

2019-2020 ATOU ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In-School, Disability-Awareness Workshop

ATOU provided **201 three-hour school workshops** and related materials to **8240 students** in **91 schools** (**5** of which participated for the first time this year) and trained the volunteers who assisted at the workshops. This brings the total number to **124,197 students** since incorporation. Each student received follow-up enrichment materials designed to extend the ATOU experience to their homes and neighborhoods.

125 schools were scheduled to participate during the 2019-2020 school year. Due to the Covid-19 school closures **34 schools** could not have the workshop as scheduled. A total of **8 new schools** were to participate this year. Of which **3** could not host the program due to the pandemic closure.

Approximately **3192** more students would have participated in the workshop had we been able to be at schools for the entire school year.

All students, as well as their parents and teachers, received a post-workshop questionnaire. The results of our analysis are summarized in the following table:

Student Responses
<p>544 (6.6%) students responded to the questionnaires.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 94% said they will be more comfortable around someone with a disability after going through the ATOU workshop.● 94% said it would be easier to make friends with someone with a disability.● 99% said they learned more about the tools that people with disabilities use.
Teacher Responses
<p>141 (45%) teachers completed the questionnaire, which was sent to them approximately two weeks after their students participated in the workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 100% think the ATOU presentation was clear and easy for students to understand.● 100% say the ATOU presentation was a valuable educational experience for students.● 97% agree that students are more accepting and respectful of peers after the ATOU presentation.● 100% say the ATOU presentation increased their students' sensitivity and awareness of children with disabilities.● 92% reported that students can improve the ways in which they interact with children with disabilities.● 100% of teachers say they would recommend this presentation to other teachers. <p>110 teachers responded to the questions proposed to teachers who have had the ATOU experience in previous years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 86% have seen a positive impact of the ATOU workshop on their students throughout the year.● 85% reported an increase of sensitivity to other forms of diversity.● 95% reported that the long-term impact is one reason they schedule the workshop for the class of each year.

Parent Responses
<p>489 (5.9%) parents whose children participated, responded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 99% think ATOU will be helpful in encouraging their child to accept and include individuals with disabilities in their life. ● 95% said their child was eager to share about the ATOU experience. ● 98% anticipate ATOU leaving a positive, lasting impression on their child.
School Rate of Engagement
<p>98% of schools that had only one grade participate during the 2018-2019 school year participated again in 2019-2020. (Schools that have more than one grade participate schedule ATOU in alternating years to achieve complete coverage.) The remaining 2% of schools that did not participate declined due to lack of funding. We served 5 new schools during this school year.</p>

Program Impact

Elementary School Students

“I learned that even though people with disabilities might need to use special tools, they are just like me on the inside.” **Student, 4th grade**

“Yes. Becaus just because ther’re difrent doesnt mean they cant be your friend.” **Alison, 3rd grade**

“I learnd that people with Dissabilities are as capable and successful as people without dissabilies. They just rely on different skills and abilities to help them acomplish their Goals.” **Ryan, 6th grade**

“A important thing I learned was that people with disabilities can still have normal lives like you and Me.” **Elizabeth, 5th grade**

“Even if someone has a disability their still on amazing person!” **Sofia, 4th grade**

“That even if you have a disability life can still be the best.” **Student, 4th grade**

“That everyone is different in the world and you need to respect everyone.” **Elona, 4th grade**

“I learned not to think about people who are different can’t do, but what they CAN do.” **Roxine, 4th grade**

“The tool a disable person uses doesn’t make them any less them.” **Student, 3rd grade**

“Because if someone has a disability you can help them a make friends with them.” **Student, 3rd grade**

“The most important thing is that I have learned is to not be afriad and be helpful.” **Student, 3rd grade**

“I learned that being in a wheel chair is not so bad, and when bad things happen sometimes their actually good things.” **Student, 4th grade**

“That you shouldn’t make fun of people for having a disability but you should instead help them and try to be friends with them!” **Mikayla, 4th grade**

“That disabled people can still do all the stuff that we do but different and still have the same thoughts and feelings as us.” **Student, 4th grade**

“I learned that even though you have a disability you can still have fun and have a smile.” **Mia, 4th grade**

“Because if you’re kind you can accomplish more than being a bully.” **Adam, 4th grade**

“That whatever happens always look on the bright side of things, and to not let people discourage you for doing what you love.” **Gabriela, 7th grade**

“I learned that people with disability can follow their dreams no matter what.” **Jeshna, 4th grade**

