

## Building on asset-building

Once you have been building assets for a while, you may want to go deeper. But how? Make an even bigger difference in the life of a young person by trying these asset building ideas.

- **Once you know the names of young people, get to know them even better.** Find out about their interests, hobbies, passions, and dreams. Connect them to people, places and experiences that will help them grow in these areas.
- **Set your sights on marginalized children and youth** who may have a more difficult time building assets. Identify their passions and strengths and help them work through barriers to achieving their goals. Connect them to people and programs that can support them.
- **Meet the parents** of the young people you know. Tell the parents what you like about their child. Collaborate and communicate with parents regularly.
- **Consider sticking with a group of kids** rather than volunteering for a specific age group. For example, instead of always coaching 5<sup>th</sup> graders in basketball, work with the same group of kids as they move through grades 6 and 7.
- **Tell other adults about asset building.** If you're an employee, get your coworkers on board. If you're a parent, tell other parents about the asset approach. Do whatever you can to spread the word about building assets for children and youth.
- **Figure out ways to spend meaningful time** with young people. Find activities that expose them to new experiences...especially ones where you are both learning something new.
- **Build assets every single day.** Be present when talking to young people which might mean you have to turn off your cell phone. If you've tried saying hello once in a while, make the commitment to say hello every day and invest some time in getting to know them better.
- **Choose an activity you enjoy** doing with young people and stick with it. If you enjoy writing and photography, get a group of neighborhood kids together to publish a neighborhood newsletter with you. Create a publication schedule and get together to assemble each issue.
- **Fill a niche that no else has filled.** One parent was troubled that the kids stood alone at the bus stop. So she started waiting with the kids every morning (and learning their names) and getting them when they came home at the end of the day. She went a step further and began getting to know the bus driver. Whenever a kid was locked out of the house, she took it as an opportunity to have a neighborhood play date.

- **Seek out opportunities** to connect with young people. Find out if your local school district has someone who can tell you about volunteer opportunities in the school. School districts and individual teachers are always looking for adult volunteers to help their students throughout the year.
- **Team up with another adult and create an asset-building activity.** For example, two neighbors got together and created a garden. The garden was in one neighbor's yard, and the other neighbor helped get local young people involved in choosing what to plant, shopping for the seeds, planting, weeding, and harvesting the garden.
- **Talk with young people** and find out how you could help them build Developmental Assets. You might be surprised by what they have to say.
- Find space in your curriculum to **give kids a chance to explore their passions.** One secondary school gives one English class a week toward the meaningful pursuit of a passion.
- If your community has a non-profit community group, **ask the coordinator** how you can help to support them.
- **Introduce asset-building to youth that are mentoring other youth** and challenge them to build assets for, and with, their peers.
- **Engage your community's voice** by creating an on-line poll on your home page that asks your followers a question every week. Use their answers to make decisions so they can see and feel that their input has had value.
- Need a problem solved? Creating a new program? **Strike a committee of youth to help.** It will be fun for everyone....and it's a powerful asset builder.
- Give children and youth **opportunities to speak to large audiences** in a meaningful way. Let them be involved in the writing of what they will say. Let them tell their stories. Let them welcome parents into their school.