

Awards honor tolerance

Police, schools among those recognized by OC Human Relations Commission.

By DOUG IRVING
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SANTA ANA • Police departments, high schools and a Latina theater ensemble were among those honored by the OC Human Relations Commission for their efforts to fight intolerance and discrimination.

A dozen people and groups from throughout Orange County received Human Relations awards during a Thursday night gala at the Grove of Anaheim. This is the 37th year that OC Human Relations has recognized efforts to foster understanding and tolerance.

"These are Orange County's unsung heroes," Becky Esparza, chairwoman of the Human Relations Commission, said in a prepared statement. The honorees, she added, "dedicate tremendous amounts of their own time... to make the county a better place for all people to live, work and do business."

This year's award recipients, with the commission's description of the work they do, are:

- **The Fullerton Police Department** for its Alcohol Beverage Control program, which fosters relationships between the police, community and businesses to create a safer environment in the Downtown Bar District.
- **The Tustin Police Department** for its Neighborhood Improvement Task Force, which is working to address quality-of-life issues.
- **The Westminster Police Department** for a program that



COURTESY OF OC HUMAN RELATIONS

HONORED: Sande Hart, center, receives a 2008 Human Relations Award from the Rev. Mark Whitlock, left, and Dr. Gurpreet Singh Ahuja, both of the Orange County Human Relations Council.

gives services to people living with mental illness.

- **Corona del Mar High School** for its Human Relations Council and its campaign to bring diverse campus groups together.
- **Huntington Beach High School** for its BRIDGES program, which promotes unity among the school's diverse students.
- **Sycamore Junior High School** for its BRIDGES United Task Force, which builds leadership within the school community.
- **The Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble** for productions such as "The Mexican OC" that address social issues facing the county.

- **Sande Hart** of Rancho Santa Margarita for founding Spiritual And Religious Alliance for Hope to build understanding between women of diverse faiths.

- **Ken Khanh Nguyen** of Santa Ana for advocating for Vietnamese American rights and exposing greater Orange County to the strengths and contributions of his community.

- **The Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force** for working to abolish human trafficking and related crimes in Orange County.

- **The Rev. Robert Rohdenburg** of

Garden Grove United Methodist Church for speaking out for Orange County's most-marginalized communities.

- **Adrienne Santellan** of Santa Ana, youth organizer of The Center OC, for providing a safe space for young women and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth.

Visit www.ochumanrelations.org for more information about the awards and the honorees.

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