

The **MY HERO** Project





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MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of The MY HERO Project is to use media, art and technology to celebrate the best of humanity.

Learning about heroes from all walks of life helps young people understand their own potential to affect positive change in the world.

MY HERO provides millions of people of all ages with stories of hope and inspiration.



FOUNDERS' MESSAGE

We launched MY HERO in 1995 with a simple idea: to create a space in the media where people of all ages could share and discover stories about those making a positive difference in the world. We were tired of the exaltation of celebrities as heroes and the promotion of hatred, violence and sexism in the mass media. We wanted children to have access to information about real life heroes who had overcome obstacles, faced great and small challenges and succeeded. During the early days of the web, we launched this project hoping that, if we built a venue online to share stories of hope and inspiration, others would join in the project and children would benefit.

Today, MY HERO is a leading destination for teachers and students around the world. We provide digital storytelling tools and a rich multimedia library that is used by people of all ages. Our global learning community includes professional filmmakers, writers and artists who join with teachers and students adding content to this ever-growing internet archive. Working together we are building the world's largest online media library of hero stories, art, and films.

A team of educators, media makers, programmers, web designers, and editors manage this multi-media project. As the internet has grown so has our need for bandwidth and improved technology. We want to improve our systems and delivery so that more students entering the digital age will access our resources and join in this celebration. Together we are working to bridge the digital divide, and bring inspiration to millions of students.

As you read this Annual Report, we hope that you will understand our goals, programs and the many ways that you can be part of The MY HERO Project. We need and value your support.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Meyers, Karen Pritzker and Rita Milch
Co-Founders



VISITORS

The 2013–2014 fiscal year brought 20,938,716 visitors from all 50 US states and 197 countries to the MY HERO website, including schools, homes and libraries.

7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014 WEB STATS

➤ 20,938,716 Visitors

➤ 454,017,872 Hits

➤ 7,719,059.00 MB Bandwidth

COUNTRIES

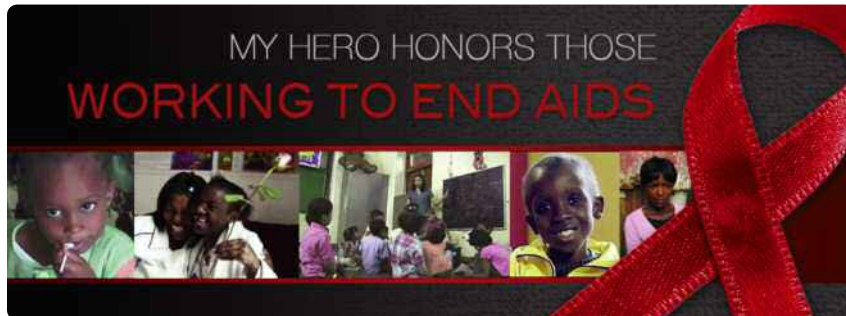
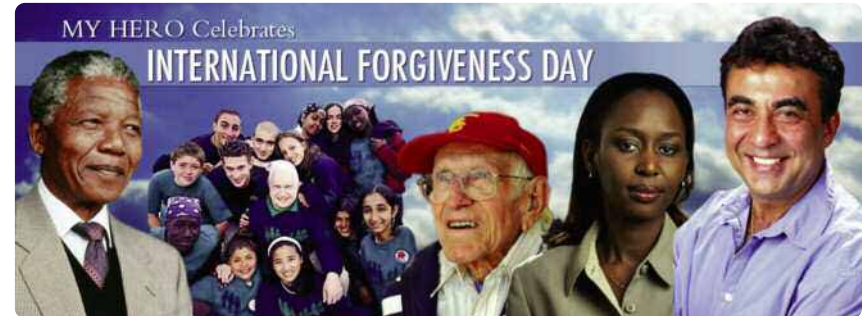
Argentina	Colombia	France	Ireland	Malaysia	Philippines	Slovak Republic	United Kingdom
Australia	Croatia	Germany	Israel	Mexico	Poland	South Africa	United States
Belarus	Czech Republic	Greece	Italy	Montenegro	Portugal	Spain	Vietnam
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Denmark	Hungary	Japan	Morocco	Romania	Sweden	Yugoslavia
Brazil	Dominican Republic	India	Jordan	Netherlands	Russian Federation	Thailand	AND MANY MORE...
Canada	Egypt	Indonesia	Kenya	New Zealand	Saudi Arabia	Turkey	
Chile	El Salvador	Iran	Kosovo	Pakistan	Senegal	United Arab Emirates	
China		Iraq	Macedonia	Peru	Singapore		



MULTIMEDIA JOURNAL AND LIBRARY

MYHERO.COM

From our ever-growing online digital library of films, art and essays, **MY HERO** staff edits timely thematic features that enrich classroom learning and provide life learners with a steady flow of inspiration



Current Events — Heroes in the News

MYHERO.COM/NEWSWIRE

Photos and stories from the AP Newswire feature current events with an emphasis on developments in science, technology, arts and innovation that significantly benefit our global society.



Malala Yousafzai, the 17-year-old girl who was shot at close range in the head by a Taliban Gunman in Pakistan two years ago, becomes the youngest person to have ever won the Nobel Peace Prize.



Stories and photos from the Associated Press



Israel Yoroba's new reggae-inspired song "Stop Ebola" gets creative in spreading Ebola awareness in West Africa.



Melisa Rivera is one of five students from Reading, Pa. to receive full-tuition scholarships from Alvernia University as part of a program to help high school students in one of the nation's poorest cities.



Tens of thousands of activists in Manhattan warn that climate change is destroying the Earth, urging policymakers to take quick action.



Indian Space and Research Organization Chairman, K. Radhakrishnan, poses for the media with a model of the Mars orbiter after its successful launch at Sriharikota, India.



Researchers create the Scratch Jr app that teaches basic computer programming to kindergartners.



Multimedia Library: Essays

MYHERO.COM/DIRECTORY

MY HERO hosts a large archive of inspiring stories written by professional writers as well as by students and others. The stories celebrate familiar and unsung heroes of **all ages and from all nations**, times and walks of life.

MY HERO's archive enables teachers, students and others to explore, enjoy and learn valuable lessons from stories that highlight the best of humanity.



Paul Cummins changed the landscape of progressive education and the lives of hundreds of children and youth in Los Angeles.



Malala Yousafzai speaks out for the rights of girls to have access to an education.



Dr. Hawa Abdi courageously provides medical care in a dangerous environment.



Cheikh Darou Seck inspires his students to reach out to their community.



Azim Khamisa founded the Tariq Khamisa Foundation to encourage forgiveness.



Create a MY HERO Webpage

AWARD WINNING STUDENT ESSAYS

[MYHERO.COM/CREATE](https://myhero.com/create)

Web-authoring tools have been designed for visitors to use to create and publish web pages with images, text and links, honoring heroes from all walks of life. The web-authoring program is used in homes, classrooms, after-school, vocational and library programs. **MY HERO** has been integrated across interdisciplinary school curricula to advance core standards-based learning and to build critical thinking, reading, writing and media literacy skills.