“The most important thing that I learned was that sometimes people look different but that is no excuse to treat them differently.” **Claire Roberts, 4th grade**

“That everyone’s different and you should always be kind and treat people how you want to be treated.” **Eddie, 4th grade**

“I learned that even if you are blind, you can still do everyday things. You just have to make your other senses stronger.” **Kaylee, 5th grade**

“Being different does not change who your friends can be.” **Bennett, 4th grade**

“It does not matter if you have a disability you’re still a great person.” **Bennett, 4th grade**

“The most important thing I learned is to not be afraid to go up to a disabled person and say “Hi or Hello.” **Eva, 5th grade**

“I learned that even if you have a disability you can lead a fulfilling life.” **Harper, 6th grade**

“Because I can be more comfortable around disabled people and get a better understanding of what they’re going through.” **Student, 7th grade**

“I now know that I shouldn’t be shy and that I should just say hi.” **Student, 4th grade**

“The most important thing I learned was to love, respect, and treat others the way I would want to be treated.” **Isabella, 6th grade**

“The most important thing I learned from A Touch of Understanding is that we are all the same.” **Student, 5th grade**

“I learned even when you have setbacks in life you can get through them if you have people who support you.” **Harper, 6th grade**

“The most important thing I learned was just because we are all different, God made each and everyone of us for a reason! Treat others how you want to be treated.” **Kate, 8th grade**

“That it does’ent matter about if you are different it matter about the heart.” **Khadija, 4th grade**

“Now I know how they feel, so that helps for making friends.” **Olivia, 4th grade**

“That all people are different, some in big ways some in small ways.” **Liam, 4th grade**

“People with disabilitys are grat! **Isla, 4th grade**

“Its important to accept people of all abilities.” **Student, 4th grade**

“That people with a disability can do things that people with no disability can.” **Hazel, student**

High School Students

“It will be easier now to be friends with someone with a disability because now I have a better understanding of how people with disability feels.” **Student, Hiram Johnson High School**

“I would stand up for that person because they shouldn’t be bullied.” **Student, El Dorado High School**

“I would give a whole lecture to whoever because they obviously do not understand what having a disability and living with it feels like.” **Student, Hiram Johnson High School**

“I’ll consider physical therapy now. I’ll also empathize with disabled people.” **Student, Hiram Johnson High School**

“That everyone’s the same and nobody’s different.” **Student, El Dorado High School**

“Not to assume what they’re like, but to understand WHO they are.” **Student, El Dorado High School**

“People with disabilities are actually very strong people.” **Student, Futures High School**

“I am so blessed to be able to assist them when they need it.” **Student, Hiram Johnson High School**

“Not to judge a book by it’s cover and always be kind because you don’t know what other people are going through.” **Student, Hiram Johnson High School**

“That they are very understanding and loving people and they are important people like all of us.” **Student, Hiram Johnson High School**

Teachers and Administrators

“I think kids will react different to people with disabilities now that they have met such dynamic public speakers with disabilities.” **Mrs. Burns, Buckeye Elementary School Teacher (4th Grade)**

“It’s been a highly effective experience for many years. It gives students new perspectives on the challenges of others through the activities and the stories they are told by those who live with disabilities.” **Mr. Peters, Lake Forest Elementary School Teacher (4th Grade)**

“Thinking about how we may appear different on the outside, does not make us different on the inside is a big take-away. In addition, our students with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Dyslexia can feel that they are understood more so than before having the program.” **C. Bricker, Lake Forest Elementary School Teacher (4th Grade)**

“The presentation will help them the rest of their life. When faced with another person, who is different than them in some way, they can reflect back on how we all have differences but we have more similarities.” **Mrs. Nelson, Lakeview Elementary School Teacher (3rd Grade)**

“Not only does the ATOU presentation make some students realize they are not alone in their disabilities but it makes students without disabilities more empathetic of those with disabilities. And everyone relates to the important message of perseverance and never giving up.” **Mrs. Eshoff, Anthony G. Bacich Elementary Teacher (4th Grade)**

“ATOU’s presentation is a highlight of the school year for our 4th graders, and for the teachers. Our students remember all of the presenters and get excited to see them when they return to present to students the next year. After the ATOU presentation we refer to the experience and stories throughout the year. It is wonderful to have a common experience that we can all refer to.” **Mrs. Kellman, Anthony G. Bacich Elementary Teacher (4th Grade)**

“We have a student who just started back to school in a wheelchair permanently. Students, I think, were much more accepting of her because she experienced ATOU.” **Mrs. Giles, Coyote Ridge Elementary School (3rd Grade)**

