



# A Touch of Understanding<sup>®</sup>, Inc.

5280 Stirling Street, Suite 102, Granite Bay, California 95746  
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[www.TouchOfUnderstanding.org](http://www.TouchOfUnderstanding.org)



## Report of Activities 7/1/14-6/30/15

### Determination and achievement, by Abby Carlson



Abby in fifth grade

“One of the best memories I have from elementary school is when I was in the third grade and ATOU presented for my class at Cosumnes River Elementary School. During their presentation there was a chance for some of us to share. I stood up and shared the fact that I had a prosthetic leg and that it did not stop me

able to experience not only the ATOU workshop, but I felt it was important to share my own story and experiences I have had with a disability. The message I always try to share with people is that people with disabilities just want to be treated the same and that people need to understand that individuals with disabilities can do everything everyone else can do, just a little differently.

I shared how I was not only their president, but a cheerleader for the high school, a livestock showman, and also shared my plans to attend CSU Fresno in the fall. Though my disability can make activities harder, I do not let it stop me from doing anything.

After the program at my high school, I traveled with the ATOU team to elementary schools to share my story of purpose, determination and achievement.

I have now completed my first year of college and am continuing on my plan of being an agriculture lobbyist.

I cannot thank ATOU enough, not only for bringing their program to my schools but also for continuing to share their message with people all over the Sacramento area.”

from doing all the things I loved doing, like showing livestock, participating in Girl Scouts, and working on my family's farm.

***“I remembered the impact ATOU had on me and my class in elementary school and I wanted my fellow FFA members to experience an organization that had such a strong message and purpose”.***

Fast forward 8 years. I had no contact with ATOU but I had not forgotten my experience with them. I contacted them asking to bring ATOU to my high school for one of our monthly Future Farmers of America (FFA) meetings, as I was now serving as our chapter president. I remembered the impact ATOU had on me and my class in elementary school and I wanted my fellow FFA members to experience an organization that had such a strong message and purpose.

The night that ATOU brought their program to Elk Grove High School, about 200 FFA members were



Abby in High School

# 9,146 Students!

The past fiscal year flew by! ATOU provided **214 three hour workshops** to **9,146 students** in **104 schools in 8 counties** during the 2014-2015 school year. **22** were first time schools! This brings the total number of students to **74,245** from when we incorporated in 1996 through May 2015. Please take time to read the student, teacher and parent comments that show the powerful impact of our workshop.

In addition to our workshop for schoolchildren, our team provided our “Spirit of Inclusion” workshops for adults to teachers, administrators, business owners and childcare professionals.

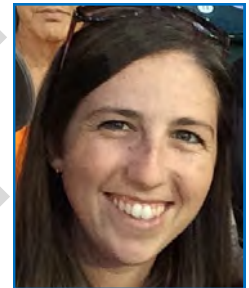
Our young people have been busy with the Youth F.O.R.C.E. activities as well as the Granite Bay High School ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. Club. Our Mom’s Chat Group met monthly providing a safe place for moms of children with disabilities to share their challenges, victories, resources, tears and laughter.



**Douglas Newton**  
*Director of  
Development*

To meet the ever-increasing demand for our programs, we added two new staff members. Douglas Newton came on as our Director of Development. He works with individuals and businesses to create partnerships extending the reach of our programs.

Meghan Adamski joined us as our Youth F.O.R.C.E. Coordinator. Our past Youth F.O.R.C.E. Coordinator, Susie Glover, who also served as Executive Assistant, has retired as a staff member, joined our Board of Directors and continues to be an active workshop and office volunteer.



**Meghan Adamski**  
*Youth F.O.R.C.E.  
Coordinator*

We have a new mission-related program to create a sustainable source of revenue. The ATOU Cares website, [www.ATOUcares.org](http://www.ATOUcares.org), is an online hub for individuals and families affected by disabilities in Sacramento, Placer, and Nevada Counties.

**CARES**— **C**ommunity **A**ccess **R**esources **E**ducation & **S**ervices.

Please enjoy this report of the many activities that have taken place thanks to YOUR generous support.

With gratitude,

Executive Director

## ATOUCares Board of Directors:

- John Adams
- John DeLury
- David Dominguez
- Susie Glover
- Stanford Hirata
- John Kennedy
- Darlene O'Brien
- Bob Schultz
- Michael Wilson

## Youth Representative:

Sara-Kate Pirnik



## ATOUCares.org

*ATOUCares.org serves as a news and information hub that offers a broad range of resources, services and connections for all who seek to foster dignity and inclusion for people with disabilities.*

- Community
- Access
- Resources
- Education
- Services

A new home on the internet for all things related to disability.