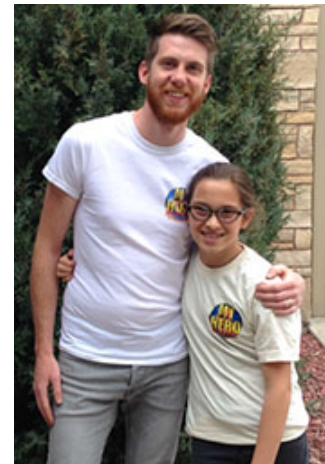
In 2014, **MY HERO** staff reviewed, edited and activated 1,992 essay submissions from over 943 schools. 58 t-shirt prizes were awarded to authors whose essays were featured on the website.



Maria Abramova from Moscow,
Russia



Winners from Belarus



Kayla from Colorado, USA



Elma Adusei from Virginia, USA



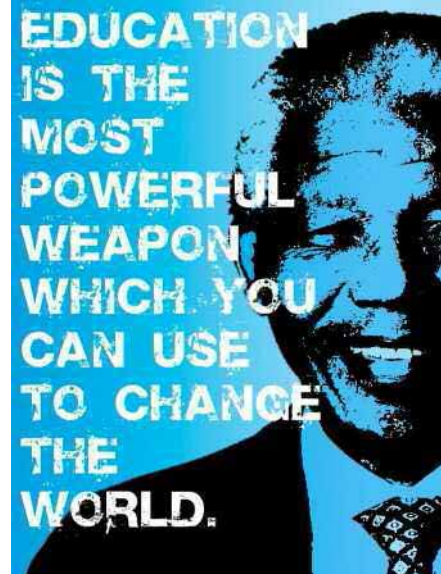
Multimedia Library: Virtual Art Gallery

MYHERO.COM/GALLERY

The **MY HERO GALLERY** promotes creativity and global understanding by giving students and emerging artists the opportunity to exhibit original, hero-themed art in an international educational online journal. **MY HERO** artwork comes from a cross-cultural and multi-generational group of artists.

All media is represented and collaborative art works, such as murals, are encouraged. Professional artists participate and inspire the next generation to engage in community-minded artistic expression.

By using the **MY HERO GALLERY** in the classroom, teachers can supplement language arts, social studies and visual arts curricula through the exploration of heroism. Students are introduced to art and communication skills by participating in the online **MY HERO GALLERY**.



Mandela by Elizabeth Healey



Maude Abbott by Kayla L from Fieldcrest Elementary in Ontario, Canada



Raise Your Voice! by Shepard Fairey
Courtesy Obey Art



African Woman
by Fary Sakho from Senegal



XRay by Nathan Sawaya
Courtesy www.thebrickartist.com



MYHERO.COM/GALLERY

Victoria Murphy - MY HERO Gallery Curator

A collage of various artistic images including portraits, abstract patterns, and text elements, overlaid with the large, colorful text "CREATE AN ART PAGE". The collage features a variety of styles, from realistic portraits to abstract and graphic designs. The text "CREATE" is in large, colorful, block letters, while "AN ART PAGE" is in smaller, black, block letters below it. The background is a dense arrangement of these artistic elements, creating a rich and creative visual.

Multimedia Library: Films

[MYHERO.COM/FILMS](https://myhero.com/films)

The **MY HERO Screening Room** hosts inspiring documentary, experimental, animated and narrative short films from across the globe. This online library features hundreds of compelling short films produced by students, professionals and community members that highlight heroes from all walks of life. The films are freely viewed online in classrooms, community centers and homes around the world.

Our archive of socially conscious films provides a unique resource for teachers who want to enhance their curricula with dynamic, child-friendly media. The short films touch upon a wide range of social and historical topics. Whether in the form of an environmental film combining NASA satellite imagery with breathtaking original music, or a touching animated short about a South African girl living with AIDS, the films on **MY HERO** captivate and educate in equal measure.



Seva Origins



Pacific Marine Mammal Center



We Sing Out



Hands Up Don't Shoot



Curt Lowens: A Life of Change



Slingshot



Create & Share Short Hero Films

Filmmakers profile and share their heroes with our global audience. Each year, great new short films are submitted to the **MY HERO** archive. These films are used online in classrooms to enhance lesson plans, explore social and environmental issues and to promote character education and media literacy. Learning about the heroes featured in these inspiring films helps young people understand their own ability to affect positive change in their community. DVDs of selected short films are available for classroom use upon request

MYHERO.COM/FILMS



Kayla Briet in her film "Stay Curious: Technology in the Classroom"



Anabelle Vo, Media Arts Educator



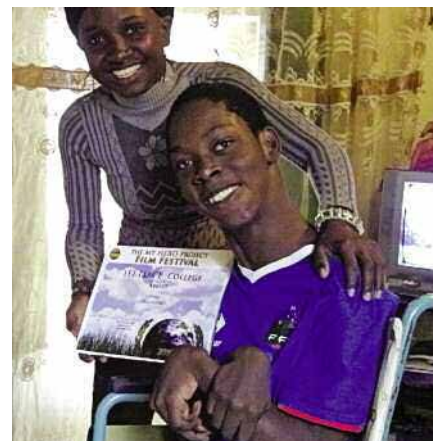
Royal Film Commission - Jordan



Teachers Ronan Hallowell from Santa Monica, CA and Cheikh Seck from Dakar, Senegal share media with their classes



Erica Fernandez - winner of the Eldon Activist Award with her Mother at the MY HERO International Film Festival



Fary Sakho, award winning filmmaker and her hero Abdoulaye Seydi in Senegal.



12 year old Molly from Nairobi, Kenya shot this film for the United Nations World Food Program.



Audio Studio

MYHERO.COM/AUDIO

Create and share original hero-themed music and audio presentations for exhibition on MY HERO audio studio.

SPOKEN WORD:

Visitors can listen to an assortment of selected MY HERO essays online, and read along.

ESL RESOURCES:

Reading and listening to stories on MY HERO is a great way to enhance learning for early readers and English-language learners.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Visually-impaired students can take and listen to stories in our MY HERO audio archive.

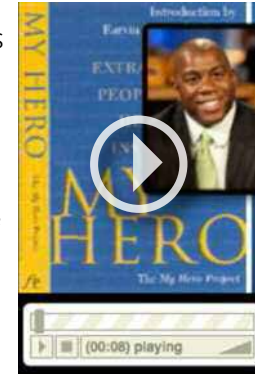
MUSICAL SCORES:

Musicians contribute uplifting original scores that can be used to enhance student films.

MUSIC VIDEOS:

Music videos from around the world deliver lesson on social justice, human rights, the environment and bring inspiration and edutainment to the classroom.

