



Asset of the Month

December Asset Category: Commitment to Learning (Internal Asset)

December Asset: #25 Reading for Pleasure

In a healthy community a young person reads for pleasure 3 or more hours per week.

(22% of youth surveyed believe they have this asset in their lives).

A commitment to learning is a commitment to growing. When we learn something new, we grow, change, and expand our horizons. This is true whether one is age 2, 14, or 60. The commitment-to-learning assets are built for children and youth through adults' attitudes, encouragement, involvement, and modeling. Reading for pleasure is incredibly powerful in that it is applicable to both youth and adults and helps build a sense of community for all.

Did You Know?

Reading to children, even infants, can help them in a number of ways. For example, researchers in a recent study saw that children who had picture books read to them were able to understand what was being said sooner than other children. In addition, those children whose mothers began reading to them when the children were infants started talking and using language before other children did.

Parenting Tips & How-to-live the Asset of the Month: Reading for Pleasure

Birth to age 5

- Start reading to infants as soon as they're born. Read aloud parts of the daily newspaper, a magazine, a novel, poems, or children's stories. It doesn't matter what you read – for infants, the sound of your voice and the quiet time you share is most important.
- Make books part of everyday life for children. Give them board books and touch and feel books – Infants especially like books with simple rhymes or pictures of animals or baby faces.
- When you're sharing a book with young toddlers, look at the pictures together before you read the words. Have the toddlers talk about what they see to help them build language skills. As toddlers grow older and are learning how to listen, start reading parts of the story.
- Let a toddler turn the pages. Expect him to skip pages or want to look at books upside down or backward. Don't worry about reading the "right" way – just let him have fun with the book.
- Let preschoolers reading skills develop at their own pace. Don't push them to start reading before they're ready. Teach them the basics in fun ways.
- Find picture books that don't have any words on the page. Ask preschoolers to tell you a story to match the pictures.

Ages 6 - 11

- Keep reading aloud to children, even when they're able to read by themselves. Reading together helps strengthen your relationship with the child. Have children read aloud to you also.
- Find books that get children excited about reading. Let children read what they like.
- Challenge children to use the newspaper to answer questions. You might ask "which basketball player has scored the most points this season?" or "What animal was just taken off the endangered species list?"
- Another benefit of reading for pleasure is that other assets can be built while working toward this goal. An example of this: parent-child book clubs can build the reading for pleasure asset while deepening the bond between parents and their children and building community with others. It also can increase achievement motivation, school engagement and bonding to school.

Ages 12 - 17

- Make learning relevant.** Young people benefit from seeing how learning and reading apply to work and to life.
- Make reading a family affair. Spend time reading as a family every day. Gather in the living room, family room, or den for an hour or half-hour before or after dinner, or any time that works for everyone.

-Make frequent visits to the library. Everyone in your family should have his or her own library card.

-Give each other books or magazine subscriptions as gifts.

-Volunteer as a family to tutor others in reading.

-Teens:

- Reading for pleasure makes you a better reader. The more you read the stronger your reading skills become. Skilled readers do better on tests, read more quickly and easily, and retain more of what they read.
- Three hours of reading per week may seem like a lot, but it's **less than 26 minutes/day**.
- Read for pleasure online: late breaking news, major newspapers, popular magazines, favorite authors' web sites, even whole books are online.

8 Things You Can Do to Help Children Read Well and Independently:

Tips from America Reads Challenge

1. Become a learning partner/reading tutor to a child in your neighborhood or from your local elementary school.
2. Help start a community reading program. (America Reads Challenge: READ*WRITE*NOW!)
3. Volunteer at your public library – offer to help in the children's section.
4. Encourage community businesses and nonprofit organizations to support community reading programs – donate supplies and to allow their employees time off to volunteer in local schools.
5. Collect and donate children's books to an early childhood center or parent/child play group.
6. Encourage other volunteers to read with children.
7. Take neighborhood kids on a field trip to the local library.
8. Help motivate children to read for enjoyment. Talk with them and ask what they're interested in. Direct them to books, magazines, books on computer software, and other library resources.

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

December 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 –**there is no cost for trainings/presentations and the time spent will be well worth it.**

***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@sheboygancountymmca.org or erikfrc@excel.net .

***Next Month's (January) Asset of the Month:** #39 Sense of Purpose. Category: Positive Identity.

Sponsor: Van Horn Automotive Group

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

