

Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth

Executive Summary

Alexandria, VA

February 2001

Prepared by:



Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth Executive Summary for Alexandria, VA
may be copied, adapted and distributed in print and electronic formats by Alexandria Youth Policy Commission
or its designee for informational and educational purposes only. All other rights reserved.
Copyright ©2000 by Search Institute, 700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55415; www.serach-institute.org.

This report is based on data from *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*, copyright © 1996 by Search Institute.

Report Number 80223
Alexandria

Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth

Alexandria, VA

Search Institute's framework of developmental assets provides a tool for assessing the health and well-being of middle and high school age youth. The asset framework represents a common core of developmental building blocks crucial for all youth, regardless of community size, region of the country, gender, family economics, or race/ethnicity. This report summarizes the extent to which youth in your community experience these assets and how the assets relate to their behavior. These 40 developmental assets were assessed in December, 2000 using the survey *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*.

The following table describes the youth in your community who participated in the study.

Who Was Surveyed

		Number of Youth	Percent of Total
Total Sample*		3708	100
Gender**	Male	1720	47
	Female	1958	53
Grade**	6	582	16
	7	583	16
	8	564	15
	9	539	15
	10	533	14
	11	497	13
	12	409	11
Race / Ethnicity**	American Indian	22	1
	Asian / Pacific Islander	219	6
	Black / African American	1429	39
	Hispanic	722	20
	White	959	26
	Multi-racial	305	8

* Five criteria are used to determine whether individual responses are of good quality. In your study, 410 survey forms were discarded for not meeting one or more of these criteria. See full report for more information.

** Numbers may not sum to "Total Sample" due to missing information.

The developmental assets are grouped into two major types (see Figures 1 and 2). **External assets** are the networks of support, opportunities and people that stimulate and nurture positive development in youth. **Internal assets** are the young person's own commitments, values, and competencies. Figures 1 and 2 provide the percentage of all youth in your study reporting each asset.

Figure 1: External Assets

Percent of Your Youth Reporting Each of 20 External Assets

Asset Type	Asset Name	Definition	Percent
Support	1. Family support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.	69
	2. Positive family communication	Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek parent(s)' advice and counsel.	28
	3. Other adult relationships	Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.	40
	4. Caring neighborhood	Young person experiences caring neighbors.	37
	5. Caring school climate	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	30
	6. Parent involvement in schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	34
Empowerment	7. Community values youth	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	22
	8. Youth as resources	Young people are given useful roles in the community.	27
	9. Service to others	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	48
	10. Safety	Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.	43
Boundaries and Expectations	11. Family boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	41
	12. School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.	59
	13. Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	47
	14. Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	31
	15. Positive peer influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.	67
	16. High expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	57
Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	22
	18. Youth programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.	50
	19. Religious community	Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	59
	20. Time at home	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	62

Figure 2: Internal Assets

Percent of Your Youth Reporting Each of 20 Internal Assets

Asset Type	Asset Name	Definition	Percent
Commitment to Learning	21. Achievement motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.	71
	22. School engagement	Young person is actively engaged in learning.	57
	23. Homework	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	65
	24. Bonding to school	Young person cares about his or her school.	53
	25. Reading for pleasure	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	24
Positive Values	26. Caring	Young person places high value on helping other people.	56
	27. Equality and social justice	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	63
	28. Integrity	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his or her beliefs.	70
	29. Honesty	Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy.	66
	30. Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.	63
	31. Restraint	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.	46
Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision-making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	32
	33. Interpersonal competence	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	44
	34. Cultural competence	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	50
	35. Resistance skills	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	44
	36. Peaceful conflict resolution	Young person seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.	42
Positive Identity	37. Personal power	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."	41
	38. Self-esteem	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.	56
	39. Sense of purpose	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."	57
	40. Positive view of personal future	Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.	75

Figure 3: Average Number of Assets Your Youth Report

Most young people in the United States—regardless of age, gender, or region of the country—experience too few of the 40 assets. Search Institute’s research on adolescents consistently has shown a small, but observable, decrease in assets among older adolescents (9th- through 12th-grade youth) as compared with young adolescents (6th- through 8th-grade youth). If the average number of assets in some of your grades is particularly low compared to other grades, it may suggest a need to more closely examine what is happening at that grade level. Here is the average number of assets reported by youth in your community at each grade level.