Listen to excerpts from the MY HERO book —
MY HERO: Extraordinary People on the Heroes Who Inspire Them



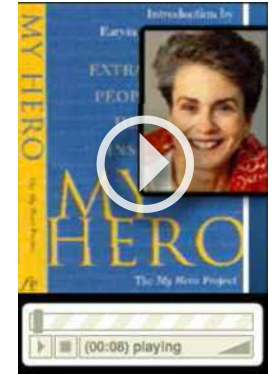
EARVIN "MAGIC" JOHNSON

Introduction by
Earvin "Magic" Johnson



WANGARI MAATHAI

Excerpt from the chapter:
"Wangari Muta Maathai"



FRANCES MOORE LAPPE

Excerpt from the chapter:
"Frances Moore Lappe"

MUSIC VIDEOS FROM THE MY HERO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



Playing for Change: Peace Through Music
Directed by Mark Johnson and Jonathan Walls



Believe By Logan Cascia



SFU Public Square ONE VOICE Music Project

Create & Share Original Songs and Audio

“Music is the universal language of mankind.”

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Music has great potential to create direct and lasting awareness of important social issues. **MY HERO**'s Audio program promotes the creation of new and original music that honors those working for social justice, peace and the environment.

Celebrating the best of humanity with musical tributes on **MY HERO** provides students with tools of self expression and avenue to publish their songs of everyday heroes.



Media Arts Educator Stu Pearlman mentors students at the Boys and Girls Club



Students mix their environmental rap song as part of a program funded by The Laguna Beach Community Foundation and The Massen-Greene Foundation.



Doug Miller and Sasha Evans perform the Dilley Ditty at the Laguna Hero Fest

Digital Storytelling Tools

MYHERO.COM/PARTICIPATE

MY HERO provides people of all ages with multimedia tools to share and archive inspiring stories, art, films, and music. Guests register to create their own unique multimedia portfolio that can be enriched year after year.



MI HÉROE - The Spanish Portal

MYHERO.COM/GO/SPANISH

MY HERO has added a SPANISH LANGUAGE component to our digital toolkit. We hope to expand the cross cultural opportunities available through the **MY HERO** website with this resource. These tools provide Spanish-speaking visitors the opportunity to use our web authoring programs in their native language. Visitors can create multimedia portfolios including their original hero stories, films, music and art in Spanish. Students learning English as a second language can also use this portal to read stories in both English and Spanish.



MY HERO created a special DVD of short hero films in Spanish. Copies of this DVD are available upon request. Email myhero@myheroproject.org.



Sonia Sotomayor
United States Supreme Court Justice



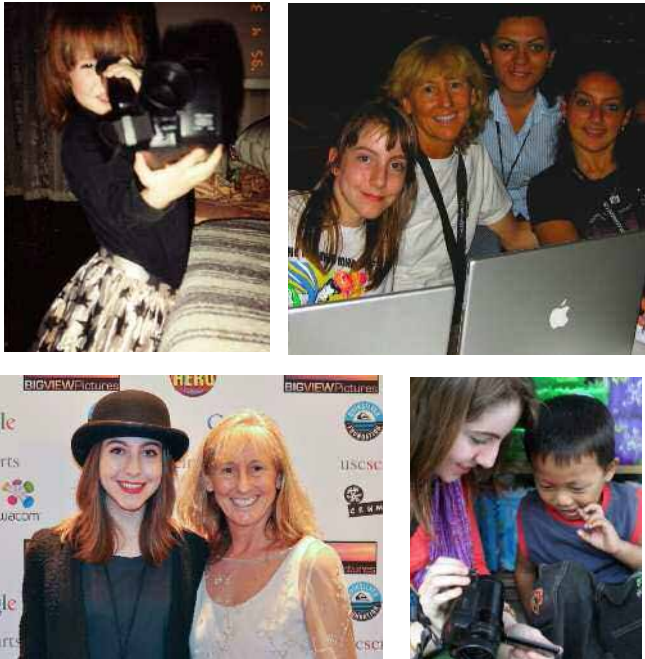
Cesar Chavez
Americans Who Tell the Truth
Robert Shetterly

Digital Storytelling Tools - Multimedia Portfolio

This personal Multimedia Database can be accessed year after year to create a unique record of growth, achievement, development and creativity. Proficiency with media and technology are important life skills and the **MY HERO** Media Portfolio is a great way to gain experience creating and publishing essays, art, music and films. Students work on media projects at home, in the library or at school. Media submitted to **MY HERO** is reviewed by staff. Once approved media can be shared online with classmates, family members and visitors from around the world. Growing a personal digital portfolio of inspirational content can also help students showcase creative work to colleges and/or future employers.

...MY HERO gives people my age and younger hope, inspiration, and motivation to believe in themselves, and their ability to change the world. MY HERO makes us all realize what we're capable of.

- Slater Jewell-Kemker, filmmaker



TEACHERS RESOURCES

MYHERO.COM/TEACHERS

The **MY HERO Teacher's Room** combines our vast database of stories, art, films and audio with tools and resources that help teachers **bring MY HERO into the classroom**.

We provide standards-aligned lesson plans and project-based learning programs across various disciplines including English, Social Studies, Art, Media Arts, Science and Environmental Studies, English as a Second Language (ESL), Character Education, and Special and Gifted Education.

Teachers share lesson plans, resources and tips on integrating **MY HERO** into their classrooms in TeachersRoom online. Teachers use the MY HERO ORGANIZER TOOL to create a "**Classroom Portfolio**." This tool helps teachers bring together students' stories, art, films, and audio work published on MY HERO into an online directory. Publishing a Classroom Portfolio online is a great way to showcase student work for parents, students and the community members.

Search MY HERO's vast library of content and create a THEMATIC ORGANIZER web page that can serve as a multimedia resource for classroom assignments. Examples of organizers include: Tribute to Nelson Mandela, Hispanic Heritage Month Heroes, International Day of Human Rights, World Water Day and more...

In 2014, more than 320,000 visitors, worldwide, visited the MY HERO Teacher's Room for educational resources, tutorials, and lesson plans. Over a thousand educators (including partners) officially registered for a MY HERO educator account. Nearly half were from nations outside the United States. Approximately 41% of the U.S. participants were from low-income families. More than half were of an ethnic minority.

Feedback and surveys from teachers help us evaluate and improve this interactive website as a platform for creative expression, collaborative learning and cross-cultural communication. According to the surveys, teachers turn to MY HERO to help strengthen skills in writing/communication, character education, web page building, and for research purposes.

EDUCATORS WHO USE MY HERO



Mali Bickley, Canada



Cheikh Darou Seck, Senegal



John Boettner, California USA



Oxana Krailo, Ukraine



Ronan Hallowell, California USA



Rowena Gerber, Florida USA



Jerrilyn Jacobs, California USA



Laura Nietzer, New Jersey USA





COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE

PREPARING AMERICA'S STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE & CAREER



Visit our [Teacher's Room](#) and check out the [Lesson Plans Center](#)

STANDARDS-ALIGNED CURRICULA

Support from a grant from the Foundation for the Contemporary Family gave **MY HERO** the opportunity to bring in educational consultants to refine the lesson plan area of the website to include standards-based lesson-plan for specific grade level and subjects.

