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## Auction to fund Sister City Association

by Eric Michael Stitt  
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Paul Hawkins, Mike Garofano and Kim Bridges were given the HBSCA's International Humanitarian Award at the Sept. 28 City Council meeting. (photo by Deb DeMaderios)

Hermosa Beach's Sister City Association is holding its 16th Auction on the Beach this Sunday, an event that only takes place every other year.

The association relies on this fund-raiser to bring in thousands of dollars to help support Hermosa Beach's sister city, Loreto, Mexico.

The Sunday, Oct. 3, event will be from 1 to 4 p.m. at the corner of 18th Street and The Strand. Organizers are hoping to raise up to \$15,000, which would fund the entire sister city program for two years.

Since the HBSCA was created 43 years ago, the organization has been bettering the lives of others in countless ways and funds two programs, said president Deb DeMaderios. For 38 years, the Student Exchange Program has positively impacted the lives of children in Loreto and Hermosa Beach by introducing them to different cultures and opening lines of support that would have never been there, DeMaderios said. The money brings seventh and eighth graders from Loreto to Hermosa Beach in July, and it sends Hermosa Valley students to the Mexican city during their spring break.

Also, the Loreto Paramedic Training Program, which was created by Hermosa Beach firefighters 11 years ago, has certified eight paramedics through the instruction of three firefighters who travel to the city twice a year to train others. The money helps pay for ambulances, fire trucks and various emergency equipment that is used for the paramedic program, DeMaderios said.

"The auction is our main source of funding. It has enabled us to continue to offer support to our sister city," DeMaderios said. "We rely on this event to sustain us."

Admission is \$10 per person with each receiving a chance to win \$1,000. The silent and live auctions include 100 items, such as a one-night stay at the Crowne Plaza in Redondo Beach, a bicycle, two VIP tickets to "The Price Is Right," two tickets to a Los Angeles Lakers game, a three-hour ride from P.V. Limo, a one-night stay at the Sea Sprite Motel, two tickets to the Civic Light Opera, an autographed football from former New York Giants defensive end Michael Strahan, gift certificates from various local restaurants, along with jewelry, crafts, clothing and paintings from several vendors from Fiesta Hermosa.

The outdoor event will include a complimentary lunch served by Cantina Real with a no-host bar.

"The community looks forward to this event, the camaraderie and seeing people you haven't seen in a while," said HBSCA auction chair Merna Marshall. "It's a lot of work (but) we appreciate the support of the community."

This year's event will also coincide with the HBSCA's creation of an International Humanitarian Award. The organization has given it to retired Hermosa Beach firefighter Paul Hawkins, and current firefighters Kim Bridges and Mike Garofano. They were chosen because of their volunteer efforts to create and maintain the paramedic program. It is the only advanced life-support training program of its kind in Mexico, according to DeMaderios. Hawkins, Bridges and Garofano were honored at the Sept. 28 City Council meeting.

Hawkins said they're very honored to be recipients of the organization's first International Humanitarian Award. These firefighters donate their vacation time to travel and train the Loreto firefighters and help them pass the required paramedics test.

Hawkins said they not only teach others about emergency response, but also learn a great deal themselves when volunteering.

"I'm not sure who gets more out of it, them or us. We've learned how to do a job with few resources and how to be innovative and make do," Hawkins said. "We've learned a lot from them."

The paramedics will arrive in Loreto Nov. 2 to prepare three people for the paramedic exam, he said.

For more information on the HBSCA's auction or how to donate to the student exchange and paramedic programs, visit [www.hb-sistercity.org](http://www.hb-sistercity.org).