

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### SILICON VALLEY'S YOUTH GRADE THE COMMUNITY

*October 19, 2004 - San Jose, CA* - The back to school season means a litany of standardized tests, but a survey being distributed to 20,000 Bay Area students this week assesses something other than their scholastic ability; it determines how well the community is supporting and guiding them.

Spearheaded by San Jose-based Project Cornerstone, the survey will be distributed to fourth through twelfth graders at 90 schools in 12 districts throughout Silicon Valley. Participation is voluntary and answers are completely confidential. Based on extensive studies conducted by Search Institute, a national nonprofit organization, the survey assesses students' experiences with key relationships, opportunities, values and skills they need to thrive. These experiences, known as developmental assets, include; support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.

Search Institute has identified a total of 40 developmental assets and maintains that youth need at least 31 assets in order to truly fulfill their potential. When Project Cornerstone first conducted the survey in 1999, results showed that Santa Clara County's youth possessed just 18.2 of those assets. Akemi Flynn, Project Cornerstone's Executive Director, states, "Research shows that as young people experience more assets they are less likely to be involved in risky behaviors such as violence and substance abuse, and more likely to make healthy choices. Each of us has the power to build assets through positive interactions with young people that make a critical difference and strengthen our community as a whole. Asset building challenges us to make the shift from reacting to problems to recognizing and building on strengths."

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The 2004 survey effort is being sponsored by United Way Silicon Valley, Applied Materials, Intel, Agilent Technologies, Kaiser Permanente, Challenge Team and YMCA of Santa Clara Valley. All surveys will be collected from participants on October 25 and then sent to Search Institute for extensive analysis. Says Flynn, "The survey results will provide us with a deeper understanding of what it's like to grow up in our community. We expect the results to serve as a renewed call to action, engaging all sectors of the community to work together to support the healthy development of our youth. We look forward to seeing how far we have come in creating an environment that helps our youth thrive." The survey results will be publicly announced at a breakfast event taking place on February 17, 2005 in San Jose.

### **Project Cornerstone**

Project Cornerstone, based in Santa Clara Valley, is a growing collaborative of more than 100 partners dedicated to engaging our entire community in the crucial task of promoting developmental assets, which are the essential building blocks of healthy youth. Our mission is to mobilize a critical mass of asset builders, thus making asset building a way of life in Santa Clara County. Our vision is to see that all individuals and organizations are motivated and empowered to come together to nurture and develop competent, caring and responsible children and youth.

[www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org)

### **Search Institute**

Founded in 1958, Search Institute is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge and resources to promote healthy children, youth and communities. To accomplish this mission, the institute generates and communicates new knowledge that brings together community, state and national leaders. [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

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