor and patriotism in a special ceremony awarding the Team the Congressional Gold Medal. Mr. Nakamura's address about his experiences as a Japanese American soldier in World War II was both inspirational and somber.

The day also marked the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day and the end of World War I. Rev. Frank Cook with American Legion Post 862 delivered a special address on the heavy price that was paid in the "War to End All Wars" and provided a historical World War I patriotic display.

The rich voice of John Huntington set the mood with special music, and beautiful floral wreaths were presented by the Cities of Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, Lake Forest and Mission Viejo. Following a moment of silence, the stirring refrains of "Amazing Grace" on bagpipes was played by Dean Johnson and Tucker Fleming. The VFW, Edward J. Kearns Post 6024 provided an honor guard firing salute led by James Styles. Life Scout, Noah Boihem with Troop 636 played "Taps" on the bugle, and Chaplain Maryann Herrera with the Mission Viejo Chapter NSDAR closed the program in prayer. Special thanks to the Program Committee co-chairs June McLaughlin and Rhonda McMorran with Mission Viejo NSDAR for their hard work organizing this event.

## Board Elects New Chair and Vice Chair for 2019

Every December, the Orange County Cemetery District Board of Trustees elects a new Chair and Vice Chair to serve throughout the upcoming calendar year. For 2019, the Chair will be Trustee Cynthia Ward (Fourth District), and the Vice Chair will be Trustee Noel Hatch (Fifth District). The District wishes to thank outgoing Chair Kelly Rivers (Second District), for her dedicated service to the Board and the District during 2018. Representing the First District is Trustee Maribel Marroquin and Trustee William Nelson represents the Third District. Board meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. and the public is welcome to attend. (Due to New Year's Day, the January Meeting is on Jan. 8, 2019.)



**Chair Cynthia Ward**



**Vice Chair Noel Hatch**

## Boy Scout Noah Rigo Helps El Toro Memorial Park with Eagle Scout Project to Honor Veterans

Every Veterans Day and Memorial Day Boy Scout Troops and a dedicated group of volunteers makes sure that a U.S. Flag is placed at each known veteran's gravesite. Steve Limtiaco is one of those volunteers. As he was working to place flags, he noticed many of the volunteers struggling to get the flag sticks to penetrate the hard soil. So, he developed a special, lightweight tool made of PVC pipe and a tent stake that allows volunteers to effortlessly step on the tool to make a hole in the ground that is perfect for securing the flags.

That's when Noah Rigo with Boy Scout Troop 772 from Laguna Niguel stepped in to help. As a part of his Eagle Scout Project, he organized a group of volunteers, studied Mr. Limtiaco's prototype, calculated the needed equipment, raised the needed \$215 for supplies, and supervised the construction of 30 flag tool implements. He even supplied two rolling garbage cans as a way to store the implements when not in use. The new tools were tested out last Veterans Day and worked beautifully! No more broken sticks trying to push flags into the ground and no more lopsided or tilted flags because of insufficient holes. A huge thanks to Steve Limtiaco for coming up with a solution and to Noah Rigo for turning Steve's prototype into a reality!



Noah Rigo and Steve Limtiaco display the 30 completed flag placement tools made for Noah's Eagle Scout project.

## 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Angel of Hope Candlelight Service Held Despite Downpour



Even with a cold, wet night, about 100 loved ones gathered at the Angel of Hope Statue at El Toro Memorial Park on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to honor the memory of children they have lost. Lisa Popper welcomed the group and Holly Rossiter opened the service with an inspirational reading of the poem, "The Cord" by Amy Merrick. Sande Herron led a prayer and Jennifer Russo performed a beautiful rendition of the song, "I Will Carry You". Chad Blake shared about the long journey he and his wife endured to become pregnant through IVF only to lose their precious child during the first trimester. Rick Hacker shared another inspirational reading and then attendees were invited to speak their loved one's name and leave a white flower in their honor at the Angel of Hope Statue. Jennifer Russo followed, singing the poignant "Tears in Heaven". Sande Herron gave the benediction and the program concluded with Jennifer Russo leading the audience in "Amazing Grace." To learn more about the Angel of Hope, please visit [www.careandkindness.org/angelofhope/](http://www.careandkindness.org/angelofhope/).

About 100 people braved the rain to attend the candlelight memorial service and place white flowers at the Angel of Hope Statue as a loving tribute to children remembered.



## "Longest Night" Service at Anaheim Cemetery Remembers the Homeless of Orange County

On Winter Solstice, Dec. 21st, about 100 people gathered at Anaheim Cemetery to remember and honor the 244 people who died in Orange County while homeless during 2018. The event was organized by Tim Houchen, founder of Hope 4 Restoration, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocacy to end homelessness. The keynote speaker was award winning journalist, Gustavo Arellano, who challenged the audience to be both touched by those experiencing homelessness and infuriated about the situation. Several speakers who had been homeless also shared their experiences during the program. Rev. Karen Stoyanoff gave an interfaith message, saying that like the Bethlehem story, we are all called "to find room at the inn" for those in need of shelter. The program concluded with a candlelight gathering at the memorial wall where the names of all who had died were read out loud.





## County of Orange Transfers 283.3 Acres Continued from page 1

has extensive soil compaction issues which must be addressed. The land also has some challenging slopes and hillsides which may not be usable property. Staff will continue working with engineers and architects to determine what areas of the land are actually suitable for cemetery development or could be reasonably altered to accommodate gravesites.

