New York State
Regional Youth Voice Forums:
An Exercise in Positive Youth Development
2002

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“Promoting the well-being and safety of our children, youth and families.”
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## Regional Forum Results

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March 2003

Dear Friends:

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is committed to promoting the well-being and safety of children, families and communities in New York State. In doing so, OCFS reached out to youth across the state in 2002, holding a series of six Youth Voice Forums to get their input on issues facing young people and families.

OCFS’s Office of Youth Development coordinated the forums, each attended by about 100 young people. County departments of social services, local youth bureaus, Advantage After School programs, and other agencies involved with youth selected the participants. Attendees, ranging in age from 14 to 20, outlined concerns, brainstormed ideas and solutions, and each developed a personal action to undertake in the near future.

I had the opportunity to meet with some of the Youth Forum participants, and drew strength and encouragement from their energy, enthusiasm and ideas. They talked about the importance of family support, communities that value youth, giving youth a voice on issues that impact them, and clear and consistent boundaries and expectations for youth.

These forums are an example of Governor George E. Pataki’s tremendous commitment to positive youth development in New York State. Following the Governor’s vision, OCFS is working directly with youth through activities like the Youth Voice Forum to foster discussion and address the issues facing the next generation of our state’s leaders and their families.

I sincerely hope this report becomes a valuable tool in your efforts to support the young people of New York State.

Sincerely,

John A. Johnson
Commissioner
Positive Youth Development: Regional Youth Voice Forums

Introduction

“Governor George E. Pataki is committed to the positive youth development of our state’s youth and to gaining their input to help build a better future for all New Yorkers. Following the Governor’s vision, OCFS is working directly with youth through activities like the Youth Voice Forum to foster discussion and address the issues facing the next generation of our state’s leaders and their families.”

- Commissioner John A. Johnson, OCFS Family Newsletter, Autumn 2002

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Office of Youth Development, and the New York State Youth Leadership and Service Council (YLSC) hosted a series of Youth Voice Forums across the State this past summer. The Office of Youth Development acknowledges that youth are resources in strengthening communities and should be valued and recognized. Each Forum strived to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide an opportunity for youth to come together and “voice” their opinion on issues that matter to them.
- Enhance communication between youth and adults by creating an opportunity for participation in a positive environment, which promotes mutual respect of individuals, ideas and diversity, leading to youth empowerment; and,
- Assist the Office of Youth Development by involving youth in the planning of statewide activities that affect young people throughout New York State.

OCFS, in conjunction with the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, kicked off the first-ever series of Youth Voice Forums on June 4, 2002 in New York City. Other Regional Forums followed in Hudson and Syracuse in July 2002 and in Batavia, Glens Falls and on Long Island in August 2002.

OCFS’s Office of Youth Development (OYD) coordinated the forums. Approximately 100 youth and adult participants- selected by county Departments of Social Services, Youth Bureaus, Advantage After-School sites, AmeriCorps programs, ACT for Youth sites, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Independent Living, Aftercare programs, and other agencies involved with youth- attended each forum. Youth ranging from age 14 to 20, outlined concerns, brainstormed ideas and solutions, and each developed a personal action plan to undertake in the near future.

More than $95 million has been included in the State’s 2002-03 budget to support positive youth development programs under the auspices of OCFS, including substantial increases in funding for Governor Pataki’s Advantage After-School and Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Programs.
**What is “Youth Voice?”**

*Youth Voice* - (i.e. youth leadership, youth participation, youth engagement, youth empowerment) the involving of a youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunities for planning and/or decision-making affecting others in an activity whose impact or consequence is extended to others.

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**A Timeline for New York State’s Youth Voice Agenda**

In 1995, there were 9 regional summits held all across the state to gather the suggestions from a broad cross section of local leaders. We brought together leaders from local government, business, civic organizations, clergy, educators, law enforcement, the media, as well as health and human service providers.

In 1996, the first Governor’s Conference on Youth was organized to develop Youth Goals for the Year 2000. The Governor asked then requested a Blueprint for Action be developed based on the findings from that conference. More than a third of the participants were youth.

