Jan. 26, 2015

I would like to offer my endorsement of AHA! Attitude. Harmony. Achievement.
As a long-time supporter and funder of AHA! I can say without reservation that this
organization is transformational in building confidence, empathy and understanding in youth
through a vibrant arts-centered, multi-cultural curriculum.
AHA! has sensitively woven colorful traditions from around the world into spirited, relevant
units that teach compassion, interpersonal skills and leadership to under-served young people
in the Santa Barbara community. These students, the majority of whom might have fallen
through the cracks or fallen prey to a gang mentality, have instead been offered the opportunity
to creatively reconstruct their world view. They have been exposed to a world of visual and
performance art and music, and have learned a brand new language to express themselves as a
result.
I have been duly impressed by program evaluations and outcomes each year, as any funder
would. But moreover, I have been truly excited to see the reduction in prejudice and bullying
behaviors, and great gains in social/emotional intelligence and confidence that emanate from
students who complete the AHA! curriculum as a high school freshman, after school program or
summer camp participant.
We are so fortunate to be able to offer this program to students in a variety of formats
throughout the year, especially at a time when funding for creative arts has been almost
completely eliminated from public school budgets. The need for quality youth development
programs has never been greater. AHA! is an excellent model with the potential to be replicated
in every community.

Sincerely,

Marybeth Carty
Community Partnership Manager, Venoco Inc.