

Metro

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Tolerance program praised

SOCIAL ISSUES:

BRIDGES is one of 110 efforts nationwide named 'Promising Practices' by the White House.

By **AMBER ARELLANO**
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SANTA ANA — An Orange County program was honored by the White House this week for efforts to teach youth ethnic tolerance and understanding.

The President's Initiative on Race named BRIDGES: A School Inter-Ethnic Relations Program and the Walk In My Shoes Student Symposium as one of 110 "Promising Practices" nationwide this year for successfully bridging racial divides in American communities.

BRIDGES teaches students in Orange County middle and high schools how to talk about ethnic issues, and build more understanding and empathy among their peers. It was founded in 1990 by the Orange County Human Relations Council.

Students and teachers lead the typically daylong workshops for students, which include motivational speakers and role playing. Students have come up with ways to create their own school's program, deal with interracial dating and build self-esteem. About 850 students participate each year.

President Clinton announced the yearlong initiative earlier this year to generate a national dialogue on race relations.

For more information on the 110 Promising Practices, visit this Web site: www.whitehouse.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica