



Certified Humor Professionals

Maia Aziz
Karyn Buxman
Cheri Campbell
Kay Caskey
Dwayna Covey
Brenda Elsagher
Fif Fernandes
Deb Gauldin

Roberta Gold
Barbara Grapstein
David Jacobson
Kathy Keaton
Jill Knox
Masako Kusakari
Kathy Laenhue
Linda MacNeal

Melissa Mork
Mary Kay Morrison
Jae Pierce-Baba
Katherine Puckett
Bronwyn Roberts
Diane Roosth
Erica Ruiz
Laura Sunn

Shirley Trout
Beth Usher
Helen Weaver
Jim Winter
Laurie Young

Learn more about the class of 2017!



The Positive Purpose of Humor - Harald Ellingsen

My project is to develop and perform a presentation/keynote about the benefits of humor & laughter and why you should always choose a positive attitude. My goal is to make people both laugh and think. As I firmly believe humor enhances interest and learning, I will in my presentation/keynote include standup comedy that underlines the theories of humor.

Some of the topics to be covered:

- Definitions of humor
- Humor and health
- Appropriate vs. inappropriate humor
- Choosing to laugh
- The power of attitude

The presentation will be presented in both Norwegian and English. Not necessarily at the same time.

~ Harald Eide Ellingsen is our Norwegian board member. Harald is a standup comedian and public speaker about humor. His day job is within politics, but his heart is in humor. Harald brightens the day with his 'seriously funny' stories, leaving his audience craving more.



Changing the world with LOVE and LAUGHTER - Guy Giard

Would you like to create a world where the main force is LOVE? Well, like me, you can! I have found my life's purpose and it is in helping others find their personal LOVE mission. I have volunteered in many Humanitarian Clown Missions with Dr. Patch Adams, giving LOVE and LAUGHTER in hospitals and orphanages in Russia, Guatemala, Peru, Mexico and India.

Giving as a 'love clown' has been the core of my Humor Academy Project. Humor has opened my heart and transformed my life as I joined AATH and volunteered with Dr. 'Patch' Adams. I am giving lectures on the health benefits of humor and am publishing three books in the coming years. The first one is entitled 'LOVE: One Man's Healing Journey'. The second book helps you find your passion, and the third is about living your purpose. These three books will help you overcome any adversity and make you fall in love with your life. They will clarify your own unique sense of purpose and show how YOU can contribute to global love and happiness!

This is the Power of Humor; not only can it open your heart; it can make you an agent of change for a better loving and caring world. Peace to you all.

~ Guy Giard is an author, speaker, professional artist and accomplished musician. During his volunteer Humanitarian Clown Missions with Dr. 'Patch' Adams, Guy has provided care for others in countless hospitals and orphanages. As an inspirational and motivational speaker, Guy gives talks on healing your life and living with purpose. He is a Certified Laughter Yoga Leader and Certified Humor Professional. His first book, 'Love: One Man's Healing Journey' is an inspirational journey that gives you the tools to overcome life's challenges. After having faced many heart wrenching crises in his youth and adult life, Guy Giard maps out in this deep personal account, the road to healing and success. A powerful testimony of the human spirit, Guy's rallying cry is to 'Get up and Live your Passion.'



Beyond Funny: Humor That Heals - Heidi Hanna. PH.D.

Over the past few years, the Beyond Funny entity has evolved to become an umbrella organization for several different projects, including the Beyond Funny Coalition, the Beyond Funny Humor Marathon, and the Beyond Funny Research Institute. For this Humor Academy project, I will focus my efforts on the most recent BF experience: "Shift Happens", looking at the impact of a daily humor intervention on non-conscious biases. In previous studies working with Dr. Evian Gordon and the Brain Resource research team, we determined that perceived stress decreases cognitive capacities in many areas, including flexibility, memory, attention, resilience and negativity bias.

