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ABSTRACT

The Orange County (California) Human Relations Council exists to improve intergroup relations by enabling a representative group of school community members to work collaboratively toward creating and sustaining a safe, inclusive school climate that is respectful of society's diversity. The Council concentrates on training and encouraging students, parents, and teachers to use positive peer support to promote intergroup understanding. At the elementary school level, the Council's approach focuses on parent and teacher participation in planning and on parent and teacher education. In the middle schools, the Council works with parents, teachers, and school administrators. At the high school level, a student-centered program is presented, focusing on positive peer pressure, and continuing work with parents and teachers. Overall components include leadership team consultations, a task force for needs assessment, student inter-ethnic retreats, staff inservice programs, and schoolwide projects. Supportive projects in the schools include: (1) "Walk in My Shoes," student symposiums; (2) "Stop in Your Tracks," a video series presenting alternatives to violence; (3) the Building Bridges award for efforts at promoting safe schools that are respectful of diversity; (4) a Hate Crime Network for shared information and resources; (5) the Summer Youth Leadership Institute for students; (6) the School Inter-Ethnic Relations Round Table for student and teacher networking; and (7) a Parent Leadership Institute. (SLD)

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Bridges

A School Inter-Ethnic Relations Program

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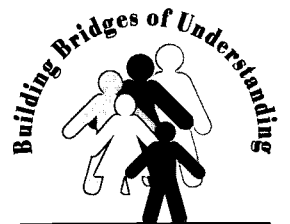
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Human Relations

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VIEWPOINTS

When asked about the impact of the Human Relations Council's School Inter-Ethnic Relations Program (SIERP), these were the responses we got...

"... the environment on this campus is dramatically different! We see almost no conflict that has racial implication!"

—Middle School Principal

"I will think twice before making any judgments about people before I've had a chance to get to know them."

—High School Student

"The conflict resolution inservices and workshops provided for our students and staff have been a major contributing factor to the substantial decline in violence on our campus."

—Assistant Principal

"... suspensions are down 20% compared to last year..."

—Middle School Principal



"One thing I learned today is never to judge people because of their looks. Never judge them from the outside, always from the inside. One thing I will do differently as a result of today is to treat people with respect."

—Middle School Student

"By listening to my classmates, I learned about myself and my prejudices. I have work to do."

—High School Student

MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP

The Orange County Human Relations Council is a nonprofit organization enabled by a unique public/private partnership between corporations, cities, foundations, the county, schools, the courts and individuals.

Our mission is to provide programs to foster mutual understanding among residents in order to make Orange County a better place for ALL people to live, work and do business.

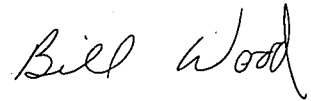
As our county grows more diverse, it is incumbent upon all of us to collaborate in this initiative that holds out the promise that tomorrow we can have a community where all are valued and included.

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SCHOOL INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS PROGRAM



STATEMENT OF NEED

Over the past ten years, schools have experienced bias-related incidents that have prompted administrators and teachers to contact the Council to help build inter-ethnic communication, cohesion and a sense of community on their campuses. The Council has worked successfully with schools throughout Orange County to address these challenges with inter-ethnic relations, conflict management and violence prevention programs.

MISSION

Our mission is to improve intergroup relations by enabling a representative group of school community members to work collaboratively towards creating and sustaining a safe, inclusive school climate that is respectful of society's diversity.



PROCESS

The Council works cooperatively with the whole school community to accomplish its goals. The program is uniquely designed to meet each individual school's needs and objectives. We concentrate on training and encouraging students, parents and teachers to use positive peer support to promote inter-group understanding.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Council's elementary school program focuses on parent and teacher participation in a planning effort to build understanding and acceptance for people who are different. This can include retreats, in-service training and classroom presentations of age-appropriate curriculum. The Council can offer a broad variety of curriculum geared for teachers and parent volunteers, as well as parent outreach, parent leadership institutes, dialogues and leadership consultations for principals.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

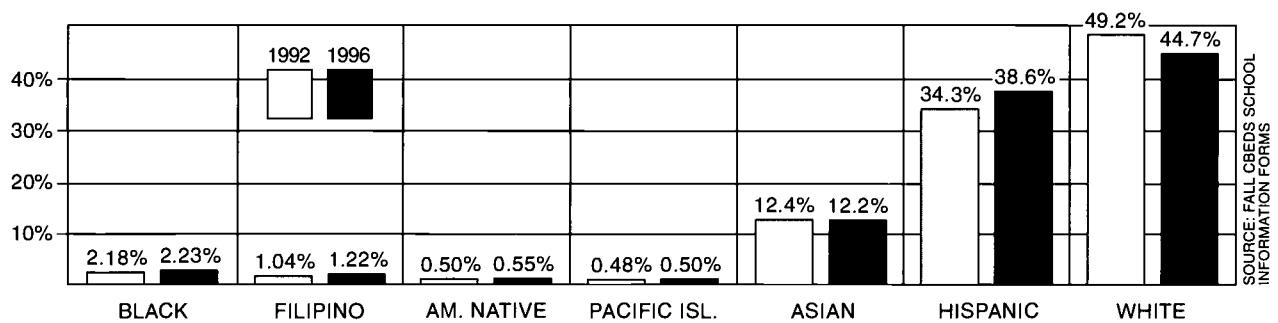
In middle school, young people go through some of the most dramatic physical, emotional and hormonal changes that human beings encounter in life. When this period of great inner turmoil is coupled with the rapidly changing diversity found in the middle schools, we see challenging times for schools. The Council's middle school program, like all of our programs, begins with an orientation and assessment done with the principal and his/her leadership team. A collaborative process is then followed that includes all

