



# Asset of the Month

October Asset Category: Support (External Asset)

## **October Asset: #5 Caring School Climate**

In a healthy community school provides a caring, encouraging environment.

(29% of youth surveyed believe they have this asset in their lives).

The framework of 40 developmental assets includes six support assets that have a great impact on the way young people grow up. While most people understand the important role that families have in supporting young people, some overlook the positive power of friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, volunteers, grandparents, bus drivers, baby-sitters, aunts and uncles, store clerks, and other people who are part of children's and teenagers' lives. Even simple actions and gestures can help to create an atmosphere of support.

Support provided by the school environment has been associated with better academic performance; it also has been linked to better mental health and lower delinquency among adolescents. Support by teachers and the school environment has also been associated with better attendance, and higher expectations and aspirations, higher self esteem, less anxiety and depression, and less substance abuse.

### **Parenting Tips & How-to-live the Asset of the Month: Caring Child Care or School Climate**

#### **Birth to age 5**

- Notice how caregivers interact with infants. Are they loving and caring? Do they meet infants' needs immediately?
- Monitor staff turnover at the child care center. Too much can cause stress for infants/toddlers.
- When you notice a childcare environment begin to slip (if caregivers act distant or stressed, for example), talk to a caregiver about your concerns. Don't wait for the situation to improve on its own.
- Be happy when toddlers call their caregivers "Mom" or "Dad" and their parents by their caregivers names. This shows that the toddler feels comfortable with the care she's getting.
- Look for a variety of daily activities, including music, reading, outdoor play, indoor play, art projects, free time, and quiet time. Children thrive when they're both cared for and stimulated.

#### **Ages 6 - 11**

- Look for attributes of a caring school such as: a place where teachers and administrators know and care for each other, a place that promotes creativity, learning, and so on.
- Find out how children feel about their school. Do they think it's a caring place? Why or why not? Ask them to use specific examples to explain their feelings.
- Learn the names of children and adults in the child's classroom and after-school clubs. Greeting people by name show that you care.
- Recognize the thoughtful work teachers do. Thank the teachers throughout the year.
- Sleep is key for this age group. As your child begins to get into an all-day school routine, expect them to be exhausted. Help your kids get their rest and be patient with the big changes they're going through.

#### **What Teens Can Do**

- Do something.* If you are unhappy with your school's environment, don't just complain about it. Do something to make it better. Run for student council or join another leadership organization committed to student representation. Start a campaign to determine what things in your school need improving.

## 8 Ways to Be More Caring at School

- Learn the names of as many students as you can. Greet them by name.
- Reach out to kids who seem isolated or lonely and aren't included in groups. Be a friend to them.
- Don't tolerate bullying, and stick up for kids who are bullied by others.
- Respect school property and encourage others to do the same.
- Make an effort to get to know your teachers
- Treat everyone – students, teachers, administrators, support staff – with courtesy and respect.
- Thank teachers, support staff, and others for the work they do.
- Get involved in programs (such as peer helping) that build assets.

-Some young teenagers will stay up too late (even when they're in their beds). Don't bail them out if they oversleep, and be firm about what you expect for daily routines and why.

### **Family Discussion / Activity**

Make it a habit to discuss school issues and events with your family. Talk about the positives and the negatives, about adults (teachers, administrators, staff) who care and those who don't, about students who contribute and those who cause problems. Talk about ways parents can volunteer in school on a regular basis – schools become stronger and more caring when parents are active and informed.

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

## **October HCHY Events/Announcements**

We are lining up trainings and presentations – please contact Erik Wagner (892-6706) or Mike Burns (451-8000) to reserve a training or presentation for your youth group, parent group, service club, students, staff, etc -.

**trainings/presentations do not cost you anything but a little time.**

- Mike and Erik are looking for **“Asset Champions”**. What do I have to do to be an “Asset Champion” you ask?
    - Attend a 7-8 hour training workshop on Friday Oct 7<sup>th</sup> at the Generations Building in Plymouth. This workshop is designed to educate a network of *Asset Champions* about the Healthy Communities/ Healthy Youth Initiative and the 40 Developmental Assets while equipping them with tips and training techniques, tools, resources, and formats necessary for them to feel comfortable training those with whom they work, volunteer, or go to school. The training will take place in a fun, relaxed environment that will also afford the asset champions the opportunity to become acquainted with one another.
    - Facilitating a workshop of their organization within 6 months of the training
    - Attending a quarterly meeting
    - Completing data forms for workshops facilitated or presentations made
    - Disseminating Asset information to their spheres of influence such as the Asset of the Month
    - Assisting with Healthy Community/ Healthy Youth Events
- If you would like to get more involved with the 40 assets please give Mike or Erik a call or an email.

**\*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@sheboygancountymca.org](mailto:ysports@sheboygancountymca.org) or [erikfrc@excel.net](mailto:erikfrc@excel.net) .

**\*Next Month's (November) Asset of the Month:** #12 School Boundaries. Category: Boundaries and Expectations.

Sponsor: Van Horn Automotive Group

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

