

# Youth Asset Report

Complete Survey Results Available Online: [WWW.soyreport.org](http://WWW.soyreport.org)

- In 2004-2005, 220 area high school students spent 5,000+ volunteer hours working with youth through school-based Big Brother/Big Sister mentoring programs.
- \$55,000 was raised in 2004 to assist children who would not otherwise be able to participate in YMCA programs.
- A Negaunee parent says, "Parenting is great, but it's a real challenge to be clear about what you expect from your teen... respecting curfew or staying away from parties where alcohol will be consumed."
- The Tobacco Coalition director at the Health Department says, "We've seen a 60% reduction in youthful smokers – positive youth development helps young people resist negative influences."

A self-report by Marquette-Alger teens regarding the attitudes and behaviors on issues and activities important to their healthy growth and development

These are only a few of the examples of people and programs in our area building assets in the lives of youth. On the basis of more than 40 years of research and surveys of thousands of young people, the Search Institute<sup>SM</sup> has identified 40 experiences and qualities known as **Developmental Assets<sup>TM</sup>** that have a positive influence on young people. This report provides an opportunity for over two thousand 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders across Alger and Marquette Counties to tell us about their lives.

In partnership with area schools and other youth-serving agencies, the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development (GLCYD) has assembled this biennial snapshot of our youth. Using the Search Institute's **Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors (PSL:AB)** survey, the portrait explores the status of our youth in respect to their development. Taken every two years since 1997, the survey allows a longitudinal look at our youth environment. The reality is, most children don't have all 40 assets. This report reveals assets that are strongly represented in our community and other assets that are missing for too many of our youth. The latest of four **PSL:AB** surveys was completed in October, 2004. More detailed information is available in the State of the Youth (SOY) report at: [www.soyreport.org](http://www.soyreport.org).

## Some Preliminary Observations from the 2004 Survey

### Compared to 1997:

- **There has been a reduction in risk-taking behaviors** associated with alcohol, drugs, tobacco, violence, gambling, truancy, and anti-social conduct.
- More youth today experience limits and boundaries through their families, schools, and neighborhoods. Clearer understanding of expectations and consequences are evident.

- The youth represented in 2004 reported more positive values: caring, honesty, equality and social justice, and restraint.
- More students are bonded to (care about) their school, and teacher expectations "to do my best" have increased.

### However,

- The sense of purpose, self-esteem, and personal power assets are not faring as well as they were portrayed in 1997.

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### Special Points of Interest:

- The Most and Least Common Assets
- The Power of Developmental Assets
- A 1<sup>st</sup> Time Look at the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Asset Base
- Youth Career Plans, Access and Exposure to Substances, and Nutritional and Exercise Practices
- Simple Asset-Building Ideas

# The 40 Developmental Assets

In Search Institute terms, **assets** are key individual or environmental resources that enable and nurture young people to develop in healthy, positive ways. The 40 Developmental Assets are grouped into two major types: External Assets and Internal Assets. **External Assets** are positive developmental experiences that surround children with support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and opportunities for constructive use of time. External assets are provided by many different formal and informal systems in a community. **Internal Assets** are a young person's own commitments, values, and competencies. They are grouped into categories of educational and learning commitment, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

Young people are experiencing some assets more than others. Here are the **most and least common assets** among young people in Marquette and Alger Counties. External Assets are shown in bold, and Internal Assets are shown in normal print style.

## Most Common Assets

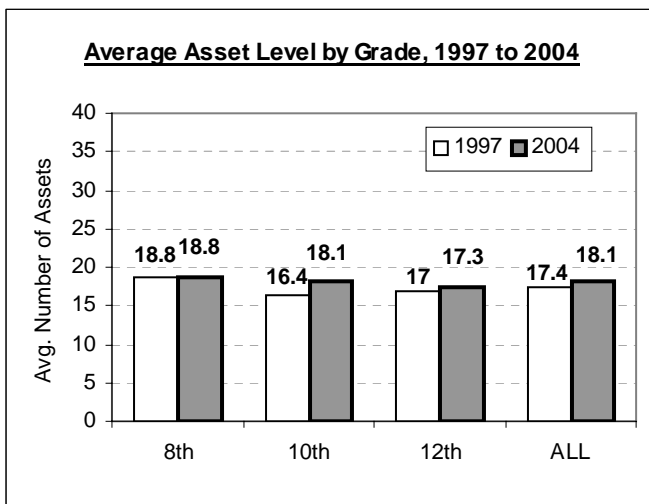
- Positive View of Personal Future (69%)
- **Family Support** (67%)
- Integrity (67%)
- Honesty (65%)
- Achievement Motivation (64%)
- **Safety** (64%)
- School Engagement (63%)
- **Youth Programs** (61%)

## Least Common Assets

- **Creative Activities** (18%)
- **Community Values Youth** (18%)
- **Youth as Resources** (24%)
- **Positive Family Communication** (25%)
- **Adult Role Models** (26%)
- Reading for Pleasure (27%)
- **Caring School Climate** (27%)
- **Parent Involvement in Schooling** (29%)
- Planning and Decision Making (29%)

## The Survey – Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors (PSL:AB)

The 40 Developmental Assets are measured by one or more of the 156 **PSL:AB** survey items. Based on their individual responses, youth are determined to “have” or “not have” an asset, and a percentage of those who have a particular asset is determined. The result is a community profile of the youth population.



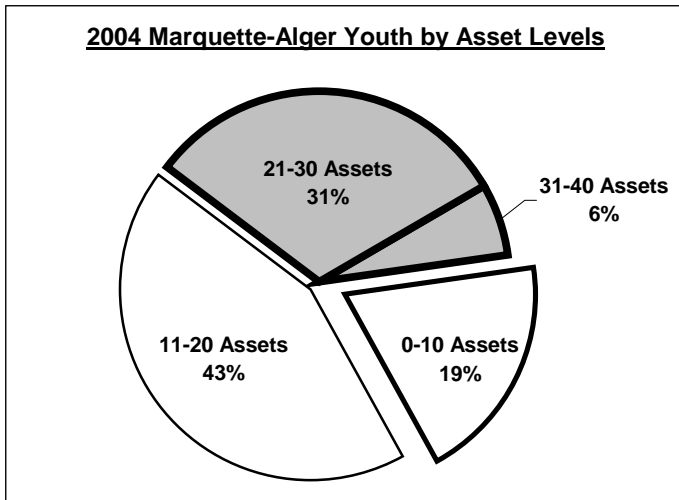
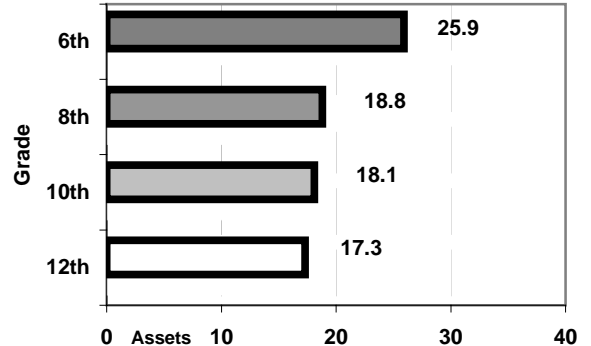
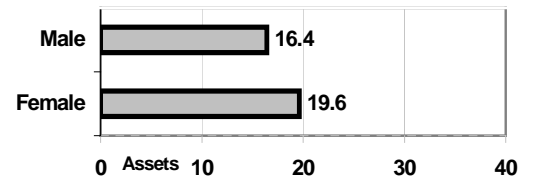
The 2004 **PLS:AB** survey found that, **on the average, young people in Marquette and Alger Counties reported having 18.1 assets.** Since 1997, when the survey was first taken by area students, there has been a slight increase (17.4 in 1997) in the average number of assets experienced by students, and risk behaviors have decreased.

Since 1997, there has been a **reduction in risk-taking behaviors** associated with alcohol, drugs, tobacco, violence, gambling, truancy, and anti-social conduct.

# An Asset-Based Profile of Marquette-Alger Youth

As is true in almost all communities using the Search Institute’s **Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behavior** survey instrument, levels of assets in area youth decline for both females and males during adolescence. Throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade time period, females, on average, reported higher assets levels than males. Previous research has consistently found that preadolescents are more likely than adolescents to have the relationships and opportunities needed for positive development.

As youth enter adolescence, it is easy to see physical growth, but we often overlook their social changes. Adolescence is a developmental period in which the regulation of activities and responsibilities begin to be transferred from the parent and society to the child.



While there is no “magic number” of assets young people should have, youth with as least half of the 40 assets are much less prone to risk-taking behavior. Yet, as this chart shows, **only 37% of Marquette-Alger youth have 21 or more assets.**

## THE POWER OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

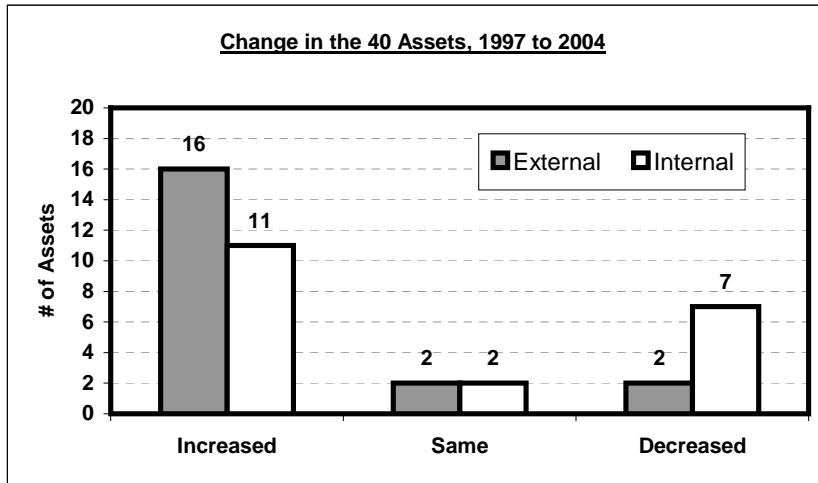
Research has demonstrated that **the fewer assets a young person experiences, the more likely they are to participate in high-risk behavior.** To examine the power of developmental assets, a closer look at low-asset youth with 10 or fewer assets (19%) is revealing.

**Compared to other youth with 21 or more assets, low-asset youth are:**

- 9 times** as likely to ...engage in **anti-social behavior**
- 6 times** as likely to ...use **illegal drugs**
- ...experience **school problems**
- ...use **tobacco**
- 5 times** as likely to ...engage in **violence**
- ...**drink and drive**
- 4 times** as likely to ...**abuse alcohol**
- ...experience **depression** and **attempt suicide**
- 3 times** as likely to ...engage in **sexual activity**
- ...have trouble with **gambling**

# Signs of Progress

In addition to a slight increase in the overall number of assets experienced by young people from 1997 to 2004, far more assets have increased than decreased. Twenty-seven of the assets have increased (11 of them significantly). This is especially true of the external assets, those influenced by our surroundings or environment.



## Most and Least Increased/Decreased Developmental Assets

External Assets are shown in bold, and Internal Assets are shown in normal print style. The percentage in parentheses represent the change in the level of that asset from 1997 to 2004. Shown below are the assets which have increased or decreased by at least 5% over the seven-year period. The Search Institute refers to 5% as a significant trend.

### Highest Increasing Assets:

- **High Expectations** (7%)
- Positive Values - Caring (7%)
- **School Boundaries** (6%)
- **Time at Home** (6%)
- Positive Values - Equality & Social Justice (6%)
- Positive Values - Honesty (6%)
- **Neighborhood Boundaries** (5%)
- **Family Boundaries** (5%)
- Bonding to School (5%)
- Positive Values – Restraint (5%)
- Peaceful Conflict Resolution (5%)

### Highest Decreasing Assets:

- **Religious Community** (-8%)
- Self-Esteem (-6%)
- Personal Power (-5%)

Since 1997, 11 assets have increased significantly compared to three assets that have decreased significantly.

# 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

In Search Institute terms, **assets** are key individual or environmental resources that enable and nurture young people to develop in healthy, positive ways. Assets which have changed by more than **+5%** from 1997 to 2004 are highlighted in the last column (trends). Percentages are for 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Marquette-Alger youth.

Asset Type	Asset Name & Definition	2004 Percentage & 1997 to 2004 Trend
EXTERNAL ASSETS	<b>SUPPORT</b>	
	1. <b>Family Support</b> – Family life provides high levels of love and support.	67%
	2. <b>Positive Family Communication</b> – Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).	25%
	3. <b>Other Adult Relationships</b> – Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.	44%
	4. <b>Caring Neighborhood</b> – Young person experiences caring neighbors.	38%
	5. <b>Caring School Climate</b> – School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	27%
	6. <b>Parent Involvement in Schooling</b> – Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	29%
	<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>	
	7. <b>Community Values Youth</b> – Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	18%
	8. <b>Youth as Resources</b> – Young people are given useful roles in the community.	24%
	9. <b>Service to Others</b> – Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	49%
	10. <b>Safety</b> – Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.	64%
	<b>BOUNDARIES &amp; EXPECTATIONS</b>	
	11. <b>Family Boundaries</b> – Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	46% ↑
	12. <b>School Boundaries</b> – School provides clear rules and consequences.	53% ↑
	13. <b>Neighborhood Boundaries</b> – Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	49% ↑
14. <b>Adult Role Models</b> – Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	26%	
15. <b>Positive Peer Influence</b> – Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.	57%	
16. <b>High Expectations</b> – Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	45% ↑	
<b>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME</b>		
17. <b>Creative Activities</b> – Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	18%	
18. <b>Youth Programs</b> – Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.	61%	
19. <b>Religious Community</b> – Young person spends one or more hours per week in a religious institution.	46% ↓	
20. <b>Time at Home</b> – Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	39% ↑	
INTERNAL ASSETS	<b>COMMITMENT TO LEARNING</b>	
	21. <b>Achievement Motivation</b> – Young person is motivated to do well in school.	64%
	22. <b>School Engagement</b> – Young person is actively engaged in learning.	63%
	23. <b>Homework</b> – Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	46%
	24. <b>Bonding to School</b> – Young person cares about her or his school.	51% ↑
	25. <b>Reading for Pleasure</b> – Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	27%
	<b>POSITIVE VALUES</b>	
	26. <b>Caring</b> – Young person places high value on helping other people.	44% ↑
	27. <b>Equality and Social Justice</b> – Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	46% ↑
	28. <b>Integrity</b> – Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.	67%
	29. <b>Honesty</b> – Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."	65% ↑
	30. <b>Responsibility</b> – Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.	64%
	31. <b>Restraint</b> – Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.	36% ↑
	<b>SOCIAL COMPETENCIES</b>	
32. <b>Planning and Decision Making</b> – Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	29%	
33. <b>Interpersonal Competence</b> – Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	43%	
34. <b>Cultural Competence</b> – Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	36%	
35. <b>Resistance Skills</b> – Young person can resist negative peer pressure.	36%	
36. <b>Peaceful Conflict Resolution</b> – Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.	43% ↑	
<b>POSITIVE IDENTITY</b>		
37. <b>Personal Power</b> – Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."	44% ↓	
38. <b>Self-Esteem</b> – Young person reports having a high self-esteem.	41% ↓	
39. <b>Sense of Purpose</b> – Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."	53%	
40. <b>Positive View of Personal Future</b> – Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.	69%	

Additional detail on each of the 40 Developmental Assets is available on the internet as part of the 2005 – 2006 State of the Youth Report provided by the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development at [www.soyreport.org](http://www.soyreport.org). Data on the percentage of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth who report experiencing each of the assets is shown, and longitudinal changes can be examined.

# 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE: ME AND MY WORLD SURVEY OVERVIEW

The Search Institute released a new 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade survey in 2004 to provide a portrait of 40 categories of childhood experiences within this age span. [Me and My World](#) was administered to 658 students in all the 6<sup>th</sup> grades in Marquette-Alger County schools during October 2004. The percentage of 6<sup>th</sup> grade preadolescents who reported experiencing each of the assets is shown.

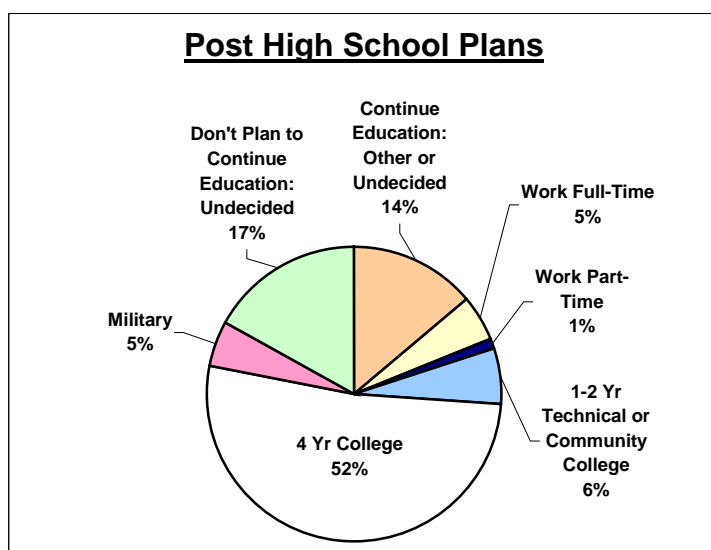
Asset Type	Asset Name & Definition	Percentage
EXTERNAL ASSETS	<b>SUPPORT</b>	
	1. <b>Family Support</b> – Family life provides high levels of love and support.	88%
	2. <b>Positive Family Communication</b> – Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).	57%
	3. <b>Other Adult Relationships</b> – Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).	51%
	4. <b>Caring Neighborhood</b> – Child experiences caring neighbors.	58%
	5. <b>Caring School Climate</b> – Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging school environment.	57%
	6. <b>Parent Involvement in Schooling</b> – Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.	55%
	<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>	
	7. <b>Community Values Children</b> – Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.	34%
	8. <b>Children as Resources</b> – Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.	53%
	9. <b>Service to Others</b> – Child has opportunities to help others in the community.	34%
	10. <b>Safety</b> – Child feels safe at home, at school, and in her or his neighborhood.	77%
	<b>BOUNDARIES &amp; EXPECTATIONS</b>	
	11. <b>Family Boundaries</b> – Family has clear, consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.	60%
	12. <b>School Boundaries</b> – School provides clear rules and consequences.	90%
	13. <b>Neighborhood Boundaries</b> – Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.	54%
14. <b>Adult Role Models</b> – Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.	48%	
15. <b>Positive Peer Influence</b> – Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.	87%	
16. <b>High Expectations</b> – Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.	89%	
<b>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME</b>		
17. <b>Creative Activities</b> – Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.	58%	
18. <b>Child Programs</b> – Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children.	55%	
19. <b>Religious Community</b> – Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.	58%	
20. <b>Time at Home</b> – Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.	32%	
INTERNAL ASSETS	<b>COMMITMENT TO LEARNING</b>	
	21. <b>Achievement Motivation</b> – Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.	77%
	22. <b>Learning Engagement</b> – Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.	41%
	23. <b>Homework</b> – Child usually hands in homework on time.	80%
	24. <b>Bonding to Adults at School</b> – Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.	78%
	25. <b>Reading for Pleasure</b> – Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.	57%
	<b>POSITIVE VALUES</b>	
	26. <b>Caring</b> – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.	87%
	27. <b>Equality and Social Justice</b> – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.	66%
	28. <b>Integrity</b> – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.	83%
	29. <b>Honesty</b> – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.	90%
	30. <b>Responsibility</b> – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.	85%
	31. <b>Healthy Lifestyle</b> – Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.	78%
	<b>SOCIAL COMPETENCIES</b>	
32. <b>Planning and Decision Making</b> – Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.	50%	
33. <b>Interpersonal Competence</b> – Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her or himself.	46%	
34. <b>Cultural Competence</b> – Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.	62%	
35. <b>Resistance Skills</b> – Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.	80%	
36. <b>Peaceful Conflict Resolution</b> – Child attempts to resolve conflict nonviolently.	72%	
<b>POSITIVE IDENTITY</b>		
37. <b>Personal Power</b> – Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.	64%	
38. <b>Self-Esteem</b> – Child likes and is proud to be the person he or she is.	72%	
39. <b>Sense of Purpose</b> – Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.	48%	
40. <b>Positive View of Personal Future</b> – Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.	61%	

# A New 2004 Sidebar Survey

In cooperation with Marquette-Alger area schools and local youth-serving agencies, Great Lakes Center for Youth Development conducted a supplemental survey in 2004 as an addition to the **Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors (PSL:AB)** survey. The "Sidebar" survey was completed by 2,172 youth. The locally developed 31 item survey was aimed at collecting additional information on 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders about: Post High School Career Planning, Access to Substances, and Nutrition and Exercise. Some of the survey highlights are shared below. A much more detailed report is available on the SOY website at [www.soyreport.org](http://www.soyreport.org).

## Post High School Career Planning

- Nearly 80% of the youth plan to participate in some form of post high school education with slightly over half holding a vision for a four-year degree.



- Nearly one youth in five has not at this time identified a career pathway to pursue following completion of her or his education.
- Health Science was the most popular choice of the six career pathways with 17% (365 students) indicating their interest in that field.

Career Pathway	Planning Entry
Natural Resources	2%
Business, Management, Marketing, and Technology	7%
Arts and Communications	10%
Human Services	11%
Engineering, Manufacturing, and Industrial Technology	14%
Other	15%
Health Science	17%
Undecided	21%

The survey also asked **where youth think they will live and work as adults.**

- While slightly more than one-fourth are still undecided, a predominant number (40%) of youth plan to leave Michigan.
- About one in four (24%) would like to remain in the Upper Peninsula even though three-fourths of those responding cited some qualities of the U.P. they really like.

## ACCESS TO SUBSTANCES

Usage levels of alcohol and tobacco by area youth has been on the decline according to historical results from the **PSL:AB** survey, but usage remains at or above national norms.

### What perceptions do area youth have regarding smoking, drinking, and illicit drugs?

#### Disapproving its use:

- 48% of area youth feel it is wrong to drink alcohol, 63% to smoke cigarettes, 64% to use marijuana, and 84% to use other illicit drugs

#### Consider it a great risk:

- 64% said smoking a pack of cigarettes or more per day is a great risk, 53% reported regular use of marijuana a great risk, and 32% viewed binge drinking as a great risk

#### How available are these substances?

- Teens reported it very easy or easy to get beer (68%), wine (60%), cigarettes (62%), and marijuana (41%)
- 39% of youth reported knowing at least one store that would sell alcohol without asking for ID or proof of age

## Nutrition and Exercise

- More area teens describe themselves as overweight (25%) than underweight (14%)
- 46% hope to lose weight
- One in seven youth reported no strenuous physical activity for the past 7 days

# You Can Get Involved in Building the Assets of Our Area Youth!

A fifteen-year-old girl has a nasty fight with her mother, slams the door shut, and cries herself to sleep. She wakes up in the morning to discover a small package outside her bedroom door. It's a rock wrapped in a piece of paper on which 20 words were written. It took less than a minute to read, but she'll have a lifetime to bask in its meaning. The note read: "This rock is 30 million years old. That's how long it will be before I ever give up on you."

Simple actions can have a positive impact in the life of a child. Studies in the field of youth development repeatedly point out how the presence of caring adults is the single most important factor that can make a difference in the life of a young person. But, research also continues to show that most young people feel they don't have enough caring adults in their lives.

So, maybe you think, what's that got to do with me? I don't have time for "one more thing" – or I'm not a professional youth worker so how can I connect with youth? But, think about this. We are talking about our future employees, teachers, politicians, and parents. We have the power now to **influence their lives** and build healthier communities for everyone.

Not sure **you** can really make a difference? Think back to people who supported and nurtured you in the past. Maybe it was a neighbor who invited you over for cocoa.

Maybe it was a coach or a music teacher who encouraged you to keep practicing. Small actions, but you still remember them and what they meant to you. **You can create that same kind of impact with a young person today.** Begin to discover the uniqueness of the young people around you, and know that you are playing a role in making the community you live in a better place for everyone.

## Here's a list of 10 ideas that can connect you with a young person:

- Introduce yourself
- Be the first to smile
- Send a card
- Go to his/her school play, concert, or game
- Listen
- Share your favorite music or book
- Meet their friends
- Go to [www.macyap.com](http://www.macyap.com) for a list of area youth programs and call them to see if you can help
- Encourage the organizations to which you belong to embark on a new youth activity
- Compliment young people when you see positive behavior that may go unnoticed or unappreciated by others



This report was prepared by the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development. For more information on the 40 Developmental Assets and our State of Youth Report, log on to [www.soyreport.com](http://www.soyreport.com). For other technical assistance, call GLCYD at 906-228-8919. For a list of youth activities, check out our website: [www.glcyd.org](http://www.glcyd.org) or [www.macyap.com](http://www.macyap.com).

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