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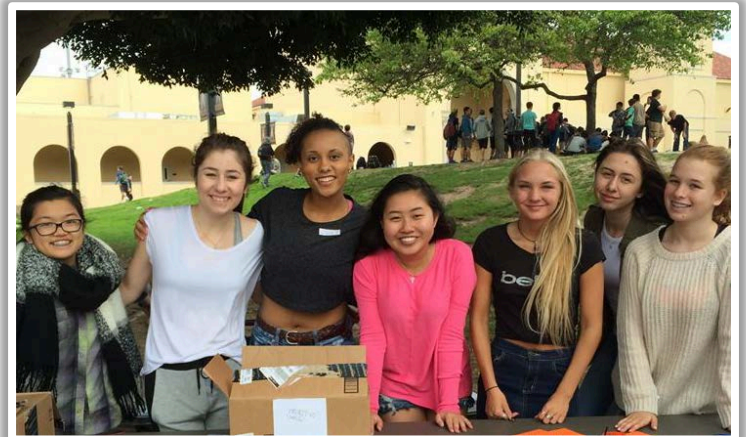
December 16, 2016

Dear Friend,

Words have power.

Witnessing public figures express prejudice on TV, radio, social media, and in newspapers is one of the worst things we would ever want our children to experience, especially during such an important moment in American history as the beginning of a new presidential era. Having any prominent individual espouse hateful rhetoric and scapegoat the most marginalized among us, and watching others echo this prejudice, makes us worry that the worst could be unleashed in our society. From Hitler's Holocaust to America's Internment of Japanese Americans, we can see in history that when we are afraid, pointing fingers, and divided, we are most vulnerable to such extreme messages.

In our work, we aim to sharpen the skills of youth to bridge divides, develop solid character grounded in respect, resolve conflict peacefully, lead with compassion, value diversity as a strength, and collaboratively build safe, inclusive schools and communities.



At OC Human Relations, we believe that ALL people have a right to live free from discrimination and violence regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or any aspect of their being.

We must bear witness to the animosity openly expressed by national figures and document the hateful behavior and harassment it has inspired in our own county against people of color, the LGBTQ community, Muslims and others.

"You should never let your fears prevent you from doing what you know is right."

— Aung San Suu Kyi

Now is the time for us all to accept responsibility for bringing people together instead of dividing us with rhetoric and hollow accusations. There could not be a better moment than now to promote meaningful dialogue between diverse people, police and ethnic communities, youth, people of various faiths, immigrants, and our neighbors.

*Utilize our expertise.
Partner with us.
Share our passion.*



“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”
– Mother Teresa

There is much to be concerned about today.

People feel divided, angered, hurt, and afraid.

Neighbors are suspicious of each other. People hesitate to trust one another, unsure if a simple conversation could escalate into an ugly altercation around closely held political beliefs. ***We are here to bring people together.***

Violence is not the answer.

While coverage of the racist former KKK leader David Duke showed him celebrating a palpable changing current in our country, here in Orange County his newly emboldened peers rallied, attracting a bloody confrontation at a local park, leaving us to be worried about escalating violence in our community spaces. ***We’re here to find alternatives to violence and conflict and promote peace and understanding.***



Hate keeps showing its ugly face.

In just the last 30 days, we’ve documented a surge of 32 hate incidents and 6 hate crimes. Both nearby and abroad:

- Swastikas have been painted on public, private and religious spaces;
- Mosques, churches and neighborhoods have been vandalized;
- Latino children and adults, immigrants, and people of varying faith practices have been harassed in their neighborhoods and schools because of their identities and cultures;
- Hate crime reports have escalated, including an assault against a woman at a local gas station who was attacked by a man who attempted to forcibly pull off her hijab, while yelling at her.



We’re here to prevent hate crimes, respond to needs, and educate our community about the dangers of hate.

Let us be strong and work together.

We will go forward, knowing that people feel vulnerable and unsure. We will be strong. We will stand up and speak up, building alliances with common partners, finding opportunities to educate others, building understanding and empathy, and creating new relationships.

“When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.”
– Malala Yousafzal

Now, more than ever, we need your support of our efforts to:

- Build understanding between diverse sectors of our society;
- Stand together to protect the most vulnerable among us;
- Develop diverse leaders who will be the hope for a better future, where we are made stronger by our diversity, rather than being split into warring camps along racial, gender, religious, or other lines.