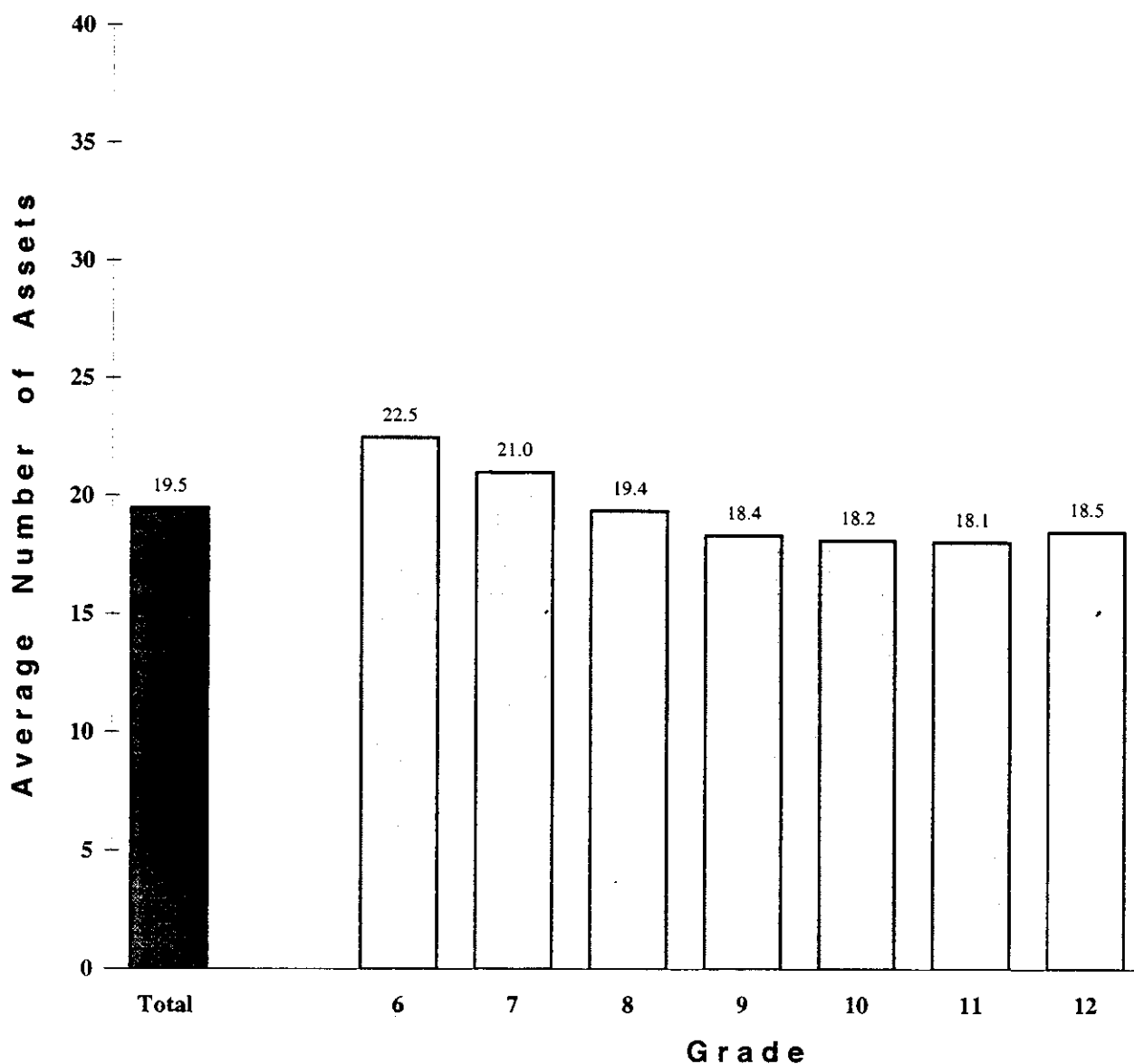
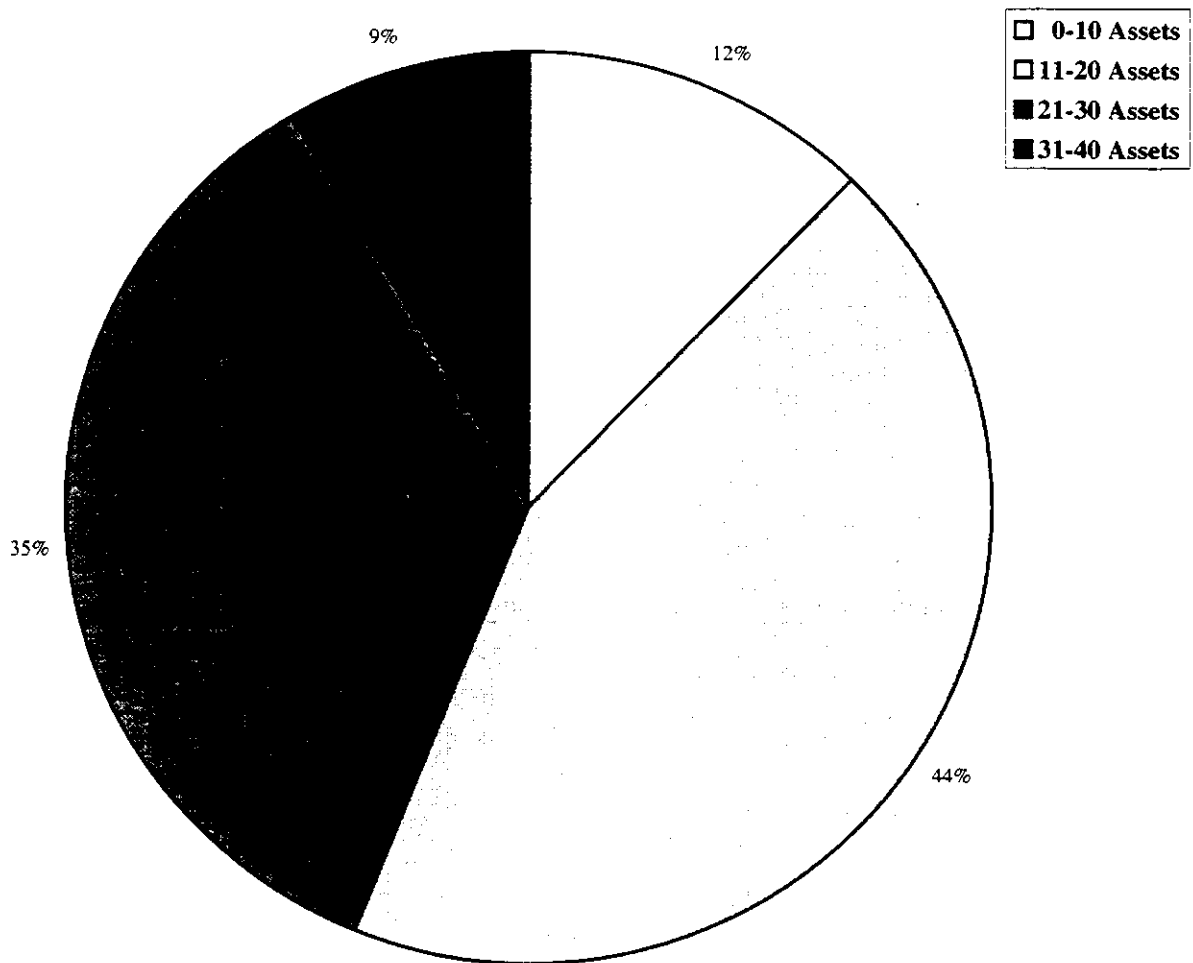


