



PRESS RELEASE – ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

For immediate release

Information: Canyon High School 714-532-8000



Canyon High School Video Class Wins Big at “Directing Change”

ANAHEIM HILLS, CA – June 3, 2014 – Canyon High School’s video production classes took home a number of awards from the Directing Change video competition held in Sacramento last week. The contest is part of a statewide effort to prevent suicide and reduce the stigma related to mental illness.

Students in Alex Graham’s video classes created Public Service Announcements (PSA) for the categories Preventing Suicide by Knowing the Signs and Ending the Stigma of Mental Illness, with three entries receiving awards.

Nick Walker’s PSA, *If We All Speak Loud Enough*, won first place in Southern California and third place statewide. His video will be presented at high school assemblies geared at Mental Health and Suicide Prevention through a program that will roll out nationwide in the coming years.

Hey Taylor, created by Cassidy Foelsch, Stephen Gracia, Nick Jackson and Kimberly Stratton, also received first place in the Southern California region and third in entire state. Katie Maynard placed third regionally with her video, *Meet Kiersten*, and Canyon students also took home three Honorable Mention awards.

Victors were awarded with cash prizes and won \$1,750 total in matching funds benefitting Canyon’s video production program. In addition, the winning students and their parents were flown to Sacramento to meet with legislators, tour the capitol, and participate in a mental health awareness rally.

To view the winning videos, visit www.vimeo.com/thecomancheinsider.

The Directing Change awards are the most recent in the string of recognitions for Canyon High School’s video program. This year alone, they have won an unheard of six awards at the Southern California Student Film Festival, over seven awards at the Orange County Film Festival, and three major awards at the Harvard Westlake Film Festival in Los Angeles. In addition, Canyon Senior Anita Foroughi was named Orange County Filmmaker of the Year, Ernst and Young’s Entrepreneur of the Year, and one of the Top 10 Artists of the Year by The Orange County Register.

Mr. Graham’s students also received the Innovation in Education award through the Project Tomorrow organization, and many have been nominated for this year’s Los Angeles Film Festival which will take place during mid-June.

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The Orange Unified School District educates approximately 30,000 students in the Cities of Orange, Villa Park, Anaheim, Garden Grove, Santa Ana and county areas. The school district, founded in 1953, encompasses 108 square miles. The District office is located at 1401 N. Handy Street, Orange, California.