“I feel like they will have a better understanding of people who may look different than us. I also heard students being more aware of what the student in our class who is blind goes through.” **Mrs. Thompson, Crestmont Elementary School Teacher (4th Grade)**

“We have quite a diverse population and it is getting more and more diverse every year. It is extremely positive to have the kids experience, meet those with disabilities, and be taught about all things included in the program.” **Mrs. Womack, Heritage Oak Elementary School Teacher (3rd Grade)**

“This is ALWAYS a great program! The kids get so much out of the day and I like to refer back to it throughout the year.” **Mrs. Moersfelder, Heritage Oak Elementary School Teacher (3rd Grade)**

“I think increased awareness of differently-abled people helps our students grow in empathy and understanding. I like the honest, open discussion of tools and strategies used by those living with disabilities. I think that takes away some of the mystery and therefore some of the scariness of differences. It’s great to give our students the opportunity to ask questions without being afraid of offending someone.” **Mrs. Lucas, Loomis Basin Charter School Teacher (5th & 6th Grade)**

“This is such an amazing program. It will always remind them of the differences people have but also how similar people are. Being able to interact with people with disabilities and ask questions helps to lower the anxiety when faced with someone who looks or acts differently. My kids will always be touched by what they saw and learned.” **Mrs. Spainhour, Breen Elementary Teacher (4th Grade)**

“It’s a wonderful opportunity for my students to hear one-on-one personal stories. The opportunity for the students to ask questions and interact with the adults and different hands on stations was extremely valuable.” **Mrs. Sgambati, Rock Creek Elementary School Teacher (4th Grade)**

“I did not know what to expect as this was my first experience with ATOU. It was an amazing workshop for students and I have seen my students make efforts to be more sensitive and inclusive towards others.”
Mr. Halseth, Orchard Ranch Elementary Teacher (4th Grade)

“ATOU allowed students to have awareness and compassion toward students who might appear different or have different skills than they are. The program also taught the children that these people are similar to them and they are approachable as well.” **Mrs. Chu, Villa Elementary Teacher (3rd Grade)**

“I do anticipate this presentation having a positive long-term effect on my students because they were able to develop compassion for their peers.” **Mrs. Yelle, Paso Verde Elementary Teacher (4th Grade)**

“The ATOU presentation makes our entire intermediate program stronger. Students respond to and learn from real hands-on experience much more effectively than they do lecture or book-paper-pencil only activities. Our students connect with the generous sharing of personal experience that ATOU presenters bring to David Lubin. Students are able to make sense of our core rules that includes the words “Say and do only kind things to others.” All intermediate students establish an invaluable reference for the importance and benefits of a culture of kindness and understanding.” **Mr. Brewer, David Lubin Elementary Teacher (4th Grade)**

“In fact, the children and/or I have referred back to the ATOU program and different learning aspects of it while doing other classroom lessons. It was very impactful! I am so glad that we had the program at the beginning of the year, too, so that the students’ empathy towards others was heightened in sensitivity because of the ATOU program.” **Mrs. Leonard, Sutterville Elementary School Teacher (2nd Grade)**

“Yes, my students will have a better understanding of the challenges of those around us. I love that they got to ask difficult questions in such a safe space without worry of offending.” **Mrs. Sidebotham, Mission Avenue Open School Teacher (4th Grade)**

“I think the opportunity to gain empathy from real people is invaluable. Students need to experience coming up close and personal with the people and tools to escape the fear and misunderstanding of those that don’t have experiences with people who have disabilities.” **Mrs. Macomber, Sierra Oaks Elementary School Teacher (4th Grade)**

“As the students grow and experience more contact with people with disabilities, they will remember ATOU and the subsequent class discussions, which will add to their understanding and empathy.” **Mr. Miller, Willett Elementary Teacher (4th Grade)**

Parents of Workshop Students

“He spoke about everything he had done in the day, all the speakers and their stories, and all his feelings. He LOVED this program.” **Parent**

“I think it’s a great program that really fosters empathy.” **Mrs. Duncan, Parent**

“Thank you so much for such an inspiring educational program.” **Parent**

“Creates empathy for people with differences; acceptance and recognition that these folks are just like any other person.” **Parent**

“Absolutely, he was completely engaged in the day. I think he gained new perspectives and insight and as a result will be a more compassionate and understanding individual.” **Parent**

“A much better understanding that disabled is not negative - this was a very impactful assembly!” **Mrs. Imwalle, Parent**

“My daughter loved being able to experience the lives of others. She was so excited to share all she learned.” **Mrs. Miesen, Parent**

