

Cornerstone Connections

Winter 2009

In This Issue

[Project Cornerstone Launches Santa Clara County Asset-a-Month Program](#)

[Parent Project® Empowers Parents to Address Destructive Teen Behavior](#)

[Register for the 2009 Asset Champions Awards Breakfast: March 19, 2009](#)

[Building Asset #8: Youth as Resources](#)



Building Asset #8: Youth as Resources

Project Cornerstone Launches Santa Clara County Asset-a-Month Program

Project Cornerstone is pleased to launch the Santa Clara County Asset-a-Month program. The goal of the Asset-a-Month program is to align adults throughout our diverse community in their efforts to promote positive youth development by fostering developmental assets.

The Asset-a-Month program is an initiative of the Project Cornerstone public policy team, which contains representatives from local governments, agencies, and youth-serving organizations united in the mission to make Santa Clara County an exceptional place for youth to live and grow.

Each month, Project Cornerstone will release an Asset of the Month toolkit. The toolkit will contain information about the asset, ways that adults (including parents, adults who work with children, and youth program leaders) can help develop the asset in youth; and content that may be freely shared in newsletters and other publications.

For more information, visit <http://www.projectcornerstone.org/html/assetamonth.htm>.

Parent Project® Empowers Parents to Address Destructive Teen Behavior

*By Julia Alloggiamento
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In today's society, destructive behavior in youth is starting at a much younger age and with much greater intensity. Starting in middle school, and sometimes even before, children are beginning to cut school, use drugs or alcohol, act out in school, or get involved in gangs. Parents who have strong-willed children often find that they simply do not know

People of all ages need to feel that that they can make a contribution and play a meaningful role in their community, whether it's at home, at school, or in the neighborhood. Research shows that youth who feel valued and useful have higher self esteem, a greater sense of personal control, reduced delinquency, greater social and personal responsibility, reduced substance abuse, and better social skills.

Unfortunately, most youth in Santa Clara County don't feel that they have an opportunity to contribute to their community. In Project Cornerstone's 2004 survey, only 55% of 4th-6th graders and 26% of 7th-12th graders reported that they are given useful roles. To help address this problem, February is Youth as Resources month in Santa Clara County. This asset focuses on including youth in decisions that affect them and creating participation and leadership opportunities where their contribution can make a difference.

The following discussion topics can help young people recognize opportunities to serve as resources

* What would you like to share with adults about your experiences in your home, school, neighborhood or faith community?

* Who are some adults that you could talk to about making positive changes?

* How will you know when

what steps to take to stop this destructive behavior in their children.

As a Deputy District Attorney working in the juvenile justice system and in the community, I repeatedly found parents asking for help and seeking solutions. While our county had several programs to assist the teens struggling with a variety of issues, none were specifically geared to help the parents deal with these issues at home. The problem with that approach was that at some point the help for the teens (through community organizations, city programs, or juvenile probation) would end and the behavior may return.

Thus, we realized that to really combat the destructive behaviors we see in our teens, we must empower the parents. As a result, the District Attorney's Office, in collaboration with the City of San José, the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, law enforcement agencies countywide, school districts countywide, and counseling agencies throughout the county have implemented Parent Project®.

Parent Project is a nationally-acclaimed program created by a police sergeant, an educator, a psychologist, and thousands of parents that provides parents with strategies to actually change the most destructive behaviors they see in their teens, including truancy, drug and alcohol use, gang affiliation, violence, family conflict and running away. While other parenting courses stress communication, the truth is that for many strong-willed children, effective communication is not enough. Parent Project provides a straightforward, step-by-step action plan that allows parents to take immediate steps toward preventing or intervening in their children's negative choices.

Parent Project is now being offered in English and Spanish at various locations throughout the county, including five classes in San José. Classes are taught by two facilitators trained through the national program—one law enforcement officer, and either an educator or a counselor. Classes are one night a week, three hours a night, for 12 weeks (typically from 6-9 p.m.). Food is provided at all sites and childcare is available at many locations. Cost for the class is \$120.00/person or \$155/family; financial assistance is available as needed.

Help is available for parents. Give the program 36 hours and it will change your life. To find out more information or to enroll in the Parent Project, call 408-808-3794 or e-mail parentproject@da.sccgov.org. Additional information about the Parent Project can also be found at the national website at www.parentproject.com.

Asset Champions Awards Breakfast
 March 19, 2009 · 7:00 to 9:00 am
 Fairmont San Jose

these changes happen?

* How would you like to be recognized for your contribution?

Keep in mind that serving as a resource doesn't have to be a large effort. Adults can help youth serve as resources simply by asking them to share their opinions, skills, or knowledge, such as how to play a game or use technology such as text messaging.

Remember, it's important that young people's efforts be recognized and celebrated! Be sure to create opportunities to show that you value each individual's unique contributions.

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Please plan to join us at Project Cornerstone's Asset Champions Awards Breakfast on March 19, 2009! This year's event celebrates **Project Cornerstone's tenth anniversary** of serving Santa Clara County through programs that strengthen families, neighborhoods, communities, and schools, and by ensuring that young people's needs are addressed in public policy.

The Asset Champions Awards Breakfast gathers more than 800 local civic leaders, parents, youth, and school leaders to recognize the contributions of organizations and individuals who have supported the healthy development of children and youth in Santa Clara County.

Your attendance will honor asset building at its finest and celebrate the progress of our countywide movement to ensure that all our children and youth have the assets they need to thrive.

This event will sell out, so be sure to register by February 27, 2009 at our Web site ([click here](#), or visit <http://www.projectcornerstone.org> and click the link for the Asset Champions Breakfast). For more information, contact Project Cornerstone at (408) 351-6482 or by e-mail at info@projectcornerstone.org.

NOTE: If you plan to attend, remember the time is 7:00 a.m., the location is the Imperial Ballroom of the Fairmont San José, and be sure to leave extra time to park your car!

The Asset Champions Awards breakfast is sponsored in part by:



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