Utilizing an integrative neuroscience assessment, I recently evaluated 200 successful entrepreneurs to determine brain patterns that may provide them with a basis for entrepreneurial success. The most significant finding was a higher than normal positivity bias, leading to high levels of perceived resilience in the midst of high levels of stress. In Phase 1 of my Humor Academy study, I wanted to see if a short humorous video viewed daily before work would shift negativity bias in a more positive way, and if there were any related shifts in other cognitive and emotional factors. Phase 2 of this study will be implemented at a health care facility in order to evaluate if we see similar results in shifting bias and resilience of clinical health care professionals.

~ Dr. Heidi Hanna is a New York Times best selling author, Chief Energy Officer and founder of Synergy, a consulting company providing brain-based health and performance programs to organizations, and the Executive Director for the American Institute of Stress. As a global speaker, she has been featured at the Fortune Magazine's Most Successful Women in Business Summit, the ESPN Women in Leadership Summit, and the Million Dollar Round Table. Her clients have included Microsoft, GE, Google, Starbucks, Morgan Stanley, Ameriprise, Nationwide and many more. Her current research explores the impact of stress, gratitude, curiosity and humor on brain health and performance. For fun, Heidi serves as a national board member for Blessings in a Backpack, a volunteer speaker for the Alzheimer's Association, and established a non-profit called Beyond Funny that provides resources related to humor and the brain. Heidi is a Co-Chair of the 2017 AATH Annual Conference - Orlando and will be the Chair of the 2018 conference in San Diego.



You May Pick Your Nose - Monnie Kinlaw

Your mother never gave you permission to pick your nose. But I have! AATH members know the power of the Red Nose. We use them frequently either by wearing or giving them away. We see the smiles, giggles and laughter they produce.

My project utilized the power of the Red Nose in the workplace with a well adult working population. I set out a large bowl of Red Noses at a large professional conference registration desk with the caption "You May Pick Your Nose." I recorded reactions, comments, interviewed participants and made observations throughout the three-day conference on those who chose to "pick their nose." I then provided the same bowl at the claims office of a major hotel chain using the same procedure.

The purpose of the project was to determine if the use of a Red Nose could impact positive emotion and improve customer service in a well adult workforce.

~ Monnie Kinlaw is a Registered Nurse with a long career that includes occupational and agricultural health, case management and utilization review. Her work is for a major hotel chain in Occupational Health/Claims. Twenty years ago, she developed a company, KK Educational Services and recently co-founded another, Entertainment CE. Both companies provide professional educational opportunities emphasizing fun and entertainment. She became involved in AATH and the Humor Academy in 2014 to infuse the use of humor in her educational experiences. Given the unique exposure opportunities that were provided, she states that she has grown both professionally and personally. Checking off a top item on her Bucket List, a speaking engagement at a large national conference was due to her HA experience.



My Piece of the Puzzle...Or Puzzled!!! - Sporty King, ACS/CL

On Monday, January 11, 2016 I tweeted, "I'm living life with more exclamation marks (!!!) than question marks (???). Yet I know who to ask because I choose my messengers carefully."

My project embraces and enhances that focus in my speaking business, which always has a spiritual twist. Humor Academy II (HA2) has taken what even I labeled my "natural" ability to be funny, and helped me repackage it as the joy of intentional humor. So I've taken some of that natural stuff to a higher level. Part of the message shared through my new business theme is that there is no Bottom Line success without Top Line compassion (The Top Line Is...How I Feel Affects Other People!!!)... This translates to How Other People Feel Affects Your Business!!! I remind people that they are important pieces in every puzzle in their lives. I created this presentation to facilitate Suicide Prevention Awareness training for the Army, and it will have transferrable use on any topic, creatively and intentionally. Meanwhile, it's not a new business theme...it's revamped. I didn't stick to it last time the vision arrived. Thanks HA2 (bless you)!!!

