



Bridges

A School Inter-Group Relations Program



La Quinta HS Day of Silence 2008

“Outstanding and effective character development! The OC Human Relations BRIDGES Program is a vital part of our safe schools program.”

-Rick Krey, Safe School Coordinator
Anaheim Union High School District

“BRIDGES has opened my eyes to the inequality that still exists today and has inspired me to take action against it.”

- Susie Toumanian, Class of '09
Fountain Valley High School

Children learn best in a safe, secure, respectful environment. Unfortunately, this isn't always easy for students to find. Over the past twenty years, Orange County schools have experienced bias-related incidents and violence that have prompted them to contact OC Human Relations to help build inter-group communication, cohesion, and a sense of community on their campuses. In response, OC Human Relations created the **BRIDGES**: School Inter-Group Relations and Violence Prevention Program.

In 2008-2009

The BRIDGES Program reached

- 45,000+ students
- 1,947 teachers
- 469 parents

BRIDGES Schools held

- 73 human relations retreats & trainings
- 76 school-wide events

What is the BRIDGES Program?

BRIDGES is a multi-year program that improves inter-group relations by partnering with schools and communities to create, advocate for and sustain a safe, inclusive and equitable campus climate that respects society's diversity.

BRIDGES empowers members of the campus community to identify, investigate and address the human relations needs on their campus via trainings and dialogues. They acquire the skills to work with a diversity of people while improving the human relations climate and addressing student success and opportunities.

BRIDGES uses evidenced based principles like the Search Institute's "40 Developmental Assets" and America's Promise "5 Promises Program." The application of these principles and others produces young people that are more likely to succeed academically, socially and civically. They are more likely to avoid violence and risks, contribute to their communities, achieve high grades in school and thrive.*



Loara HS BRIDGES Week 2009

*sources: www.americaspromise.org, www.search-institute.org

How does the BRIDGES Program work?

Each **BRIDGES** School Site partners with a **BRIDGES** Staff person to implement the program. **BRIDGES** staff work with administrators to form a Task Force – the core group of students and adult allies charged with creating a plan to address the human relations needs of the campus.

The Task Force is continually supported by **BRIDGES** staff via meetings and presentations. Members are trained in facilitation, project planning and identifying and prioritizing issues. These skills are used to develop and execute a campus-wide human relations plan that includes new programs and projects that support a safe, welcoming and equitable learning environment and increases opportunities for all students to be successful.

The **BRIDGES** Program also offers trainings for teachers, parents and community members. Additionally, schools are invited to participate in conferences, summer camps and leadership programs that attract participants from across the county.



BRIDGES Camp 2008

Is the BRIDGES Program well-known?

BRIDGES has received the following recognition:

- Identified on the White House website as a “Promising Practice” as part of the “One America” Initiative
- Received the Multicultural Diversity Award from the National Association of Counties, the National Association of Black County Officials and the National Association of Hispanic Officials and Woman Officials of the NACO
- Chosen by the US Department of Justice and the US Department of Education as one of seven programs to prevent hate crimes in schools and communities.
- Featured in School Safety Journal, Fall 1997
- Sponsoring agency in the America’s Promise Orange County Dropout Prevention Summit 2009

How the BRIDGES Program Funded?

BRIDGES is funded largely by grant and private donations. Due to this generosity, OC Human Relations is often able to assist schools with securing funding by writing grants, raising donations or matching funds to bring the cost within the reach of each school. We are always looking for new corporate sponsors to partner with us to bring **BRIDGES** to more of Orange County. Staff time and program space is limited. Participating schools are selected on the basis of commitment and enthusiasm toward long-term change.



Fountain Valley HS at Camp Bear Paw

For more information about the **BRIDGES** Program please contact Alison Lehmann at 714-567-7566 or Alison@ochumanrelations.org.

Participating Schools

Anaheim HS
Ball Jr. High
Buena Park Jr. High
Cesar Chavez HS
Corona del Mar HS
Cypress HS
Fountain Valley HS
Fullerton HS
Garden Grove HS
Huntington Beach HS
Irvine Int. School
Katella HS
La Quinta HS
Las Flores School
Laurel HS
Loara HS
Los Amigos HS
Magnolia HS
Newport Harbor HS
Rancho Santa Margarita Int. School
Santiago Creek Day
Santiago HS
Savanna HS
Servite HS
South Jr. High
Sycamore MS
Western HS