



# A.T. Community Ambassadors 2012 Report Summary



A.T. Ambassadors [Bios](#)

"I have been honored to be a part of the ATC Community and serve as an Ambassador and A.T. Community Committee member. I have enjoyed supporting the efforts to bring a greater awareness and appreciation for the A.T. and our local natural environment, resources and stewardship." – A.T. 2012 Ambassador

## A Year in Numbers

[Ambassadors](#)

11

[Volunteers Recruited](#)

961

[Ambassador Hours](#)

2990

[Students on the Trail](#)

Over 1000 and counting!

## [Project Highlights](#)

Trail Mural

Family Fun Hikes

Trail Happenings Classes

Interpretive Signage

Improved Trailhead Access

Tree Planting

A.T. Film Festival

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events

African American History Hike

Community Maps

Website promotion

Invasive Exotic Plant Mgmt.

Phenology Monitoring

Scout Hikes

Leave No Trace

[Contributions to the A.T.](#)

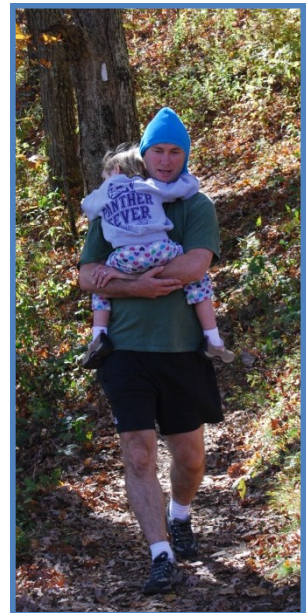
Priceless!

**Donnie Kelley**, Principal of Union County Middle School, encouraged teachers at his school to incorporate the A.T. into their curriculum, and they logged over 300 lessons that included the Trail in disciplines ranging from math to art. He is responsible for getting **over 600 of his students** out on the Trail with careful coordination with the US Forest Service, and increasing the number of students from 20% who had heard about the Trail to a full 100% within a year. Donnie distributed A.T. info at several festivals and events, raising interest and bringing new members to GATC. He is a committed member of Blairsville/Union County's Community Committee.

[Blog post](#)



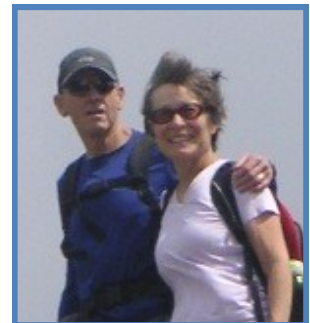
[Student Video](#)



**Anna Sherrill** supported Damascus in a variety of community and outreach events *and* helped to bring Abingdon, VA on board as a new A.T. Community. She initiated a *Trails Happening* class at the SW VA Higher Education Center, dubbed by the director as **one of the most successful classes they've held**, with over 40 registering for the class series.



She led hikes, provided presentations to civic, club organizations and corporations, collaborated with area partners, and is serving on the first Tourism committee, working to increase the appeal of Damascus to families and people with physical challenges.



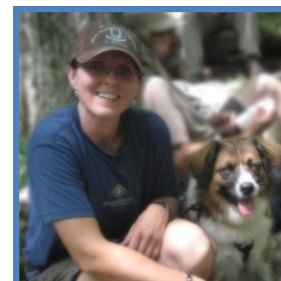
Click and Read: [The Power of Voice](#), the A.T. Journeys article by Leanna Joyner.



“Thanks to Dianna, we have at least 14 new club members as a direct result from her new Fun Hikes,” Steve Yonts, PATH



**Diana Billips** started her service year out with a bang, receiving immediate attention through the local paper (which attracted new club members) and a letter of congratulations from the US Congressman Morgan Griffith. Diana contributed countless hours to Bland County’s festivals, increasing the awareness of outdoor recreation through the Festival of Trails, Festival of Leaves, Summerfest and PATH’s DAWG Days. She supported the creation of a new outreach committee, of which she serves as co-chair; supported mowing and bald management at Chestnut Ridge (and provided supper!), and led many new outreach hikes A.K.A. Fun Hikes! Diana continues to be a valuable resource on hiking and trails for Bland, VA and her community.



**Mary Bennett** has worked in schools, at events, on the Trail and with families, scouts and student groups in Franklin, NC. She supported art projects at the library, spoke to over 300 students about the dangers of invasive exotic plant species, led over 100 students on A.T. hikes, and taught Leave No Trace and Hiking 101 workshops.

She also planned and coordinated events for Family Hiking Day and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the completion of the Trail. When she isn’t blogging, face-painting or hiking, she’s recruiting volunteers to get out on the Trail (over 160 of them this year)!



[Blog Post](#)



[Meet Mary](#)

**Kayah Gaydish** recruited almost half of the *total* volunteers we had as a goal this year, **241!** She led maintenance hikes, environmental monitoring projects and invasive species management workshops. She recruited youth groups, families, and diverse groups of volunteers. She picked up the lead on monthly hiker gatherings, supported staff on federally required deficiency mapping, and worked on a grant to increase the signage and interpretive information for the A.T. in Hot Springs, NC. At a dangerous crossing where many hikers miss the Trail, Kayah improved signage and Trail infrastructure at a dangerous road crossing where many hikers miss the Trail. She also helped bring interpretive signage to the new Visitors Center in town, and volunteers her time there to provide information to the public.



“Our Ambassador was a presence in the community and at Club events. She gave information and reached out to the community. She attended Club events and volunteered her time. She has been a positive influence and reflected well on the A.T.,” Anonymous club member, from Ambassador survey.



**Kweli Kitwana** has created unique and new opportunities in Harpers Ferry and Bolivar, WV, including the highly successful African American History Hike, a new A.T. Community Partnership Group, a film festival, Cake contest,



75th Anniversary event, Harpers Ferry Outdoor Festival, Spring Bash, and Tiger on the Trail TTEC project. She wrote [Outdoor Afro](#) Blog posts; supported the Canal Town Partnership, worked on a Trail Park Map, and much more!

*“Our Ambassador is continuing to improve the perception of the ATC together with promoting increased awareness of the A.T.”*  
From the A.T. Ambassador Survey

**Janet Hensley**, better known as Miss Janet across the broader Trail community, worked in Unicoi county doing outreach with businesses, civic groups, schools, the 4H group, scouts, Tourism, the Chamber and community leaders. She coordinated an Appalachian Trail Short Film Festival in conjunction with the Erwin Downtown Merchants Association, provided information about sustainable tourism and the A.T. at the county’s biggest festival—the Apple Festival, and brought over 40 thru-hikers to talk about the A.T. at the Fiddlers and Fiddleheads Festival, which drew over 3000 people. Miss Janet also traveled to New England and was able to engage with other A.T. Communities about their efforts and share successes.



**Meet Christine Lauriello**, the Ambassador for Boiling Springs, PA. Christine worked extensively with school groups, supported local festivals and events, with one event, Foundry Day, attracting over 1000 visitors. She participated in the Yellow Breeches Middle School Day of Caring, supporting the school’s effort to help non-profits, nursing homes, and other local volunteer groups. She led scout hikes, worked with the Boiling Springs Civic Association, and the South Middleton Township Parks and Rec office for their Tree Vitalize Grant program, did a family presentation at the Farm Show, and helped to improve Trailhead access at the parking area of Trindle Road.



**Mike Fraatz’s** work spanned the length of New York, as he reached out to Pawling and Warwick. Mike supported the Great Girl Scout hike all year, recruiting 45 volunteers to assist the scouts with their mission of getting out on the Trail for their 100th anniversary. He was also supportive of the work that the Dutchess/Putnam A.T. committee celebrated with the opening of the new [boardwalk](#) crossing the Great Swamp of Pawling. Finally, Mike volunteered at the successful designation ceremony in Warwick, NY this past June.

*“The A.T. Ambassador experience was priceless. I thoroughly enjoyed the entire process.”* A.T. Ambassador, Donnie Kelley

“Having a person to be the ambassador and help the communities with projects, marketing, etc. for the AT has been wonderful. The ambassador has helped plan our community ceremony and helped with A.T. family hiking day, which has helped tons being our first year as an A.T. community,” Anonymous from Survey



**Paul Smith** has worked tirelessly to bring Duncannon, PA on board as a new A.T. Community. Their designation in 2012 brought over 500 people to celebrate. They hosted a postcard contest in the schools, and the winning prints were distributed throughout businesses in town. The community has been working on a project called Apple Tree Alley, a master site planning initiative for regional greenway connections to the Susquehanna River, improving accesses and interpretive signage along the river and the A.T. Paul helped coordinate the completion of a mural in town, and is working on a video highlighting the designation.



**Dick Hostelley** has managed to make time to coordinate with



Luray/Page County, VA between trips to Afghanistan, and the community was the most recent approved application. Dick frequently visits Shenandoah National Park to talk with the public and hikers about the A.T. experience. He always encourages them to

contact his club, PATC, or their local Trail organization to get involved. He also supported scouts in their efforts to rehabilitate the Byrd Nest #2 hut in Shenandoah NP. Dick was recently elected Vice President of Volunteerism for PATC, and we're excited for him to remain active in that role working with A.T. Ambassadors supporting volunteer recruitment, engaging in A.T. Community activities and promoting the A.T. experience.

Map of Ambassador's 2012



## AMBASSADORS 2013

Interested in being an A.T.  
Ambassador in 2013?

[Read More Here](#)