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Unsung Heroes to be Honored for Outstanding Service to OC

(Orange County, CA) The outstanding work of local individuals, groups, and a business will be honored at OC Human Relations' Annual AWARDS Celebration and fundraiser at 5:30pm, Thursday, May 4, at the City National Grove of Anaheim. This year's awardees include community leaders who have dedicated themselves to improving conditions for the homeless, the LGBTQ community, Spanish-speaking residents, African American youth, and refugees. Also to be honored is a local ice cream shop that stood up to an anti-Muslim bully, a detective who holds community meetings, a junior high school excelling in creating a welcoming campus and, receiving the Distinguished Business Award this year will be Target.

The **AWARDS 46 Celebration**, sponsored this year by UPS, is a unique occasion that brings together hundreds of residents, along with business and community leaders to celebrate justice, diversity and the human spirit. Additional sponsors include the Banc of California, Keith Swayne, The Crevier Family Fund at the Laguna Beach Community Foundation, and Bill Witte and Keiko Sakamoto, amongst others.

"Some 46 years ago, our County's Board of Supervisors created the OC Human Relations Commission to build mutual understanding among our residents," said Frank Marmolejo, president of OC Human Relations. "Out of the Human Relations Commission, our nonprofit was created to expand and support the work of the Commission by creating safe and inclusive schools and communities, developing diverse leaders and mediating conflict. We host this special event to celebrate the inception of the Human Relations Commission and honor its mission by bringing together an incredibly diverse collection of people in a beautiful mosaic to share the stories of unsung heroes who make a difference every day, often one person at a time, and to uplift our vision to create safe and inclusive neighborhoods."

The AWARDS 46 Celebration will recognize five categories of local heroes:

Diverse Community Leaders - Honors individuals and groups who have made extraordinary contributions to Orange County in human or civil rights. This year's honorees are:

- **TyRon Jackson, Operation Warm Wishes** (Tustin) Provides free Thanksgiving dinners, anti-bullying programs, food drives, holiday breakfasts and meals, free showers, and laundry days for people experiencing homelessness, veterans, families and children in need.
- **Bill Bracken, Bracken's Kitchen** (Huntington Beach) Using a food truck, serves healthy meals to adults and children experiencing homelessness, while also providing healthy food for meal programs for other nonprofits, churches and veteran groups
- **Juana Trejo, OC Congregation Community Organization** (Costa Mesa) Neighborhood leader who educates others about immigrant rights, trains community leaders, collaborates with local churches, bridges the gap between low-income community and city officials, and helps those in need.
- **Laura Kanter, LGBTQ Center OC** (Santa Ana) A tireless advocate for the LGBTQ community, she helped build the OC LGBT Policing Partnership with Huntington Beach Police Chief Rob Handy, leads community efforts to respond to hate crime, and raises awareness of the plight of the Transgender community.
- **Rev. Dr. Charles Dorsey, Christ Our Redeemer** (Irvine) Works extensively with African American youth and organized the OC Solidarity March and Summit to bring together police with diverse Orange County communities, alongside the Sherriff's office, Irvine Police Department and community and faith-based organizations.

- **Bang Van Pham** (Tustin) Having escaped Vietnam with her small children in tow, she rebuilt her life in Orange County while helping others in the refugee community. She supports community building, provides voluntary Vietnamese translation, hate crime response to victims, and connects people in need with resources.

#HateFreeOC Profile in Courage Award

- **Andrew's Ice Cream** (Orange) The co-owner and an employee of this shop stood up for two Muslim hijab-wearing patrons who were accosted by a customer in May 2016. Later, The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the shop hosted an "Ice Cream and Unity" social to honor all who took a stand against Islamophobia. This shop is being recognized for doing the right thing and standing up to hate.

Community-Policing - Recognizes a department that has tailored creative strategies to provide outstanding service to, and build positive relationships with, their communities. This year's honoree is:

- **Det. Noah Daniels** (*La Habra Police Department*) Built well-attended quarterly community outreach meetings after making door-to-door invitations to local residents to participate. This effort has built dialogue between the community, police and city officials, while helping to rid the neighborhood of vandalism and violence.

Distinguished BRIDGES School - Recognizes exceptional contributions to promote, nurture, protect and cultivate a BRIDGES' school campus that is safe, welcoming and equitable. This year's honoree is:

- **South Jr. High School** (*Anaheim*) The staff and students are exceptional in their efforts to foster student leadership, to reward positive behavior in students, to support the most vulnerable students on campus, and to promote a connected and empowered student body.

Distinguished Business Award - Honors one local business for going above and beyond to embrace diversity and inclusion in the workplace and community:

- **Target** - Target believes that companies play an important role in creating greater opportunity and equality. At Target, diversity and inclusion is an all-in, full-contact, participatory endeavor, where everyone has a voice and plays a role.

About OC Human Relations

OC Human Relations is a local nonprofit with the mission to foster mutual understanding among residents and eliminate prejudice, intolerance and discrimination in order to make Orange County a better place for ALL people to live, work and do business. Since 1991, OC Human Relations has operated with the belief that ALL people should live free of violence and discrimination. The organization brings people together to create safe and inclusive schools and communities, develop diverse leaders, give voice to those who don't have a voice, and mediate conflict. For 26 years, OC Human Relations has been honoring individuals, law enforcement, schools and community organizations for their contributions to human relations in Orange County. These community heroes model community engagement and help lead the way to greater mutual understanding among residents of Orange County.

www.ochumanrelationsawards.org | www.facebook.com/ochumanrelations | www.twitter.com/weareoneoc

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(BREAKOUT BOX) IF YOU GO

WHAT: OC Human Relations' AWARDS 46 Celebration and fundraiser—celebrating justice, diversity and the human spirit. OC Human Relations will honor six diverse community heroes/groups, a BRIDGES Safe and Respectful School, an outstanding community-policing program and a distinguished business from Orange County.

WHEN: 5:30-9:15 p.m., Thursday, May 4.

WHERE: The City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 East Katella Avenue, Anaheim.

PRESS: Press are encourage to attend at no cost. For biographies of the honorees and other details, see www.ochumanrelationsawards.org