



OC Human Relations

Building community by fostering respect, resolving conflict and pursuing equality

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Young Volunteer Inspires High School Students to Embrace Diversity at Annual *Walk In My Shoes* Youth Leadership Conference

(Orange County, CA) – Christian Lopez is a college student, writer, public speaker, activist and volunteer board member with OC Human Relations. Christian is passionate about sharing with others how having a physical disability does not define who he is, but instead it has fueled him to be determined to break social norms. Now a student at Santa Ana College, Christian takes part in speaking engagements about inclusion and awareness related to people with disabilities and what it takes to move towards a society that is accessible and equal for all people.

Christian will be presenting the "Put the Move in Movement" workshop at the upcoming *Walk In My Shoes* Youth Leadership Conference for 500 high school students from across Orange County. This event continues OC Human Relations' annual tradition of inspiring empathy amongst youth and will be held at California State University, Fullerton on Friday, November 18, 2016.

Local student leaders, mentored by OC Human Relations' nonprofit staff, developed this year's sold out *Walk In My Shoes* youth conference around a youth activism theme entitled: "*Healing Our People through Empowerment (H.O.P.E.)*" High school student leaders and corporate volunteers will support the event throughout the day. The conference features workshops related to school violence prevention, relationship violence, media literacy for young women and men, human trafficking, and inclusive approaches to addressing LGBTQ students, among others.

Each year, the *Walk In My Shoes* Youth Conferences brings together close to 1,000 middle and high school students and educators from across Orange County to empower and mobilize students to explore issues of identity and culture, develop their leadership skills and expose them to examples of successful youth activism. The conference's goal is to inspire and equip students to work towards creating positive social change. The 2016 *Walk In My Shoes* event is sponsored by Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian and California State University, Fullerton. Anyone interested in learning more about the conference should contact Julie Vue at 714-480-6588 or julie@ochumanrelations.org.

"Hoag is committed to meeting the unique needs of Orange County residents with particular emphasis upon the disadvantage and underserved" said Minzah Malik, Manager of the Community Benefit Program at Hoag. "Hoag is proactive in partnering with other likeminded organizations to meet the ever increasing needs of the Orange County community. The *Walk in My Shoes* Conference, and OC Human Relations' work with youth all over Orange County, embodies a commitment to our mission."

About OC Human Relations

Walk In My Shoes is presented by OC Human Relations, a local nonprofit working to foster mutual understanding and eliminate prejudice, intolerance and discrimination in order to make Orange County a better place for ALL people to live, work, go to school and do business. OC Human Relations' *BRIDGES Safe and Respectful Schools Program* has been partnering with schools in Orange County since 1988 to create safe and inclusive campuses that are respectful of all people. The BRIDGES program is unique in its design by bringing together educators, students and families on each BRIDGES school campus to build an inter-generational Task Force that utilizes community-building strategies to address issues of respect, safety and connectedness over a multi-year timeframe. www.ochumanrelations.org

Photos

Available at event or by request to julie@ochumanrelations.org.

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