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## Project helps Jewish and Muslim teens cooperate, form friendships

By Dana Bartholomew, Staff Writer

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Co-Founders Ilana Schachter and Samia Buno of Culver City, CA. initiate a prayer before their teens from the King Fahad Mosque and Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills Teen interfaith Dialogue Project participated their time and food to the SOVA Community Food and Resource Center in Van Nuys, CA. April 4, 2010. (Ernesto Elizarraraz, LA Daily News) (Ernesto Elizarraraz)

**VAN NUYS** - Danielle Feuer and July Aye both study hard, share Facebook friends and worship the same God.

But one is Jewish, the other Muslim, working side-by-side among a dozen interfaith teens on Sunday to sort food at a Van Nuys food bank.

"The whole point of our group is to not be confrontational, but to learn about each other and to discuss issues in a friendly way," said Feuer, 16, of Temple Emanuel in Beverly Hills.

"We're not just learning about religions," added Aye, 15, of King Fahad Mosque in Culver City. "We go to each others' houses. We go to each others' places of worship. We go on Facebook."

After six months of praying, meeting, going to the movies and serving to help the poor together, the Teen Interfaith Project of both congregations has formed bonds between faiths at historical odds overseas.

The project - the first known group of its kind in Los Angeles - follows a national "twinning" movement to bring mosques and synagogues together, organizers say.

Both faiths share similarities, including values of required charity. And teens from both have worked to mutually respect their differences.

"I think it's wonderful, to see groups coming together to help their neighbors," said Fred Summers, director of operations at the SOVA Community Food and Resource Program in Van Nuys, the food pantry run by the Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles.

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Lena Grossman, who is Jewish, said she's surprised it took so long to get young Jews and Muslims from both congregations together.

"I think it's really spectacular," said Grossman, 16, from Beverly Hills. "It's sort of radical. I hope it does lead to world peace. Maybe this can spark something bigger.

"I hope it does."

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