



## A Touch of Understanding®, Inc.

5280 Stirling Street, Suite 102 • Granite Bay, California 95746  
Phone (916) 791-4146 Fax (916) 791-4134



# Report of Activities 7/1/10-6/30/11

*Building Empathy ~ Igniting Respect*

## ATOU Volunteers discover passion & purpose

It has been an exciting year for A Touch of Understanding. While many nonprofit agencies have had to close their doors, we are grateful to be weathering the difficult economic climate, to serve more students and involve more volunteers. This past school year, through the dedication of our volunteer team and staff members, and the financial commitment of our donors, 4,495 students have experienced our in-school, disability-awareness workshop. Although schools are facing unprecedented financial cutbacks, our schedule continues to be full. There are workshops to schools we have served for more than a decade and to schools we are serving for the first time. Teachers, parents and administrators realize that our workshop is an integral component to their anti-bullying efforts. As a nine year-old student said, "I get it now! I can be a buddy, not a bully!"

**"I get it now! I can be a buddy, not a bully!"**

Our in-school workshop is the heart of our mission. We "Build Empathy and Ignite Respect." The impact of our workshop can be seen in the comments from the students, teachers and parents in this report. However, the behind-the-scenes activity has become another way of serving our community. Our office at Olive Ranch School has become both a hub of activity and a haven of friendship and acceptance. Each day of the week, volunteers who range from middle school students to senior citizens, gather in the two classrooms which serve as our office. More than half of our volunteers have disabilities. This forms a rich social group of individuals who all agree with Albert Schweitzer, German physician, philosopher, and clergyman, who said: *"One thing I know, the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."*



ATOU Volunteers enjoy time at our office.

Our office offers our volunteers a place to gather and work together for a common purpose. It also allows them to meet new friends, to build social skills, to develop work skills and self confidence, in short – to belong. Many volunteers have said our office is like a second home.

**"ATOU is where I can be myself."  
Kiersten Schmidt, college student,  
who has autism**

As we look back over the past school year, we see that we are able to continue serving more schoolchildren with our in-school workshops and we are able to involve more volunteers who make these workshops possible. We are mentoring a team of young people who are eager to reach out to others with acceptance and respect. And we are seeing the ripple effect of our efforts in our communities. Please see the following stories to see how those who have never experienced our program are benefitting from A Touch of Understanding.

## The ATOU ripple effect...

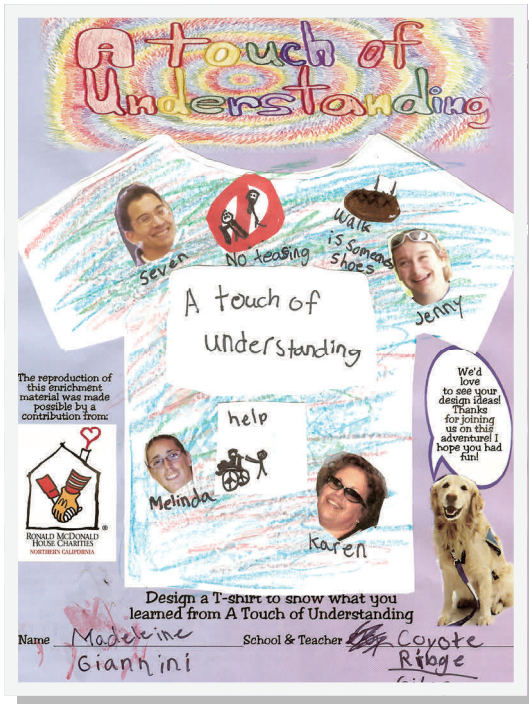
A mother sat at a local McDonald's restaurant watching her son play in the playground. He was by himself as usual. Her son had autism and his lack of verbal communication and frequent unpredictable behavior caused other children to avoid him. But this day was different. Another boy arrived and began to play with her son. Although her son did not speak and did not interact the way a typically-developing child would, this boy continued to play. When she asked him why, He said, "It's okay. I had a program at school that taught us about disabilities, so I understand." The mother was extremely grateful.

