



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



JULY Asset of the Month:
COMMUNITY VALUES YOUTH
Young people perceive that adults in the community
value children and youth.

This document is designed to help adults throughout Santa Clara County develop materials and activities to promote the asset of adult role models.

Newsletter Content

The following text may be used in organizational newsletters. Please include the credit at the end of the article.

Community Values Youth

Research shows that youth who feel valued in their community enjoy better mental health; a greater sense of personal control and optimism; reduced crime, violence, and fighting; less substance abuse; and higher academic performance. Unfortunately, in Silicon Valley, Community Values Youth is by far the least reported asset. In Project Cornerstone's 2011 survey, **only 33% of 4th-6th graders and 22% of 7th-12th graders** reported that they feel valued by their community. To help raise awareness of the importance of communicating respect to young people, July is Community Values Youth month in Silicon Valley.

Frequently, adults feel that youth already know that they're valued and appreciated, but the survey results show that this is not true. Young people are not fully connected to their community if they only feel that they are valued by the adults who they know. All adults in the community have a role to play in showing their support for youth!

The following discussion topics can help you work with young people to identify the ways that the community does, and does not, provide them with this asset:

- Do you ever encounter adults who have negative opinions about people your age? Do you know how to respond politely and positively to their criticism or comments?
- Are there good places for kids your age to hang out after school and on the weekends? If there aren't, what kind of place would you like to see?
- Do you feel that adults at school and other organizations give you an opportunity to voice your opinion? Can you suggest some ways that adults could make it easier for kids to share their feedback and suggestions?

Community Values Youth is linked to other external assets. Children and teens will feel valued by the community when adults provide them with opportunities to make meaningful contributions, programs that help them make constructive use of their time, and support so that they feel important to the people in their world. The more effective that we are as a community at building assets in general, the more effective we will be at raising the levels of this asset.

This article was provided courtesy of Project Cornerstone's Asset-a-Month program. For more information, visit www.projectcornerstone.org.

Activities

The activities below are a starting point to help adults find ways to show youth that they are valued and appreciated.

For families

- Many programs young people enjoy are created and maintained by the community (e.g., libraries, parks, and playgrounds). Make sure your children understand that these resources are available because the community cares about them!
- Your children can participate in community life! Help them identify issues that affect young people. Write letters to newspapers or government officials about ways to address their concerns.
- Encourage your children to write letters of thanks to the organizations and businesses that treat young people well. Doing so will encourage them to continue their efforts. Your child's letter may be publicly displayed.

For all adults

- Remember to treat all young people with respect, and take their ideas and suggestions seriously.
- If you work in a business, train your staff to treat young people respectfully. Make sure that your policies are youth-friendly. If your business serves adults who may have children with them, make sure the space is inviting and provides age-appropriate activities.
- Celebrate youth who help your organization daily.
- Attend and contribute to local government meetings to make sure that the needs of young people are being addressed.

At school or in youth programs

- Ask businesses in the community to show support for your program. In addition to financial donations and sponsorships, they can display artwork, host tours of their facility, or find other ways to show that they care about the youth in the community. (Doing so makes good business sense—today's kids are tomorrow's customers!)
- With older children and teens, discuss whether the community has good places for kids and teens to hang out, and if there are more positive opportunities for

younger kids than for older ones. Use the results to create an action plan to make adults in the community more aware of the issue.

- Invite important members of the community to attend shows and events.

AUGUST Asset of the Month: Caring Neighborhood!

If you or your organization can share ideas for positive, creative activities for young people, please contact us at (408) 351-6482 or by email at info@projectcornerstone.org.

About the Asset-a-Month Program

The goals of the Silicon Valley Asset-a-Month program are to help align adults throughout our diverse community in their efforts to promote positive youth development by fostering developmental assets. For more information about the Asset-a-Month program, contact Project Cornerstone at (408) 351-6482 or info@projectcornerstone.org.