Figure 4: The Challenge Facing Your Community

Ideally, of course, all youth would experience 31-40 of these assets. Each community needs to establish a goal for what percentage of youth it seeks to be at this level. This process can provide an important opportunity for creating a community vision for your youth. The figure below shows the percentage of your youth who experience each of four levels of assets: 0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40.



Note. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 5: The Power of Assets to Protect Against Risk-Taking Behaviors

This figure shows the power of assets to protect youth from risk-taking behaviors. Search Institute's research consistently shows that youth with higher levels of assets are involved in fewer risk-taking behaviors. Each vertical bar shows the *average number* of 24 risk-taking behaviors among all youth, grouped by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40). The 24 risk-taking behaviors are: alcohol use, binge drinking, smoking, smokeless tobacco, inhalants, marijuana, other illicit drugs, drinking and driving, riding with a driver who has been drinking, sexual intercourse, shoplifting, vandalism, trouble with police, hitting someone, hurting someone, use of a weapon, group fighting, carrying a weapon for protection, threatening physical harm, skipping school, gambling, eating disorders, depression, and attempted suicide.

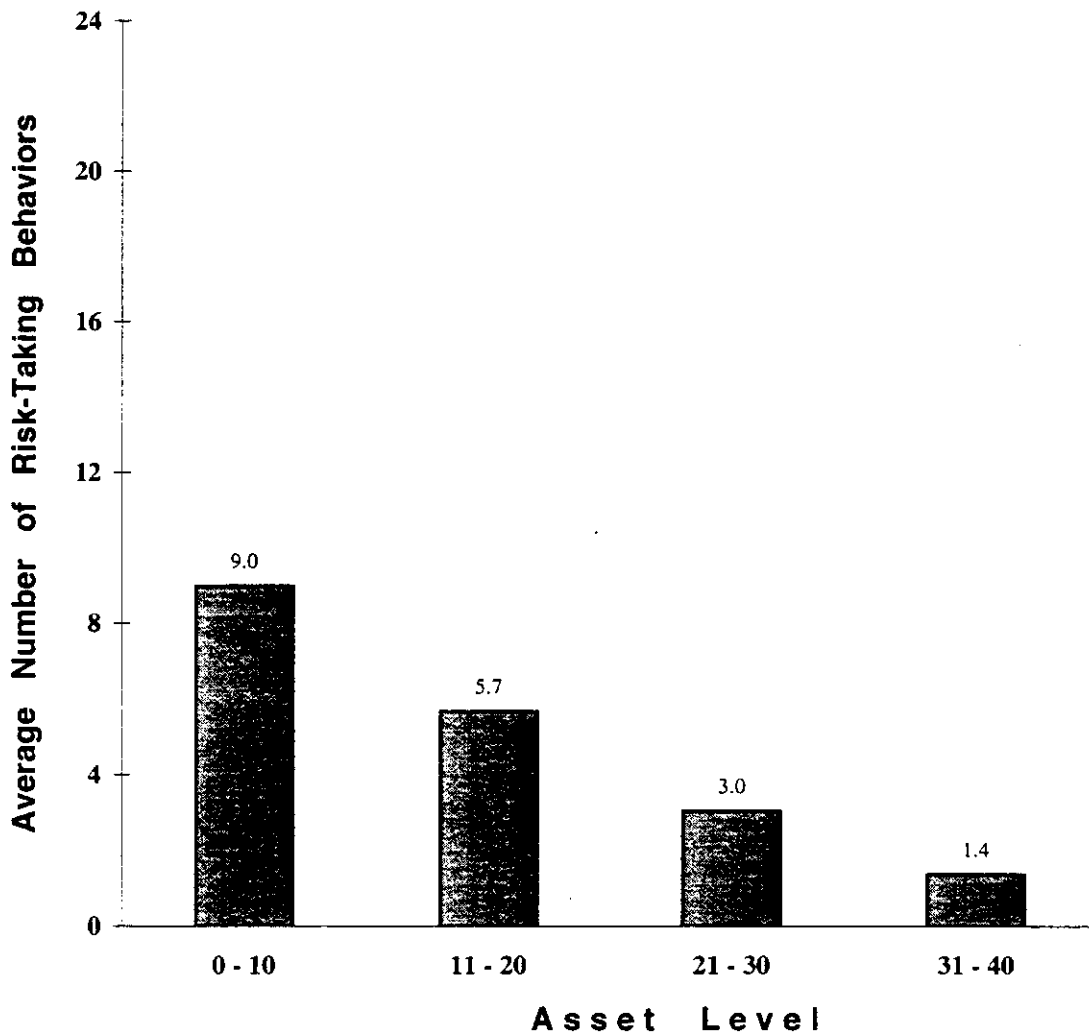
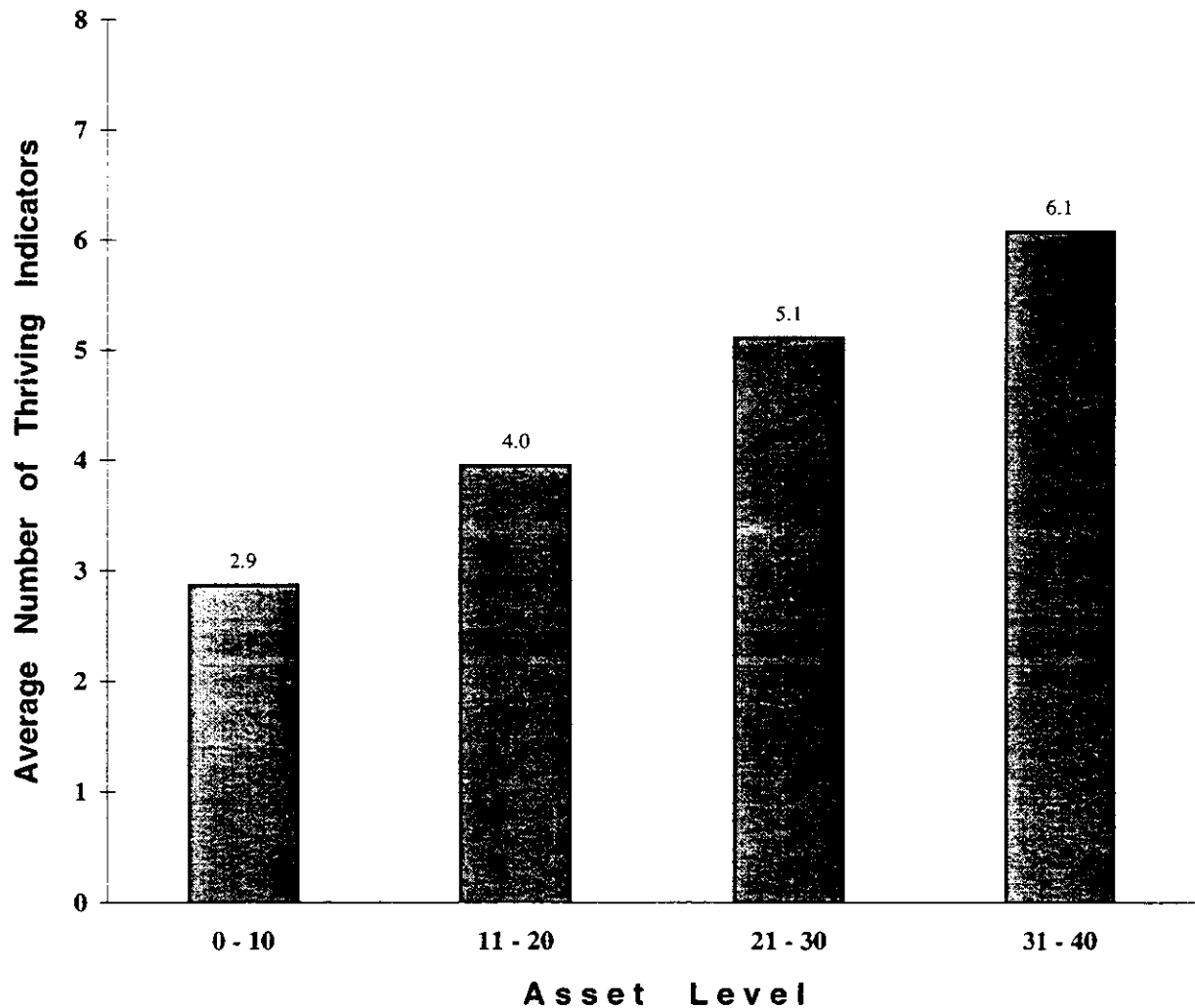


