



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PROJECT  
CORNERSTONE**  
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

JULY Asset of the Month:  
**COMMUNITY VALUES YOUTH**  
Young people perceive that adults in the community  
value children and youth.

This document is designed to help adults throughout Santa Clara County develop materials and activities to promote the asset of adult role models.

### **Newsletter Content**

*The following text may be used in organizational newsletters. Please include the credit at the end of the article.*

### **Community Values Youth**

Research shows that youth who feel valued in their community enjoy better mental health; a greater sense of personal control and optimism; reduced crime, violence, and fighting; less substance abuse; and higher academic performance. Unfortunately, in Silicon Valley, Community Values Youth is by far the least reported asset. In Project Cornerstone's 2016 survey, **only 27% of 4th-6th graders and 22% of 7th-12<sup>th</sup> graders** reported that they feel valued by their community. To help raise awareness of the importance of communicating respect to young people, July is Community Values Youth month in Silicon Valley.

All adults in the community have a role to play in showing their support for youth. Young people are not fully connected to their community when they notice value from only the adults they know. They will miss the benefits that such a connection can provide. Normally adults feel that youth already know that they're valued and appreciated.

The following discussion topics can help you work with young people to identify the ways that the community does, and does not, provide them with the permission associated with this asset:

- Do you ever encounter adults who have negative opinions about people your age? Do you know how to respond politely but well to their criticism or comments?
- Are there good places for kids your age to hang out after school and on the weekends? If there aren't, what kind of place would you like to see?
- Do you feel that adults at school and other organizations give you an

opportunity to voice your opinion? Can you suggest some ways that adults could provide opportunities for youth to provide feedback and suggestions about programs?

Community Values Youth is basically linked with other external assets. Children and youth will feel that they are welcomed and valued by the community when adults provide them with support, permission, boundaries, and positive outlooks. The more effective that we are as a community at building assets in general, the more effective we will be at raising the levels of this sadly lacking asset.

*This article was provided courtesy of Project Cornerstone's Asset-a-Month program. For more information, visit [www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org).*

## **Activities**

The activities below are a starting point to help adults find ways to show youth that they are valued and appreciated.

### *For families*

- Many programs young people enjoy are created and maintained by the community. (e.g., libraries, parks, and playgrounds)
- Your children can participate in community life. Help them identify issues that affect young people. Write letters to newspapers or government officials about ways to address their fears.
- Encourage your children to write letters of thanks to the organizations and businesses that treat young people well. Doing so will encourage them to continue their efforts. Your child's letter may be publicly displayed.

### *For all adults*

- Remember to treat all young people with respect, and take their ideas and suggestions seriously.
- If you work in a business train your staff to treat young people respectfully. Make sure that your policies are youth-friendly. If your business serves adults who may have children with them, make sure the space is inviting and provides age-appropriate diversions.
- Celebrate youth who help your organization daily.
- Attend and contribute to local government meetings to make sure that the needs of young people are being addressed.

### *At school or in youth programs*

- Ask businesses in the community to show support for your program. In addition to financial donations and sponsorships, they can display artwork, host tours of their facility, or find other ways to show that they care about the youth in the community. (Doing so makes good business sense—today's youth are tomorrow's customers!)
- With older children and teens, discuss whether the community has good places

for kids and teens to hangout, and if there are more positive opportunities for younger kids than for older ones. Use the results to create an action plan to make adults in the community more aware of the issue.

- Invite important members of the community to attend shows and events.

### **AUGUST Asset of the Month: Caring Neighborhood!**

If you or your organization can share ideas for positive, creative activities for young people, please contact (408) 351-6482 or by email at [info@projectcornerstone.org](mailto:info@projectcornerstone.org).

### **About the Asset-a-Month Program**

The goals of the Silicon Valley Asset-a-Month program are to help align adults throughout our diverse community in their efforts to promote positive youth development by fostering developmental assets. For more information about the Asset-a-Month program, contact Project Cornerstone at (408) 351-6482 or [info@projectcornerstone.org](mailto:info@projectcornerstone.org).