



# Asset of the Month

April Asset Category: Empowerment (External Asset)

## **April Asset: #9. Service to Others**

In a healthy community a young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.

(48% of youth surveyed believe that they have this asset in their lives.)

**What youth say about Empowerment:** “Give me a voice.” “Take me seriously.” “Help me change things for the better.”

### **Service to Others**

Not only do young people who serve others tend to develop caring values, but service also often leads them to think about issues important to themselves and society. Researchers found that service projects usually provoke young people to think about:

- Their own lives in comparison to the lives of people who are different from them.
- Their relationship to people who are less fortunate than they are.
- Political and moral questions.
- Their role in bringing about change in society.

Empowerment assets such as service to others help young people unleash their gifts and talents to contribute to their families, their schools, and their communities. Here are some steps to follow when asking someone to pitch in with a service project and/or volunteer:

1. **Identify what needs to be done.** People of all ages are more willing to help out when they know what’s expected and the results that are hoped for.
2. **Create a variety of tasks.** Sometimes a specific task may not appeal to someone. Having a selection of tasks to choose from is more empowering. Be willing to join the youth in the task, or find another person who can help.
3. **Help young people succeed.** Young people will succeed if they know what is expected and are given the tools and helpful instructions to do what is expected.
4. **Don’t underestimate the power of asking.** Studies have shown that the number one way young people get involved in volunteering is by having someone ask them.
5. **Focus on building relationships in addition to accomplishing the task at hand.** People working together to do something are more likely to stick with it if they get to know each other and feel like important people on the team.
6. **Ask for feedback.** Helpers often have good ideas on how to make a task more efficient or more creative. Implement some of their ideas immediately.
7. **Celebrate.** Thank helpers for their contributions. Do something in honor of what has been done and those who have contributed.

### **Parenting Tips & How-to-live the Asset of the Month: Service to Others**

#### ***Ages Birth – 5***

- Start introducing the value of community service by having children do simple tasks at home, such as putting a toy away in a toy box or picking up socks.
- Do simple acts of community service together with children such as collecting food for a food bank.

#### ***Ages 6 – 11***

- Encourage children to write to the editor of your local paper about issues that are important to them.
- Ask children for their help when you’re solving a problem or tackling a project.

## **Ages 12 – 18**

- Encourage young people to volunteer at least one hour a week. Talk with them about what they learn from these experiences.
- Help teenagers spend time contributing to their communities. This could range from finding out about opportunities and how to get involved to simply figuring out ways to get them there.
- Encourage teenagers to take leadership roles in addressing issues that concern them.

**Family Discussion Topic/Activity:** Plan a service project as a family – volunteer at a homeless shelter, a nursing home, or a benefit for a local person who is sick or a family who is suffering from a tragedy. Get your neighborhood together to clean up a local park.

\* Visit <http://www.familyresourcesheboygan.org>. Learn more about Service to Others and the other 39 assets. This website also lists other great websites for parents, youth group leaders, teachers, etc. with tools, handouts, etc.

## **April Events**

- Plymouth Arts Center’s Acoustic Jam/Open Mic Nights: 4/30, 5/28 from 6 – 10pm. For more information call 920-892-8409 or go to [www.plymoutharts.org](http://www.plymoutharts.org)
- Sheboygan County YMCA Healthy Kids Day – Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:45pm. This is a **free** community event – enjoy swimming, gymnastics, games, try Zumba or dance, and healthy snacks.
- April is National Youth Service Days (third weekend in April) and National Volunteer Month.
- Summer Camp registration is starting for youth and teens. Go to [www.sheboygancountyyymca.org](http://www.sheboygancountyyymca.org) and [www.anokijig.com](http://www.anokijig.com) – for enriching and unforgettable experiences.

**\*Please forward this information to co-workers, clients, families, and other contacts.**

\*Please respond with feedback, ideas for upcoming assets of the month, etc., or if your organization would like to be listed as a resource to: [ysports@sheboygancountyyymca.org](mailto:ysports@sheboygancountyyymca.org) or [erikfrc@excel.net](mailto:erikfrc@excel.net) . Also contact us if your organization would like a 40-asset presentation or training.

**\*Next Month’s Asset of the Month:** Category: Boundaries and Expectations: #15 Positive Peer Influence. If your organization has a potential asset building event or information you would like to share for the May “Asset of the Month” notice please respond by the 20<sup>th</sup> of April.

**\*Upcoming months:** June: #37 Personal Power; July #4 Caring Neighborhood

Sponsors: Kohler Credit Union, Van Horn Automotive Group

*The Asset of the Month is a campaign is an effort under the Healthy Community/ Healthy Youth Initiative:*

