



BritishBlindSport

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I invited Alan and Steve to work with a group of young people with sight loss at our Surrey County sports event. I was impressed by the way that they engaged with the young people. They were very patient, encouraging and supportive in the way that they delivered the session. Their coaching techniques were appropriate for working with Blind and Visually Impaired people, especially as they were very descriptive in the way that they coached.

The response from the children was very positive and the parents were impressed by the way the session was structured and delivered. It is our intention to use them again to work with other groups of young people with sight loss across South East England. I strongly recommend their services.

Alan Whetherly

Regional Development Officer, British Blind Sport

Dear Teachers of the Visually Impaired:

I have been working in the vision field for over 30 years. I have worked primarily as a TVI and Orientation and Mobility Specialist in public school settings, currently employed in an urban setting south of Boston.

I completed the 1Touch training because I felt I needed to do more to help my students become independent and safe travelers. They were learning the proper O&M techniques well, but was I really providing them the skills to be safe while traveling independently?

What I like about the One Touch program is that not only does it teach self-defense, but also helps to foster improved body awareness and movement, orientation, balance, and environmental awareness. It promotes physical fitness and provides modifications that allow participation in an activity that traditionally is not accessible.

The One Touch program of self-defense does not require a background in martial arts. People of all ages, sizes, and abilities can participate. I would highly recommend this program for any professional in the field of vision services.

Sincerely

Katrena Traut-Savino

Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments (TVI) Orientation and Mobility Specialist Brockton Public Schools System-wide

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Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Working with the visually impaired population has shown me just how terrifying the loss of sight can be for so many people. I heard somewhere that when asked if someone would rather be paralyzed or blind, most people would pick 'paralyzed.' I have no idea how accurate that statement is but I can attest that there is great amount of fear attached to losing vision amongst my clients. You would think someone who was a mountaineer or a soldier would be able to adapt and have manageable fear, but when faced with being blinded or a loss of functional vision, these people who were so daring and brave are now scared to ride the bus. The loss of confidence is staggering and the fear of being seen as a victim even prevents people from wanting to carry a cane, a very necessary part of navigating around. This is key for our clients- they have to be able to move about independently and using a cane and taking public transportation is a giant factor in true independence. When they are scared that someone will harm them, they are scared to go anywhere alone.

I have had clients who were war veterans that were scared to use a cane for fear of being victimized and attacked and it was then that I truly realized just how crippling this fear can be. Shortly after, I happened to run into Stephen Nicholls doing a 1Touch presentation. It all clicked into place of just how scared even the bravest could be and there is a need for everyone to increase their confidence. The 1Touch program does just that. I managed to get some fellow rehab teachers on board and we were trained in the 1Touch method. One of the biggest factors that attracted me to this program was that it was specifically designed for the visually impaired person and that it is so simple that one can disable an attacker in just one move and one step. Our clients cannot afford to move around and lose orientation and this method keeps them in touch with their attacker and enables them to break the psychological dominance. And the fact that one of our totally blind teachers with very limited mobility could "take me down" was the clincher..anyone can do this!

I cannot recommend this program enough. When someone feels safe enough to travel around alone again after losing their vision, it is literally a life-changer. Thank you Stephen for developing this program and for continuing to adapt and develop it to suit the needs of the VI population! Your passion, research and willingness to go anywhere people need you is to be applauded.

Maureen Reggie
Blind Rehab Teacher, COMS



December 18, 2013

To whom it may concern,

I had the pleasure of meeting Stephen Nicholls when he provided training for fourteen Lighthouse employees during Oct. 2013. Stephen is a very engaged and charismatic instructor. His passion is very evident by the way he remains focused, excited and truly zealous about teaching people to protect themselves.

The culture of the Seattle Lighthouse is enormously diverse; there are employees who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, blind hearing, blind with other disabilities and numerous foreign languages spoken within the Lighthouse. I was very impressed by Stephen's ability and willingness to make adjustments, as necessary, to accommodate all the participants' needs. To be an effective instructor with such a diverse group is not an easy task-very impressive!!