~ Sporty King, ACS/CL is an Inspirational Humorist, here to remind you that you are an important piece of every puzzle in LIFE (Lessons Intended For Everyone)... specializing in showing people how to use humor to stay Powerful & Positive when Positive doesn't seem like an option. He started his business in 1994, wanting to be the 'Muhammad Ali of Professional Speaking'. What he found out is that Ali was the 'Sporty King of Boxing'. An expert on personal success, the impact of words on our lives, and turning any negative into a positive, he is the author of 8 books of inspirational poetry and positive affirmations. Sporty is a 1996 Toastmasters International Hall of Fame inductee, having finished as one of the Top 9 Speakers in the World Championship of Public Speaking; and finished as 2011 North Carolina Division C Highest Honors.



Developing and Teaching a PhD Seminar Class in Humor and Laughter Therapy - Fr. Paul Moore, MS, LPC, LMFT, NCC

My project is to develop and teach a PhD level seminar course in Humor and Laughter Therapy for the College of Education and Health Professions: Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources, and Communication Disorders titled, CNED 699V - Seminar: Humor and Laughter Therapy. Students will include those enrolled in the Master's or PhD program in Counselor Education and Supervision or currently licensed mental health counselors seeking continuing education or training.

The course will explore humor and laughter as a therapeutic paradigm and examine concepts and interventions as it relates to mental health and wellness, with an emphasis on mental health as the catalyst for overall wellness with a special emphasis on multicultural and liberation paradigms. The course will utilize experiential blended lecture and group discussion technique with research focused on discovering and creating meaning and process. The primary vehicle for this class is dialogue and discussions since therapeutic and healing modalities are often experiential and dialogical. Discussions, activities, and experiences will provide an opportunity to explore attitudes, feelings, and values associated with our perception of humor and laughter as it applies to therapeutic and wellness paradigms as well as recognizing different experiences in others.

The course will include the following assignments:

- Humor and Laughter Genogram
- Interview Humor and Laughter Professional
- Individual Article Presentation
- Partnered Media Analysis
- Multicultural/Liberation Humor Final Presentation

~ Fr. Paul Moore is a Licensed Professional Counselor, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, a National Certified Counselor, as well as an Anglican priest. His psychotherapy practice, Client Focused Counseling, provides counseling and marriage & family therapy to the NW Arkansas region. Fr. Moore's therapeutic approach is a blend of Humanistic, Psychodynamic, Family Systems, Thomistic, and Liberation. He currently serves on the AATH Board of Directors.



THE PRINCIPAL DIARIES: Principles for Leading with Humor and Heart - Nila Nielsen, Ed.D.

As an elementary principal, I watched my colleagues grow weary under the tremendous pressure of the day-to-day tasks and overwhelming responsibilities of ensuring success and safety in their schools. Having been assigned to three buildings and loving my job, I questioned why I felt invigorated with each day rather than stress. The answer was clear. I had infused humor daily, and found it to be the answer to building a positive school environment and preserving the joy I felt in this role.

For this project, I compiled examples of how school administrators and school leaders infuse humor to create a warm, fun and caring learning environment. The Principal Diaries is a sampling of real-life experiences shared in a light-hearted format. Its purpose is to help others learn how to laugh at the little things, bounce back from the big things, and find joy in the unexpected.

The infusion of humor by school leaders may need to be intentional at first, but it will quickly become easy, especially considering they are surrounded by kids! The Diaries also encourage implementation of humor with an uplifted heart - one that encourages gratitude and kindness. When a central theme of 'learning with humor and heart' prevails, the result becomes a positive, caring environment led by a very happy principal.

It is my hope that by sharing the stories written through this project, they will inspire educational leaders and teachers to find the magic humor can bring and help them improve their own schools - one smile at a time.

~ Dr. Nila Nielsen proudly served students and families through her work as an educator and administrator prior to her retirement. By infusing humor, kindness and 'heart' into the school setting, Nila discovered the secret to turning challenges in to hugs! Nila currently serves on the board and as an AATH volunteer, helping others discover the joy of humor. She freely provides humorous inspiration to all who will listen in her work as a motivational speaker.