

Rancho-Cheviot Hills News

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Local parents call for peace

As the athletes of the world come together in peace to compete in the Olympics, a group of peacemakers in Watts, a city once torn by riots, received an international peace award Wednesday.

It was presented by a Century City-based group.

On behalf of Bridge Publications, singer Amanda Ambrose, who has a special interest in Watts, presented a handsomely framed copy of the lyrics of the song "Declaration of Peace," composed by L. Ron Hubbard, to the Parents of Watts (POW). Founders Alice Harris and Helen Teate accepted the award together with Maudine Clark, the group's Youth Project Director.

When Harris and Teate founded POW two years ago, Jordan High School, the only high school in the area, was about to close because it was deemed too dangerous for children to cross Alameda Street to attend school.

Known to residents as "The Alameda Line," this street at the eastern border of Watts, like the Mason-Dixon line of the old South, had long been the focal point of segregation, keeping blacks, whites and browns separated and at odds.

Decided that enough was enough, Harris and Teate crossed the line to create peace and keep the school open.

And they accomplished just that.

"Communication," said Harris, "was the key. Blacks, browns, whites or polka dots, we decided to bring them together and we've done it."

POW was nominated for the peace award by the Concerned Businessmen's Association of America (CBAA), who recently worked with the multi-ethnic parent group to create a "Celebrate the Children Month," dedicated to preven-

ting the moral abuse of children. During this month POW distributed 125,000 copies of a common-sense moral code entitled "The Way to Happiness," which urges a return to traditional values.

Barbara Ayash of CBAA stated, "Having worked with gang problems, I understand the effort it takes to bring peace, especially when violence is involved. The Parents of Watts is one of the finest examples of a group bringing peace to an area as far as I am concerned, and they really deserve this award."