## A touching letter:

*Our daughter, Michaela, now 15 and a sophomore at Woodcreek HS, attended A Touch of Understanding when she attended Coyote Ridge Elementary School. She loved the program, and shared with us the impact it made on her (in fact to this day, she still has her Braille card that she made during the hands-on activity). Specifically, her ability to empathize with and understand the special and beloved members of our Brownie Troop significantly improved (we had one girl with Asperger's, one who had required open heart surgery and a pacemaker from a very young age and was of extremely fragile health, and two girls with dyslexia/learning disabilities). Prior to ATOU, Michaela was often confused and overwhelmed by the unpredictable behaviors that resulted in some of our troop members, and as a troop our activities had largely been limited to arts and crafts or cooking since that was easier to manage among such a wide range of social, physical and academic skill sets. After discussing Michaela's revelations in ATOU, we as leaders were encouraged and decided to train our troop for weekend camping trips – with tents, campfires, outdoor cooking, etc. It may seem like a small accomplishment, and it took many months of preparation, but with this group of girls this was a major victory. Out in the woods, living in tents, hiking and singing by the campfire all the girls were just girls. And to this day, four of the original troop members, now in high school, still are very close. Three of the four have significant challenges, but at camp, the challenges are irrelevant. It's a wonderful thing.*

*So thank you for A Touch of Understanding. It opened many eyes to what is possible with a fundamental change in thinking and perspective.*

## 2010 –2011 Survey Responses Indicate Program Success



One of the many pieces of artwork we receive from students. The perfect way to honor our volunteers!

### Student Survey Responses

687 elementary and high school students (15%) responded:  
99% of students feel that ATOU helped them learn more about the tools individuals with disabilities use.  
93% of responding students reported that A Touch of Understanding helped them feel more comfortable with individuals with disabilities.  
89% of responding students said it would now be easier to make friends with someone with a disability.

### Teacher Survey Responses:

38 teachers (25%) responded:  
100% said the ATOU workshop is a valuable educational experience.  
89% of teachers reported a direct benefit to their students with special needs.  
95% said ATOU improved peer interactions in their classrooms.  
100% want each of their classes to experience the ATOU workshop.

### Parent Surveys

600 parents of elementary school students (13%) responded:  
97% of responding parents think ATOU will be helpful in encouraging their child to accept and include individuals with disabilities in their life.  
95% anticipate ATOU leaving a positive, lasting impression on their child.



## ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. "Friends Offering Respect ~ Creating Empowerment"



Our young volunteers, most of whom participated in our in-school workshop, are active as members of our ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. (Friends Offering Respect ~ Creating Empowerment). This group provides them with youth-adult partnerships focused on leadership, team building, and fun. They have chosen the mission of **"Making a difference and having fun while doing it."** One Saturday in April, a long-term volunteer who started with us as a college intern, fulfilled one of her dreams right in our office. Jenny Zimmer, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, created a special event called "Dreams to Goals Workshop." Our office was filled with young people who were paired with adults listening to their dreams and helping them to take steps to turn them into achievable goals. Everyone was enthused and excited. This is sure to be an annual event.



Orange Grove Adult School, Freedom Singers

Children with Autism Avoid Common Pitfalls" helped families with Dr. Michael Chez, the Director of Pediatric Neurology at the Sutter Neuroscience Institute provided a seminar on "Autism, A Generation Aging into Adulthood" for families with adolescents and young adults.

Guests also enjoyed demonstrations by individuals with disabilities including: Tridynamic Adaptive Tricycles, the Freedom Singers from Orange Grove Adult School, One Athletics Dream Team, and Kovar's Satori Martial Arts Academy.

