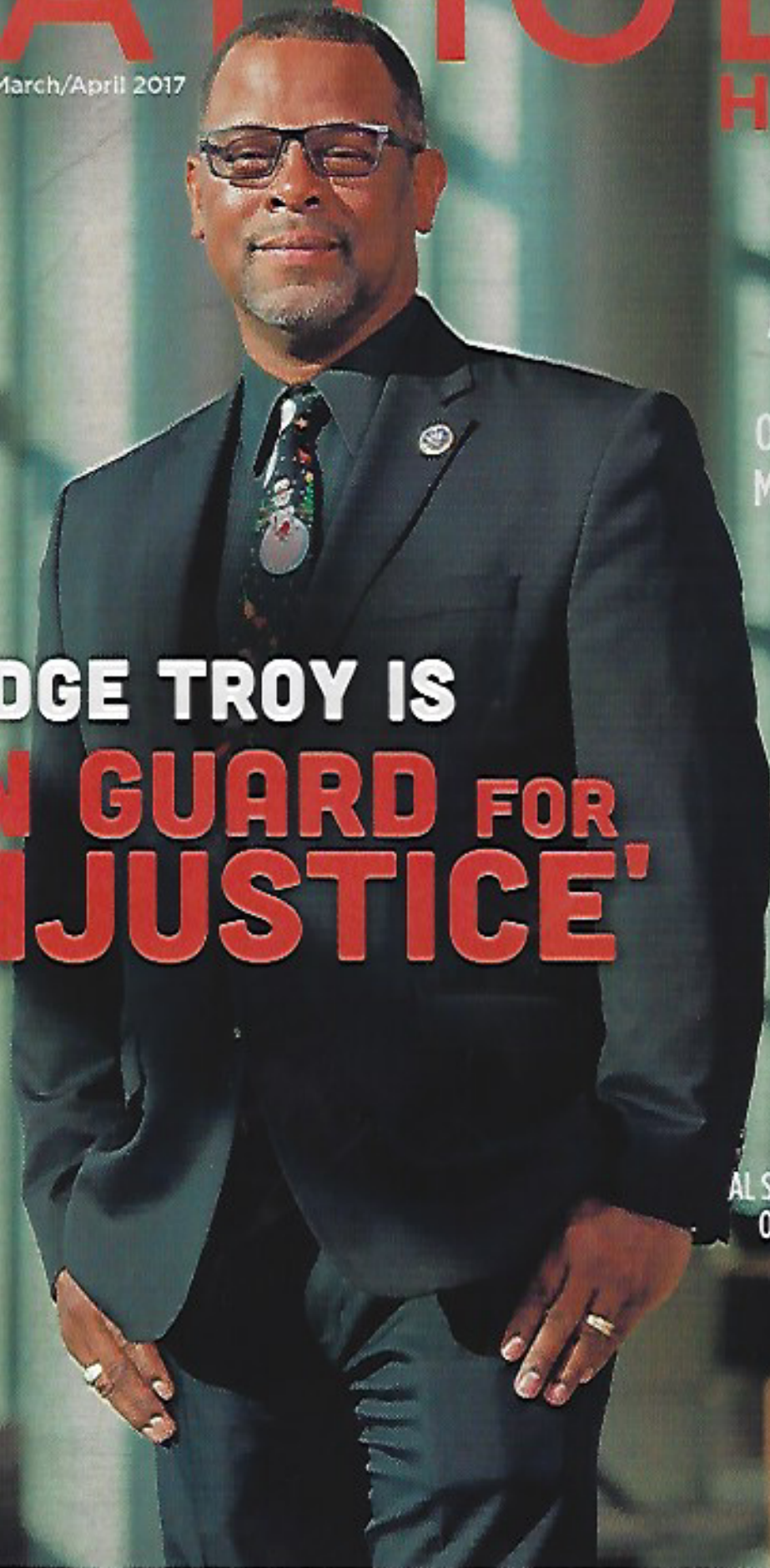


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FROM THE DISNEY
AWARENESS FROM A
TRAIN RIDE ABOUT
OUR PLURICULTURAL,
MULTIETHNIC SOCIETY

JUDGE TROY IS 'ON GUARD FOR INJUSTICE'

MY STORY
AFTER 30 YEARS
IN LAW ENFORCEMENT,
AL SHARES HIS PERSPECTIVE
ON COMMUNITY POLICING

OUR STORY
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS'
STUDENTS BREAK
DOWN BARRIERS,
BUILD UP HOPE

Breaking down **BARRIERS,** building up hope

TWO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS SHARE HOW EDUCATION CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ANAYA WATKINS AND WILL YUPONCE, seniors at Christian Brothers

High School in Sacramento, believe education offers the solution to some of today's most troubling issues, such as racism and immigration.

