



## It starts with a label: Learning Disabled. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Too often, it also ends there. That's where Project Eye-to-Eye comes in. As the only national mentoring program pairing kids with LD/ADHD with similarly labeled high school and college students, Project Eye-to-Eye encourages labeled children to become their own best advocates.

Using an art-based curriculum of individual and group projects, our mentors guide their mentees to unearth their own potential, in their own way and on their own timetable. Art removes the kid's barriers to learning: there are neither rules nor expected outcomes. Each kid learns his or her strengths and comes to value them. They see that there are many ways to solve a problem. Because they set their own expectations, they aim high, and use their newfound skills and confidence back in the classroom.

**The mentors make all the difference.** They are empathetic, well-trained and deeply committed college and high

school students with LD/ADHD who have all faced the same challenges as the children they support. Project Eye-to-Eye kids see a hopeful future in their mentors.

**+** **99.2%**  
of mentors reported that it was through feeling that they were a part of an **LD community** (often for the first time) that they were able to increase their self-confidence, self-esteem, and their ability to act as an advocate for themselves

Mentors consistently report that they benefit as much from the program as the students themselves. Because they also have LD/ADHD, the mentors share a common perspective, one that

is critical to the emotional and educational development of their mentees. This creates an enormous sense of value and empowerment among the mentors, who continue to learn and grow through their involvement. An added benefit is the opportunity for mentors to connect with each other, sharing experiences and often teaming up to help each other with college work. The life skills acquired as a Project Eye-to-Eye mentor – organization, management, leadership – provide mentors with a big head start towards their post-college life.

“Graduates” of Project Eye-to-Eye’s mentoring programs overwhelmingly report increased self-esteem, a newfound ability to self-advocate and a greater appreciation of how their own minds work. The label? It’s still there, but now it speaks of strengths.

## Number of chapters on the rise

In 2010 we received a generous grant from the Oak Foundation Learning Differences Programme to build 14 new Project Eye-To-Eye chapters by 2012. This fall we welcomed the final eight schools that include the University of Wyoming, Cherry Creek High School, and Wesleyan

University, bringing our total number of chapters to 38 in 16 states. But it doesn't stop there. Last fall we received a grant to expand by 20 more chapters over the next two years. By the start of the 2012-2013 school year we will have 50 chapters across the country.

+ 85%

of mentors believed that Eye-To-Eye had a positive impact on their self-esteem



## Eye-To-Eye becomes a factor in mentors' college search

The Project Eye-To-Eye National Program Staff have begun noticing a new trend among graduating high school mentors and coordinators: the presence of a Project Eye-To-Eye chapter has increasingly become a factor when these students consider where to apply to college.

This fall, three former members of the Pennington Chapter in New Jersey headed to Hobart and William Smith Colleges, which is home to one of the largest chapters of Project Eye-To-Eye. The Pennington chapter coordinator, Marissa Perl, was one of those students. "I applied to several different schools with chapters of Eye-

To-Eye," Marissa says. "It became an important factor in my decision making process when applying to schools."

Another former chapter coordinator and close friend of Marissa's, Erin Minuth, from the St. Ignatius Chapter in San Francisco, is attending Whitman College which opened a new chapter in the fall. Erin shares, "I was so excited to be going to Whitman because there was Project Eye-To-Eye there. I knew I would have an instant supportive LD community." Both Marissa and Erin are now mentors at their college chapters.

## New program initiative: Think Different Diplomats

Last fall marked the beginning of an exciting programming initiative for us - the Think Different Diplomats. This new Project Eye-To-Eye speakers' board brings current mentors, recent graduates, and our executive leaders to schools, universities, and conferences nationwide.

Through lectures, workshops, and panel discussions, the Diplomats will share their own journeys to success - and inspire audience members to strive toward educational and personal empowerment as well.

Last fall, 22 of our college student leaders gathered in Washington D.C. for the Think

Different Diplomats Summit where they received training from members of our national staff on public speaking and telling their LD story.

These students also had the opportunity to meet with members of Congress to bring awareness to LD/ADHD issues thanks to our partners at the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD). In addition to arranging the congressional meetings, the NCLD team also educated the Think Different Diplomats on specific issues affecting people with learning disabilities that are currently being discussed on Capitol Hill.

+ 84%

of mentors felt that being part of Eye-To-Eye made them a better advocate for themselves as a student with a learning difference



[www.projecteyetoeye.org](http://www.projecteyetoeye.org)

To donate visit [projecteyetoeye.org/donate](http://projecteyetoeye.org/donate)