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**HOPE THROUGH  
HOUSING  
FOUNDATION**

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# PRESS RELEASE

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## Hope Through Housing Nonprofit Steps in to “Bridge” Gap in Summer Program Cuts at Local High School

*Hope's Summer Bridge Program offers graduating middle school students in Rialto a chance to prepare for the challenges and expectations of high school and beyond.*

RIALTO, Calif. -- Tight school district budgets resulted in summer program cutbacks at many Inland Valley schools. In response, Hope Through Housing Foundation (Hope), a nonprofit organization that offers academic and enrichment services to elementary, middle and high school youth, teamed with Rialto's Eisenhower High School counseling services department to offer incoming freshmen a four-day high school orientation experience that prepares them for the challenges and expectations of high school. The course is called the “Summer Bridge” program.

“Like many local schools, budget cuts forced Eisenhower High School to scale back its summer program and only provide services to juniors and seniors,” said Hope After School Program Coordinator Aaron Kohl who runs Hope's Grove Teen Center in Rialto. “Our goal is to help students succeed by preparing graduating middle school students for the complexities of high school and letting them know that there are resources and support for them.”

Summer Bridge runs Monday through Thursday for seven weeks from June 7 through July 22. Approximately 350 incoming freshman are enrolled, and the course is taught by Eisenhower Guidance Counselor Shellie Dansby-Hall and Eisenhower Security Officer Kevin Bishop. Students learn everything from how to read a transcript, graduation and college requirements, standardized testing requirements, disciplinary procedures, and extra-curricular

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activities. In addition, guest speakers such as Rialto Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Harold Cebrun, Sr. and Hope Through Housing Foundation Executive Director George Searcy motivate and encourage students.

“The program empowers students by giving them time on campus, in a safe and intimate setting, to experience high school firsthand,” said Kohl. “We have 50 students signed up for each orientation and we try to inspire them to succeed in high school and beyond. They also become familiar with the Grove Teen Center and the resources we offer to continue supporting them throughout their high school years.”

The Grove Teen Center is located at 250 East Baseline Road, across the street from Eisenhower High School in Rialto. The Grove Teen Center opened December 2009 in a retail space once occupied by the YMCA. The Grove Teen Center offers high school students free services such as tutoring, homework assistance, test preparation, social clubs and activities. Summer Bridge is conducted at the Eisenhower High School campus from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and then students walk over to the teen center for additional services, mentorship, and social time.

Hope Through Housing Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing child, youth, and senior services in low-income communities. In Rialto, Hope is responsible for the operation of a Head Start preschool center that serves residents in the community directly north of Eisenhower High School as well as after school services for children grades K- 8 in the same community. Elsewhere in Rialto, Hope provides afterschool services in two other locations: one at 177 W. South Street and 220 N. Glenwood Avenue. All sites utilize the nationally renown PeaceBuilders and KidzLit curriculums. PeaceBuilders is a research-validated violence prevention and character education program. KidzLit is a reading enrichment program designed specifically for use in afterschool program settings. It increases young people's motivation to read and builds literacy skills. Hope evaluates its programs every year and the results are published on the Hope website, [www.hthf.org](http://www.hthf.org).