GLOBAL OUTREACH

IEARN CONFERENCE & YOUTH SUMMIT, QATAR



Cheikh Darou Seck from Senegal and Barry Kramer from the U.S.A. led a digital storytelling workshop with teachers taking part in the global learning conference in Qatar. Cheikh presented an hour of inspiring short films from the **MY HERO Film Festival** to the general assembly of teachers and students from around the world.

IEARN CONFERENCE & YOUTH SUMMIT, ARGENTINA



Daniel Chavez represented MY HERO at Puerto Madryn, Argentina.



MY HERO created a special DVD of short hero films in Spanish for the conference. Copies of this DVD are available upon request. Email myhero@myheroproject.org.





MYHERO.COM/LEARNINGCIRCLES

IEARN/MY HERO LEARNING CIRCLES

In partnership with the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN.org), **MY HERO LEARNING CIRCLES** stimulate dynamic, interactive, and online global exchanges that bring the world into the classroom and the classroom into the world. Learning Circles act as virtual classrooms that enable students to communicate and collaborate with peers across the globe. Teachers and students learn about each other's cultures, communities and heroes.

In 2014, a total of 43 Elementary, Middle and High School classes (incorporating approximately 1,000 students) participated in the **MY HERO** Learning Circles. The Circles included participants from the following countries: USA, Canada, Belarus, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, South Africa, Taiwan, Slovenia, Pakistan, Mexico, Kenya, Bangladesh, Australia, Georgia, Morocco, Iran, Indonesia, Egypt.



Wendy Jewell
MY HERO Learning
Circles Facilitator



Barry Kramer
iEARN Learning
Circles Coordinator



Becky Miller
MY HERO General Editor

MY HERO presented a workshop at the 2014 Virtual Global Education Conference entitled "New Media for Global and Local Activism"



Mali Second Class Learning Circle



High School Class of Pan Szu-Han Feng-Yuan, Taichung, Taiwan



Uganda High School Learning Circle



Media Arts Education

MYHERO.COM/MEDIAARTS

MY HERO Media Arts Educators provide training and mentorship to students and teachers around the world with an emphasis on sharing stories about those making a positive difference in the world.

The MEDIA ARTS curricula and tutorials are freely available online, providing users of all ages with instructions on how to use new technologies to express themselves and develop important media literacy skills. Educational materials and resources are adaptable for multiple subjects and grade levels.

Through tutorials, live workshops, one-on-one trainings and direct communication via skype, our media arts educators ensure that student filmmakers and teachers receive the support they need to be successful at all stages of the production process.

MY HERO Media Arts Educators have led workshops in Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, Senegal, Netherlands, Qatar, Slovakia, Russia, China, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Nepal and across the United States.

Both locally and internationally, The **MY HERO** Project provides media resources and technical training to teachers of underserved youth. **MY HERO** distributes DVDs, books and USB drives with lesson plans to those who lack internet access. Partner organizations such as The American Film Institute provide materials to help students get started making short films honoring their own heroes.

Our Media Arts Educators make sure that all appropriate, student-made short films and media projects created for this program can be uploaded to the **MY HERO** website and shared with its international learning community.



Slater Jewell-Kemker mentors a student in Nepal



Cheikh Darou Seck works with Wendy Milette at the iEarn conference in Dakar, Senegal



A student takes part in the Eco-Heroism program at the Laguna Beach Boys and Girls Club.



A student takes part in the Global Exchange in Jordan



MY HERO takes part in media arts program at Lennox School in Los Angeles, CA.

2014 International Film Festival

MYHERO.COM/FILMFESTIVAL



I'll take it from here...Because I'm a Girl

The Best of Fest Award

One in three girls around the world is denied an education by the daily realities of poverty, conflict or discrimination.



Blessed is the Peacemaker

The Ron Kovic Peace Prize

Blessed is the Peacemaker is a short film developed by Wide Angle Youth Media's Mentoring Video Project.



Waves for Water

The Dan Eldon Activist Award

Waves for Water's mission is to get access to clean water to those in need around the world.



Facebook Stories - The Conditioned

The Media Award

Raimundo Arruda Sobrinho was homeless in Brazil for nearly 35 years. Impressed by his poetry, Shalla Monteiro created a Facebook Page to feature Raimundo's writing. Neither could have expected what happened next.

Relationships First

'Present Trauma' is a drama about a veteran struggling to cope with family life after a combat tour overseas.



Global Educator Award

Paul Cummins is a visionary, poet and educator. He has launched schools and created arts enrichment programs for thousands of students in Southern California.





The 10th Annual MY HERO International Film Festival took place at the Herb Alpert Educational Village in the Ann and Jerry Moss Theater. Entries came in from all over the world, including Australia, Canada, China, Congo, England, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, the UK, and the USA.

The MY HERO International Film Festival explores the theme of heroism in documentary, narrative, animation and experimental short films, and supports the crucial work of real life heroes and passionate filmmakers by recognizing their efforts to a worldwide audience online. Winning films can all be viewed online and this library of hope and inspiration is used to enrich classroom learning globally.

Special awards are given to filmmakers whose work celebrates those working for peace and tolerance, and ocean conservation. Ron Kovic gives a Peace Prize; Kathy and Amy Eldon present the Dan Eldon Activist Award honoring those using media for positive social change; MacGillivray

Freeman Films' One World One Ocean campaign sponsors the Sylvia Earle Ocean Conservation Award; The Foundation for the Contemporary Family gives the Relationship First Award.

myhero.com/Kovic

myhero.com/Eldon

myhero.com/EarleAward

myhero.com/RelationshipsFirst

The MY HERO International Film Festival sponsors include: The Seedlings Foundation, USC School of Cinematic Arts, The Coalition for Engaged Education, New Roads School, The Foundation for the Contemporary Family, Big View Pictures Inc, Google, LRG, Sorenson, Shure, Barracuda Software, Ken and Sandra Malamed, Marilyn Athey, Joyce Sharman, Dorothy Meyers, Ken Koslow, Mark Cavanagh, Cynthia Costas-Cohen, Rita Stern Milch, Karen Pritzker, Sue Miller, Monica Olsen, Judy Anderson Ph.d.

myhero.com/FestivalSponsors

Winning short films, including documentaries, narratives, experimental shorts, music videos and excerpts can be freely viewed in the MY HERO screening room online: myhero.com/Winners



Media Arts Education - Model Programs

Local Hero Fests

MYHERO.COM/HEROFEST

Online resources include templates and plans that can be customized for groups hosting Local Hero Festivals in community centers and schools. DVDs of award-winning short films from our International Film Festival are available upon request to enrich local hero fests.

LAGUNA HERO FEST

MYHERO.COM/LAGUNA

The City of Laguna Beach, the Laguna Beach Community Foundation, local merchants and artists join with **The MY HERO Project** to support an annual celebration of local heroes. This all-ages event is held at {seven-degrees}, state-of-the-art multimedia venue.

