

## Have an Asset Building Christmas

Hard to believe but it is almost Christmas again and as we finish up all the last minute buying, baking and wrapping let's take some time to reflect on how we could build assets with our youth this Christmas. Take a moment and think about Christmas's of your childhood and what your favorite memories are. It's likely that you will think about picking out a Christmas tree and decorating it or making cookies, going to midnight mass, playing Christmas music or enjoying a feast with family. Yes, of course we remember some of our favorite gifts but what makes the season so enjoyable is the time we take to spend time with our families. While most of us will give the children in our lives gifts for Christmas the best gift anyone can give our youth is the gift of time. All youth benefit greatly from the time spent with a positive adult. The Holiday season is the perfect time to be intentional about building assets with youth. All of the usual tasks of the season- shopping, cooking, decorating- can involve youth of all ages. So as you are doing your Christmas chores take time to involve kids in these activities. It is a great learning and bonding experience for them that they will likely reflect on as adults. Below are some ideas on how to be an asset builder during this season. The lists is not meant to overwhelm you but to serve as a reminder that no matter how many things we have on our "to do" list it's important to take the time and model positive attitudes and behaviors for the youth in our lives. Take Care and Enjoy this time with Family!

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### The 40 Developmental Assets®

Assets are 40 positive qualities, skills, experiences, and opportunities that are critical in the lives of children and youth. The more assets youth have, the more likely they are to succeed.

42% of youth surveyed by Search Institute have just 20 or fewer of these assets in their lives.\*

\*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

**Positive Family Communication:** talk and plan how the family will spend holiday time. Talk about traditions and how to make new traditions.

**Community Values Youth:** many young people get involved in community service projects over the holiday season; recognize and show appreciation for those efforts.

**Youth as Resources and Service to Others:** get youth involved in the community: food drives, adopting angels, serving in soup kitchens — invite them to come along with you as you serve in the community.

**Adult Role Models:** this is a great season for being a good role model through giving, caring, responsibility, restraint, and planning and decision making.

**Creative Activities:** There are many ways to utilize creativity at all ages during this season- cooking, music, art projects- encourage youth to use their creative talents as they celebrate the season.

**Religious Community:** this is an asset with the fewest amount of youth reporting they have and what better season then to help youth find opportunities to connect to the faith community. Help them find ways to get involved in church services, youth groups and activities and recognize this positive involvement throughout the whole year.

**Caring:** Encourage youth to take this time to reflect on how much we have to be grateful for and then to find ways to help those less fortunate.

**Planning & Decision Making :** from planning holiday meals to planning holiday travel this busy time of year, planning ahead and making good choices is more important than ever.

**Peaceful conflict resolution:** However enjoyable this season is we all encounter our fair share of stress during this time of year it's important to make sure we show young people how to compromise and to resolve difficult situations calmly.