

35 Characteristics of Asset-Building Communities

1. A vision rooted in developmental assets is communicated several times a year to all residents.
2. All residents understand their personal capacity to promote developmental assets.
3. Most residents take personal responsibility.
4. Most residents take action.
5. New residents are quickly socialized to the community vision.
6. Children and teenagers know the developmental assets.
7. Most youth take action to promote assets for themselves and for their peers.
8. The community thinks and acts intergenerationally; most adults establish sustained relationships with children and adolescents; most adolescents establish sustained relationships with younger children.
9. Youth have many opportunities to lead, make decisions, and give input; youth are provided useful roles in community life. Youth then are actors in the reclaiming of community rather than just objects of programs.
10. All children and teenagers frequently engage in service to others. Much of this "work" is done with adults; a premium is placed on processing the experiences (i.e. service learning).
11. A common core of values is named.
12. Adults model and articulate their values.
13. A common core of boundaries is named.
14. Adults model and articulate their values.
15. Families are supported, taught, and equipped to elevate asset-building to top priority.
16. Community programs assist adults-particularly parents-to personally reclaim developmental assets.
17. Neighbors and community residents build caring relationships with youth and express this caring through dialogue, listening, commending positive behavior, acknowledging their presence, enjoying their company, and involving them in decision making. They know neighborhood children and adolescents by name and take time to get to know them.

18. Businesses that employ teenagers address the assets of support, boundaries, values, and social competencies. Employers also develop family-friendly policies and provide mechanisms for employees to build relationships with youth.
19. Religious institutions mobilize their capacity for intergenerational relationships, educating and supporting parents, structured time use, values development, and service to the community. They focus on both their own members and the larger community.
20. Schools-both elementary and secondary-place priority on becoming caring environments for all students, providing challenging and engaging curriculum for all students, providing opportunities for nurturing values deemed crucial by the community, expanding and strengthening co-curricular activities, and using their connections with parents to reinforce the importance of family attention to assets.
21. Youth organizations and other service providers train leaders and volunteers in asset-building strategies and provide meaningful opportunities for youth to serve their community and build citizenship and leadership skills.
22. Local government-through policy, influence, training, and resource allocation-moves asset development and community-wide cooperation to top priorities for planing, policies, and funding allocations within the municipality.
23. The community invests in expanding and strengthening its systems of clubs, teams, and organizations.
24. Virtually all 7 to 18 year olds are involved in one or more clubs, teams, or other youth-serving organizations that view building assets as central to their mission.
25. All professionals (e.g. day care providers, teachers, social workers, youth ministers) and volunteers (e.g coaches, mentors) who work with youth receive training in asset building.
26. The media (print, radio, television) repeatedly communicate the community's vision, support local mobilization efforts, and provide forums for sharing innovative actions taken by individuals and organizations.
27. The community prizes cultural strengths and traditions. Particularly for youth of color, this heritage includes the concept of elders, the primacy of intergenerational relationships, respect for figures of authority, the value of caring for others, and a wisdom about what matters. Being in touch with and affirming these strengths represents an important dimension of cultural competence, in addition to knowledge and contact with cultures beyond one's own.
28. Teenagers have safe places "to hang".
29. Families have safe places on weekends and during evenings to receive short-term child care.

30. All children receive frequent expressions of support in both informal public settings and in places where youth gather.
31. The community celebrates the individuals and systems which take innovative action; youth professionals and volunteers have high status in the life of the community.
32. The community-wide commitment to asset-building is long-term and inclusive.
33. The community pays particular attention to helping girls develop assertiveness skills, a sense of personal control and mastery and healthy self-concept.
34. The community pays particular attention to helping boys develop and express compassion and caring.
35. Current programs which intentionally build assets, like peer helping, mentoring, and service learning are elevated to top priority and expanded to reach a higher number of youth.