

Artesia High School Students Complete Intensive Human Relations Summer Camp



In July, ten Artesia High School students completed a two-week intensive human relations summer camp as part of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations' zerohour program in collaboration with the ABC Unified Safe Schools Health Students grant. The camp was co-facilitated by Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations staff, Daniel Cacho and riKu Matsuda.

During the camp, students were introduced to community and school demographics and human relations concepts including identity formation, root causes of intergroup conflicts, institutional and internalized oppression and alliance building. Through active participation in group and 1-on-1 activities, students were challenged to learn about each other's identities, life experiences and backgrounds. An element of the camp also included keeping a journal to free write reflections on the camp or write on specific human relations issues. The camp experience bonded students who were otherwise complete strangers on a campus of over 1,800. By the end of the program, almost all the students openly shared reflections from their writing with the group. In the creation of safe space, relationships grew and a sense of community emerged where each student felt comfortable sharing personal struggles and challenges.



The students were given the freedom to design a presentation for the culminated of their program to present to peers, teachers, school and district administration and community members. Students decided to present a "reality-style" play to demonstrate elements of the camp experience and introduced human relations in their own words using activities they learned during the camp. During the ceremony, students received certificates of achievement from the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations recognizing their personal commitments to human relations.

All ten students have committed to return in the fall semester to start Artesia High School's first Campus Action Team (CAT). Look out for news from Artesia High's CAT in the 2007-08 school year!