SANTA MONICA NEW HEROES EVENT

The MY HERO Project teamed up with The New Roads School and the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce to produce a video to highlight heroes in public service and education for this annual event.



Visit myhero.com/HeroFest to download a step by step guide to hosting a local hero fest

Honorees at the 2014 Laguna Hero Fest included:



Mary Fegraus, founding executive director of the Laguna Canyon Foundation



Nancy Caruso, marine biologist involved with the Orange County Ocean Restoration and Kelpfest



Jodie Gates, founder of the Laguna Dance Festival, is also the Vice Dean & Director of the Kaufman School of Dance at USC



Heroes on stage at the Laguna Hero Fest '14

Media Arts Education - Salon Series

MYHERO.COM/SALON

THE HERB ALPERT EDUCATIONAL VILLAGE - NEW ROADS SCHOOL CAPSHAW-SPIELBERG CENTER FOR ARTS AND EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE: LEADERSHIP CENTER

Speakers, films, art and music celebrate local and global heroes. The Salon showcases content and heroes from the **MY HERO** archive. Organizers who want to host an event in their community can check the **MY HERO** online calendar for themes on a certain month/time of year and contact **MY HERO** for content to enrich Salons in homes schools or community centers in their area.

In January 2013, **The MY HERO Project** and its Media Arts Education Program was selected to be one of ten nonprofit organizations to be housed at **The Capshaw-Spielberg Center for Arts and Educational Justice** in Santa Monica, the cornerstone structure of **The Herb Alpert Educational Village**.

To introduce our award-winning programs to the general public, **The MY HERO Project** inaugurated a Salon Series, an educational community forum, on the Third Thursday of each month at the Herb Alpert Educational Village. **The MY HERO** Salons provide guest speakers, film screenings, art exhibitions, musical performances and interactive discussions with professional writers, filmmakers and visual and performing artists. Each Salon is devoted to a theme that echoes the Capshaw-Spielberg Center's commitment to education and social justice.

Host your own Salon. The **MY HERO** team will provide support in the form of media and suggested speakers to help groups create their own **MY HERO** Salon, these inspiring community events honor heroism locally and globally.



Joanne Tawfillis founder of Art Miles Mural Project and Wendy Milette, Director of MY HERO Media Arts



David Milch reads poetry of Robert Penn Warren at the Poetry and Jazz Salon



Paul Cummins interviewed by The Santa Barbara Teen Press at the MY HERO Poetry Salon



Stu Pearlman Jazz Trio performed for Jazz History Month Salon

International Day of Peace Event - 2014

MYHERO.COM/GO/PEACE2014

MY HERO honored a unique group of peace activists at International Day of Peace Celebration in Santa Monica. Mohamed Sidibay the host, recounted the horrors of his childhood, when he was forced into slavery as a child soldier at age 3, suffering humiliation, cruelty, abuse and violence. He shared with the audience step by step the stages of his own personal growth and enlightenment: forgiveness, compassion, purification, serenity, surrender and finally escape. He tells his story with a depth of feeling and humor, honoring his own personal heroes who also spoke at the event. "I'm going to introduce you to some of the people I've met through **MY HERO** who inspire me to be the voice of the voiceless, to be an activist, to keep the faith...the people who remind us, in Anne Frank's words, that "nobody need wait a single moment to improve the world."



Mohamed Sidibay, Peace Activist and former Child Soldier



Erin Gruwell, Mohamed Sidibay, Robert Shetterly, Kenji Williams



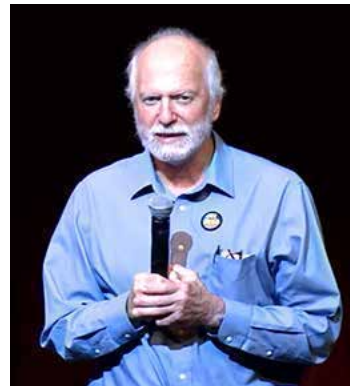
Folk City band, New Roads School



Erin Gruwell, Educator and Author -
Founder of the Freedom Writers Foundation



Ron Kovic, Peace Activist, Author, and Artist



Robert Shetterly, Artist



Dana Williams, Singer



Kenji Williams, Performance Artist and
Founder of BellaGaia.com



Art Outreach

MYHERO.COM/GALLERY

As part of MY HERO's mission to promote arts education, the Gallery conducts workshops with hands on hero art activities at museums, schools, afterschool programs and community festivals.

IMAGINATION CELEBRATION

The **MY HERO** Gallery participated in the 2014 Orange County Imagination Celebration at the Laguna Art Museum.

EXPLOROCEAN MUSEUM

With the help of participating families, **MY HERO** designed and created a mural Be a Hero - Keep Our Oceans Safe & Clean! with the help of families visiting the Explororcean Museum on Balboa Peninsula, as part of the Newport Beach Imagination Celebration.

ART AND NATURE FESTIVAL

The **MY HERO** Gallery hosted a RECYCLED SHOREBIRDS art project in conjunction with our partner Laguna Art Museum's Art & Nature Festival. The hands-on craft was inspired by the **MY HERO** short film THE BIRDMAKER by Cheikh Seck from Dakar, Senegal.

ART PARTNERS

The **MY HERO** Art Gallery is grateful to Americans Who Tell The Truth, The Art Miles Mural Project, and Peace Pals International who have contributed their vision to our website.



Celebrate Eco-Heroism

CELEBRATE ECO-HEROISM (PDF)

Launched in 2012 at the Laguna Beach Boys and Girls Club, “Celebrate Eco-Heroism” was a 12-week after-school pilot program. Elementary students developed media literacy and environmental awareness watching award-winning films, learning digital filmmaking techniques, interviewing local environmental stewards, and creating artworks that celebrated eco-heroism. The curriculum for this model program is available online, and can be modified for use in the classroom or after-school programs.

With support from a grant from the Puffin Foundation and The Massen Greene Foundation, **MY HERO** created a DVD and companion guide to provide inspiring short films about environmental heroes, which are resources to launch an eco-heroism program in schools and after school programs. The DVDs were distributed to teachers at the PEN Conference, the iEARN International Conference in Qatar and Argentina. They are freely available upon request.

MYHERO.COM/GO/ECOHEROISM



GLOBAL IMPACT

EDUCATORS' FEEDBACK

Jonathan Feinn, Carlos Rey School in Albuquerque, New Mexico

I want you to know how much the children and I have enjoyed participating in the **MY HERO** project. I'm very pleased with their commitment and I feel they have gained a great deal from this experience. Thank all of you connected with this endeavor; it's a terrific learning experience.

Timothy Dennis, Xiamen International School, China

The ease of use was a godsend for teachers, both as a resource for written examples, and ideas for student projects. We used the newswire for current events, tied our poetry writing to poets featured on the site, and practiced analyzing written work. Thank you so much, what a wonderful project this has been!

