

CITY RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS HELEN PUTNAM AWARD

On September 17 at the annual League of California Cities Conference in San Jose; the City of La Mesa was presented the 2009 Helen Putnam Award for Excellence in the category of Health and Wellness Programs for “*ready, set.....Live Well*” a community wellness initiative.

Established in 1982, this program recognizes ten outstanding cities that deliver the highest quality and level of service in the most effective manner possible. Helen Putnam was a dedicated parent, teacher, principal, mayor, and county supervisor who viewed meeting one’s potential as the greatest measure of success. To her, excellence was defined as people doing their best. The League of California Cities recognized that Ms. Putnam epitomized the best definition of excellence in her years of public service and named this Award of Excellence in her honor.

The award winning “*ready, set.....Live Well*” initiative is a partnership endeavor that has evolved from the La Mesa Community Wellness Program. This model program, adopted by the La Mesa City Council in July 2006, is now a growing network of community partners whose shared vision is to create opportunities that promote physical activity and good nutrition, and provide encouragement and incentive for community members to embrace habits that lead to lifelong health and wellness.

The work accomplished by the City’s partnership efforts with the LMSVSD positioned the City to receive a grant from The California Endowment to pursue establishment of joint policies and programs to promote health and wellness in the community and “*ready, set.....Live Well*” was born. The Live Well policy team met during the first quarter of 2009 to establish policy



guidelines for future programs and projects. Following the work of the policy team, tactical teams were established to draft a strategic plan to encompass a variety of subject areas devoted to community health and wellness. The City Council approved the draft strategic plan on September 22. The plan now heads to the LMSVSD board for its endorsement. Specific elements within the plan that have begun are funded through grants already received. Additional grant and private funding sources are being sought for other programs outlined in the strategic plan.

La Mesa is one of only two cities in San Diego County to receive a 2009 Helen Putnam Award for Excellence. The City of Chula Vista also received the award in the category of Internal Administration. The City of La Mesa is honored to be the recipient of this prestigious award for the second time. In 2006 La Mesa received the award under the category of City-Business Relationships for The PARKS Project, a partnership endeavor between the City, local businesses, non-profits, and the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District (LMSVSD) that resulted in construction of the Junior Seau Sports Complex at Parkway Middle School and renovation of Briercrest Park adjacent to the Grossmont Healthcare District building.