In 1997, this Blueprint for Action was developed in partnership with all the State health, education, human service and criminal justice agencies. The Youth Development Blueprint established a major shift in policy direction for the State. Rather than focus on youth problems as the principal barrier to youth development, we shifted our policies and programs to promote youth development as the most effective strategy for prevention...

- To see youth as problem solvers, rather than as problems to be solved...
- To make clear what we want for youth not just what we don’t want.

In 1997, the 2nd Governors Conference on Youth was held, this time we had more youth than adults involved. We had learned that it is critical to give youth a real voice if we want to develop actions that will make a difference. At this 2nd conference the youth and adult leaders turned the ideas of the Blueprint into local actions and state policy recommendations.
In 1998, the 3rd Governor’s Conference on Youth was held, which focused on youth leadership development, and youth involvement in state youth related policy development. Governor Pataki created the Youth Leadership and Service Council (YLSC) to serve as an advisory group within Office of Youth Development. It is comprised of young people, ages 14-20, nominated by leaders in their community. YLSC members provide input on state policies that will have a positive impact on young people throughout New York State. Members of the YLSC helped coordinate the Youth Voice Forums. As a result of the nine (9) regional summits in 1995 and the first Governor’s Conference on Youth, the five objectives for New York State youth policy, recommended in “New York Youth – The Key to our Economic and Social Future: A Blueprint for State and Local Action,” are a direct result of input from youth and families from the grassroots level throughout the state:

- Build community opportunities for positive youth development in neighborhoods, schools, parks and religious facilities.
- Strengthen and support the capacity of families to care for their children.
- **Expand opportunities for youth leadership and the opportunities for youth to serve as problem-solvers.**
- Mobilize resources (public-private, state-local) through collaborations and partnerships including business, media, and civic organizations.
- Support programs that are measurably effective and promote the most successful approaches.

**Youth Voice Priority**

For 2002-03, the Office of Children and Family Services Office of Youth Development (OYD) has designated Youth Voice a priority to expand opportunities for youth leadership and for youth to serve as problem solvers.

OYD will place an emphasis on the following areas while implementing the Youth Voice priority:

- **Internal and External Training** - Train both internal and external stakeholders on the principles of youth development and youth voice.
- **Model Behavior** - Incorporate youth development and youth voice principles into OCFS initiatives.
Regional Youth Voice Forums - Coordinate six (6) regional youth voice forums throughout New York State.

Youth Voice Focus Groups - Hold youth voice focus groups with OCFS populations.

Collaboration - Continue to collaborate within OCFS and with state and local partners regarding youth development and youth voice.

The 40 Developmental Assets

Search Institute has developed 40 developmental assets that youth need to grow up to be competent, caring and healthy. Helping youth to develop these assets depends primarily on individuals – parents, grandparents, teachers, neighbors and many others – building positive relationships with children and teenagers. Nearly all children and adolescents would benefit from more developmental assets than they now have. While it is crucial to pay special attention to those children who have the least assets economically and emotionally, the goal is to reclaim the kind of community-wide attention to positive youth development.

(Assets in bold type were those identified during the regional forums)

1. Family support
   Family life provides high level of love and support.

2. Positive family communication
   Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).

3. Other adult relationships
   Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.

4. Caring neighborhood
   Young person experiences caring neighbors.

5. Caring school climate
   School provides a caring, encouraging environment.

6. Parent involvement in schooling
   Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

7. Community values youth
   Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.

8. Youth as resources
   Young people are given useful roles in the community.

9. Service to others
   Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.

10. Safety
    Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

11. Family boundaries
    Family has clear rules and consequences and monitor’s the young person’s whereabouts.
12. School boundaries
   School provides clear rules and consequences.

13. Neighborhood boundaries
   Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior.

14. Adult role models
   Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.

15. Positive peer influence
   Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior.

16. High expectations
   Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

17. Creative activities
   Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in
   music, theatre or other arts.

18. Youth Programs
   Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or
   organizations at school and/or in the community organizations.

19. Religious community
   Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious
   institution.

20. Time at home
   Young person is out with friend “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights
   per week.