Lyudmila Gilyova, Lyceum of Information Technologies, Ukraine

The students have learned to communicate on the forum platform, upload text, images to build a webpage. I like everything.

Galina Smirnova, R.A. Naumov Secondary School No.13, Russia

A new way of discovering global collaboration and an opportunity to tell the world about the person our students admire. Everything is excellent. Thank you very much for your patience and help.

Cornelia Platon, Alexandru Papiu Ilarian Highschool Dej, Romania

Storytelling: it is important for developing their writing and reading skills, also for developing their ability of researching information for a specific purpose I consider it works just perfect and I appreciate the fact that the materials made by students are evaluated before being approved. Thank you for the opportunity of participating in this wonderful project.

Fatemeh Nikui Nezhad, Farzanegan High School, Kashan, Iran

Heroes help us define, develop and live by the values of kindness, generosity, forgiveness, joy and peace. **MY HERO PROJECT** provided my lovely students with the big chance of thinking about their heroes and why they are their heroes. They identified heroic characteristics and what it means to be a hero. Moreover, they developed internet research skills as well as writing skills. Thanks to the outstanding facilitators and managers of this wonderful project, my students could design a web page for their heroes to honor them and publish their writing to the international audience of **MY HERO**. We are extremely grateful to all My Hero staff for their help and kindness.

GLOBAL IMPACT

EDUCATORS' FEEDBACK

Ikram Esegir, Mohamed 5 High School, Kenitra, Morocco

It is certain that **The MY HERO Project** experience has been very enjoyable and enriching for my students and me. As a teacher, I greatly benefited from the resources and exchange of ideas the website offers; it has also enabled me to know more about my students: their heroes, idols, aspirations; it has also been an opportunity to discover many of their talents: writing, art, technology, that would otherwise have remained unknown!

For my students, this project has been an innovative learning activity: they have been responsible for their own learning (making decisions and choosing heroes/ how to present themes; it has offered them a secure and motivating space to collaborate, exchange ideas locally and globally as well as to freely express themselves; they have been using technology for a variety of purposes: connect, gather and organize information. In brief, this project- based activity has been a perfect model of 21st century learning

design that teachers all over the globe are aspiring for! So, thanks a million!

On behalf of all my students, I would like to thank all the **MY HERO** team members. Special thanks are due to our facilitators Barry and Wendy for making this journey comfortable and successful, and of course, best wishes to all the teachers and students who have participated in this learning circle.

Last but not least, I would not miss the opportunity to deeply thank my students/ "heroes" who have produced excellent work despite time and curriculum constraints. I am so proud of them.

Vera Stoilov Spasova, O' Naklo, Slovenia

Last year I worked with that same group of students in **MY HERO** Learning Circle. Those students are all at secondary school now but they've told me that learning about different countries and meeting new friends is the best reward after hard work.

Tatiana Nosareva, Gymnasium 14, Orekhova-Zuyevo, Moskovskaya Oblast, Russia

It's really challenging and exciting to deal with students whose passion and interests belong to English, literature, culture, communication, music and art. **MY HERO** attracts me and my kids because it gives unique opportunities to learn something new, to interact with peers and make a difference - Challenging Educational Project!!! Wish you all peace in your families, countries, anywhere.



EDUCATORS



Mali Bickley

Innovative Global Educator
ISTE Keynote Speaker
Teacher, Canada

*What **The MY HERO Project** has created for us as educators is an invaluable resource, and shows that learning is real and meaningful on so many levels. Being able to take experiences and make them personal, and then also to share with a global audience is authentic learning at it's best.*

*I am so proud to be part of the **MY HERO** family and having the project to share with others and my students. Your small idea has truly made a BIG impact on kids and teachers all over the world.*



Emily Murray

Director of Arts Programs
Laguna Beach Boys and Girls Club

***The MY HERO Project** Media Arts Education Program...introduced our 4th and 5th Grade students to numerous environmental heroes while giving them training in Media Arts Production. The **MY HERO** mentors trained the students how to use cameras, conduct interviews and edit video montages on the computer. One of the benefits of having this program run in our facility is that our staff also received training from **MY HERO**, as well as equipment, so that we can continue creating and celebrating heroes on myhero.com.*

At the end of the program the completed work was screened for parents and heroes,

*and all of the kids were beaming with pride and accomplishment. We are all looking forward to more programs with **MY HERO**!*

Abdesalam Zouita

Teacher,
Làayoune, Sahara Morocco

*It is breathtaking when I do remember my experience in **MY HERO** Projects. I have learned more than I have been expecting from these projects. I have made very interesting connection around the world... I have improved my learning, teaching skills, strategies, and methods. **MY HERO** Projects provide opportunities to practice English globally...*

Mark Hildreth

SanLee Middle School
SanLee, North Carolina

*Thanks a million times again. **The MY HERO Project** has been an incredibly rewarding project for my kids, who labor with writing so much!*





Bujar Luma

Executive Director

Center for Balkan Cooperation Tetovo, Macedonia

***MY HERO** has a very effective platform/tool to work in post-conflict, ethnically-mixed areas and communities; and through its activities has fostered debates on important issues of our society... the project has generated positive energy and has contributed to reestablishing trust in areas where ethnic communities were divided... Promoting values and animating people with the idea of heroism, we have succeeded in moving attention from things that divided to the things that unite different community members.*

Marinta Skupin

Curator of Education, Laguna Art Museum

*I have been an admirer of **The MY HERO Project** ever since I learned about its existence upon arriving in Laguna Beach in 2012. I have been particularly impressed by how effectively it enables students to use media and technology in the process of identifying and learning about inspirational role models.*

*It is therefore with great excitement that I look forward to the first opportunity for collaboration between Laguna Art Museum and **The MY HERO Project**.*

***The MY HERO Project** will be an extremely valuable addition to our list of partners, especially since it will offer visitors the ideal opportunity for hands-on engagement with technology while learning about heroes in art.*

Andrés Sierra

Educator, Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico

*Sometimes we are not aware, or conscious of the great impact this project has in our lives, but our students often remind us how positive this experience was for them. We are still receiving e-mails from students that already graduated from school, who participated in **The MY HERO Project** some years ago, thanking us for the great experience and telling us how inspiring and fulfilling the whole process was, meeting people from around the globe and exchanging experiences.*

*For me, it has been an incredibly motivating and inspiring experience too. The whole process is so rich and well organized. I thank all the **MY HERO** team for putting so much effort in making this happen. YOU ARE MY HEROES!!!"*

STUDENTS



Slater Jewell-Kemker

Student Reporter

Award winning filmmaker, Activist

***The MY HERO Project** and its media arts workshops give students of all ages the resources to build their digital media skills and the means to share their ideas with a global learning community. But more than that, the project gives people my age and younger hope, inspiration, and motivation to believe in themselves, and their ability to change the world. By bringing attention to the heroes in our midst, the ordinary people who do extraordinary things, **MY HERO** makes us all realize what we're capable of.*

*It did for me. Since I spoke with Jean-Michel Cousteau, I have chosen to follow his footsteps and inspire others to protect our planet and build a sustainable, green society. Thanks to the ongoing support of **The MY HERO Project**, I'm now producing a feature-length film on environmental youth activists worldwide called *An Inconvenient Youth*.*



Fernando

4th Grade Student

ECO-Heroism program,

Laguna Beach Boys and Girls Club

*I loved everything in **MY HERO**!! This was one of the best programs I have ever been in.*

Sean Guy

Student T-Shirt Prize Winner

San Diego, Ca.

