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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Human Relations Commission Holds John Anson Ford Human Relations Awards and Reception**

On Tuesday, October 25, 2016, The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Commission on Human Relations honored exemplary change makers and innovators for their contributions towards transforming prejudice into acceptance, inequity into justice, and hostility into peace within the communities of Los Angeles County. The John Anson Ford Human Relations Awards is an annual event to honor individuals, organizations, and companies that have significantly impacted human relations in Los Angeles County for the better.

“On behalf of Community and Senior Services, I want to extend my congratulations to this year’s John Anson Ford Human Relations Award winners. The true reward is not the acknowledgement we give today, but the direct implications of these life-changing programs. Our success depends on strong collaborations with innovative individuals, organizations and other community partners, such as the outstanding awardees we recognize today,” said Cynthia Banks, Director of County of Los Angeles Community and Senior Services.

Those recognized on October 25<sup>th</sup> included:

- Award-winning filmmaker **Renee Tajima-Pena**, who has mentored countless students to use story-telling through film as a force for positive social change and human relations, and continues to enhance cross-cultural resources for youth and the community at-large.
- **Michelle Guymon**, with the Los Angeles County Probation Department for her leadership in the County’s Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) program. She has been instrumental in substantially raising the awareness of County government leaders regarding the distinct needs of sex-trafficked youth by training over 7,000 professionals in the County, and coordinating the annual Survivor Leadership Conference.
- **Media Done Responsibly**, for their media arts education program that specializes in engaging middle, high school, and college age youth to become conscious about

media consumption and the negative impact of certain mainstream images of women and people of color.

- **S.T.A.R.** (Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience) Court, for their exemplary program that addresses the distinct, severe trauma of CSEC by treating them as survivors, not criminals.
- **Young Warrior's Project**, for the innovative program that combines social consciousness with arts and culture, providing a space for young people to develop creatively and personally.
- **Visions of Unity Arts Contest**, for recognizing the power of youth to explore diversity and promote inclusion using art and literature that express ideals that enhance unity, and to take initiative as agents of change to inspire understanding and acceptance.
- **Foreign Language Academies of Glendale Dual Immersion (FLAG)** for using cutting edge curriculum to empower elementary school age youth to be cultural ambassadors through the learning of multiple languages.

"It's never been a better time for us to honor the wonderful work that uplifts the best in human relations in our County. Amidst the rise in hate crimes we recently announced, and a divisive presidential campaign season that has a level of intolerance, bigotry and discriminatory stereotyping we've not seen in decades, we need to be reminded of those who encourage our better selves. I know I speak for myself and our Commission President Isabelle Gunning when I express our deepest appreciation to our awardees for their dedication, achievements and excellence in doing that," said Robin Toma, Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations.

The awardees have made tremendous steps toward impacting the County in a way that creates positive social change now and for the future. The Commission on Human Relations, as part of Community and Senior Services, is proud to acknowledge and recognize the great work and programs of the awardees.

### **About Community and Senior Services**

Community and Senior Services is committed to providing services which have positive impacts on the lives of the citizens of Los Angeles County. We provide employment services to adults and youth. We work with employers in times of hiring and downsizing. We offer mediation services to avoid court filings. We investigate abuse claims against our older adult and disabled populations. We provide nutrition and other life-enhancing services to older adults. Our Human Relations Commission is dedicated to fostering positive inter-group relations.

### **About the Human Relations Commission**

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations is one of the oldest and largest agencies of its kind in the United States. The Commission's mission is to promote better human relations in Los Angeles County by working to transform prejudice into acceptance, inequity into justice and hostility into peace.

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