



*Attitude. Harmony. Achievement.*

FALL 2016 Update



Photo: Carly Otness

## Dear AHA! Allies and Supporters,

We have just completed the most satisfying year of the 17 we have been in existence.

A few of the many reasons why:

- **Our 20-person staff is at the top of its game in terms of service and training, and remains motivated to learn and grow.**  
Within our own organizational culture, we prioritize connection, caring, celebration of diversity, empathy, emotional management, self-care, integrity, mindfulness, joy, and restoration and repair where needed. These priorities are exactly the priorities we work so hard to introduce to as many young people as possible each year.
- **This year, we served over 2500 youth in more area schools than ever before:** Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Dos Pueblos, and San Marcos High Schools, La Cuesta Continuation High School, and Santa Barbara Junior High.
- With support from the Susan Crown Exchange, **we trained several dozen area youth providers for out-of-school programs** in socially and emotionally intelligent practices for working with the youth they serve.
- **Our 150 AHA! Peace Builders reached 5000 peers and community members through Connection Circle leadership** and reported a huge leap in school belonging and confidence in their ability to interrupt hate and bullying.
- **This August, we trained a new crew of 200 youth for the next round of AHA! Peace Builders**, and have seen more enthusiasm and positivity in our AHA! Peace Builder clubs than ever before. In attendance on the final day of this Fall training, School Board member Monique Limon, SBUSD School Board candidate Laura Capps, and representatives from the offices of Hannah Beth Jackson, Salud Carbajal, and Raytheon. All were truly captivated by our programming.

“Best program in the world and changed my life around.”

- Summer participant



Photo: Carly Otness



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## AHA!'s Summer Program

**We were able to provide three sections of our summer programs this year**, reaching over 70 students with our robust curriculum built around celebrating diversity, persisting through adversity, deep listening and heartfelt sharing, and becoming allies in the efforts to create a cohesive and inclusive community.



**“This is what makes my life worth it. I would be lost without AHA!”**

-15-year-old young man in AHA!'s Summer Program

## Media Highlights

Over the past few months, several significant articles by Dr. Jennifer Freed with Melissa Lowenstein and Molly Green were published in *USA Today*, *GOOP*, *Parent Click*, *Mind Body Green*, *Family Loop*, *CoreBrain*, and *Huffington Post*.

“As Images of Violence Escalate, How Do We Talk to Our Children?” in *USA Today*

“Talking with Your Child About Tragic Events” at [familoop.com](http://familoop.com)

“What to Do About Bullying” posted at [goop.com](http://goop.com), discusses what parents can do about bullying, whether their child is bullied or bullying others.

“Why Bother with Empathy?” on [SB ParentClick.com](http://SBParentClick.com) asks and answers the question.

And, finally, “A Better Way to Break Up: 20 Ways to Leave Your Lover” a light-hearted but hard-hitting article at [goop.com](http://goop.com) about healthy romantic separation.

Jennifer has also been featured on numerous podcasts and radio shows as a national thought leader on issues related to tweens, teens, and their families. Find links to additional articles and audio files of Dr. Freed's media appearances at [www.jenniferfreed.com/blog](http://www.jenniferfreed.com/blog).

## AHA! Professional Development

Dr. Jim Peal donated a two-day training to our staff about the latest, best ways to shift toward an enduring positive attitude and to face adversity with a sense of purpose and determination. We will be passing all this along to the thousands of young people served this year through AHA! programs.

## Thank You and See You Later, Martin Leyva

A huge **thank you** to Martin Leyva for years of powerful leadership and service to AHA!. Congratulations on your path into graduate education at Cal State San Marcos in San Diego, where we hope your studies of Re-Entry and Juvenile Justice will help lead us to the next level of social justice and emotional intelligence. **We will miss you, Martin!**

Photo: Carly Otness



“There are not enough words to describe my appreciation for your mentorship. When I was first introduced to AHA!...I was definitely uncomfortable sharing my feelings with my fellow classmates.

After hearing everyone speak, though, I felt more connected to my class in such a short period than I could have ever imagined...AHA! Peace Builders gave me so much more self-confidence and the confidence I needed to move across the country to face new and different perspectives and mindsets.

You have believed in me so much and for that I am endlessly grateful.”

- a recent high school and AHA! graduate who is headed to college this Fall

## Friends of AHA!

Please support Friends of AHA! businesses who have provided AHA! teens and their families with discount cards: [www.ahasb.org/aha-discount-card](http://www.ahasb.org/aha-discount-card)

805 BOBA	Pathways To Natural Health
Cheri Bibi	Peaches Skin Care
Cloud 10 Jump Club	Rocket Fizz Soda Pop
D & D Painting Co.	& Candy Shop
Fosters Freeze	Sal's Pizza
La Tapatia Bakery	SB Wine Collective
Lucky Penny	Solutions Carpet Cleaning
Martial Arts Family Fitness	Taqueria El Buen Gusto
McConnell's Fine Ice Cream	Zodo's Bowling & Beyond



## Dearest Supporters:

In a recent study from the Southern Poverty Law Center, 2000 teachers surveyed nationwide reported a substantial increase in meanness and racially motivated bullying in their classrooms. This cruel behavior and language were reflective of the overwhelmingly negative tones of current adult political discourse. While this example is being set, it is more important than ever for youth to learn to have inclusive, productive conversations; to accept difference; and to actively promote peace.

AHA! has worked hard since 1999 to build effective tools to train a generation of youth in emotional and social intelligence. We ask you to help us maintain our momentum as we empower youth to cultivate peace and social-emotional intelligence in their schools and communities.

We would love to engage your support to help us bring our experience and programs to more youth and families, both locally and nationally. Please consider what part you would like to play in supporting us this school year.

Your help right now is critical. Schools we serve can pay only a fraction of the cost of our programming on their campuses; we fundraise the rest of that cost, in addition to the cost of our by-donation out-of-school (after-school and summer) programs. Budgets have been cut at schools across the board, even as requests for our help on school campuses continually expand. Your investment in AHA! directly translates to maximum impact now, and into fully self-expressed future leaders with social and emotional maturity.

We are your allies in creating a generation of mature leaders who create peace and possibility wherever they go.

Gratefully,

Jennifer Freed, Rendy Freedman, and the AHA! team

**Let's make our Santa Barbara a model of emotional and social equity and maturity.**

**Please contribute however you can: with time, financial contributions, love, or a combination.**

[www.ahasb.org/donate/](http://www.ahasb.org/donate/)



## Hike for AHA! Saturday, November 12, 2016

**Support AHA! in its commitment to the healthy development of teens in the Santa Barbara community.**

On Saturday morning, November 12, hikers will convene for a seven-mile hike at the scenic Romero Canyon trailhead in Montecito. Hikers are asked to raise a minimum of \$500 in donations to be eligible for participation in the hike.

Register to hike, help a hiker or team reach their goal, or sponsor the event to assist us in raising much needed funds in support of AHA! Funds raised at this event increase awareness of and support for the over 2500 youth served directly in AHA!'s in-school, after-school, and summer programs.

All sponsors will be acknowledged on the hike website and in AHA!'s newsletter. Sponsors will be acknowledged in event advertising, on the hike t-shirts, and in press materials. For more information, please contact [molly@ahasb.org](mailto:molly@ahasb.org).

**[www.hikeforaha.org](http://www.hikeforaha.org)**



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# AHa!

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