

ASSETS AWARENESS ARTICLE

Welcome back to Assets Awareness! This time we're working on the external asset of **empowerment!** Don't forget, external assets are the opportunities and experiences adults nurture for youth. This is where you fit in!

Very few youth report feeling empowered. As the chart shows, youth report that they contribute a lot to their communities through service, but they don't always feel that their communities recognize, appreciate and value them.

Community values youth	22%
Youth as resources	26%
Service to others	48%
Safety	51%

Source: www.search-institute.org

Community Values Youth: Youth believe that adults in their communities value youth.

- Encourage youth to write letters to the editor, showing that youth have Important and valuable opinions and views.
- Headed for the polls? Ask youth what issues are important to them when you place your votes.



Youth As Resources: Youth are offered meaningful roles in their communities.

- Encourage your community to create a youth representative position on your town or city board/council.

Service To Others: Youth serve in the community at least one hour per week.

- Have youth brainstorm various types of thoughtful acts (from picking up litter at the park to making cards for isolated neighbors) and write them on slips of paper. Each week youth choose one slip of paper from a jar and complete the thoughtful act.
- Be a positive role model! Start a *family* service project tapping into the family's skills and interests. Check out www.volunteermatch.org for creative opportunities!

Safety: Youth feel safe at home, in school, and in their community.

- Create a "safe zone" in your home. Youth need places they can go to vent and speak in confidence. Show respect by hanging a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door when talking with youth.
- Help youth complete a safety inventory, listing things in their community that make them feel unsafe. Do they want more streetlights or better sidewalks? Let local officials know.



**Assets Awareness Brought To You By:
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Cornell University
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Did any of these ideas work for you? Do you have ideas for empowering youth? Send feedback to Lori at llh38@cornell.edu