21. Achievement motivation
   Young person is motivated to do well in school.

22. School engagement
   Young person is actively engaged in learning.

23. Homework
   Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

24. Bonding to school
   Young person cares about her or his school.

25. Reading for pleasure
   Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

26. Caring
   Young person places high value on helping other people.

27. Equality and social justice
   Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger
   and poverty.

28. Integrity
   Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. Honesty
   Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy”.

30. Responsibility
   Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.

31. Restraint
   Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

32. Planning and decision-making
   Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.

33. Interpersonal competence
   Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

34. Cultural competence
   Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.

35. Resistance Skills
   Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

36. Peaceful conflict resolution
   Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

37. Personal power
   Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me”.

38. Self-esteem
   Young person reports having high self-esteem.

39. Sense of purpose
   Young person reports that “my life has a purpose”.

40. Positive view of personal future
   Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Adapted with permission from “Developmental Assets Among Minneapolis Youth”© 1997 by Search Institute

Statewide Forum Results

Youth Forum Assets to Build upon: Youth and adults identified the following in the majority of the six Youth Voice Forums as the Developmental Assets to build upon in their communities:

- Caring Neighborhoods
- Community Values
- Youth Programs
The following is the results of each regional forum. During each forum, participants were divided into work group of 5-10 per table. Table level youth facilitators reported their work out to the general audience. The Assets listed below were those that emerged as most common for each region. Each asset is followed by strategies for strengthening each asset and a list of sources for help in achieving and/or strengthening that asset.

The New York City Regional Youth Voice Forum-
“Voices on Youth: New York City Rebuilding”
was held at Con-Edison on June 4, 2002. Sponsored by NYC Department of Youth and Community Development and NYS Office of Children and Family Services.
The region included the counties of Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens and Richmond.

“Empowerment of our adolescent population, create committees of different ethnic backgrounds to work together to promote giving back.”
- Participant, New York City Youth Forum, June 6, 2002

The results of the NYC Forum were arranged into the following Developmental Asset categories.

Asset #5: Caring School Climate
Asset #22: School Engagement
Asset #24: Bonding to School

Strategies

• Explore alternative education/learning methods using the arts as a tool for learning.
• Build more schools
• Promote and support education: more money for schools, free college/more
• financial aid, provide education about world religions and cultures, media literacy (so we can question the news).
• Make public education more like private education with good teachers, more resources, smaller classrooms, etc.
• Fund alternative high school programs.
• Mandate official parent and teacher support for youth in the schools.

Whose/What help is needed?

• Increase the school budget, instead of cutting
• Model private education with excellent teachers, small classes, good facilities and adequate amount of text books
• Fair share should govern school funding and all community concerns
• Encourage other methods of learning using the arts as a tool
• More Beacon programs/activities
• Build more schools
• Promote education dollars for schools, and more financial aid for colleges
• Free college tuition
• Put our money into education
• More money for public schools and teachers for all their hard work
• Help for young mothers to continue their education
• Educational programs for parents on how to listen to young people
• Teachers who speak proper English

Asset #18: Youth Programs

**Strategies**

• Increase number of youth programs that combine/utilize arts/music/recreational/educational activities provide more programs for youth geared toward expressing their grief and emotions in dealing with tragedies like 9/11
• Review existing youth programs that do not work and replace them with programs that do work
• Increase the number of programs for children and teenagers/more Beacon programs
• Provide more creative programs that promote the arts/peace and would help young people think for themselves, think globally. Have large events like the 9/11 memorial that are explicitly about promoting peace, nonviolence, and global accountability
• Build comprehensive neighborhood centers with mental health facilities, educational, recreational and cultural activities
• Provide more mentoring programs to promote good role models/provide avenues for youth to be heard
• Increase/promote well organized after school programs

Whose/What help is needed?