I am very impressed at the accessibility of the *1 Touch Program*. It allows for so many diverse groups to implement techniques for effective self-defense strategies. The program is beneficial for everyone, not only for people with disabilities. It's a program that allows an individual to gain self-confidence and independence. There are other benefits too, including, building communication skills, sensitivity to touch, and the awareness of where one is located in space. In addition, a person does not have to be physically fit to benefit from the program; it truly is for anyone interested in gaining life-long skills.

As an Orientation & Mobility Instructor I am excited to be able to share this knowledge with my clients, who often feel vulnerable while traveling on public transportation. I highly recommend the *1 Touch Program* to anyone interested in learning effective self-defensive techniques.

Sincerely,

Beth Jurco
Orientation and Mobility Specialist (MA, COMS)
Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
bjurco@seattlelh.org or (206) 436-2122

August 11, 2014

Dear Sir or Madam;

I am writing to offer my very favorable personal and professional opinion about the 1Touch Project developed by Stephen Nicholls. I learned about the program during a professional conference for educators who work with individuals who are blind and visually impaired. I was fascinated by the project as soon as I learned about it. It seemed like the type of program which could not only serve individuals who are blind and visually impaired by giving them a practical skill set to help promote safety, but also increase the individual's psycho-social well-being by creating a more positive self-image.

A few weeks after learning about the 1Touch Project, I underwent the coaches training. I was the only person with typical vision who took the training. The other participants had varying degrees of visual impairment, including total blindness. Before we began, we all talked about our reasons for participating in the training. My reasons for participating were different than the consumers who were blind. I was very interested in the Project as a professional who trains teachers of students with visual impairments. I wanted to learn more so I could share more with my students. The consumers who were blind in my training group all expressed wanting to learn skills to be safer when they traveled alone. Whether these consumers are in danger or not when traveling alone in their communities, the perception of threat and the constant feeling of fear significantly impact quality of life in a negative way. During the training, I saw these consumers take charge! At the beginning of the training, these were individuals who feared traveling alone. By the end of the training, these individuals were already carrying themselves with increased poise and self-assurance. It was a beautiful change!

Since I completed the training, I have shared the information I learned with two groups of pre-service teachers of students with visual impairments. I will continue to share information about the 1Touch Project with my classes. I have now incorporated an introduction to the 1Touch Project

as a part of one of my classes. I think it's great information for individuals who are blind and visually impaired and the professionals who serve them to have.

Sincerely,

Tessa McCarthy

Tessa McCarthy, PhD

Assistant Professor

North Carolina Central University, Visual Impairment Training Program



July 18, 2014

Subject: Letter of Testimony for 1Touch Project

Dear Sir or Madam,

The rate of crime directed towards persons with disabilities, including vision impairment and blindness is disproportionately high compared with the general population. Those with disabilities are perceived as vulnerable, not just by the general population but by those who seek to victimize them.

The 1Touch Project seeks to empower those with visual impairment and blindness by giving them confidence to live lives free of paralyzing fear as they learn through body and mind how to respond using the 1Touch Self-Defense Project to minimize or prevent injury and loss of life.

I recently had the privilege of completing a coaching certification course through the 1Touch Program in May of 2014. The 1Touch Project is a unique self-defense system devised by Mr. Stephen Nicholls that empowers visually impaired and blind people to defend themselves in necessary situations. The system is unique because it is designed to address the remaining, intact sensory systems of this population. This includes the use of touch and hearing to quickly ascertain possible threats to safety and life and to respond appropriately. Additionally, it addresses important areas of accommodation related to the visually impaired and blind's ability to navigate daily life, such as sensory efficiency skills, travel skills (orientation and mobility), social skills, and self-determination. These are skills which the visually impaired and blind need to live independently.

In my professional capacity, I have had the opportunity to see presentations on the 1Touch Project at several national vision impairment conferences. I have witnessed professionals in the field and their students/adult clients impressed with the simplicity of the curriculum, which allows them to utilize self-defense techniques immediately. It is then not difficult for these individuals to understand the significance of the 1Touch Project to their students and clients.

