

A Touch of Understanding®, Inc.

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www.TouchOfUnderstanding.org



Report of Activities 7/1/13-6/30/14

Kindness and the next generation...

"I am writing to express my gratitude to A Touch of Understanding for their amazing program. It is a unique program that truly educates students to help



them better understand and respect individuals with disabilities. I went through the program as a student many years ago, and now get to watch my students go through the program as the principal of Stoneridge Elementary School.

As a student, I clearly remember walking with a white mobility cane

and using a wheelchair for the first time in my life at Franklin Elementary school in Loomis. It helped change my attitude from one of judgment to one of understanding and acceptance.

I went through the program as a student many years ago, and now get to watch my students go through the program as the principal of Stoneridge Elementary School.

As a principal, I was lucky enough to come to an elementary school that already had ATOU come out every year for our 3rd grade students. To see it now from an adult's perspective gives me an ever greater appreciation for what ATOU can do to change our students' awareness and respect for others. I love watching our students listen to stories from the presenters. You can see them learning and changing their attitudes right in front of your eyes.

I would recommend ATOU to any and every school. This program does an outstanding job of giving



students a unique experience by having individuals with disabilities share their stories, educating students and also letting students experience for a brief time what it is like to have some of those disabilities. I greatly appreciate the fact that every single student who comes through our school will get to see this program and the presentations when they are in third grade. Next year my daughter will be a 3rd grader here at Stoneridge, and I can't wait for her to go through the program just like I did almost twenty years ago.

With many thanks for all you do," Brandon K. Blom



Knowledge = Understanding → Empathy + Respect. Open Minds = Open Hearts.



Aunt Betty's lap robe has been shared with more than 68,000 students

I recently shared with a group of friends why I started ATOU. In reflecting back those many years, I realized one powerful motivation for starting the program remains the motivation for continuing it to this day. I distinctly remember an incident when I was five years old. I unintentionally mistreated my Aunt Betty. who had intellectual disabilities. inadvertently made her cry. because I didn't understand her challenges. The incident caused my mother to explain

Aunt Betty's challenges to me. With this new knowledge, I was able to interact with her in positive ways. Aunt Betty and I shared a close relationship until she passed away three years ago. She will always be one of the most influential individuals in my life. Simply put, the reason I mistreated her was that I did not have the knowledge necessary to interact with her in a positive way. Had my mother not educated me, I might have missed out on the loving relationship we shared.

Many of our children experience a similar disadvantage. Without A Touch of Understanding to educate them about the challenges of their disabled peers, these typically-developing students are expected to interact appropriately with schoolmates with disabilities. They are expected to understand the issues these students deal with and interact positively with them. Unfortunately, they do not have sufficient knowledge to do so. This is unfair to the typically-developing children and can be devastating to their peers with disabilities. Everyone loses.

Thankfully, thousands of schoolchildren experience A Touch of Understanding's character-building, disability-awareness workshops each year. Each child hears individuals who have disabilities tell of their challenges and the ways they meet them. Once the students understand the challenges, they move past the discomfort of the unknown and eagerly interact with our volunteers. They realize a disability is only one characteristic of a person; it doesn't define them. During the workshop students relate their own strengths and challenges. They begin to accept and appreciate their

own differences. They realize their discomfort with others who seem different is an unnecessary and limiting burden.

During the 2013-2014 school year, 7,465 students participated in ATOU's workshops. Just think of it 7,465 young minds exposed to the fact that we are all different and these differences are not to be feared, but to be celebrated! This realization is freeing, allowing them to befriend more children. Their new relationships will enrich their lives as well as the lives of their new friends.

7,465 young minds were exposed to the fact that we are all different and these differences are not to be feared, but to be celebrated!

In addition to the growth in the number of students experiencing the school workshop, our Youth F.O.R.C.E. ("Friends Offering Respect ~ Creating Empowerment") grew to 180 registered members, both with and without disabilities. This group truly lives out the mission of full inclusion. Members enjoy events each month which are planned and implemented by the Core Group, a leadership group of young people which meets monthly.

The Youth F.O.R.C.E. is expanding to our local high school campuses, providing new leadership at these schools. Our first ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. High School Club was formed at Granite Bay High School in September 2013 and is strong and growing. These students have taken personal responsibility to bring the message of full inclusion of all students to their campus.

Another exciting group that began this past year is our Mom's Chat Group. Mothers of children with special needs meet monthly at the ATOU office to share information, resources, challenges, and victories and to support one another with understanding and friendship.

This past year was one of energy and growth for ATOU. We reached thousands of children and provided them with the necessary information to interact positively with one another, creating more accepting environments on school campuses and in our communities. I'm confident this year will show even more growth in the number of lives we touch. We welcome and invite you to be involved in any of our programs. Please call our office for more information or to arrange a visit.

Leslie J. DeDora

Members of the ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. and High School Clubs... "Making a difference and having fun while doing it."

