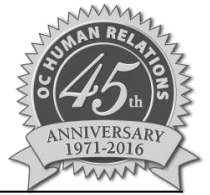




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April 6, 2016

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## OC Human Relations Marks 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by Honoring Diverse Unsung Heroes and Businesses

(Orange County, CA) On May 5, 2016 OC Human Relations will honor the outstanding work of local individuals and groups, and the Disneyland Resort at its 45<sup>th</sup> Annual AWARDS Celebration and fundraiser at the City National Grove of Anaheim. Also among the honorees is a group of mothers, grandmothers, aunts and role models from West Anaheim. These Orange County residents have banded together to urge their neighbors and landlords to rebuild their community and drive out gang activity and violence in order to build a clean, united and safe community that can ensure that youth there will have the opportunity for a bright future.

The AWARDS 45 Celebration is a unique occasion that brings together hundreds of residents, along with business and community leaders to celebrate justice, diversity and the human spirit. Related California is the title sponsor of AWARDS 45.

“Some 45 years ago, our County’s Board of Supervisors created the OC Human Relations Commission to build mutual understanding among our residents,” said Leticia Mata, president of OC Human Relations. “Out of the Commission, our nonprofit was born to support the work we do in Orange County to create safe and inclusive schools and communities, develop diverse leaders and mediate conflict. We host this special AWARDS Celebration to bring 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 45 celebration will recognize four 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:

- **Michelle Evans** (*Lake Forest*) Educator and advocate for the transgender community.
- **Jan Nelson Meslin** (*Mission Viejo*) Service provider and advocate for immigrant communities and undocumented detainees.
- **Parents in Action Group** (*Anaheim*) Grassroots residents who lead outreach and plan events to help improve the living conditions and safety in their neighborhood.
- **Steve Kim** (*Santa Ana*) Connector and service provider for people reentering communities after incarceration. He formed Project Kinship to reintegrate former gang members and the incarcerated into their community.
- **Gurpreet & Bicky Singh** (*Orange*) A married couple who participate in diversity training, serve in interfaith networks, and develop events to educate people in Orange County about the Sikh culture.

- **Scott Larson (Irvine)** An advocate for people experiencing homelessness, who helped develop the OC 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness which led to the development of the county's first multi-service homeless shelter.

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:

- **Officer Juan Munoz (Huntington Beach Police Department)** Coordinates the Citizenship Academy for Spanish-speaking residents to build relationships between Huntington Beach Police Department and OakView neighborhood residents.

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:

- **Loara High School (Anaheim)** Educators, students and parents collaborate across generations in their BRIDGES Safe and Respectful Schools Task Force, partner with their Ethnic Studies department, develop initiatives to promote peace and anti-violence campaigns, participate in peer mediation, explore democratic processes and restorative practices, support mental health resource access and provide support for struggling students.

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

- **Disneyland Resort (Anaheim)** The Disneyland Resort embraces diversity in how it recruits, hires, and develops its 29,000 cast members; as well as how it engages millions of guests from around the world and supports diverse students and nonprofits in Orange County. In partnership with Angels Baseball, the Anaheim Ducks, and the Orange County Community Foundation, Disneyland Resort launched Accelerate Change Together (ACT) Anaheim, which has granted more than \$3 million to organizations serving Anaheim youth to provide opportunities for college and career readiness, healthy lifestyles, and positive relationships in the community and at home.

### **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 1971, 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 45 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](http://www.ochumanrelationsawards.org) | [www.facebook.com/ochumanrelations](https://www.facebook.com/ochumanrelations) | [www.twitter.com/weareoneoc](https://www.twitter.com/weareoneoc)

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## **(BREAKOUT BOX) IF YOU GO**

**WHAT:** OC Human Relations' AWARDS 45 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 5.

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

**TICKETS & SPONSORSHIPS:** Available online. Press are encourage to attended at no cost. For tickets, biographies of the honorees, and other details, see [www.ochumanrelationsawards.org](http://www.ochumanrelationsawards.org)

## **PHOTOS**

Available at [www.ochumanrelationsawards.org/tickets/the-evening](http://www.ochumanrelationsawards.org/tickets/the-evening)