



Attitude. Harmony. Achievement.

Summer 2019 Update

FABULOUS NEWS



Jennifer Freed, Chief Content Officer, Rendy Freedman, Clinical Director, and the entire AHA! staff are thrilled to announce that **Pilar Montoya** has been named **Executive Director**. Ms. Montoya brings to her position at AHA! over 25 years of business and financial management for private companies and non-profits. She is a strategic thinker, a problem-solver, and a phenomenal implementer.

She has been at the forefront of national-level social norm change initiatives promoting education, health, teen pregnancy prevention, and youth development. She has successfully secured and managed grants exceeding \$1.2 million; has headed corporate-sponsored programs; and has led national youth-focused initiatives with budgets in the multiple millions.

She has been honored as one of America's **Top 100 Women in STEM** by *US News and World Reports*; as **Inspirational Leader of the Year** by *San Diego Magazine*; with a **California Assembly Resolution** for efforts with Latino youth; and was featured as a **Woman in Leadership** in that organization's publication two years in a row. She was recognized as **Volunteer of the Year** by the Child Abuse Prevention Council and as an exemplary volunteer by the American Cancer Society.

Pilar fits in beautifully here at AHA!. We are deeply enjoying her warmth, generosity of spirit, confidence, and playfulness and appreciating her dedication and smarts. We are excited to see where her leadership takes us!.

AHA! PROGRAMS TAKE A BIG LEAP FORWARD

In our 21st year, we are:

- Launching a three-year rollout to train all teachers and staff in the Carpinteria Unified School District in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), in addition to ongoing work with students at Carpinteria HS, Rincon Continuation HS, and Carpinteria Middle School.
- Providing Spring and Fall Parent Groups for Carpinteria District parents and monthly Parent Groups for Santa Barbara District parents.
- Training several hundred educators from across the Santa Barbara Unified School District in the AHA! Method, with enhanced depth of training at Santa Barbara High School—where Principal Elise Simmons is collaborating closely with AHA! to augment the impact of our work on her campus.
- Continuing to deliver AHA! Peace Builders programming at SBHS, DPHS, and all four SB junior high schools.
- Continuing to deliver nationally recognized by-donation AHA! Summer and After-School programs.

In all our programs for youth, student-to-staff ratio never exceeds 7:1, and we continue to offer up to six free therapy sessions with an AHA! staff therapist for youth in our programs who could benefit from extra support.

La Cumbre AHA! Peace Builder parent & current Summer program parent:

At a very vulnerable developmental stage, AHA! has become my son's tribe—a kind, intelligent, creative group of socially conscious friends... AHA! is giving him tools and resources that are making him strong, confident, resilient and caring.

SUMMER FUN

AHA! Summer Program launched on Saturday, June 15th, with an orientation attended by 75 youth and parents. We are thrilled to welcome many rising 9th graders to our out-of-school programming -- many of whom were introduced to AHA! via the robust AHA! Junior High Peace Builders program. At Orientation, our long-time participants, including some recent high school graduates, helped welcome the newbies by modeling the Social-Emotional Learning skills they have mastered over the years. Parents were active participants in the orientation morning's activities, experiencing elements of the program alongside the youth.

We changed the structure of our Summer program this year, offering daily groups such as Girls' & Guys' Groups, Social Justice, Let's Connect, Peace Builders 2.0, Music Group, and Creative Group. On Thursdays, Outdoor Group brings all Summer participants together for adventures and connection in nature. Teens sign up for as many groups as they are interested in exploring, always with an emphasis on connection and fun! Summer program teens had the opportunity to experience the exquisite beauty of Lotusland (thanks to the Garden's generous Open Pathways program), and were invited to join occasional evening documentary film and discussion.



AHA! Alumna, fourth year college student at UNC Chapel Hill:

With the mentorship of so many educators through AHA's Peace Builder program I was able to grow as a person, building my confidence, my public speaking abilities, and most importantly my awareness of the importance of social emotional learning and the value that this can bring to a school district. Through this program I was able to watch my own high school campus transform and it started with AHA! Peace Builders, which brought together a group of diverse students coming from different backgrounds with different interests who all wanted to see a more inclusive campus.

WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

A group of 22 AHA! teens and facilitators experienced four days of fresh air, deep connections, breathtaking beauty, and a respite from technology at Rock Creek Lake in Inyo National Forest. Thanks to all who loaned/donated clothing and gear to the intrepid campers!



AHA! PRESENTS: ABOUT EDUCATION

Join **Neil Kreisel** each week for conversations about education with thought-provoking guests, including educators, administrators, social scientists, teens, and parents. Broadcast live on KZSB AM1290, Wednesday 2:00-3:00 PM, Rebroadcast Wednesdays at 10:00 PM and Saturdays at 4:00 PM and streamed live at morenews.newspress.com/kzsb/player.html. Podcast available on iTunes.



San Marcus High School alumna:

AHA! Peace Builders provided me the unique opportunity to connect with people who were different from me. In most areas of my high school life I chose to stay inside my comfort zone and only associate myself with those who seemed most similar to me. Through connecting and playing with a wide spectrum of people who were racially, sexually and socioeconomically different from me I got to experience how similar we all really are. AHA! Peace Builders allows teens to dive deeper into what makes us unique in our communities but also what we all share so that we can grow closer to one another and forge a more peaceful future.

MOTHERS' DAY SING IT OUT EXTRAVAGANZA

Once again, the gorgeous Lobero Theatre hosted the feel-good event of the year, AHA!'s **Sing It Out**, on Sunday, May 12. We honored the nurturers in our community while celebrating the 11 courageous performers who took to the stage and stole the hearts of the near-capacity crowd. There were standing ovations, cheering, and dancing in the aisles in support of the Sing It Out participants who conquered their fears and gave it their all, with the support of **Michael Andrews**, **Sio Tepper**, and Michael's all-star band. Heartfelt appreciation to all who sponsored and purchased tickets, making this event possible. Save the date for our next **Sing It Out**: April 26, 2020—this is an event you do not want to miss!



PHOTOS: Carly Otness

Our programs thrive with the generous support of foundation, corporate, and individual donations. Join our effort to ensure that communities feel safe, seen, celebrated, and emotionally connected.

Please consider becoming an AHA! Luminary by making recurring donations at www.ahasb.org/donate.

Contributions made to AHA! are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by US Law. IRS nonprofit tax ID # 20-4418873. Contact Molly Green, Development Director at molly@ahasb.org with questions.