

## Asset-Building **Ideas** for Youth

You can make a difference for yourself and your peers by learning about and building the developmental assets. Some teenagers have started by learning the names of more of their peers at school. Some build assets by befriending younger children. Others have focused their efforts on making a difference in their congregation or community. Here are ideas on how to get started as an asset builder:

- Learn the names of your neighbors (including adults, children, and other teenagers). Ask one of your parents to introduce you to neighbors you don't know.
- **Post the 40 developmental assets in your room or in your locker. Choose a different asset each day and focus on nurturing it for your friends.**
- Sample a variety of experiences and activities in music, theater, art, and athletics, at school and in your community.
- **Participate in at least one club, group, team, or sport—or find something creative that appeals to you, like acting or music.**
- Get to know an adult you admire
- **Replace put-downs with affirmations.**
- Become a walking example of asset building. Learn more about the research and the implications of the asset framework.
- **Write a note to or call one of the main asset builders in your life. Thank her or him for making a difference in your life.**
- Think of your best friend. Do they build you up or drag you down? How do they build assets for you? How do you build assets for them?
- Go out of your way to greet your neighbors.
- Limit the amount of television you watch. Choose shows you really like not just whatever is on.
- **Volunteer at your local nursing home, community center, or animal hospital.**
- Take a conflict-mediation course.
- **Start a book club with friends and read just for fun.**
- Practice different ways of saying no when people try to get you to do things you don't really want to do.
- **Talk about the 40 developmental assets with your family. Which assets do family members think are the strongest in your family?**
- If you have a part-time job during the school year, limit your work schedule to allow time for schoolwork, doing things with family and friends, and other activities.
- **Identify something each family member is good at and learn from them. If your sister is great at geography, turn to her when you're reading a map or needing help with a geography assignment. If your dad is a whiz at math, seek him out for making a savings plan or for assistance with a math problem.**

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- Discuss with younger people in your neighborhood what's good about where you live. Also discuss ways you could help improve the neighborhood.
- **Even if your family provides a warm, caring, supportive place to grow, also seek support through adults in your school, community organization, or congregation.**
- Examine the activities you are in outside of school. Are you feeling challenged? Do you enjoy activities? Do you feel you have enough time to do the activities, complete your homework, and also have time for yourself, family and friends? If not, consider making some changes.
- **Seek out adult mentors and healthy role models.**
- Become involved in a social issue that interests you, such as poverty, civil rights, endangered species, hunger, child abuse and neglect, the environment, or discrimination.
- **Get involved in the community through volunteering.**
- Build a relationship with a child through baby-sitting, playing catch with a neighbor, or volunteering as a coach or coaching assistant.
- **Let your friends know that you are available when they need someone to talk to. If they need it, help them get additional assistance from a counselor, social worker, parent, or other adult.**
- Seek out people and information to help make your future dreams and plans come true.