

Making Community Connections for Asset Building

General Asset Building

- Coordinate the asset-building efforts in your congregation with other congregations and community organizations. Offer each other ideas and support. Communicate information on the Developmental Assets™ and asset-building stories and examples in newsletters and presentations.
- Sponsor billboards and/or public-service announcements on television and radio related to asset building. Highlight the positive ways all people can interact with young people. Tell stories about how young people contribute to the community.
- Identify leaders and volunteers in your congregation who are involved in the community in other leadership roles. Encourage them to be champions of asset building through their existing responsibilities and relationships.

Support

- Go deeper into Relational Ministries. Increase the number of volunteers involved in mentoring programs for children, youth, and families. Teach mentors about the 40 Developmental Assets. Encourage them to share stories that highlight positive results of asset-building efforts.
- Encourage all congregational leaders and volunteers to be active asset builders in their own neighborhoods and to work at creating caring neighborhoods for all children and youth.

Empowerment

- Offer leadership training and service opportunities to all young people in the community.
- Challenge messages in the media that stereotype youth or portray them as problems, and affirm stories that reflect an asset-building perspective on youth. Send letters to the editor, meet with editorial boards, and take appropriate action.

Boundaries and Expectations

- Equip leaders and volunteers to clarify boundaries for youth in their programs and in their neighborhoods.
- Work with community youth to develop a statement of expectations for all youth in the community. Then sponsor public dialogues about these expectations.

Constructive Use of Time

- Sponsor sports and recreation activities, or music, drama, or other arts programs for community children and youth, and invite them to participate in congregational youth programs.
- Sponsor or cosponsor after-school activities for community youth.

Commitment to Learning

- Sponsor or cosponsor afternoon tutoring or study places for community children and youth.
- Set up a homework hot line. Ask and train older youth and adults to answer calls about various subjects.

Positive Values

- Join with other organizations to identify and promote shared community values. Seek to find common ground.
- Honor young people in the community who model positive values. Consider, for example, sponsoring a scholarship or award for youth who exhibit a strong commitment to serving others.

Social Competencies

- Get involved in community efforts to encourage nonviolence and peaceful conflict resolution. Support community efforts to build young people's social skills.
- Have youth develop drama, music, or other presentations for teaching social skills to children.

Positive Identity

- Sponsor or cosponsor activities that help young people affirm and connect with their own cultural heritage.
- Work with community youth to paint a mural that depicts their sense of identity and the kind of community and world they hope for.

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