participants of the school community in building and implementing a multifaceted plan to promote inter-ethnic understanding and a positive climate on campus. Parents, faculty and staff are also included in the process from the beginning because an effective strategy must include all parts of the school community.

HIGH SCHOOL

Nowhere is the emerging diversity of Orange County more evident than in our high schools. These quickly changing demographics and the attendant escalation of inter-group tension, conflict and violence has motivated principals from throughout the county to call upon the Council for assistance. The high school inter-ethnic relations and violence prevention programs were developed over the last 10 years to work to restore and develop a sense of understanding and school spirit inclusive of the diversity that exists. This age group requires a student-centered program, thus the Council focuses on positive peer pressure as well as working with faculty, parents and school staff.

Racial & Ethnic Summary of Orange County Students



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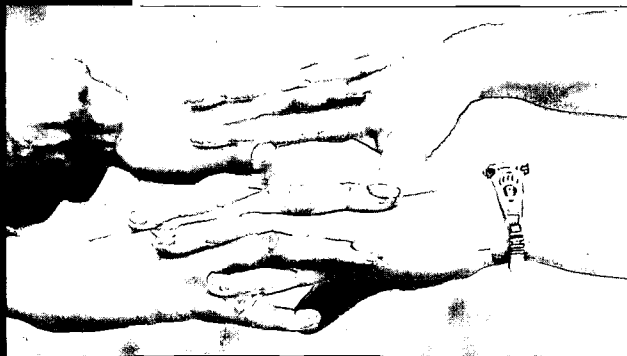
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Mary Graves
Diane Lichterman
Margot Mauer
Rachna Pandya
Mary Randall



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This provides an introduction to the program that includes assessment of each school's needs and identifying objectives.

TASK FORCE

The creation of the school human relations task force identifies needs and establishes short-term and long-term objectives to improve the inter-group relations climate on campus. This includes training sessions with parents, students, administrators, school staff, teachers and community members.



STUDENT RETREATS

All-day student inter-ethnic relations retreats increase student awareness, encourage dialogue about diversity issues, evaluate the school inter-ethnic relations climate and build enthusiasm for the task force efforts.



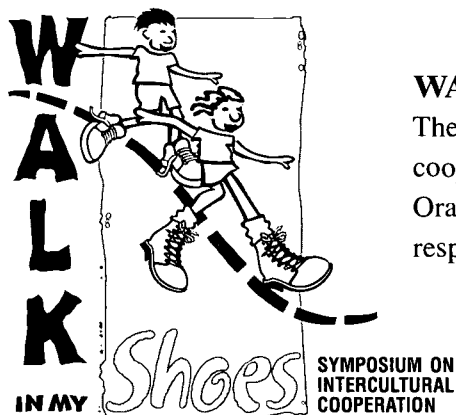
SCHOOL-WIDE PROJECTS

The development of school-wide projects comes out of the efforts of the task force, student retreats and staff development sessions. School projects help the students and teachers convey their new understanding to the entire student body. Examples include: freshman multicultural field days; assemblies, student-facilitated classroom dialogues and student-facilitated retreats; intercultural symposiums; school surveys; and, mentorship programs.

STAFF IN-SERVICE

In-service sessions are developed in collaboration with teachers in order to address the specific needs of the staff. These can include building awareness, dealing with prejudice and conflict management in the classroom, and incorporating diversity into the curriculum.





WALK IN MY SHOES

The annual middle and high school student symposiums on inter-cultural cooperation bring together more than 800 students and teachers from all over Orange County to foster greater understanding of the challenges and positive responses to the rapidly increasing ethnic diversity in Orange County Schools.

STOP IN YOUR TRACKS

STOP IN YOUR TRACKS ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE

This is a three-volume video series that addresses themes such as what makes us angry, why we fight and how to manage anger.

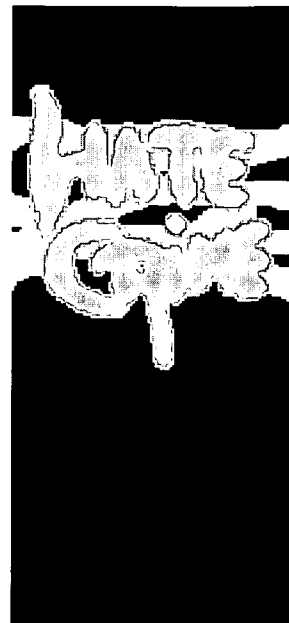


BUILDING BRIDGES AWARDS

This event recognizes elementary, middle and high schools for their outstanding efforts in promoting, nurturing, protecting, and cultivating a safe campus climate that is respectful of society's diversity.