“She loved learning braille. She was writing notes to me all night.” **Parent**

“He really enjoyed the hands-on experiences and talked about using a wheelchair and writing his name in braille in great detail.” **Parent**

“I foresee this making my son more comfortable and accepting of individuals with disabilities, and more understanding of their challenges. What a wonderful program. Thank you!” **Parent**

“I think it has opened up Claire’s eyes to have empathy, respect and compassion to all people.” **Parent**

“Improving and increasing her awareness, knowledge and compassion for one another as she said ‘Be kind to one another’ when I asked her about what she liked and learned the most.” **Mrs. Aderados, Parent**

“My daughter wore braces on her legs for 6 months to help her not walk on her tippy toes. There was a man there w/what she felt were ‘the same braces.’ She was so excited to have this connection. Representation matters. Thank you for providing such a wonderful program.” **Mrs. Mrizo, Parent**

“To know that people with disability are nice and kind and that you don’t need to be scared of them.” **Parent**

“Lana talked about various ways that you could make friends with different types of disabilities.” **Parent**

“A greater level of compassion and understanding. Also she said ‘They were just like me only they had a little something different.’” **Parent**

“He did mention it on the way home from school. He sounded excited. He showed me his new button that he received from the program.” **Mrs. Inaparapu, Parent**

“My child was very eager to talk about everything! She was eager to share the different ways people are able to communicate if they are different than us.” **Parent**

“I am glad my daughter got to experience this and next time, instead of staring or thinking it’s strange behavior, she will understand it is people’s different ways of communicating.” **Parent**

“This experience will help her treat people with disability very kindly and respectfully.” **Parent**

“Definitely! The more we talk about disabilities and know about special needs, the more patient and understanding our children are. It helps build compassionate knowledgeable adults.” **Parent**

“Awareness - having but themselves in the shoes of someone with a disability. Understanding - that people with disabilities have a story worth learning about.” **Mrs. Murray, Parent**

“She talked about how everyone is equal no matter their disability.” **Parent**

“Understand and tolerance. My older kid has been through this program and it was so impactful to her. We are grateful for this amazing program at our school!” **Parent**

“That my child will be more kind and understanding with people who may be different from him.” **Parent**

“Increase in empathy and compassion, realization we all want to be included. Thank you.” **Mrs. Graciano, Parent**

“Realizing the disability doesn’t make them different. They are actually stronger and braver because of the disability. Not being fearful of differences.” **Mrs. Harnell, Parent**

“They will treat those with disabilities in the same way as their friends and neighbors. GREAT EVENT!” **Parent**

“To understand that people who may be different on the outside are still normal people like she is, with similar hopes and dreams.” **Parent**

“He spoke about how he now understands what people with disabilities go through as well as expressing that he will now be more compassionate.” **Mrs. Hassan, Parent**

“Haelee started talking about the button she was wearing and then she went into detail of what it meant and the training she received.” **Mr. Grafton, Parent**

“We anticipate more empathy, patience, understanding and advocacy as a result of this program.” **Parent**

“He has already been sharing his knowledge and spreading the word about Brail.” **Parent**

“My son was so excited to share the stories and experiences shared by the speakers/representatives of the program at St. Michaels. The people from A Touch of Understanding had a huge impact.” **Parent**

“Appreciating the amazing adaptation ability of those with disabilities making these people of special ability instead of disability.” **Parent**

“The speakers were really inspiring to my son. These stories of perseverance and a different perspective will nurture empathy and a sense of his own strengths and power despite perceived limitation.” **Parent**

“I anticipate she will include new people no matter how they look or what disability they may have.” **Parent**

“I think this is a wonderful program and I’m glad my son participated.” **Parent**

Spirit of Inclusion Workshop Participants

SMUD Interns

“The invisible disability station was such an eye opener. It was helpful to see what people experience everyday.”

“I will be open to interacting with people of all kinds of disabilities”

“This workshop definitely enabled me to view individuals with disabilities in a different way. It also reminded me that everyone goes through things, therefore it is important to have compassion.”

“Treat all people like people”

“I will use what I learned and apply it to my little brother who is on the spectrum”

City of Elk Grove Employees

“Understanding that every individual is unique, seeing the person and not the disability”

“It is so valuable learning from the individual’s experiences. This type of training should be offered to more employees.”

“I will be more mindful to interact with individuals with disabilities as people first, and offer help as I can.”