• More youth recreational centers to keep us busy and off the streets
• Build neighborhood centers focus on education, health (including mental health) and cultural (arts, crafts, and sports) for all ages, by reducing the construction of prisons
• Fund alternative high school programs more youth centers and after school programs
• Youth centers and artistic programs geared to providing outlets for youth to express their grief and emotions in dealing with 9/11
• Better programs to keep kids off the streets and drugs
• Consolidate youth programs that have the same goals and save money
• More programs for children and teenagers
• Eliminate unnecessary spending and invest in valuable programs
• More arts programs
• Better youth programs
• Organized after school activities

Asset #34: Cultural Competence

**Strategies**

• Put in place more diversity education programs in schools
• Conduct community outreach to parents on promoting cultural tolerance
Whose/What help is needed?

- Empowerment of our adolescent population, create committees of different ethnic background to work together to promote giving back
- High schools should work together on projects that promote understanding of race, sex, sexual orientation and cultural diversity
- Educate the kids about discrimination
- More community outreach to parents in promoting cultural tolerance

**Asset #39: Sense of Purpose**

**Asset #40: Positive View Personal Future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Increase employment opportunities to benefit those who are jobless as a result of 9/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increase and promote vocational training programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Grant “green cards” to everyone under 21 who needs one. Promote summer youth employment programs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Whose/What help is needed?

- More summer and part-time employment for youth
- Increase employment opportunities to benefit those who are jobless as a result of 9/11
- Provide counseling for youth and families to express their feelings post 9/11
- Take kids to visit places that will expand their minds instead of visiting prisons
- More funds for Summer Youth Employment
- More summer youth employment programs
- Teach youth more about values and morals
- Internships for youth
- Better housing
- Grant “green cards” to everyone under 21 who needs one

**Asset #7 Community Values Youth**

**Asset #8 Youth as Resources**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Fair share should govern school funding and all community concerns (no disparate treatment for communities of color)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Establish a youth advisory council to advise the Mayor, City Council, Board of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Promote groups that give back to New York City</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Give more attention to open spaces and parks</td>
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Whose/What help is needed?

- Create a campaign to promote self assurance which will focus on community based self-help programs
- Creative programs to help young people think for themselves
The Capital District-Hudson Valley Regional Youth Voice Forum was held at Columbia-Greene Community College on July 19, 2002

The region included the counties of Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester.

“Keep in mind that it is an exchange of ideas and not just youth voices, to be heard by adults. For example, we should always acknowledge that youth are an excellent source of energy and optimism, while adults are an source of knowledge and wisdom. We [youth] need to be part of the solution, not the problem. Focus on what is working for youth rather than what is not.”

-Participant, Capital/Hudson Valley Youth Forum, July 19, 2002

Asset #14: Adult Role Models

Strategies

- Create college-aged mentoring program
- Train Mentors
- Funding

Whose/What help is needed?

- Volunteer mentors
- Colleges
- Local newspapers
- Youth and Family Providers
- Schools
- Family court
- Funders

Asset #4: Caring Neighborhood

Strategies

- Spread the word and open door to entire neighborhood
- Promote neighborhood activities (billboards, TV, newspaper, etc.)
- Community Forums

Whose/What help is needed?

- Funders
- Faith-based community
- State and Local Government
- Schools, other youth, malls, parks, movies.
- Libraries, parks recreation
Asset #40: Positive View of Personal Future

**Strategies**

- Support from positive role models
- Consistency
- Occupational training especially for females
- Career exploration/planning
- Positive activities
- Sex education

Whose/What help is needed?

- Adults
- Schools
- Guidance Counselors
- Youth

Asset #35: Resistance Skills

**Strategies**

- Arrange for youth speakers to address peer groups
- Peer education
- Create programs that are kid based/ kid friendly
- Move money towards youth services
- Police Athletic League activities
- Older children helping other youth

Whose/What help is needed?

- Law enforcement
- Community based organizations
- State and Local government
- Foundations
- Youth
- Funders

Asset #7: Community Values Youth

**Strategies**

- Youth Forums
- Give incentives to community programs that involve youth in leadership roles
- Raise public awareness of youth roles and opportunities
- Provide culturally diverse programming
Whose/What help is needed?
- Adults
- Funders
- Schools
- Community Stakeholders
- Youth

**Asset #8: Youth as Resources**

**Strategies**
- Include youth in community decision making
- Increase interaction through internships and work experience
- Create an organization with the purpose of achieving youth and adult partnerships.