Call (916) 791-4146 or email [DNewton@touchofunderstanding.org](mailto:DNewton@touchofunderstanding.org) for information on

# The ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. and High School Clubs...

## "Making a difference and having fun while doing it."



This past year the [ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E.](#) (*F*riends *O*ffering *R*espect – *C*reating *E*mpowerment) has been growing! We have been busy with our monthly events with some returning favorites from the year before, and some new, big hits, such as Disney Night in April. In addition to large monthly events, we also had monthly Core Group meetings. The Core Group is made up of youth, both with and without disabilities, who plan the events. Each event welcomes new and returning faces and provides a space where all get to be themselves, without fear of judgement. Parents say events give their child an opportunity to form friendships, try new things, and gain lifelong skills.

The events included:

- July – State Fair and White Water Rafting
- August – Movie Night on the Lawn
- September – Glamping (Glamorous Camping)
- October – Halloween Party
- November – Roseville Holiday Parade
- December – Showcase of Talents and Interests
- January – Art With Friends
- February – Valentines Dance
- March – St. Patrick's Party
- April – Disney Night
- May – Science Night
- June – Lake Day



*Making princess crowns during our fun Disney Night*

Our ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E continued to expand its Granite Bay High School Club. This club meets every other week, and helps the ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E with each of their events. They provide support for planning and decorations, as well as serving as buddies at each event.



*Having fun at an ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. event.*



*2015 Youth Impact Award*

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

**Calaveras County**  
Vallecito Union School District

**El Dorado County**  
Buckeye Union School District  
El Dorado Union High School District  
Rescue Union School District

**Nevada County**  
Pleasant Ridge School District  
Union Hill School District

**Marin County**  
Mill Valley School District

**Placer County**  
Colfax Elementary School District  
Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District  
Eureka Union School District  
Loomis Union School District  
Newcastle Unified School District  
Placer County Office of Education  
Rocklin Unified School District  
Roseville City School District  
Roseville Joint Union High School District  
Western Placer Unified School District

**Solano County**  
Dixon Unified School District

**Sacramento County**  
Center Joint Unified School District  
Dry Creek Joint Unified School District  
Elk Grove Unified School District  
Folsom-Cordova Unified School District  
Natomas Unified School District  
River Delta Unified School District  
Sacramento City Unified School District  
San Juan Unified School District  
Twin Rivers Unified School District

**Yolo County**  
Davis Joint Unified School District

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### **Student Survey Responses & Comments:**

- 95.1% said they will be more comfortable with someone with a disability after going through the ATOU workshop.
- 92.8% said it would be easier to make friends with someone with a disability.
- 99.0% said they learned more about the tools that people with disabilities use.

*"Before ATOU came, people were making fun of people with disabilities. After the ATOU came and told us about disabilities, people stopped making fun of others."* **Salvina, 4th grade**

*"In doing A Touch of Understanding, I learned they [individuals with disabilities] can still do everything just differently than other people. Being different is not a bad thing at all. Before I did A Touch of Understanding, I was scared to see people with disabilities, but after I realized they weren't any different than before they got disabled. I never knew that people who are disabled are always the same spirit inside. I now feel empathy for people with disabilities."* **Audrey, 6th grade**

*"I had a new experience today! Seeing and meeting disabled people. It was kind of different for me to see the missing body parts. I always stared at disabled people and just wanted to know how, what, when and where. But when they looked at me I ran. But after today, when I was going home, I saw a disabled person. This time, instead of staring, I yelled "Hello!" and he said "Hi!" back. ATOU was the best program to overcome my habit of staring at normal humans. Nothing is wrong with disabled people and instead of staring just say "Hi!"* **Hunter, 4th grade**

*"I will be able to understand others with these disabilities more than I did before. What I'm most grateful for is that you guys taught me about autism. I have a 13 year-old sister named Regan and she has autism. All this time, I haven't known what to think of it. I've looked it up and tried to see what abilities she has and her future, if she could live on her own when older, drive a car. You guys are the ones that taught me a lot about her. I have never treated her different than a regular person, but now her past activities make sense to me. Now I know what she is going through. I thank you guys for teaching me that!"* **Charlie, 10th grade**

*"Your program really impacted everyone in this class. I really mean it. I have always worked with special needs kids, but never fully had an understanding of how it really felt to live that way. Thank you for giving me this great experience that I will never forget. I loved all the activities and getting to know the speakers on a personal level. This program truly and genuinely touched my life."* **Sierra, 10th grade**

*"You have truly inspired me to help more with my community and talk to more people with disabilities. It is an understatement to say you inspired me; you have changed my whole perspective."* **Megan, 10th grade**

### **Teacher Survey Responses & Comments:**

- 96.2% reported improved peer interactions following the ATOU workshop.
- 93.6% reported increased student awareness/sensitivity to others.
- 100% consider the ATOU workshop to be a valuable experience to improve respectful relationships and communication.

