



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



GROWING ASSETS AT HOME

Youth First Parent Newsletter

Vol. 1, Issue 1

YOUTH FIRST: An Initiative In Putting Youth First

Youth First, a program initiative of the Washington County Family YMCA, was formed in January 2007 by the Washington County Community Foundation in response to a county-wide assessment conducted that showed a deficit in services for our youth.

Youth First, now in its 8th year of service to Washington County, is dedicated towards creating a positive environment within our county where youth are valued, their needs come first and investments are made in their well being. This dedication and commitment went hand in hand with the Y's focus of healthy living, social responsibility, and youth development.

Because of these common core values, a merger commenced in 2011 for Youth First to become a program of the Y. This merger has allowed the Youth First mission to take flight in all youth geared programs at the Y, and incorporates the 40 Developmental Assets frame work into all youth development at the YMCA.

"The 40 Developmental Assets are integral in growing strong, healthy, and confident youth," stated Rosie Morehous, Youth First Director at the Washington County Family YMCA. "The Assets have always been the foundation of Youth First Programming, and I don't think a lot of people realize that Assets are the foundation for youth development at the Y too."

The 40 Developmental Assets are evidence-based resiliency factors that Search Institute has established as being crucial to a youth's successful development.

The Assets include areas of focus in support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and building a positive self identity. The YMCA and its Youth First initiative strive to fill community voids in these areas to provide youth with the environments, mentors, skills sets, and personal commitment needed to succeed.

"Our enrichment programs here at the Y are near and dear to my heart," said Ashley Hubbard, Youth First Program Coordinator at the YMCA. "We focus extensively on providing intentional and fun activities—we always want our interactions to be educational, but hands on fun is a must for the Y." When asked why she has so much passion for her job, Hubbard stated, "We all want the best for our kids, and if they are at the Y, they are my kids—that's why I do what I do... to give my kids the best."

YMCA Youth First programming has many options to help grow Assets in our youth—from break camps, ROCKs and Jr. Rocks, to the After School Program, Preschool, and Youth Sports and Leagues—there is something for EVERYBODY at the Y.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Youth First: An Initiative In Putting Youth First..... 1

Growing Assets At Home..... 1

The Art Of Resistance And Reasoning.....2

Happy, Happy, Happy for HEPA.....2

GROWING ASSETS AT HOME

Youth Development doesn't stop at the Y campus—there is opportunity for it to happen everywhere! That's why Youth First is committed to providing information and education to all—teachers, neighbors, parents, cousins, grandparents, and everyone in-between. We want to equip our community with skills needed to put Youth First.

THE ART OF RESISTANCE AND REASONING: Asset No. 35

Learning resistance is one of the most important social skills to develop. This skill gives youth confidence to say “no” to people or situations that make them uncomfortable. Learning to assert themselves also helps youth make their voices heard and express opinions. With these skills, youth make appropriate decisions and stand firm in what they believe.

The Facts Research shows that youth who can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations are more likely to avoid risky behaviors and focus on positive attitudes. Speaking up for themselves takes practice, but with your help, youth can learn to take a stand.

GROWING ASSETS Teach youth resistance skills, but also teach them the values that support why they would take a stand on an issue. Having many conversations

with youth about drug use, safety, and personal boundaries increases the chance he or she will make a safe choice when, for example, asked to participate in bullying a peer at school.

Home & Family: Model and role-play resistance skills, specifying what to say or not say. Talk with your child about what was easy and what was difficult. Focus not only on how to resist, but also on what to say “yes” to.

Neighborhood & Community: Offer a safety net to the young people you know. Let them know they can call you if they feel pressured or tempted to do something unsafe or unhealthy.

School & Youth Programs: Learn about people in the world who stood up for their values and resisted what everyone else was doing (such as Rosa Parks and Gandhi). Discuss why they were able to do so.

#PuttingYouthFirst

Happy, Happy, Happy For HEPA

Exciting things are happening at the Washington County Family YMCA as we move towards HEPA compliance for all of our programs.

What is HEPA, you might ask? HEPA stands for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity. This initiative is in

response to the Y-USA’s commitment to Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America.

In an effort to tackle childhood obesity and strive for healthy living, the Y has made some fundamental implementations to our Early Childhood and Youth Programs. Sugar-added beverages and deep fried foods are not permitted at Y programs, and students are encouraged to eat fruits and vegetables at every meal. Physical activities are also incorporated. For more information, visit ymcaeuc.org/content/promo/2013%2004%20HEPA%20Standards.pdf

