
MID-MARCH 2008



14th Annual Walk in My Shoes

The 14th annual Walk in My Shoes sponsored by Orange County Human Relations took place March 7 at CSUF. The event featured over twenty interactive hands-on workshops where students explored issues of identity and culture, and developed leadership skills. Five hundred middle school students from across the county attended the event.

"Going to Walk in My Shoes has helped me see Orange County's tremendous diversity and how our diversity can actually help us unite the community when we work together regardless of race, ethnicity, or background," says Youval Yadlin, one of the event's two youth emcees.

Yadlin says, "It's an amazing conference! Students learn that it's not just adults who can change our community, but that they too can make a positive, lasting impact on their schools and neighborhoods."

Fullerton High School teacher Sal Tinajero opened the conference encouraging middle school students to believe in themselves, stay in school and pursue a college education. According to Tinajero it's crucial that students have confidence in themselves. And once they have confidence, it's even more important that they put it to

good use for the future. "My goal is to get students to college," says Tinajero, "And in order to do that, I have to get them excited about school and what they are doing." Mr. Tinajero is also a Santa Ana City Council member and the 2006 National Hispanic Teacher of the Year.

"Never has the diversity of Orange County been so evident as when you gaze out over the sea of young faces at Walk In My Shoes," said Ken Inouye, chair of Orange County Human Relations. "The students who attend this conference are the leaders who will work towards creating safe and equitable schools and communities."

One of the goals of the conference is to develop awareness among students to help them promote unity and build on the strengths of diversity at their schools. Conference organizer Dave Southern says, "We just have to look at the recent, tragic examples of school violence in communities close to Orange County to recognize that it's important that students develop empathy and appreciation of diversity."

Students can help reduce the violence and intergroup tension that is all too present on school campuses and in the community today."