*The best part about **The MY HERO Project** is that the stories posted truly are inspirational and uplifting. It compiles the best humanity has to offer and puts it into an easily accessible form. I am glad to have been introduced to this project.*

Andreea Minzat

Age: 17

Alexandru Papiu Ilarian Highschool Dej in Romania

*I consider **MY HERO** as an opportunity for us to develop our knowledge, to learn about heroes from other countries and from our own country and to practice and improve our English language. I believe it is a complex project that addresses to all students and can cover all expectations.*



GLOBAL IMPACT

HEROES' FEEDBACK



Ron Kovic is an Academy Award-winning author and sponsor of The Kovic Peace Prize at The MY HERO Film Festival

*Get involved with **MY HERO** because it is one of the most important and worthwhile things that you can do. You will be adding to a more peaceful world. You will be bringing people together. You will be bringing out the best in yourself and in others...*

If you really care about peace, if you care about a better world, if you really believe that there is an alternative to war and violence as a way of dealing with conflicts

*both here in the US and around the world, then you'll realize why **MY HERO** is so important. And you'll take an active role. You'll participate, and you begin to move in a whole new direction. You begin to see that there are alternatives to war. There are creative solutions—that we do have it within ourselves to make this world a better place, to reach goals that we, perhaps, never before dreamed possible.*

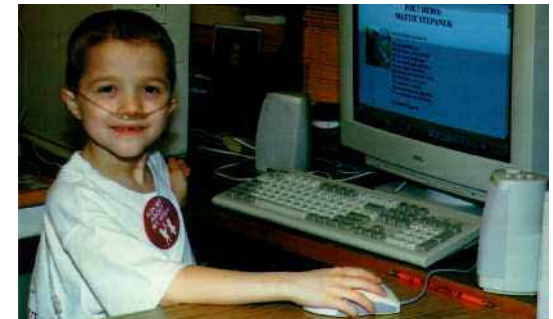


Kovic Peace Prize Winner
Azim Khamisa: *The Tool of Forgiveness*



Jeni Stepanek, Ph.D. is an author, activist and mother of poet/peace hero Mattie J.T. Stepanek, and executive director of his foundation.

*You have helped to re-shape the word 'hero' for many people.
What a gift.*



Poet and peacemaker hero
Mattie J.T. Stepanek



Kathy Eldon is an author and founder of the Creative Visions Foundation. She annually sponsors the Dan Eldon Activist Award at The MY HERO International Film Festival.

*Thanks to Wendy Jewell's thoughtful profile of Dan on the **MY HERO** site, countless individuals around the world have learned about the life and legacy of my son, a 22-year-old photojournalist and creative activist who was killed in Somalia while covering a story for Reuters News Agency in 1993. Our family is deeply grateful to **MY HERO** for its outstanding work in inspiring other young activists to create awareness of important issues and catalyze positive change in our world.*



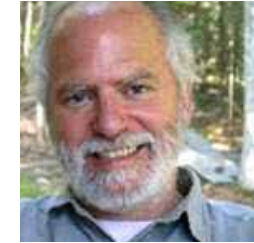
2011 Eldon Activist Award Winner
Erica Fernandez: The Tool of Protest



2012 Eldon Activist Award Winner
A Ride with Matt



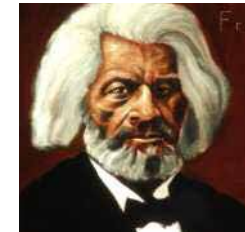
Dan Eldon



Robert Shetterly & Michele Hemenway USA

Authors, *Americans Who Tell the Truth*

*We who have been working on “Americans Who Tell the Truth” are very grateful to have been included in **The MY HERO Project**. Our collaboration of portraits and lesson plans helps students explore what heroism is and is not... We congratulate all of you at **The MY HERO Project** for your mission to educate children to be good citizens*



Art by Robert Shetterly

MY HERO TEAM

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Jeanne Meyers
Co-Founder
and Director



Karen Pritzker
Co-Founder and
Producer



Rita Stern
Co-Founder and
Producer

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Learning Circles
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Artist

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Xenia Shin
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Shelby Adair
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Gabrielle Gorman
New Roads Intern



Our special thanks to all of the professionals, teachers and students who contribute hero-themed essays, art, lesson plans, audio and short films to this multimedia journal and digital library.



AWARDS and RECOGNITION



2013 Online Video Stories Website Award



Best Documentary Short 2012
(MY HERO Report: Youth Edition volume 2)



2009 Silver Award Winner



2006 Education Website Honoree
2004 Best Spirituality Nominee (Wheel of Faith)



Best Educational Website



Top-Rated on GreatNonprofits.org

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Special thanks to all of our donors throughout the years.

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The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
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New Roads School and New Visions Foundation
UC Irvine Donald Bren School of Information & Computer Sciences
University of Southern California - School of Cinematic Arts

Herb Alpert Educational Village
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KOCE - OC
LA36.org

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MY HERO partners with a wide network of organizations around the world.

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum
Africa Geographic
Art Miles Mural Project
BELLA GAIA
Children Uniting Nations
CreativeVisions.org
Life Giving Moments
Fundación Federico García Lorca
Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust
iEARN (International Education and Resource Network)
Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission
Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition
Miami Country Day School - Abess Center for Environmental Studies
Peace Pals International

The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission
UCLA Today
University of Southern California - My Teacher, My Hero
Laguna Beach Boys and Girls Club
Laguna Art Museum
Imagination Celebration
New Visions Foundation
Laguna Beach Community Foundation
Creative Visions Foundation
iEARN.org
iEARN Canada
New Roads School
USC School of Cinematic Arts
Americans Who Tell The Truth

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Jonathan Anderson
John Barrett
Jonathan Keller
Zackary Kiebach
Riley McMahon
Charlie McMahon
Gala Mendoza
Meredith Nilsen
Monica Olson
Casey Pearlman
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Thanks to all who help support this global learning community.

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pinterest.com/myheroproject



Find us on YouTube
youtube.com/MYHERO



See more of our films on Vimeo
vimeo.com/myheroproject



LEADERSHIP

FOUNDERS

Karen Pritzker | Branford, Connecticut

CO-FOUNDER AND PRODUCER

Karen understood early on the potential of the Internet to be a tool for education and literacy. She is an author, producer and a passionate advocate for diverse approaches to education. Karen spearheaded The MY HERO Books Project as well as numerous features on the web site. Most recently she served as the Executive Producer of The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia, which is screening across the nation in schools and which aired on HBO. She was formerly an editor at both Working Mother Magazine and McCall's. She co-founded Read to Grow in Connecticut, a program that provides new books and literacy support to new families.