Figure 6: The Power of Assets to Promote Thriving Indicators

This figure shows the power of assets to promote thriving indicators among your youth. Search Institute's research consistently shows that youth with higher levels of assets are more likely to report more thriving indicators. Each vertical bar shows the *average number* of eight thriving indicators among all youth, grouped by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40). The eight thriving indicators are: school success, informal helping, valuing diversity, maintaining good health, exhibiting leadership, resisting danger, impulse control, and overcoming adversity.



What Next?

Moving from Awareness to Action

This report provides insights about the young people in your community and can be a powerful tool for community-wide discussion about how to improve the well-being of your youth. The good news is that everyone—parents, grandparents, educators, neighborhoods, children, teenagers, youth workers, employers, health care providers, coaches, and others—can build assets. Ideally, the whole community is involved to ensure that young people have the solid foundation they need to become tomorrow's competent, caring adults. Here are some suggestions for how to begin strengthening the assets among the youth in your community.

What adults can do . . .

- Smile at every child or adolescent you see.
- Send a "thinking of you" or birthday card, letter, or e-mail message to a child or adolescent.
- Invite a young person you know to do something together, such as playing a game or going to a park.

What young people can do . . .

- Take advantage of interesting and challenging opportunities through youth programs, cocurricular activities, and congregational youth programs.
- Get to know an adult you admire.
- Find opportunities to build relationships with younger children such as service projects, tutoring, or baby-sitting.

What families can do . . .

- Model—and talk about—your own values and priorities.
- Regularly do things with your child, including projects around your house, recreational activities, and service projects.
- Talk to your children about assets. Ask them for suggestions of ways to strengthen theirs and yours.

What organizations can do . . .

- Highlight, develop, expand, or support programs designed to build assets, such as mentoring, peer helping, service-learning, or parent education.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to others in and through your organization.
- Develop employee policies that encourage asset building, including flexible work schedules for parents as well as other employees, so that they can volunteer in youth development programs.

For more information about what you can do to build assets or start an asset-building initiative in your community, call Search Institute at 1 - 800 - 888-7828.

If available, the name and phone number of a local contact person or initiative appears below.