



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



GROWING ASSETS AT HOME

Youth First Parent Newsletter

Vol. 1, Issue 2

YOUTH FIRST: Growing Assets

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can always build our youth for the future."

This quote by Franklin D. Roosevelt gets to the heart of Youth First programming at the Washington County Family YMCA, which focuses on building assets in our Youth. Through the many athletic and enrichment programs geared towards youth at the Y, Youth First strives to aid our children in being prepared for bright futures by building their 40 Developmental Assets.

The 40 Developmental Assets, an initiative of the prestigious Search Institute, are a set of skills, experiences, relationships, & behaviors that enable our youth to develop into successful and contributing adults. Both external and internal assets attribute to this success. External assets center on support, empowerment, constructive use of time, boundaries and expectations. Internal assets focus on a commitment to learning, positive values, social competency, and a positive identity.

External assets are very important to a youth's experience, because their environment can positively or negatively influence their choices. By building family support, communication, and school involvement, as well as encouraging positive adult relationships, a caring neighborhood, and school climate, support is increased for our youth allowing them to gain

vital assets.

Empowering youth with opportunities to make a difference in their family and community, establishing family, school, and community boundaries for youth, providing them with positive adult and peer relationships, and holding them to high expectations also encourages asset growth.

By ensuring that youth have creative activities, youth programs, religious community, and family time at home provides youth with necessary assets to thrive in their external environment.

Internal assets are equally vital for youth, as it allows them to positively interact with their environment, even if not all external assets are possessed. When students have commitment to learning, a motivation for achievement, are engaged and bonded to in their school, complete their homework, and read for pleasure they are more likely to be resilient in the face of barriers.

By instilling positive values in our youth such as caring, equality, social justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and restraint, youth are able to make positive life decisions no matter what they are presented with in their experiences.

Social competencies such as planning, decision making, interpersonal and cultural competencies, resistance skills, & peaceful conflict resolution abilities will aid youth in navigating situations positively.

Internal assets of positive self-identity are key to allow youth to thrive. By having a sense of personal power, a

positive self-esteem, a sense of purpose, and a positive view of their personal future, youth will have the motivation to shoot for the stars, but more importantly, they will have the assets to reach them.

When asked why the YMCA focuses so heavily on the 40 Developmental Assets in all of their youth enrichment programming, Youth First Director, Rosie Morehous, pointed to the statistics.

"When the Washington Co. Community Foundation conducted a community-wide assessment, it was found that 61% of our youth are at -risk and vulnerable due to their asset levels. With this in mind, we ensure that every activity we do is intentionally asset driven.

With the intentions of building assets in Youth, The YMCA and it's 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."

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.

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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.

WHAT IS JR. ROCKS?

Jr. ROCKs is a Youth First Program of the Washington County Family YMCA.

Jr. ROCKs is our Elementary version of ROCKs; a character enrichment program that uses fun and functionality to develop life skills vital to successful futures.

Youth First Programs are based on Search Institutes' 40 Developmental Assets, which are important resiliency factors that help our Youth have positive futures.

The purpose of Jr. ROCKs is to grow assets in our Youth. We do this by offering four 30 minute lessons to your student throughout the school year regarding the important topics of peer pressure, bullying, self-esteem, and appropriate social media use. In addition to fun and educational lessons in the classroom, we want to help you grow assets at home.

Each time your student participates in Jr. ROCKs, parents will receive this newsletter to aid in asset growth in school and out.

We look forward to providing this free program to your family, in partnership with the School Corporation.

Please feel free to contact Rosie Morehous, Youth First Director of the Washington Co. Family YMCA with any questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding Jr. ROCKs at rosie@wcfymca.org, (812)883-9622.



Bullying Is NO Joke!!



Here at the Y, we focus heavily on improving the self-esteem of our youth. Our first Jr. Rocks lesson focuses on bullying—which we all know can negatively effect the self-esteem of our Youth.

Both physical and emotional violence is no laughing matter, and it is up to every adult to help our youth understand that fact.

By helping our youth have the appropriate life skills—such as communication & self-regulation techniques, we know that we can eliminate bullying.

Beat Bullying: TIPS FOR HOME

Help your child understand empathy for others. When you hear of a bullying situation—whether your child was the bully, victim, or bystander—ask them “how do you think that made _____ feel?” “Why do you think _____ made that bad choice?” “What could you do next time to make it better?”

Help your child to know that bullying is not ok—that it is important to stand up against bullying, and get help from a safe adult if it continues. By talking through these situations with your child, you can help give them the language, skills, and confidence to tackle bullying head on, and make every day happier & safer.

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 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 intentionally incorporated.

HEPA is about making better choices every day, and striving for a better life style. For more information, visit:

ymcaeuc.org/content/promo/2013%2004%20HEPA%20Standards.pdf

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