

## High school earns honor for connecting cultures

By **LYNN SEEDEN**  
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**FOUNTAIN VALLEY** – A student eating lunch alone in the quad at Fountain Valley High will soon be eating pizza with classmates.

Any signs of racial intolerance are answered with movie nights.

And when the teens aren't getting along, they seek help from ... teens.

The school's Bridgebuilders Club, a group of about 25 students that offers peer mediation, game nights and bonfires, has come up with creative ways to connect classmates, fight prejudice and promote understanding among cultures and social groups on campus.

Because of the club's efforts, the Orange County Human Relations Commission has named Fountain Valley High a recipient of the O.C. Human Relations Award. The award will be presented May 4 at The Grove in Anaheim.

Periodically, Bridgebuilder Club members look for students eating alone or for those not connecting or making friends.

"They will send invitations to the students (who are alone), inviting them to a pizza lunch in my classroom," adviser Janet Marquez said about the club's "Project Pizza."

During the lunch, the students are told about ways they could be involved.

"The kids introduce them to different clubs and will go with them to the first club meeting," Marquez said.

The club members also ask teachers if they know of students who aren't making friends and then invite them to the cafeteria for a lunchtime party.

Earlier this year, the club hosted a month-long diversity film festival featuring flicks like "Remember the Titans" and "The Color of Friendship" to help students appreciate other ethnic backgrounds.

"We don't really have a lot of racial tension here," Marquez said. "But we had a couple groups that were having a little tension. The students felt (the movies) would bring them together ... would make them more responsible in society."

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