Volunteers

“I volunteer with ATOU because it’s a way for me to give back to my community in a way that is highly personal. As a child, I was bullied, and I struggled with my school work. I want to help make a change in the way we treat one another and ourselves. ATOU does a great job at this.” **Melinda Sayers, Volunteer Speaker**

“I love volunteering with ATOU because I know without a doubt it fosters a lifelong understanding and appreciation of the fact that we are all more alike than different and everyone deserves respect and empathy. Also, the pleasure of knowing and working with the staff and other volunteers has added a tremendous sense of family to my life.” **Peggy Cain, Workshop Volunteer**

“I volunteer with ATOU because it matters. It matters that children learn from an early age to be open and accepting of others. The school children are so excited and open to hearing that everyone deserves respect. It's fun watching their faces as this message is delivered. Then, after they've performed the activities in person, they really "understand." I've been assisting the workshops for over 5 years and never tire of seeing the children leave the workshop so much more inspired than when they walked in the door. I know it makes a difference. That's why I volunteer.” **Kim Nash, Workshop Volunteer**

“I joined ATOU because it gave me an opportunity to have a voice for others that were like me in the earlier years of school. I wish there was a voice like that to advocate for me and educate my peers when I was younger. I saw that there was a change that needed to happen in the classroom and the workplace, so ATOU allowed me to be that change I wanted! I immediately saw how willing students were to get educated on disabilities during my first presentations. I can only see the impact of the ATOU family growing exponentially in the future without any limit!” **Qamdhyn Hale, Volunteer Speaker**

“I volunteer with ATOU because at EVERY school presentation we go to, I know in my heart, that we stop at least one child from being bullied, AND stop at least one child from being a bully. If I can stop 1 child from being bullied or teased I'm good.” **Sandy Puleo, Workshop Volunteer and Speaker**

"I volunteer with ATOU to educate kids about individuals with disabilities. To promote understanding, empathy, and acceptance for those who may for some reason seem different. As well as, demonstrate that no disability perceived or real needs to get in the way of any child, disabled or not, in rising to their full potential. That is best achieved helping one another and showing one another kindness and respect." **Dwight Lunkley, Volunteer Speaker**

“I love to give back, I love to educate, esp. the young. It is a wonderful thing to see kids learn stuff as we speak to them. They light up like a Christmas tree when I say I like the SF 49ers, or when I raise my wheelchair seat, and when they see I am just like them.” **Bill Richards, Volunteer Speaker**

ATOU Youth F.O.R.C.E. (Friends Offering Respect ~ Creating Empowerment):

Our Youth F.O.R.C.E worked on growing its membership this year. This was done through fun “team-building” activities such as a ropes course, escape room, and other fun events. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, all activities, from March, on were cancelled. Due to staffing levels, we were unable to make a transition to virtual activities. We are fortunate to live in a community that has offered other online activities for youth with disabilities. We look forward to gathering the Youth F.O.R.C.E when the situation allows.

August - Bowling

October - Halloween Party

December - Showcase

February - Valentines Party, hosted for the Youth F.O.R.C.E by Boys Team Charity, Class of 2020

Additional Accomplishments

We reached the milestone of more than 125,000 students experiencing our life-changing workshop since 1996.

2020 Evening of Insight - Virtual Fundraising Event - Given the COVID-19 pandemic, we changed our in-person Evening of Insight Fundraiser to a virtual one, in which guests could participate online from their homes. This was our most successful fundraiser ever, netting approximately \$64,000 for ATOU.

Power of 100 Women - The local giving circle, Power of 100 Women who has supported ATOU in the past, hosted a Dark Meal for their members, and asked each member to donate to ATOU, raising \$10,300.

The Coronavirus pandemic gave our staff and volunteers the opportunity to create programs which can be delivered virtually, and aid in the expansion of ATOU programs beyond our current geographic region.

Maintained a relationship with Boys Team Charity (BTC), benefitting from their volunteer work packing follow-up materials for workshops, as well as helping at all Youth F.O.R.C.E events. ATOU was the beneficiary for the 3rd year in a row of the BTC Senior Project. This year they planned and put on a full Youth FORCE event.

Grant Funding

City of Roseville, Citizen's Benefit Fund \$20,000
Safeway Foundation \$15,000
Placer County Association of Realtors (PCAR) Foundation \$1,000
El Dorado Community Foundation, \$5,000
Consolidated Communications Foundation \$1,000
Placer Communication Foundation \$1,000
Rotary Club of Roseville \$1,200

Media Attention

GoodDay Sacramento
Community Catalyst Roseville Life Magazine, Featuring Volunteer Amy Giffin