A Touch of Understanding has hosted this event at Bayside Church in Roseville for three years. We are looking forward to the 2012 AccessToCare Fair at Bayside Church on **April 21, 2012.**

### 2011 AccessToCare Fair

**"Every year, it's a must!"**



Energy and enthusiasm filled the room at the 2011 AccessToCare Fair on March 19<sup>th</sup>. More than 800 guests visited 70 exhibitor booths to learn about products and services that could enrich their lives. Individuals and families affected by disabilities learned about adaptive equipment, recreational opportunities, therapies, service animals, special needs estate planning, educational opportunities, and home modifications. Many guests received free repairs to their wheelchairs and walkers.

Two seminars were provided regarding autism. A panel discussion entitled "Helping Parents of newly diagnosed and school-age children.

## Our thanks to Our Program Sponsors/Donors

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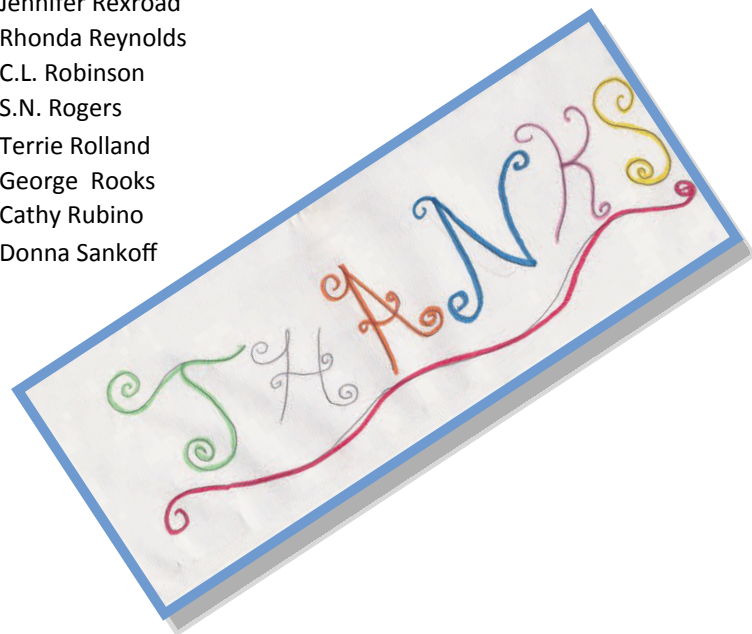
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**CORPORATE GIFTS**

Ability Center, Sacramento Site  
Advantage Dental Care  
Avalon Hearing Aid Centers  
Brain Balance Center  
Brian D. Wyatt, PC Law Office  
Classic Impressions, Landa and Bob DuBose  
COSTCO  
Down Syndrome Information Alliance  
Fuqua Physical Therapy, Inc.  
Give Something Back  
Honesty and Ease with IEPs, Laura Sullivan  
Jamba Juice  
Loomis Basin Brewery, Jag & Son, LLC  
McConnell Music Therapy Services  
Mechanics Bank, Roseville  
Merrill Lynch Special Needs Advisory Group  
Molina Healthcare of California  
My Friends, Specialized Day Care Services  
News 10, Gannett Foundation  
Nor-Cal Mobility, Inc.  
PRIDE Industries  
Private Ocean, LLC  
Raleys  
Renasas Electronics America Inc.  
Sacramento Van Conversions, Inc.  
Safeway  
Sam's Club  
Style Magazines  
Surewest Foundation  
Sutter Neuroscience Institute  
University of California, Davis, MIND Institute  
Wells Fargo Community Support

**GRANTS**

America's Tire, Discount Tire  
Gannett Foundation  
Jonas Family Foundation  
PASCO Foundation  
Placer Community Foundation  
River Cats Foundation  
Ronald McDonald House Charities, Northern CA  
Spiritual Life Center  
State Farm Youth Advisory Board

**SERVICE CLUBS**

Carmichael Emblem Club  
Kiwanis Club of Granite Bay  
Roseville Area Newcomers and Neighbors  
Roseville Host Lions Club  
Soroptimist International of Roseville

