



2009 Report to the Tri-Town Community

Dear Neighbor,

Since 2005, **Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth** of Chester, Deep River, and Essex has been committed to enriching the lives of our youth by building assets with and for them. Made possible with funding from *Middlesex United Way*, the Asset Development Strategy Team has served as a catalyst for mobilizing all sectors of the community to provide meaningful experiences, opportunities, skills and relationships that benefit all our children.

Through extensive research the Search Institute has identified 40 developmental assets, which can be considered the building blocks or ingredients for a young person's success. The more assets a young person possesses, the more likely he or she will be emotionally healthy and successful in life.

Within this publication you will find the results of our most recent survey of students in grades 7-12 taken in January 2009. We have also included the 2005 results from Search Institute's "Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors" as well as national numbers for comparison purposes. We are very proud of the growth shown over the past four years, with significant gains in many areas.

While we think the community is on the right path, we still have much work to do! We encourage everyone to get involved in asset-building. Please review this pamphlet. Become aware of the strengths and deficits our young people are experiencing, of initiatives that make a difference, and how you can help the children in your family, neighborhood, and community.

Thank you.

The Asset Development Strategy Team



Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth Activities portrayed here include: professional development for all Region 4 teachers; a banner with a message for sports events; information table at Liberty Bank; mini-grant awards for community organizations; window painting in Deep River to promote substance abuse prevention; skill building through equestrian program; team building at Camp Hazen.

Results of Search Survey 2005 and 2009

Percentage of youth, grades 7-12 experiencing assets 1-20

(External Assets: Positive developmental experiences that surround youth)

Asset	Asset Name	Definition	Nat'l %	2005 %	2009 %	Point Change
Support	1. Family Support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.	68	66	73	+7
	2. Positive Family Communication	Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek parent(s) advice and counsel.	28	27	34	+7
	3. Other Adult Relationships	Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.	43	49	58	+9
	4. Caring Neighborhood	Young person experiences caring neighbors.	37	40	45	+5
	5. Caring School Climate	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	29	28	39	+11
	6. Parent Involvement in Schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	29	19	25	+6
Empowerment	7. Community Values Youth	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	22	17	29	+12
	8. Youth as Resources	Young people are given useful roles in the community.	26	26	37	+11
	9. Service to Others	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	48	49	52	+3
	10. Safety	Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.	51	59	62	+3
Boundaries and Expectations	11. Family Boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	46	40	44	+4
	12. School Boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.	52	36	55	+19
	13. Neighborhood Boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	47	45	50	+5
	14. Adult Role Models	Parent(s) and other adults model responsible behavior.	27	29	31	+2
	15. Positive Peer Influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior	63	57	68	+11
	16. High Expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	48	57	68	+11
Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative Activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	21	23	21	-2
	18. Youth Programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.	57	70	67	-3
	19. Religious Community	Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	58	41	45	+4
	20. Time at Home	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	51	50	75	+25

Results of Search Survey 2005 and 2009

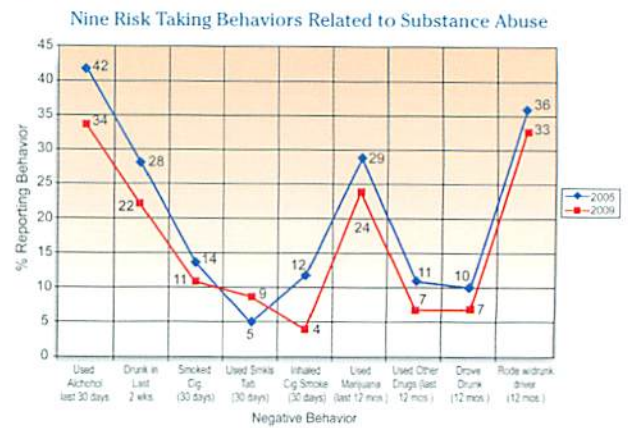
Percentage of youth, grades 7-12 experiencing assets 21-40

(Internal Assets: Qualities that families and communities nurture in their youth)

Asset Type	Asset Name	Definition	Nat'l %	2005 %	2009 %	Point Change
Commitment to Learning	21. Achievement Motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.	65	64	69	+5
	22. School Engagement	Young person is actively engaged in learning.	55	51	58	+7
	23. Homework	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	47	45	46	+1
	24. Bonding to School	Young person cares about his or her school.	52	51	65	+14
	25. Reading for Pleasure	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	22	27	30	+3
Positive Values	26. Caring	Young person places high value on helping other people.	50	42	47	+5
	27. Equality and Social Justice	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	52	43	48	+5
	28. Integrity	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his or her beliefs.	68	64	70	+6
	29. Honesty	Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy.	66	57	61	+4
	30. Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.	63	54	61	+7
	31. Restraint	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.	45	35	43	+8
Social Competencies	32. Planning and Decision-Making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	29	26	29	+3
	33. Interpersonal Competence	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	45	43	46	+3
	34. Cultural Competence	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	43	39	40	+1
	35. Resistance Skills	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	41	37	46	+9
	36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution	Young person seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.	40	45	54	+11
Positive Identity	37. Personal Power	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me".	42	46	49	+3
	38. Self-Esteem	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.	48	45	54	+9
	39. Sense of Purpose	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose".	57	58	70	+12
	40. Positive View of Personal Future	Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.	72	71	77	+6

Successes

These two graphs demonstrate an important asset building concept: as youth assets increase, risky behaviors diminish.



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Using the Asset Framework to Inform our Actions

While we have made significant progress in asset development in many areas, our results provide us with vital information to develop goals and implement strategies to directly benefit our kids and our community.

It is obvious that parents remain the single most important factor in their children's success. Parents influence their children through parenting practices, modeling behavior, and the opportunities they avail to their children for positive experiences and healthy relationships in the community.

Businesses, organizations, the faith community, other caring adults, and the media *must support the work of parents* and join them in modeling appropriate behavior and providing consistent messages about expectations. We encourage everyone's involvement in this important initiative.