

# HUNTINGTON BEACH INDEPENDENT

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## Students open their eyes to the world

Huntington Beach High hosts evening that fundraises and raises awareness of worldwide issues.

*By Mona Shadia, mona.shadia@latimes.com*

Katy Fetters is not one who takes the simple moments of life for granted.

The 18-year-old grew up with mild cerebral palsy, and her weak left side has slowed her down.

But it has allowed her to look deeper into the layers of life.

When it was time to submit poems for the **Huntington Beach High School Bridges program's Social Justice Night**, she wrote about conditions that dehumanize men, women and children of the world.

"The woman who wears the black cloth over her face to conceal her identity," she wrote. "The boy who holds a rifle in his hands with ammo over his bony shoulder. The girl who closes her eyes to hide the tears as her body is sold into slavery. The man who sits in the crowded refugee camp, as he watches his family starve to death."

Her words, along with others', worked together to send a message to the world: that the students at Huntington Beach High School are aware of injustices.

"I feel like, as humans, we should open our eyes to what's really happening in the world," said senior Vanessa Estrada, 17, the president of the program. "Life is not as perfect as it seems. It's not like Huntington Beach. There are other places in the world where people don't even have clean water to drink."

The event, which took place from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. June 3 at the high school, raised funds for Girl Effect, Jordan Casteneda Fund and Bridges.

Local bands performed at the event while the students enjoyed themselves and came together for good causes.

"In order for people to take action, you have to make them realize there's a problem," Vanessa said.

Signs on the walls of the high school gym with written words and facts about unrest and tragedies around the world could not be missed. Some were close to home and others seemed far away.

"15 million children are orphaned worldwide due to HIV/AIDS," one sign read.

"Religious intolerance is a driving force behind many of the world's armed conflicts and center of civil unrest," read another.

Fetters said everything she sees and hears about inspires her. She wrote her poem, "Dehumanized," because she wanted people to appreciate what they have, even the little things like the ability to smile.

"These people. They are real," her poem read. "These people. They feel."