**IN-KIND**

American MedEquip, LLC.  
Autism Speaks  
Bayside Church  
Bill's Donuts  
Blind Ambition  
Classic Impressions  
Correct Direct  
Dandelion Magazine  
GoodSearch  
Hope Productions  
Nestle Waters North America  
Microsoft Unlimited Potential  
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Hirata  
Richard Marasso  
Dean Martens  
Darlene O'Brien  
Nayan Pradhan  
George Rooks  
Revonna Roper  
Christina Shaver  
Wendy Sipple  
Rosa Umbach  
Debra Wright

**IN MEMORY OF:**

Eddie Benedict  
Eleanor Cawley  
Lauris Ennis  
Betty Gundersen  
  
Paula and Warren Hummel  
Chad Mallo  
Wearn Perry

**IN HONOR OF:**

Pamela Gehrts  
Susan Beeman and Bobby  
Hollins  
Jack Kennedy  
Edward Ennis  
The Yayas and ATOU

**BY:**

Joan and Edward Benedict  
Edward Ennis  
Edward Ennis  
Joyce Beeman  
Cindy and Joe Elie  
Edward Ennis  
Lyn and John Erskine  
Margaret and John Hardwick  
Pequita and Richard Marasso  
Karen Mayer  
Tamara Ranta  
Ruby and John Rodina  
Grace and Erik Stavrand  
Rosa and Kenneth Umbach  
Jinnie Welsh  
Janice Wofford  
Laurie Hummel Schraml  
Ann and Art Mallo  
Karen Winnett

**BY:**

Dorothy Abercrombie  
Joyce Beeman  
  
Carolee Hamilton  
Grace and Erik Stavrand  
Nancy Wood

**Volunteers are our biggest asset!**  
Total hours volunteered = 10,016  
Total number of people who volunteered for the year = 208  
24 volunteers received the President's Volunteer Service Award  
contributing 100 hours or more—

Dan Adragna	Greg Elie	Paul Mitchell	Dave Seagraves
Hope Adrian	Ed Ennis	Armin Morales	Tukey Seagraves
Joyce Beeman	Pam Gehrts	Darlene O'Brien	Austin Taylor
Jackie Callahan	Becky Hensley	Karen Parsegian	Rosa Umbach
Mary Carter	Anna Hoban	Mike Penketh	Ashley Young
Mario DeLaTorre	Deanne Luchs	Christina Perez	Jenny Zimmer



### **Teacher Comments**

"This presentation is the perfect platform for further conversation about treating each other fairly, helping others, and walking a day in someone else's shoes." *Third grade teacher*

"Participating in the program through the years has helped increase my understanding and comfort level when it comes to handling situations with students who have a disability. This year, I was completely confident when I found out a student with prosthetic legs would be in my classroom. I relied on my 'training' through the years and was able to explain to the class that his legs were his 'tools.' As a teacher who has participated in the program for seven years, I'm able to integrate what I've learned in the classroom even before ATOU comes to our school." *Third grade teacher*

"A Touch of Understanding provides a sense of acceptance for my own challenged students. An acceptance of themselves, as not being so different, which is a difficult mountain to climb. The common characteristics of all people are emphasized and it brings a sense of relief and community acceptance to a class full of students that have each faced exclusion to some extent. The education that A Touch of Understanding brings to students is an essential understanding beyond enrichment with an emphasis on building the best community we can." *Special education teacher*

### **Administrator Comments**

"I am convinced A Touch of Understanding is one of the most effective programs to build student acceptance of people with disabilities." *Elementary School Principal*

"A Touch of Understanding opened dialogue among the students, answered uneasy questions for students, and ultimately helped break social barriers between typically developing students and disabled students." *Placer County Superintendent of Schools*

"This humanistic presentation has had an immeasurable impact on our school community. Students gain an important connection to people with disabilities by hearing about their challenges, hopes and dreams. It is very common for parents to approach me days after the presentation to tell me how A Touch of Understanding opened up dialogue in their homes. Most importantly, our students come to realize that the disability does not define the person." *Elementary School Principal*