The 1Touch Project gives something to students and clients that is vital to almost everything they do. A visually impaired or blind person can learn to travel independently, qualify for college, and get a great job offer. But if that same person becomes a victim of violence, and is too afraid to travel because they fear for their safety, those earlier examples of independence and success become moot. The 1Touch Project gives those with vision impairment and blindness the confidence to live life more fully.

Best regards,

William Tubilleja, Certified TVI, COMS, AT Specialist, 1Touch Coach
Secretary, Raising Cane / Camp Abilities North Carolina, Co-Director



Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Pearl Van Zandt, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Dave Heineman
Governor

9/9/2014

I highly recommend the 1Touch Program. Stephen Nicholls and Miranda Brown are great teachers. They are professional, safe, and fun. If you are not getting the moves they are teaching, they spend time with you until you feel comfortable with the moves. This program can benefit people of any age or physical disability.

It allows you to stay safe without resorting to violence. That is one of the components that made 1Touch training stand out for me. The purpose of it is not to get into an altercation, but if you are forced into a confrontation, you can perform some very simple techniques to give you a chance to get away or have some control over the situation. The program teaches you ways to protect yourself without aggression if someone inappropriately touches or threatens you.

We at NCBVI were thrilled with the 1Touch training, and we are looking forward to seeing Stephen and Miranda very soon. Thank you for the great experience.

Mitzy Buchanan
Counselor-Communications Instructor
Nebraska Center for the Blind

Recommendation for 1Touch Project

I have been a Certified O&M Specialist for several years. Over the years I have looked for a program that effectively addressed the needs of some type of self-defense for my students. When I came upon the 1Touch Project I was elated to know there was such a program. I highly recommend the 1 Touch Project be made available to those who work with the blind or visually impaired. The training is concise, precise and an effective method of teaching self- defense to the average person who has no formal training in self-defense. The skills taught to the blind/ low vision student are thoroughly thought out and efficiently communicated in the curriculum and coaching certification course. Those who have use of their vision will highly benefit from the skills as well. 1Touch Project is a tool that needs to be in our toolbox.

Leah Pittman COMS

To Whom It May Concern:

There are many different systems, offshoots, or practices for disadvantaged personnel or people perceived to be, disadvantaged or "vulnerable members of society." " Some of them have philosophies, some of them have a comprehensive and in some cases, an incomprehensive curriculum; some of them, shockingly enough, even work! There is a lot of circumstantial information that needs to be taken into consideration when we start to contemplate how to teach deaf, blind, paraplegic, or otherwise disabled people. The 1Touch Project focuses on all people, with a emphasis on the blind.

I started studying Martial Arts when I was four in a literary format. When I was eleven, I started Karate at a community center. That progressed to Judo, Jujutsu, Hapkido, and many other disciplines. The community center eventually turned into various dojos and dojangs across North America and Australasia. I have almost no vision, an extremely low partial. I was a low partial learning different art forms in a primarily sighted environment. This means that you may or may not end up with a teacher/instructor/professor who has previously taught people like yourself. Ask yourself, how is his/her skill and understanding of a person's given problems...and that person's gifts. In other words, how sensitive to your problem is the person instructing you? More to the point, how sensitive is the system in which your studying to your particular needs?

Stephen Nicholls first ran into teaching blind people at a guide dog school in the United Kingdom. After he realized that a basic "WATCH-and-repeat" approach wouldn't work for people who, at best were extremely limited in what they could see, and at worse, weren't capable of seeing anything, he decided that there needed to be a comprehensive curriculum for the blind population , "a platform for distribution and continued development. Professor Nicholls has traveled around the world certifying coaches in the 1Touch system, rising to the challenge, and teaching the visually impaired world extensively.

