

Mentor Memos

Fairfield County 4-H

Where youth dream & Achieve

New Haven County 4-H

volume 23

Developmental Assets® are positive factors within young people, families, communities, schools, and other settings that research has found to be important in promoting the development of young people.

Asset 18: Youth Programs

After-school activities: They may be extra but they're also essential

It's appropriate that the word *extracurricular* starts with the letter "E." But the word should really be *essential-curricular*. In fact, they're so important many schools are now calling them *co-curricular* activities. For many young people, youth programs at school and in the community are the highlight of their day. They meet new people who share their interests or introduce them to new pursuits. They spend time with adults who also enjoy the activity. And, they boost their skills. **Youth Programs** is Asset 18 of Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, the qualities, experiences, and relationships that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Here are the facts

Research shows that young people who regularly spend time in sports, clubs, or other youth programs have higher self-esteem and better leadership skills, and are less likely to feel lonely. About 57 percent of young people, ages 11–18, spend three or more hours a week in youth programs, according to Search Institute. Involvement in interesting activities helps bring out the best in young people.

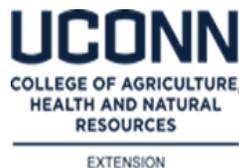
Tips for building this asset

Encourage young people to join a school or community activity that matches their interests, or try one they have never considered before. People can learn a lot about themselves by taking a chance on something new! Clubs and programs can also help young people make new friends of all ages, give them leadership opportunities, and make school more fun. Clubs and programs give students something to look forward to. Many groups also let them choose how much time and energy to commit.

In your home and family: With your child, make a list of activities he or she wants to learn about. Rank the ideas according to her or his level of interest. Together, research ways to try out their top choices. Check your newspaper for upcoming community activities such as charity events, art openings, or athletic events. How many are youth-centered or allow youth participation? Perhaps you may want to start a new 4-H club.

In your 4-H group: Discuss the following with the young people in your group: If you could start a club of your own, what kind of club would it be? How would you get your friends to join? What kind of materials would you need to learn about this new project?

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-External Assets-

Support

1. Family support
2. Positive family communication
3. Other adult relationships
4. Caring neighborhood
5. Caring school climate
6. Parent involvement in schooling

Empowerment

7. Community values youth
8. Youth as resources
9. Service to others
10. Safety

Boundaries & Expectations

11. Family boundaries
12. School boundaries
13. Neighborhood boundaries
14. Adult role models
15. Positive peer influence
16. High expectations

Constructive Use of Time

17. Creative Activities
18. Youth programs
19. Religious community
20. Time at home

-Internal Assets-

Commitment to learning

21. Achievement motivation
22. School engagement
23. Homework
24. Bonding to school
25. Reading for pleasure

Positive values

26. Caring
27. Equality & social justice
28. Integrity
29. Honesty
30. Responsibility
31. Restraint

Social Competencies

32. Planning & decision making
33. Interpersonal competence
34. Cultural competence
35. Resistance skills
36. Peaceful conflict resolution

Positive Values

37. Personal power
38. Self-esteem
39. Sense of purpose
40. Positive view of personal future