Since this is raw land, utilities including water, electrical, sewer and communication lines, must be brought on to the site and access roads must be planned and constructed. Costs for this first stage of development are being determined as District staff work with development professionals and representatives from the County of Orange.

In preparation for the development of a fourth public cemetery, the District has been diligently saving as much as possible and has set aside approximately \$8 to \$10 million that is designated for this purpose. The District will be exploring financing options as we consider the various phases for the future development of both cemeteries. Look for more information on these exciting developments as information is gathered and plans become finalized.

The District wishes to thank the Orange County Board of Supervisors for their unanimous support, as this land will allow us to continue to serve the interment needs of the residents of Orange County for generations to come.

## American Heritage Girls Troop 356 and Wreaths Across America Sponsored 362 Wreaths to Honor Veterans Graves for the Holidays

For the second year, American Heritage Girls Troop 356, honored Veterans at El Toro Memorial Park with a special Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Flag Pole and the placement of beautiful, fresh wreaths on the gravesites of veterans interred at the park. The ceremony was held on Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m., and honored all branches of the military including those who are prisoners of war or missing in action. Girls from the Troop escorted a veteran from each branch of the armed services who placed a wreath at the flag pole representing their branch of the military. Following the ceremony, which was conducted entirely by the girls in the Troop, all in attendance worked to place wreaths on veterans' graves. As each wreath was placed volunteers were encouraged to speak the veteran's name, thank them for their service, and say a prayer for the veteran's family. The wreaths are purchased through Wreaths Across America and serve as a fundraiser for the girls. This year Wreaths Across America will place over 1.5 million wreaths, including for the first time, 9,500 wreaths on the beaches of Normandy, France. For more information visit [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org). Job well done AHG Troop 356!



## Construction Update at Santa Ana and El Toro Memorial Park

Up until now, in order to enter a public restroom at Santa Ana Cemetery you had to walk through the Cemetery Manager's Office. When the office is closed, the only restrooms available on the grounds are portable toilets. That will all be changing with this most recent capital improvement project. Demolition (pictured far right) is now underway to reconfigure the existing office space to create a new public restroom that visitors can enter without having to go inside the office. A new staff restroom will also be completed. In addition, a new sewage holding tank is being installed which should reduce the number of times pumping is required.



We ask for your understanding while the work is being completed and apologize for any disruption this may cause, especially for families who come inside the Santa Ana office to make arrangements.

At El Toro Memorial Park, work is progressing on the new niche feature and public restroom. The block wall for the niche feature is now under construction (pictured above left). The restroom is completely framed and rough electrical and plumbing are complete. The District expects the project to be finished in late March or early April. We appreciate your patience.

## Flower Removal and Holiday Schedule

Every Wednesday, groundskeepers remove and discard flowers and decorations throughout all three cemeteries. Families are encouraged to remove their flowers or decorations on Tuesday night; you can then place the flowers back on the space on Wednesday afternoon. Please remember that the District policy only allows for two items to be placed on gravesites. This includes the in-ground flower vase and one other item. If gravesites exceed the number of allowed items, staff may remove and discard the excess items. Please do not leave items of great monetary or sentimental value on gravesites as the District cannot prevent theft.

The District permits the allowed two items of flowers and/or decorations to be left on gravesites during holidays or for special occasions, such as anniversaries, birthdays and for new interments. Please come to the cemetery office and let us know that you have a special occasion and request that the flowers and decorations be left on the space. We do ask that you empty the vase and place fresh water in the container every four to five days to eliminate mosquito breeding sources, which can cause serious health issues. Your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.

**In honor of Valentines Day , flowers may be placed on gravesites beginning on Thursday, February, 7<sup>th</sup> until Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>.**



A complete listing of the District's extended holiday flower schedule for 2019 is available on our website at [www.occemeterydistrict.com](http://www.occemeterydistrict.com). Just click on the tab for Flowers, Markers and Rules.

## Our Mission Statement and Core Values

*The Orange County Cemetery District manages and maintains Orange County's public cemeteries in a manner that preserves their beauty, dignity, historical and cultural values, and offers affordable interment service for Orange County residents.*

The Trustees and staff of the Orange County Cemetery District are committed to the following values:

Integrity ■ Respect ■ Accountability  
Responsiveness ■ Empathy ■ Transparency  
Appreciation for Diverse Needs

## ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT January and February Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees for the Orange County Cemetery District holds regular meetings the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at the District Office located at 25751 Trabuco Road, Lake Forest, CA 92630. The public is welcome to attend.

Agendas are available at least 72 hours prior to each meeting and are also posted on our website at [www.occemeterydistrict.com](http://www.occemeterydistrict.com). In January and February, meetings will be held as follows:

1. **Tuesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**  
Postponed from Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> – New Year's Day
2. **Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact the District Secretary, Mary Funk at (949) 951-9102 ext. 110.

**The offices at  
Anaheim Cemetery,  
Santa Ana Cemetery, and  
El Toro Memorial Park  
will be closed on:**

**New Year's Day**  
Tuesday - January 1<sup>st</sup>

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**  
Monday – January 21<sup>st</sup>

**Lincoln's Birthday**  
Tuesday – February 12<sup>th</sup>

**Presidents' Day**  
Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>

**All offices are closed on the weekends.**

**Cemetery grounds are open for visitation  
seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