Their unique experiences and their firm commitments to educational opportunity and self-education present examples to emulate. They trust that individuals can make a significant difference in their communities and in their own thinking, to ultimately usher in a future of unity and peace.

BY LYNETTE
MAGNINO

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY CATHY JOYCE

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

"Education is important to me and my family," Anaya says, noting how education fosters success. Her parents attended UC Berkeley for their bachelor's degrees and her mother earned her medical degree from UC Davis. "They've always told me to work hard in school because it will help me in the future."

Anaya recognizes, however, that achievement and academic success often slips out of reach for many minority students. As a part of her work toward the prestigious Girl Scout Gold Award this year, Anaya chose to address the "academic achievement gap."

"It is the persistent under-achievement of minority students," she explains, yearning to unlock the potential in young students

who lack guidance, mentors and preparation. She organized a symposium titled, "Education Matters in Black Lives," and invited middle and high school students and parents. Some 200 people participated in the event, which was held at the church Anaya attends.

She invited current college students, college and high school counselors, and local community activists to speak and emphasize the importance of a college education. Anaya began the symposium, sharing statistics and research to punctuate the sobering facts specific to African-American youths.

"By third grade, African-American boys are not reading 'at age,' she notes. Later "they are more likely to drop out of school, be incarcerated, or live in poverty." Her research further revealed root



■ Anaya Watkins and Will Yuponce are seniors at Christian Brothers High School in Sacramento.



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WILL



**YOUR STORIES
OUR STORY**

causes of the achievement gap – lack of resources and lack of mentors who had gone to college themselves.

While the symposium provided valuable insights to underserved families about the importance of education in the lives of young black students, Anaya also believes there is another equally important benefit.

“Education is important if we are to end racism,” she contends, illustrating that a future without the “achievement gap” can be a future absent of racial disparity and injustice as people embrace the success of all races and all individuals.

Anaya’s symposium and her desire to break down barriers in education for minority students prompted special attention by Girl Scouts of the USA. She was one of only 10 girls nationwide recognized on the 2016 list of “National Young Women of Distinction.”

The future Harvard University biology major (in fall 2017) and aspiring medical doctor knows education will always be important to her. “I know I will work

in some way in the future to help people access a quality education,” she says.

BUILDING UP HOPE

Will admits that just a year ago he held a limited knowledge on immigration matters. “I wanted to learn more because I only knew what was in media coverage,” he shares.

“I thought it would be good to get a firsthand experience and see the hardships immigrants go through,” Will says, sharing that his own Mexican heritage inspired him to pursue greater knowledge on the topic.

Will participated in Christian Brothers’ Ven a Ver Otra Lado program. That translates from Spanish to “come and see.” The summer immersion trip invites students to come and see the complete immigration story, in and around Tucson, Ariz., and Nogales, Mexico.

“We went to the court house and learned about the immigration process and ‘Project Streamline,’” he recalls, sharing details about law enforcement measures and how those who cross the border illegally either experience mass deportation



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or prison after multiple attempts at illegal entry.

“We also visited border patrol offices and the border town of Nogales,” he says, explaining how some students worked in a soup kitchen, while his group visited women in a house for refugees.

Remembering a conversation with one woman, Will confesses, “Her story hit me.” He tries to convey how hard it was to “wrap his head around” her plight. “She was deported and separated from her husband and family,” he says, expressing her misery and hopelessness.

“It taught me to be understanding,” Will says, fully aware of his up-close view of a “sad but true” reality for immigrant families. “The human element of immigration isn’t publicized so much, and seeing it through their eyes, I got a different perspective.”

Sensitive to the politics and varying opinions on immigration matters, Will insists that an open mind and a commitment to educate oneself on tough topics is the gateway to understanding. His interface with a different culture and seeing real issues come alive before him in the community of Nogales, Mexico made him hopeful that greater education on the topic could inspire people to make a difference with humanitarian reforms.

Will is the recipient of the Mario Encarnacion Humanitarian Award given by the Sacramento Rivercats, presented to a student athlete for service to peers and community. He looks forward to studying biomedical engineering in college. †

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