### **Parents' Comments**

"I want to tell you, my child got in the car that day, and talked non-stop all the way home about that assembly. I was fascinated by how much attention he obviously paid to it. He was very interested about everything he saw and heard. The information card (about autism) hit home with me that day." *Mother of a son with autism*

"The strength of the program lies in its ability to reach both inside and outside the walls of the school to make the community a much better one in which to live. A Touch of Understanding delivers a program with both an educational value and more importantly, a societal value that pays dividends to our community that are both short and long term. Creating a culture of acceptance and understanding combined with the willingness to assist those who are not always able to assist themselves, is society's most admirable trait. It is a trait that A Touch of Understanding faithfully delivers." *Father of a son with autism*

"I wanted to relay a little of the feedback that I've received from random parents stopping me in the halls, at the soccer field and even in the Safeway parking lot. All of these parents have gushed on about how their child has not been able to stop talking about the program. Not only sharing the details about the stations and what they learned by also reflecting on how people with disabilities must feel. They also said that their children came home with so many important questions and a desire to discuss all of it. I think the program certainly met and exceeded its goal of building awareness." *Mother of a fourth-grade student*

"My children speak more passionately about this program than anything else all year." *Mother of elementary school children*

"My daughter was impressed by the people's accomplishments and feels encouraged to do the same." *Mother of a third-grade student*

### **ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. Comments**

"ATOU means independence, freedom to be around your peers without worrying are they going to judge you. I can relax in my own skin and be myself."--*Hope Adrian, 7th grade girl, who has cerebral palsy*

"ATOU brings out the respect kids can have for other people and themselves. I can stand up for myself. I feel a lot more respect for myself."—*Jack Kennedy, 7th grade boy, who was born with only one hand*

"ATOU reminds me of my accomplishments and it makes me feel proud of myself. I feel a lot of love, encouragement and support from the other volunteers. The other speakers have accomplished lots of things, and they have even more disabilities than I have, therefore, it makes me feel like I can do anything."—*Paige Whitefield, 15-year-old girl, who suffered a stroke at birth*

# 4495 Students in 2010-2011

4495 students in the following schools participated in the ATOU Workshop during the 2010-2011 School Year

## Calaveras County

Avery Middle Avery  
Hazel Fischer Elementary Arnold

## El Dorado County

El Dorado High Placerville

## Marin County

Edna Maguire Elementary Mill Valley

## Placer County

Breen Elementary Rocklin  
Cathryn Gates Elementary Roseville  
Cirby Elementary Roseville  
Cobblestone Elementary Rocklin  
Crestmont Elementary Roseville  
Coyote Ridge Elementary Roseville  
Dry Creek Elementary Roseville  
Excelsior Elementary Roseville  
Greenhills Elementary Granite Bay  
Heritage Oak Elementary Roseville  
Loomis Charter Loomis  
Maidu Elementary Roseville  
Oakhills Elementary Granite Bay  
Ridgeview Elementary Granite Bay  
Sargeant Elementary Roseville  
St. Rose Roseville  
Stoneridge Elementary Roseville  
Twelve Bridges Elementary Lincoln  
Twin Oaks Elementary Rocklin  
Valley View Elementary Rocklin  
Vencil Brown Elementary Roseville

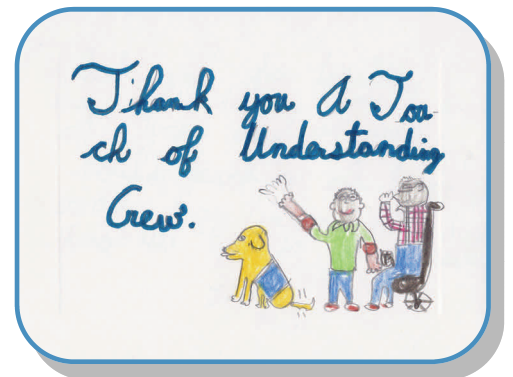


## Sacramento County

Bowling Green Elementary Sacramento  
Caleb Greenwood Elementary Sacramento  
David Lubin Elementary Sacramento  
Dillard Elementary Wilton  
Gold River Discovery Center Gold River  
Hiram Johnson High Sacramento  
Mariemont Elementary Sacramento  
Natomas Park Elementary Sacramento  
Oakview Community Orangevale  
Olive Grove Elementary Antelope  
Sierra Oaks Elementary Sacramento  
St. Johns Notre Dame Folsom