*"A Touch of Understanding has been a profoundly powerful experience for our fourth graders for many years. Not only does it bring awareness to disabilities but, more importantly, takes away the negative stigma associated with them. The students are fascinated by how each presenter faced difficulties and how they approached their "new" lives with such positivity and motivation. Students are so impacted by the speakers from the program that they make connections with their stories throughout the year. They share personal stories about people they know who face challenges due to their disabilities and brainstorm how children and adults can positively support disabled individuals. They feel like they have made some new friends and bring up their names during literature or current events discussions. The program does a beautiful job of putting the challenges faced by the speakers in a context that is accessible to nine- and ten-year olds."* **Gail van Adelsberg, Principal, Aimee DeCelles, Kate Kellman, and Ann Marie Padilla, Teachers, at Tamalpais Valley Elementary School in Mill Valley**

*"It is a privilege to support this program and your team always makes a tremendous impact on the students. This year we have a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student who suffered significant injuries in a catastrophic accident. He will be paying us a visit in his wheelchair now he has been released from hospital, so the students who participated in ATOU this year will have an immediate chance to put into practice what they have learned. Never think your program doesn't make a difference."* **Richard Dixon, Principal at David Lubin Elementary School in Sacramento**

**Parent Survey Responses & Comment:**

- 99.4% feel the ATOU experience will help their child accept and include individuals with disabilities in their life.
- 97.7% anticipate the workshop leaving a lasting positive impression on their child.
- 94.4% said their child was eager to share about the ATOU experience.

*“As a parent of a differently abled little man, and a trainer of care providers for our individuals, I wanted to tell you how much this experience impacted me on multiple levels. I left your setting with a deeper understanding of the way disabilities are viewed in the community, as well as a refreshed commitment to heighten awareness at every turn for my child and every other child who has such amazing differences. I appreciated the perspectives provided by your speakers, and the clear direction of your volunteers. Their dedication is inspiring, and I am so thankful that your organization is out there to promote learning and understanding to children in our communities who so desperately need this kind of direction. When I get home, I am going to squeeze my little man until he can’t take it (which shouldn’t take long lol), and remind myself every day of the things I learned at the hands of your organization.”*

**Katherine Luna, The Mentor Network**

**Sponsor Comments:**

*“The lessons taught by A Touch of Understanding have an immediate and lifelong impact on students who participate in their assemblies. Community 1<sup>st</sup> Bank is honored to support such a positive and influential message.”*

**Carol Garcia, Senior VP of Community 1<sup>st</sup> Bank and Mayor of City of Roseville**

*“The disability awareness training A Touch of Understanding provides, educates and sensitizes people of all ages to the challenges associated with disabilities. ATOU’s program reinforces the necessity of treating everyone we meet with respect, regardless of the challenges they face. Kovar’s is honored to be a friend and partner of A Touch of Understanding.”*

**Dave Chamberlin, CEO of Kovar’s Satori Academy**

**“Spirit of Inclusion” Workshop for Adults Comments:**

*“Thank you so much for your time and incredible impact through A Touch of Understanding presentation and application, for the Leadership Sacramento class! We received very positive feedback, in that the interactive stations were “very informative.” I, myself, was very touched by it all and have a new perspective and understanding. I can’t stop talking about it! I have also attached an overall review, for which the class members ranked the activities. A Touch of Understanding ranked one of the highest, which is telling of how great it was!”* Missy McDougall, Event Manager, Leadership Sacramento, Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce

**Volunteer Comments & Awards:**



**Chris Roe, ATOU volunteer with Arthrogryposis, causing lack of development of his muscles and joints:**

“At the age of 27, I was given the opportunity to meet this amazing group, A Touch of Understanding, and was asked to join their team. This opportunity has changed my life. I’m so excited for the future and to see what’s to come with this amazing group. It is an honor to be involved in such a valuable and worthwhile cause to help give back to the next generation with the right education to live their lives.”

