



Attitude. Harmony. Achievement.

## HOLIDAY 2016 Update



AHA! Peace Builders Spread joy at the Milpas Street Holiday Parade

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS!

As we approach the dramatic end of 2016, we are more thankful than ever before for your support. In standing with AHA!, you stand for social and emotional intelligence, diversity appreciation, social justice, and kindness.

AHA! is a movement that, with your help, will continue to promote a generation of leaders who practice not just random acts of kindness, but intentional and declared acts of kindness every day.

Although we have made enormous strides on all fronts of services, evidence-based research, and community impact, we are still challenged to meet our annual budget.

If ever there was a time to empower a generation to work for the highest good, it is now. If ever there were a time to make kindness the norm, it is now. Our journey is long, and we need your help to nourish and support our goals. Thank you for doing everything you possibly can to help AHA! become a household name and a fully funded movement.



PHOTOS: Carly Otness



From Sunnie Robertson, teacher at Santa Barbara High School, on the impact of AHA! in her classroom:

*As a high school freshman teacher, I believe that AHA! is instrumental in the following ways: students have the opportunity to work with adults (of varying races, educations, experiences) without a "rubric"; students are able to meet weekly in whole group and small group where they learn to trust and be empathetic to others; students are asked to consider life skills that enable us to be better global citizens; and AHA! simply allows students to connect to one another. In today's busy world, it is refreshing to see a program like AHA! that focuses more on the individual than the test score.*

## AHA! BOARD LEADERSHIP NEWS

We have been blessed for seven years with the stellar leadership of **Board President Beryl Kreisel** and her husband **Neil Kreisel**. They are now moving on (Please see "Hats Off to Beryl," below). As of January 1st, our new board president will be **Marla McNally Phillips**. We know she will bring incredible verve, commitment, and vision to the next era of AHA!. We are also thrilled to welcome **Patricia Selbert**, **David Alameida**, and **Jim Peal** as new board members.

## IN 2016 AHA!:

- Served over 2,500 teens and their families directly and reached another 3000 in student-led Connection Circles
- Co-authored *Prepare to Thrive*, the first research-based manual on integrating social-emotional learning into teen after-school programs [www.selpractices.org](http://www.selpractices.org)
- Authored the hands-on *AHA! Method Book* [www.amazon.com/AHA-Method-Book](http://www.amazon.com/AHA-Method-Book)
- Participated in over a dozen national media outlet pieces on social and emotional learning, with Jennifer as a featured thought leader; Jennifer also was honored to be keynote speaker at CALM's annual luncheon
- Co-led **Stand Together**, a project that introduced the AHA! Method for connection to hundreds of elementary school youth
- Led trainings in Social and Emotional Learning for hundreds of youth facilitators across 10 different organizations
- Sent leadership to give a keynote address at Michigan Conference for Youth Providers
- Trained over 35 youth to work with the school district as Restorative Approach facilitators
- Expanded its programming to private schools, including Laguna Blanca and Cate High School
- Received a gift from Kristin Kirby to sponsor its trauma counseling services for teens and families

## HATS OFF TO BERYL!

In celebration of Beryl Kreisel — whom we fondly call “The Empress” — we are dedicating our end-of-the-year campaign to the establishment of the Empress Room at the AHA! offices. This room will be dedicated to the core competencies of social and emotional learning: Emotional Management and Empathy.

Every donor who participates between now and January 1st will be part of inaugurating this space for staff and youth alike to learn in a safe and inclusive mode that honors the character and kindness of our departing Board President. Those who give \$1000 and above to this initiative will receive a custom AHA! hat and an adorable “onesie” for any future AHA! Peace Builders they might know! Email [molly@ahasb.org](mailto:molly@ahasb.org) if you would like to participate in honoring Beryl.



PHOTO: Carly Otness



## SING IT OUT 2017

Get ready to bring the house down as AHA!'s Sing It Out moves to the **Lobero Theatre** this year...

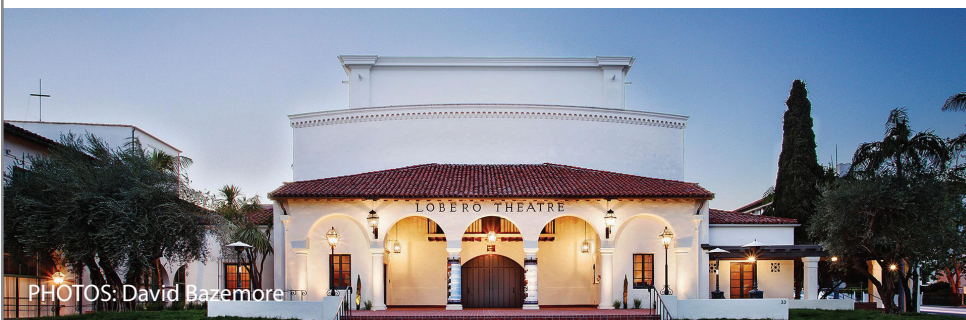
Save the date **Sunday, April 30, 2017**

Stay tuned for information about special guests and grand surprises!

Don't miss it!



PHOTO: Erick Madrid



PHOTOS: David Bazemore



PHOTO: Erick Madrid

From Joanie Merrill, M.Ed., Teacher, San Marcos High School:

*AHA! has been one of the best things to happen to my Freshman Seminar class and to the school district.*



## HIKE FOR AHA! 2016

Special thanks to all of you who helped make our Hike for AHA! the best it has ever been!



### SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL HIKE DONORS \$500+

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From Mary Ziegler, Assistant Principal at Dos Pueblos High School:

The AHA! staff is professional and warm hearted. They bring Social and Emotional Learning (Emotion Management, Empathy, Teamwork, Responsibility, and Problem Solving) not only to DPHS, but to many students in the Santa Barbara Unified School District.

From Maggie Light, teacher at Santa Barbara High School:

*AHA! takes a multi-pronged approach in reducing the fears and insecurities of students...helping students to feel comfortable, planting seeds of valuable information, then practicing what they teach in small group discussions. My wish is to have AHA! all semester long, especially in a class with such a diverse group of students and in the transitional freshmen year. Freshman Seminar and AHA! provide a comprehensive approach to the development of students, learners, and people who know themselves and know they are part of a wider community.*

Dearest Supporters:

May you and yours be held close during this holidays season.

Let us be candles for each other, and never tire from lighting up the possibility of a more peaceful, loving, and equitable world in a young person's heart.

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/)



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