## Solano County

Tremont Elementary Dixon



## Students' Comments

"The most important thing I learned is to always be nice to people no matter how they look from the outside because we all have heart."

"It doesn't matter if a person has a disability, I will still be friends with them."

"I learned to understand a person before judging them."

"The most important thing I learned is that people with disabilities get hurt feelings just like me."

"The most important thing I learned is not to tease or be a bully to people with a disability."

"I know that a person with autism might not understand facial expressions and might need help."

"It would be easier to make friends now because I've had hands-on insight to how they live with a disability. The most important thing I learned was to never be afraid of a person with a disability and never be scared to say 'Hello!'"

"The most important thing I learned is never to give up on yourself. Always have someone around to support you."

"The most important thing I learned was that if you can take a first and second step, you can take the last step."

## Financial Statements

### Statement of Income

July 2010-June 2011

<b>INCOME</b>	
Corporate Donations	254
Fundraising	20,629
Contributions Income	18,659
Government Grant	33,700
Grants	42,927
United Way Contributions	1,660
Program Fees	47,950
Interest	<u>247</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>166,026</b>

<b>EXPENSE</b>	
Promotion	416
Copy/Duplication/Printing	4,911
Dues and Subscriptions	148
Equipment/Furniture	300
Filing Fees—Business Taxes	60
Insurance	5,685
License and Permits	40
Payroll	99,634
Postage and Delivery	554
Professional Fees	16,061
Rent	13,497
Supplies	5,936
Telephone	5,016
Travel & Meals	6,344
Workshops/Seminars/Membership	693
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b><u>159,263</u></b>

Net Ordinary Income	<u>6,763</u>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b><u>6,763</u></b>

### Balance Sheet

As of June 30, 2011

<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Cash Clearing	1,531
Bank of America	<u>71,876</u>
Total Checking/Savings	73,407
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable, Program	<u>9,052</u>
Total Accounts Receivable	9,052

**TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS** **82,459**

Fixed Assets	
Durango	24,077
Equipment Trailer	3,429
Accumulated Depreciation	-25,104
Furniture/Equipment	<u>10,700</u>
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b><u>13,101</u></b>

**TOTAL ASSETS** **95,600**

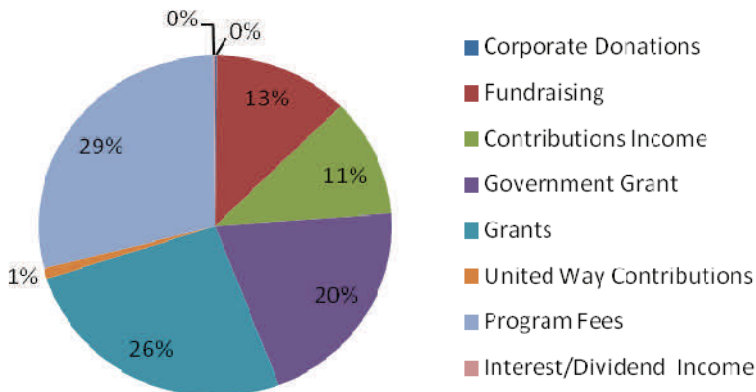
#### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Payroll Liabilities	<u>2,759</u>
Total Current Liabilities	2,759

Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	86,037
Net Income	<u>6,763</u>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b><u>92,800</u></b>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY** **95,600**

### INCOME



### EXPENSE