Youth F.O.R.C.E. events:

- Teddy Bear Picnic
- California State Fair
- Creation of Bully Prevention Video
- Lazer Craze
- Volunteer Appreciation Picnic
- Scavenger Hunt/Campfire Night
- Harvest Festival
- Movie Night
- Theatre Production of the Wizard of Oz
- Minute to Win It Challenge Night
- Game Night
- Valentine's Day Party/Dance
- Science Exploration Night
- Lego Night
- Lake Day
- Holiday Party and ATOU Showcase of Talent and Interest



Members of the ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. relaxing after one of the Core Committee meetings

ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E Comments:

Youth Member:

Amberlynn McLoed, a 19 year old girl with cerebral palsy who recently moved to Reno: "My life would not have been the same without you guys! ATOU has taught me so much. I talk about you all the time. Wherever I go you are in my heart! Miss you lots! ATOU Rocks!"

Parents of Youth F.O.R.C.E. members who have disabilities:

Shirley Lewis, 20 year-old Brandon's mom:

"Thank you again for inviting Brandon to participate in the Showcase of Talent. What an amazing experience that was for him and his family! As you know, many of these amazing young people

have so much to contribute to society yet there are so little avenues available where they can do so. This showcase is exactly what is needed to help individuals and families shine in their special way. We so appreciate all the hard work that you do and hope you will share with the many sponsors how much their support is both valued and necessary."

Karen Kampmann, 9 year-old Conner's mom:

"My son has trouble making friends and has awkward social behavior. He enjoys coming to the Youth F.O.R.C.E. activities where he is accepted and makes friends. The wow moment was how our family and child were greeted with such kindness and respect at our first meeting. The Youth F.O.R.C.E. is so accepting of Conner's quirkiness."

Amy Wenzel, 13 year-old Andrew's mom:

"[ATOU is] a place for my family to fit in and not be left out of the fun activities that other families do. No one stares at us or treats us as different. It is the only organization like this in our area. We have so much love and acceptance in this group. [His favorite time was] the day at the lake when Andrew got to ride a paddle boat with a buddy instead of with Mom or Dad. He was SO HAPPY!"

ATOU is improving the climate on school campuses in the Sacramento Region and beyond...

Calaveras County

Vallecito Union School District

El Dorado County

El Dorado Codiny
Buckeye Union School District
El Dorado Union High School District
Placerville Union School District
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Nevada County

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Placer County

Colfax Elementary School District
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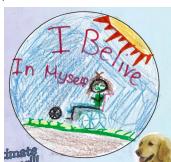
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Roseville Firefighters #1592



Student's Artwork

Student Survey Responses (24% response rate)

- 94.5% said it would be easier to make friends with someone with a disability.
- 95.85% said they will be more comfortable with someone with a disability after going through the workshop.
- 99.38% said they learned more about the tools that people with disabilities use.

"On Friday, March 28th I experienced something that changed me forever. Not only my mind, but my way of thought. To me, and I believe to a lot of other people, it was more than an assembly, it was an inspiration. All in all, now I understand what people with disabilities go through. Now, before anybody looks at someone with a disability, they should take the time to understand. I know I will, because now I understand, and now and forever, I choose to be kind!"

"I learned that everybody's different, and don't judge people by their looks, because there are so many people in this world that are so nice and have such a kind personality, so if you don't respect them because they look different then you don't understand one of the most important things in life."

"I gained a lot from learning about autistic people and kids with disabilities. It showed me how to accept different people. All people no matter how they look or how they learn or how they talk, deserve to be treated kind. I enjoyed today and think all of the people we met are very brave."

"I know this guy who is always being teased. I will be a good friend to this guy and always be there for him. I learned to not be a bully, but to be kind."

"Before A Touch of Understanding I was scared of people with a disability. Now I understand them."

"This program gave me a clearer understanding of what everyday life is like for a person with disabilities. I am more empathetic."

"Even though you have a disability you can still live life to the fullest and be happy. I also learned that you should never give up."

Volunteer Comments:

Darlene O'Brien, volunteer and board member:

"ATOU came along at a time in my life when my world had been turned upside down and sideways. What ATOU does for its speakers is to give us the opportunity to talk about what is going on in our lives as it pertains to our disability, and for many of us, this is a new development that we have to get used to. Talking to the kids about my blindness helped me to explain it to myself. I think

this is true for a lot of us. When I told the kids about losing my sight and about the things I do and the tools I use to accomplish my goals, I got the chance to tell myself that I did indeed have all that I needed to accomplish my goals. ATOU's vision to expand the lives and hearts of the children in our schools has enabled lots of folks like me to find our own voices as we do our best to explain it to someone else."

Bryon Chapman:

"Each workshop is as exciting and rewarding as the last with the little and not so little miracles that take place at every event. I am truly Blessed, there is no doubt about it! Life is good and will always remain so until the day of my passing and then I will know the rest of the answer of Why Me God, Why Me and Thank God for ATOU!"