The 1Touch system features an easily-understandable curriculum that has five core points; everyone of which is designed to be a hands-on and dynamic approach to keeping a person under threat in control of the situation. For a person who struggles with a visual impairment, using other abilities at your disposal is imperative. If your eyes don't work, your hands do. We take the "Touch" in 1Touch, literally. By making physical contact, we view a situation the way a sighted person would...just in a blind format. We learn how to carry ourselves, how to stand, how to move. We learn legal responses; we learn how to assess a threat, and the risk of one. We learn when it is best to call for help, or when we should stand our ground. We learn how to be more sensitive to the people that we work with.

As long as you remember that self defense isn't necessarily the same thing as a martial art, you can keep an open-minded, out-of-the-box approach to this constantly changing world that we live in. 1Touch takes into consideration size, gender of an aggressor, state of the environment (hostile or friendly, obstacle-plagued or relatively empty), proximity to friendly back up and/or law enforcement, and many other circumstances that simply have to come into contemplation when considering a violent or otherwise physical encounter with an assailant. We don't teach flashy techniques worthy of an oscar, we teach you how to extricate yourself from a situation that could potentially be life-threatening.

Brando Collins

November 14, 2014

Bernard Werwie
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RE: 1Touch Project

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to provide you with my testimony and very positive experience with the 1Touch Project. I am a 47 year old blind individual who is a member of the Greater Falls Run Lion's Club in Stafford, VA. I have been legally blind since birth. In fact, blindness runs in the men of my family. As such, I have been in and around the blind rehabilitation system my entire life. I am providing you with my testimony in regard to the 1Touch Project because it is – by far - one of the very best rehabilitation programs that I have experienced in my entire life.

Even though I have been legally blind since birth, for the majority of my life I have had some “functional” and/or “usable” vision which I have relied on heavily. However, approximately one year ago I lost all usable vision due to an accident and became totally blind. Adjusting to total blindness has been a daunting challenge because blindness has impacted just about every aspect of my life.

Fortunately, in late October 2014 I participated in the 1Touch Project self-defense certification training program at the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VRCBVI) in Richmond, VA. The 1Touch Project has literally changed my life because it has equipped me with the knowledge, skills and abilities to protect myself and my family when and if I encounter dangerous situations while participating fully in society on the path to reaching my greatest potential possible as an individual who is blind. In short, the 1Touch Project has provided me as an individual who is blind with the ability to live a life of independence with dignity and respect.

In conclusion, and for the reasons stated above, it is my privilege and honor to recommend the 1Touch Project to you and your organization without hesitation. Based on my very positive experience with the 1Touch Project, it is my sincere hope that your organization will make an investment in the lives of the blind by helping to support and sponsor the 1Touch Project so that they can continue to foster independence and change lives. Please feel free to call/email me at any time with questions. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Bernard Werwie
1Touch Project Student

To Whom It May Concern:

We held the first much wanted 1Touch Coaching Certification Course for Blind Veterans UK.

As a member and Trustee of Blind Veterans UK I was struck by the significant boost to self-confidence that could be delivered by the 1Touch™ program. At the same time as providing valuable techniques to bring a sense of security to one's physical well-being it also provides a better understanding of the world around us and how to move safely and efficiently within it."

As a reminder of what 1Touch is, the program provides a range of tactile skills to provide participants with the skills and confidence to defend themselves should they ever find themselves in an antagonistic situation, in which they may feel their personal safety, is being threatened. The course focuses on the need for, psychology behind and the implications of self-defense on a personal level that said this is not "Blind Judo"; I experienced first-hand the incredible power of this program to empower the Visually Impaired to give them the confidence and equally importantly the skills to move about in a sighted world without fear of antagonism. The 10 or so members who took part ranged in age from 32 to 84 and were at various stages in adjusting to their sight loss with some being very recent additions to the Blind Veterans family. I personally witnessed a significant change in several of the participants from meek & mild and intensely insecure to confident enough to present in a teaching environment the skills learned over the course of the 2.5 days, the change was frankly unbelievable. In terms of Rehabilitation benefit I don't think we should under-estimate the power of this program as a tool for the benefit of our members.

Regards

Kerry Levins
Trustee, Blind Veterans UK