**2015 Daily Points of Light Award**

Our volunteers served thousands of hours for ATOU!  
36 volunteers received the President’s Volunteer Service Award  
(50+ hours/youth, 100+ hours/adult):

George Arrant	Qamdhyn Hale	Sara-Kate Pirnik
Mandy Boyd	Doris Hernandez-Morales	Sandy Puleo
Peggy Cain	Stanford Hirata	Kiersten Schmidt
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Jeanne Culhane	Ivy Liu	Chris Smazenko
Nathaniel Daniel	Dwight Lunkley	CC Stevens
Suzie Dobbs	Jill Mason	Anjali Suthahar
JDD Doran-Jammer	Kim Nash	Rosa Umbach
Pam Gehrts	Darlene O’Brien	Cameron Yee
Erik Greenan	Karen Parsegian	Jenny Zimmer



**2014-2015 Ed Ennis Award Recipient**

**Susie Glover** was awarded this prestigious award in honor of her years of dedicated service to ATOU.

## Financial Statements

### Statement of Income

July 2014-June 2015

#### INCOME

Lynn Marie Scholarship Fund	3,090.00
Corporate Donations	2,824.21
Fundraising	41,618.23
Contributions Income	56,844.67
Government Grant	11,000.00
Grants	64,648.07
United Way Contributions	842.61
Miscellaneous Income	25.00
Program Fees	126,574.00
Interest/Dividend Income	118.63

**TOTAL INCOME** 307,585.42

#### EXPENSE

Youth Force Program	5,206.84
Automobile Expense	1,020.92
Books & Publications	77.89
Copy/Duplication/Printing	15,585.07
Depreciation	191.10
Dues and Subscriptions	2,077.89
Equipment / Furniture	1,007.80
Filing Fees - Business Taxes	80.00
Insurance	9,966.68
Licenses and Permits	22.00
Payroll Expenses	215,759.83
Postage and Delivery	2,099.17
Professional Fees	9,773.95
Rent	14,258.00
Service Charges	273.22
Supplies	7,301.82
Telephone	5,032.21
Travel & Meals	6,314.91
Workshops/Membership	1,679.76

**TOTAL EXPENSE** 297,729.06

**NET INCOME** 9,856.36

### Balance Sheet

As of June 30, 2015

#### ASSETS

Current Assets	
Total Checking/Savings	154,010.00
Total Accounts Receivable	4,700.00

**Total Current Assets** 158,710.00

Total Fixed Assets 4,118.00

**TOTAL ASSETS** 162,828.00

#### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Total Current Liabilities 4,500.00

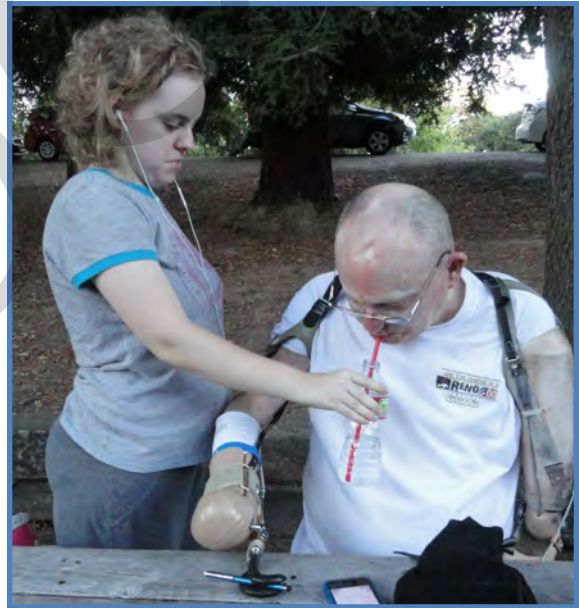
Equity

Unrestricted Net Assets 148,471.00

Net Income 9,856.00

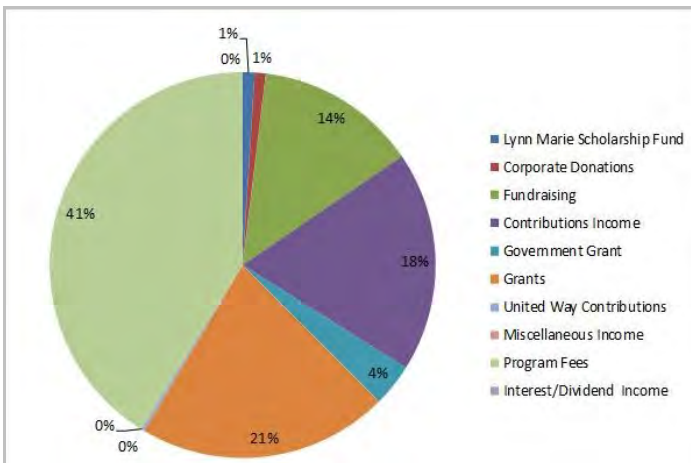
Total Equity 158,328.00

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY** 162,828.00



*ATOUs produces lifelong friendships.*

**2014-2015 SOURCES OF INCOME**



**1998-2015 GROWTH CHART**