Volunteers served nearly 10,000 hours for ATOU! 27 volunteers received the President's Volunteer Service Award contributing 100 hours or more—

George Arrant Erik Greenan Mandy Boyd Doris Hernandez-Morales Jackie Callahan Amanda Hussa Byron Chapman Felice Hussa Jeanne Culhane Greg Hussa Suzie Dobbs Dwight Lunkley JDD Doran Darlene O'Brien Kody Fernandez Jill Mason Pam Gehrts Andrew Payne

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CC Stevens
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Anna von Wendorff



Anna von Wendorff

2013-2014 Recipient of the Ed Ennis Award

Anna served as president of the ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. and member of the ATOU Board of Directors for two years. In 2013 she founded the first high school ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. Club on the Granite Bay High School campus. Anna graduated valedictorian in June 2013 and is now attending Stanford University.

Teacher Survey Responses (34% response rate)

- 90.3% reported improved peer interactions following the workshop.
- 96% reported increased student awareness/sensitivity to others.
- 100% consider the ATOU workshop to be a valuable experience to improve respectful relationships and communication.

Susan Rubert, Teacher, Hiram Johnson High School:

"The students are still abuzz with excitement about everything they saw and learned. Several students were inspired to look into ways that they can be allies to the disabled/other-wise abled community. They were so glad to have the experience and to get to meet all of you."

Gail Van Adelsberg, Principal, Tam Valley Elementary School, Mill Valley:

"Each year you gracefully enter Tam Valley School and create a whirlwind of awareness, knowledge, empathy and thoughtfulness. You are masterful at relating to nine and ten year olds, modeling respect, and opening their eyes in a new way. We just adore you and your program and LOVE having you each year."

Michelle Flowers, Brighton School, Folsom:

"I have gotten nothing but positive feedback from children and their parents. I am also spreading the word to other schools since I see such value in ANY opportunity to teach and encourage kindness."

Parent Survey Responses (20% response rate)

- 99.8% feel the ATOU experience will help their child accept and include individuals with disabilities in their life.
- 99.39% anticipate the workshop leaving a lasting positive impression on their child.

"So glad you are doing this! Our daughter has CP and kids need to understand."

"[My daughter] uses a walker so is used to handicapped people but thought it was neat to meet adults who had found different ways to adapt."

"With every exposure to folks with disabilities, Megan becomes more knowledgeable, compassionate, and accepting. This program has been the most positive experience yet."

"I am thrilled to see this education in school. Though well taught at home, it is great to know a similar message is taught among her peers."

"We have not been exposed. He told us he was nervous and had a stomach ache before he met everyone and then after it was the best assembly he has ever been to."

"He is still talking about it – and sharing stories with my older son who took the course two years ago. I see the impact it had on him. I think it helped to open his eyes. Very impactful."

"My older daughter was at an ATOU seminar at Edna and it changed her perspective and attitude towards disabled people. Despite

having a disability to overcome, they are the same as everyone else. I expect my younger daughter to have the same lasting impression."

Sponsor Comment:

Becky Bell, Client Relationship Manager, River City Bank:

"I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoyed this morning. I was able to stay for all three speakers, all of whom are awesome. I have to tell you that had I not attended, I would not have been able to fully understand what ATOU does. I am certain that there is an impact on the students hearing what is said and the "hands on" interaction. Thank you for all you do — I was blessed."



Financial Statements

Statement of Income

July 2013-June 2014

Filing Fees - Business Taxes

Licenses and Permits

Postage and Delivery

Payroll Expenses

Professional Fees

Service Charges

Insurance

Rent

Balance Sheet

As of June 30, 2014

INCOME			ASSETS	
	Corporate Donations	1,316.40	Current Assets	
	Fundraising	27,745.85	Total Checking/Savings	148,246.73
	Contributions	26,837.15	Total Current Assets	148,246.73
	Government Grant	32,254.00	Total Fixed Assets	4,308.90
	Grants	43,721.62	TOTAL ASSETS	152,555.63
	United Way Contributions	1,043.65		152,555.05
	Program Fees	86,001.00	LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
	Interest/Dividend	160.03	Total Current Liabilities	4,084.16
TOTAL INCOME		219,079.70	Equity	
EXPENSE			Unrestricted Net Assets	194,718.18
	Youth Force Program	4,785.01	Net Income	-46,246.71
	Advertising / Promotion	18.26	Total Equity	148,471.47
	Automobile Expense	2,243.11	TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	152,555.63
	Books & Publications	63.04		
	Copy/Duplication/Printing	18,697.26		
	Depreciation	191.10		
	Equipment / Furniture	307.95		

85.00

22.00

6,418.56

182,031.09

1,294.04

9,882.73

14,144.00 243.84

8,672.29







