



Asset of the Month

August Asset Category: Constructive Use of Time (External Asset)

August Asset: #18 Youth Programs

In a healthy community, a young person needs to spend three or more hours / week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. When young people spend their time in meaningful ways, everyone benefits. Young people learn new skills and connect to a great variety of people. Adults share their passions along with their skills. Neighborhoods and communities benefit from energized, excited young people who feel empowered and are willing to contribute their talents and their ideas. (58% of youth surveyed believe that they have this asset in their lives.)

What youth say about constructive use of time / youth programs: “Let me play.” “Offer lots of fun things to do after school.” “Open up more places for young people to go.”

Constructive Use of Time: All children and youth need opportunities to be involved in positive, constructive activities. The constructive use of time assets explains *how* children and teenagers spend their time makes a big difference in the way they grow up. What do these assets offer young people?

Balance – The Constructive Use of Time Assets encourage young people to get involved in creative activities, youth programs, and congregational programs. They also say that young people need to spend time at home with their families.

Connections – Through activities, young people have opportunities to build relationships with caring peers and adults.

Growth – Constructive activities give young people opportunities to grow.

Challenges - Most constructive activities challenge young people to grow and learn. These challenges help children and young people expand their horizons and try new things.

Safe Places – For many young people, youth programs provide a safe, supervised place to spend time. Without them, young people may spend many hours alone, which too often can lead to dangerous or negative activities. (58% of youth surveyed believe they have this asset in their lives).

Parenting Tips & How-to-live the Asset of the Month: Youth Programs

All Children

- Look for activities that are fun for children. Programs that push children to excel often aren't enjoyable – and can be harmful.
- Routines are important for children. Make sure that children's activities and schedules are planned and predictable.
- Find structured activities for preschoolers to enjoy outside the home. For some children, this might be a childcare setting or a preschool. A preschool art class or beginning ballet or swimming lessons might work for others.
- Let children experiment with different activities they like. Learn more about the options that are available in your area. Many programs are free or inexpensive, and scholarships are sometimes available.
- If children's sports leagues focus on competition, start some “fun” teams for kids. Make sure that kids on all teams have fun by learning about cooperation and sportsmanship. Thank coaches who praise and support every child on the team.
- Involve children in team activities (such as a team sport or a choir) as well as individual ones (such as piano lessons or karate).

Teens

-If 58% of the youth surveyed are involved in youth programs, this means that 41% aren't. Many teens don't participate because they don't know about the programs available to them. Parents – do some research and find out what is available, then involve your teenager in finding a program that fits their interests and abilities.

-If you can't answer yes to all or most of the questions below, maybe it's because you're not involved in enough (or any) meaningful activities. Or maybe it's because you're not involved in the *right* activities. Either way you can do something about it.

- Overall, are you happy with how many different things you do with your time?
- Are the activities you're involved in stimulating and challenging for you?
- Are you learning new skills and talents and acquiring new knowledge?
- Do your activities teach you more about yourself?
- Are you excited each day to do these activities?
- Do they bring out the best in you?

FACT: Youth programs build assets!

A youth program is an asset-rich environment. It's one of the best places you can go to build and strengthen a lot of assets at the same time.

You'll form relationships with caring adults (Asset #3). Youth programs are proof that the community values youth (#7). You'll be given useful roles and meaningful things to do (#8), often (depending on the program) including service to others(#9). Youth program are safe places to go and be (#10). You'll meet and interact with adult role models (#14) and make friends who model responsible behavior (#15). Many youth programs offer creative activities (#17). Most promote positive values #26 - #31), social competencies (#32 - #36), and positive identity (#37 - #40). Grand total: 23 assets...and maybe more, depending on the program and how involved you decide to be.

Youth Program and Constructive Use of Time Opportunities - contact ideas:

- Schools/ teachers—after school programs area coaches and P.E. teachers
- Sheboygan & Sheboygan Falls YMCA
- Recreation Departments – often part of the school district
- Sports Core in Kohler
- KMK Art Center
- *A dozen more examples on the website below:*
- Golf Courses
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- Churches
- Above and Beyond Children's Museum
- Local Libraries
- Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts

* Visit <http://www.familyresourcesheboygan.org>. Learn more about Youth Programs and the other 39 assets. This website also lists other great websites for parents, youth group leaders, teachers, etc. with tools, handouts, etc.

August HCHY Events/Announcements

1. **We need your help!!** Please contact Mike or Erik (contact info below) with how you are putting assets into action. We are putting together a short newsletter called "Assets in Action" with HCHY Happenings and stories and testimonials on the impact asset building is having around the county.

2. We are lining up trainings and presentations – please contact Erik Wagner (892-6706) or Mike Burns (451-8000) to reserve a training or presentation for your youth group, parent group, service club, students, staff, etc –**there is no cost for trainings/presentations and the time spent will be well worth it.**

***Please forward this information to co-workers, clients, families, and other contacts.**

*Please respond with feedback, ideas for upcoming assets of the month, etc., or if your organization would like to be listed as a resource to: ysports@sheboygancountyyymca.org or erikfrc@excel.net .

***Next Month's (September) Asset of the Month: #22 School Engagement. Category: Commitment to Learning**

The Asset of the Month campaign is an effort under the Healthy Community/ Healthy Youth Initiative:

