



## **Developmental Assets**

### **There are 40... How many does your child have?**

#### **Asset #18 – Out of Home Activities**

“Hey dad, I want to be a ballerina”. “Mom, can I sign up for judo?” “I want to be a singer!” “Can I join the scouts?” Sound familiar? Many of you are thinking “oh my....the cost!....the scheduling!....the travel!.....the time!.....ugh!” But did you know, when you people participate two or more times per week in co-curricular school activities or structured community programs, they are building one of 40 Developmental Assets? Having lots of Developmental Assets means young people are less likely to use substances, experience depression or having an eating disorder. Studies also show that young people who participate in quality co-curricular/community activities get along better with other, have higher grades and self-esteem, and behave better in school.

Time, cost and transportation may be barriers to having our young people involved in out-of-home activities. However many activities are no or low cost; don't be shy about asking organizations for a subsidy to help ensure your child can be involved. Some parents in this community with no vehicle barter with other parents to provide transportation in exchange for child care, house cleaning or other services. Even if you don't have children of your own, consider offering to take a friend's child to an activity both you and the young person would enjoy: a walk to the park, or a program at the library.

#### **Here are some other ideas for building Asset #18**

- ❖ Look for programs that are fun for young people. Programs in which adults/leaders push young people too hard to “excel” are not fun and can be harmful.
- ❖ When a young person wants to try a new activity, ask them for a six month commitment to give it, and themselves, a chance to grow.
- ❖ Routines are important for young people; ensure that their activities are predictable, planned and put on the family calendar.
- ❖ Encourage variety in activities – perhaps one that is more physically active and one that is more creatively engaging; alternatively, one that involves a team (team sport, choir) and one that is an individual activity (karate, piano).
- ❖ Encourage activities that teach skills while giving interesting, well rounded experiences – activities like Scouting, Junior Forest Wardens and 4\_H build many of the 40 Developmental Assets.
- ❖ If you are an activity leader, familiarize yourself with the 40 Developmental Assets and find ways to incorporate them into your programming.