Rita Stern | Santa Monica, California

CO-FOUNDER AND PRODUCER

Rita Stern has worked as an independent producer in Los Angeles where she has also edited films. She won an Emmy for her PBS Frontline documentary. Rita is an artist and she has exhibited her artwork in galleries in Los Angeles..



Rita has contributed original hero art to the MY HERO Gallery and she has also helped design the MY HERO website. Rita has produced several MY HERO events at the Herb Alpert Educational Village in Santa Monica, Ca.

Jeanne Meyers | Laguna Beach, California

CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR

Jeanne has been directing the MY HERO website since its inception in 1995. Jeanne is a filmmaker and a digital media producer. She produces special events for MY HERO including The Laguna Beach Hero Fest, The International Day of Peace Event, Nelson Mandela Day and educational outreach programs in the USA and abroad.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark Cavanagh | Chepachet, Rhode Island

Mark Cavanagh is a screenwriter. He founded Youth Vision, Inc., which promotes television by and for kids. A Recipient of the Action for Children's Television Award, Mr. Cavanagh has directed projects for Public Broadcast and recently released his first feature film.

Leanne Mella | New York, New York

Leanne Mella is a specialist in American contemporary art. Most recently, she was a guest curator at the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami. She served for close to seven years as the manager of International Visual Arts Programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State where she was responsible for programs supporting the participation of U.S. artists in major international exhibitions and cultural exchange programs in the visual arts.

Cynthia Costas Cohen | Beverly Hills, California

Cynthia Costas Cohen is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Beverly Hills, California. Cynthia's specialties include EMDR and hypnosis. She is the co-author of *The 7-Day Energy Surge*, a *New York Times* bestseller.

Judith Zucker Anderson, Ph.D. | Laguna Beach, California

Judith Zucker Anderson, PhD, is a clinical psychologist. She is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the UCI College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior. Dr. Anderson also serves as President of the Foundation for the Contemporary Family (FFCF), a non-profit foundation whose mission is to support innovative research, clinical training, and community programs that address the important issues facing contemporary families.

LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Linda Kahn | New York, New York

Linda Kahn is President of Linda Kahn Media LLC, a global consulting firm dedicated to forging strategic business and creative partnerships in all aspects of children's media and entertainment for general audiences. Formerly Senior Vice President of International TV Sales & Merchandising for Scholastic Media, Kahn established Scholastic Media's presence in the highly competitive global market. In senior management positions at Nickelodeon, she was instrumental in the growth of Nickelodeon, successful launch of Nick at Nite and initiated the international TV program sales division. She has extensive experience training teachers nationwide in media education.

Carolyn Hodge-West | Dowagiac, Michigan

Carolyn Hodge-West is an innovative business leader with extensive board leadership and civic involvement. She currently serves on the board of trustees for a regional health care delivery system. A graduate of Northwestern University, Carolyn is a professor of Psychology, Human Development and Interpersonal Communications. Throughout her career, Carolyn has demonstrated a lifelong commitment of working to improve the status of women and girls.

David Kleeman | Chicago, Illinois

David Kleeman is President of the American Center for Children and Media and Advisory Board Chair to the international children's TV festival, PRIX JEUNESSE. He has consulted for producers, broadcasters and organizations ranging from the Geena Davis Institute on Gender and Media and the Fred Rogers Center on Early Learning and Children's Media, to Baby Einstein, PBS Kids and HarperCollins Publishers. David authored a major study on public broadcasting's unique roles for children in the digital era; two book chapters; numerous articles for trade, academic and general press; and blogs for the Huffington Post.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Fiscal Year 2014

The following information is a condensed version of our audited financial statements as of and for the year ending June 30, 2014 that were provided in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America by Piazza, Donnelly and Marlette, LLP.

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$427,406
Grant receivable	310,864
Prepaid expenses	8,676
Property/equipment.....	7,212
Total assets	\$754,158

CURRENT LIABILITIES

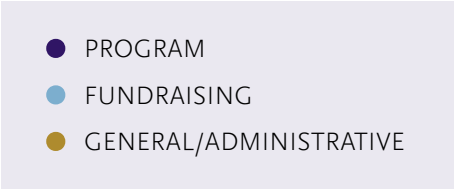
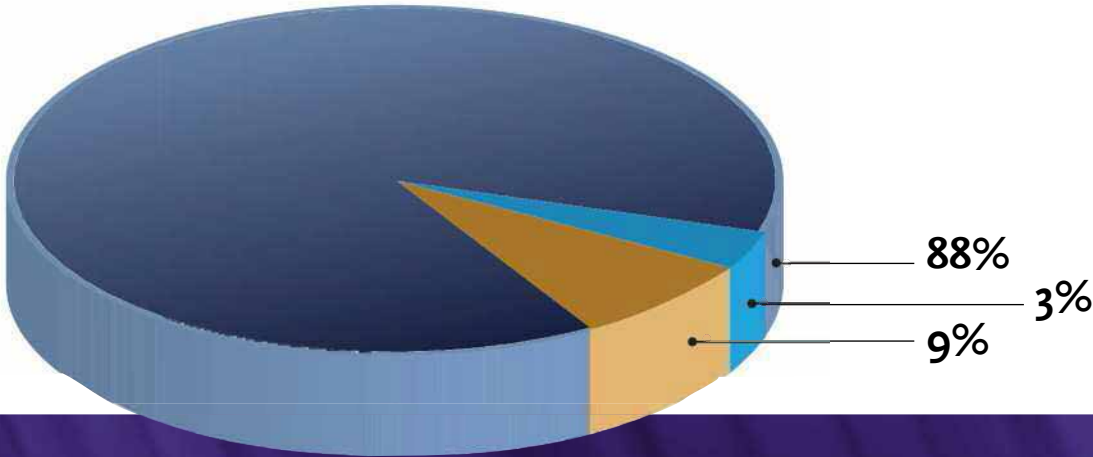
Accrued expenses	\$ 17,641
Net assets	736,517
Total liabilities and net assets	\$754,158

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

Contributions.....	743,297
In-kind	251,706
Interest and other	752
Total revenue and support.....	\$995,755

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Program.....	752,827
Fundraising.....	26,112
General and Administrative.....	77,714
Total functional expenses	\$856,653



The MY HERO Project is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to this nonprofit project are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The MY HERO Project



The MY HERO Project is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Donations to this nonprofit project are fully tax deductible.

myhero.com/donate

The MY HERO Project Inc.

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**MY HERO - Media Arts @
The Herb Alpert Educational Village**
Capshaw-Spielberg Center for
Arts and Educational Justice
3131 Olympic Blvd. Room # 203
Santa Monica, CA 90403