HATE CRIME NETWORK

The Orange County Human Relations Commission, in collaboration with the Council, convenes a county-wide network of law enforcement and community groups to document hate-related crimes and incidents and publish that data. Other services include support for hate crime victims, assistance to schools in responding to incidents, working with school districts to develop policies and conducting police in-service trainings.



SUMMER YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

These two institutes provide high school and middle school students with advanced skill training, a deeper awareness of human relations and a forum to participate in open dialogue.

SCHOOL INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS ROUND TABLE

Networking opportunities are provided for teachers and students through the county-wide School Inter-Ethnic Council's Round Table discussions. The Council meets periodically to increase awareness, obtain information on diversity programs, exchange ideas and to build enthusiasm and commitment for human relations programs on school campuses.



PARENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

This intensive training program builds the skills and abilities of non-English speaking parents so they can be more effectively involved in their children's schools.



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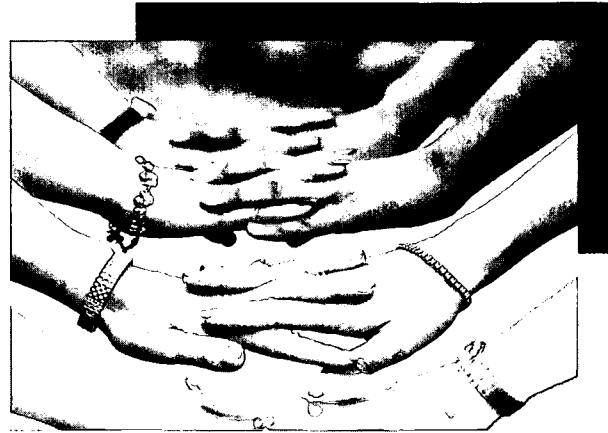
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RESOURCES

Videos, curriculum materials, exercises and books on a variety of human relations topics are made available to teachers and other school staff on a check-out basis. Professional staff and volunteers are available as resources to schools and community members on inter-group violence, parental involvement and issues pertaining to the emerging diversity of Orange County. Volunteer and intern opportunities are available for college and high school students. Semester and summer assignments are available.



SPECIAL INITIATIVES

The Pacific Mutual Foundation's generosity has allowed us to provide a program specifically tailored to 24 middle schools. Grants from the Steelcase Foundation, the McKay Foundation, the Orange County Community Foundation and other local funders made it possible for us to serve seven Tustin Schools over the past three years. Orange County's United Way has committed multiple-year funding to enable this program in schools throughout the county.

TO PARTICIPATE

The annual cost of the School Inter-Ethnic Relations and violence prevention program is approximately \$7,500. However, the Orange County Human Relations Council can assist with grants, raising donations or matching funds to bring this within reach of each school. Staff time and program space are limited. Participating schools are selected on the basis of commitment and

enthusiasm to long-term program goals.

VIEWPOINTS

“My students have been educated and trained in many skills centering around tolerance and cultural awareness. The activities have been effective and enjoyable. My students have responded positively. . . . I hope to see this program continue for many years to come.”

—Middle School Teacher

“One thing I learned today is many people have different points of view. I learned that getting to know people is a great experience. One thing I am taking away with me is that each person is an individual and I’ll never forget to respect them and their opinions. One thing I will do differently as a result of today is never stereotype a person and always respect people’s views.”

—High School Student

“The dialog and discussion that the Human Relations Program has encouraged has most definitely been a positive step in improving student and community relationships.”

—Middle School Principal

“One thing I learned today is that you should try to walk in the other person’s shoes. One thing I am taking away with me is how to stand up for others and myself. One thing I will do differently as a result to today is think before I act.”

—Middle School Student

“I learned that it doesn’t matter where a person is from. The only thing that matters is the person they are. From now on, I will smile to any sad person I see.”

—Elementary School Student

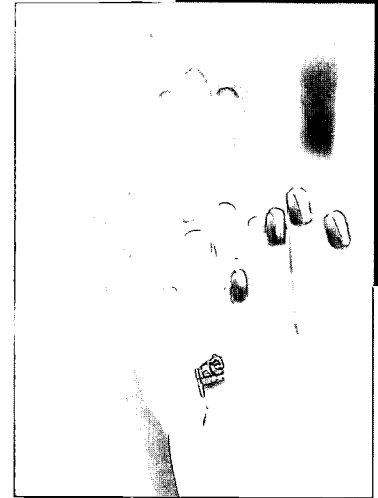


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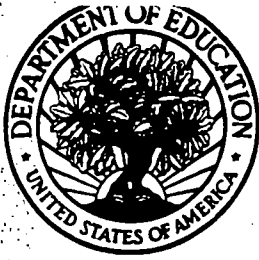
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