



Developmental Assets

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

Asset #27 – Equality and Social Justice

Caring about **equality and social justice** is one of 40 Developmental Assets which help young people grow up to become healthy, caring and responsible.

Young people who are concerned about equality and reducing hunger and poverty may not know what life is like for those who suffer these conditions, but they do understand it's important to care for people – all people. They care about people they don't know, who live a world away, and who may have critical needs. And they want to do something to make the world a better place. Even tiny steps – if enough people take them – can make a big difference in providing water, food and shelter for others.

A great gift idea or loan from the library is a must-read book you can read together called “Ryan and Jimmy – And the Well in Africa That Brought Them Together” by Herb Shoveller. This is an amazing story about how one Canadian six year old, whose classroom assignment to demonstrate equality and social justice has truly changed the world. You can check out the website: www.ryanswell.ca. Ryan Hreljac is now 18 years old and is founder of Ryan's Well Foundation which grew out of his project in grade 1 to drill a clean water well in Africa. Since then Ryan and his foundation have raised money to contribute to 502 water and sanitation projects in 16 countries. Ryan's story is proof that one person can make a difference in the area of equality and social justice.

Here are other ideas for building this Asset:

- ❖ **In your home and family:** Find out which injustices in the world most concern your child. Help her or him develop a plan to personally help address the problem.
- ❖ **In your neighborhood and community:** Donate canned goods and other non-perishables to your local food bank. Volunteer to serve food at a nearby homeless shelter.
- ❖ **In your school or youth program:** Choose a social issue which either directly affects or troubles the young people in your class or program. Have them write letters about the issue to the local newspaper or politicians. Help them plan and implement fundraisers that raise awareness and funds for equality and social justice projects.