“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”
– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



At OC Human Relations, our expert team of 18 employees, supported by more than 150 volunteers, has been developing model programs to resolve conflict peacefully, bring diverse people together around their shared humanity, create safe, inclusive schools and communities, and develop the voices of marginalized communities in the decision-making process of the institutions that affect their lives. These initiatives include our **BRIDGES Safe & Respectful Schools** Program,

Police-Community Reconciliation Program and Dialogues, **Hate Crime** Education, **Dispute Resolution** Program, **Restorative Justice** Initiatives, and **Community Building** Programs.

We've been serving Orange County since 1971

This year, I celebrated 40 years of service to Orange County here at OC Human Relations, surrounded by dedicated, kind, and talented colleagues, Commissioners, Board Members and Community Partners. I feel so honored to work with such amazing people! Thank You!

“Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate.”
— Albert Schweitzer

Thanks to the support of generous people like you, over the last year, we have been able to impact the lives of more than 43,000 students, families, educators and residents across Orange County.



We have reached more than **19,000 students, staff, administrators, parents, and community members**, facilitated **19 Restorative Justice Circles**, documented **44 hate crimes**, provided mediation services to more than **4,400 people in conflict**, certified **640 people in advanced mediation**, and engaged volunteers in more than **9,600 hours of service**. We need your help to continue providing such important services and programs to those who need us most.

“Each person must live their life as a model for others.”
— Rosa Parks



As a local nonprofit organization, we depend on people like you who share our passion for equality and fairness, in order to sustain the important, proactive, and responsive initiatives we lead in Orange County.

“We're here for a reason. I believe a bit of the reason is to throw little torches out to lead people through the dark.”
— Whoopi Goldberg

To serve Orange County, this year and into the future, I am asking for your support. Please find a place in your monthly budget to give. Maybe you would consider putting OC Human Relations in your planned giving or will. Whether you can give a little or a lot, I hope you will invest in our shared vision of a community where ALL people are safe and included, free from discrimination and violence.

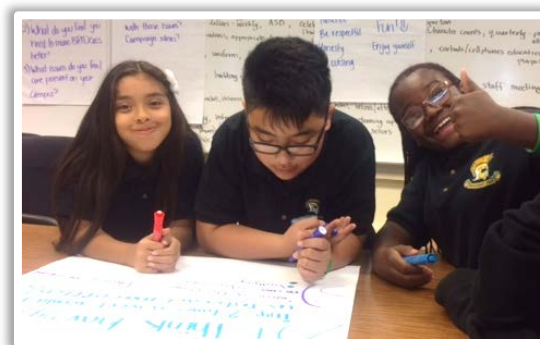
“Goodness is the only investment which never fails.”

– Henry David Thoreau

Let's work together to build a #HateFreeOC!

We know you want to live in a hate-free OC where ALL people can live, work, go to school and do business. We believe we can be a model for the rest of our country and are excited to be launching our **#HateFreeOC** public education and awareness campaign across Orange County. We hope you will be a part of this initiative that aims to create a hate-free environment in Orange County, bring diverse communities together, and promote a peaceful and inclusive community where everyone can thrive! The **#HateFreeOC** campaign will promote the value of RESPECT and how, as a community, we must LEARN IT, LIVE IT, and LEAD it.

Learn more at www.ochumanrelations.org/hatefreeoc and follow **#HateFreeOC** on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.



You can play an important role in making a difference with us. Please make a donation of any amount right now online at www.ochumanrelations.org/donate or mail your gift in the enclosed return envelope. If your year-end gift and this message have crossed, please accept my gratitude for your continued support in making Orange County a better place for all people.

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

– Archbishop Desmond Tutu

We know many organizations have asked for your support this month, and we hope you will make a gift to OC Human Relations today and invest in creating an Orange County where **equality, diversity, and justice matter**—where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Thank you for caring about Orange County with us! We send you wishes of *peace and harmony* for the New Year.

Warmest regards,

Rusty Kennedy, Chief Executive Officer

OC Human Relations is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, Tax ID #33-0438086.

P.S. This is a great time to find out if your employer will provide a matching gift to maximize your donation to our nonprofit. Or, consider adding us to your planned giving or will and join our new Legacy Circle. Contact Melissa Morgan, Director of Partnerships at 714-480-6582 or melissa@ochumanrelations.org—we'd love to discuss the legacy you'd like to leave.

P.P.S. **Will you consider becoming a monthly sustainer?** By designating a donation of at least \$10 a month on your enclosed envelope, or online, you become a valued *Annual Ally Member* and receive annual member perks! Your gift will provide continuing support that we can count on for our programs, including BRIDGES which serves thousands upon thousands of students each year. **We thank you and the youth of Orange County thank you!** Visit www.ochumanrelations.org/allies to join online now.

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

– Sir Winston Churchill