Whose/What help is needed?
- Community
- Adults
- Youth
- Local businesses
- Local government

**Asset #10: Safety**

**Strategies**
- Community service projects for youth
- Parent support/education programs
- Youth on policy making boards
- Character education
- Counseling programs
- Mentoring programs
- Access to mental health/health services

Whose/What help is needed?
- Adults
- Funders
- Schools
- Community Stakeholders
- Youth
- Local government
Asset #1: Family Support

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Family fun nights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mentoring program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community family support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have meals together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Banana splits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Peer mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parent education/support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Design programs around families</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Whose/What help is needed?
• Parents
• Youth
• Local programs

The Central/Southern Region Forum was held at Onondaga Community College on July 29, 2002.

The region included the counties of Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins.

“I will take ideas from today and apply them to other committees that I am on. The best way for youth voices to be heard is to have adults, like the ones here today, who are actually willing to hear our voices.”
-Participant, Central/Southern Youth Forum, July 29th, 2002
Asset #1: Family Support

**Strategies**

- Parenting Education – esp. age specific for pre-teens/teens
- Campaigns to promote ‘family time’
- Help parents and youth learn communication skills
- Helping parents to understand adolescent development
- Giving youth choices that are appropriate
- Helping adults to see “times have changed”
- Need to recognize new pressures, realities of youth today
- Reaching out to parents-telling them what we need and being responsible
- Group activities (fun days)
- Cost efficient transportation to activities (fairs, festivals)
- A recreation center with pool, park for all towns

Whose/What help is needed?

- Parents
- Youth
- Local Programs
- Local Government / Support Programs

Asset #7: Community Values Youth

**Strategies**

- Youth take initiative to improve community
- Encourage others to not live up to stereotypes
- If more youth stand up to show that not all youth are troublemakers
- Reach out more to your community…more community service
- Make your youth organization known
- More advertising for youth organizations, media needs more emphasis on good rather than bad. Possibly a youth column in local newspapers?
- Reward and recognize contributions
- Showing and using our assets
- Become more involved in our issues today
- Reaching out to parents-telling them what we need and being responsible
- Caring for the community
- Being good role models for friends and siblings
- Listen to them
- Honor their ideas
- Provide places for youth with interests to go
- More engagement
- Positive image of youth in media
- More youth-designed activities
- More youth speak out
- Don’t make judgments kids are “bad” based on unhealthy decisions like smoking, drinking drugs, pregnancy, etc.
- Volunteering
- Decision Making
- Intramurals
• Community service day
• Connecting the dots
• Better relationships between police and youth
• Places for youth during hours they need them
• More places for youth to volunteer

Whose/What help is needed?
• Good media
• Local employment
• Scholarships
• Parental/youth advisory board
• Local business owners
• Town officials-Youth bureau
• Organizations that work with youth (4-H, Boys and Girls Club)
• Helping others see their assets
• Senior citizens
• Interracial activity
• Schools
• Transportation
• Employers
• More social gatherings

Asset #18: Youth Programs

Strategies
• Recreation (sports) for teens out of school (home school, out of school) or during non-school times
• More computers-at the mall, library
• Improve the “teen-friendliness” of existing facilities: such as malls
• Organize newer trends in youth facilities
• Skate parks
• Snowboard parks
• Jobs for Youth
• More school based activities
• Year round activities-outdoor
• NEED youth programs (Activities, basketball, computers, gym equipment, canoeing, trails/hiking, games [pool, cards, and arcade], lounge area, concerts and trips)
• Stay open at night or on weekends
• NEED funding
• NEED places to gather
• NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO AGE DIFFERENCES
• Have some activities together and some separated by age (younger and older)
• Support more water activities
• Centralized places for canoes, kayaks, etc for different programs to use
• Get people involved
• Support for programs to keep youth in school
Whose/What help is needed?
• Funders to support programs
• Using natural resources
• Participants (youth and adults) to organize and instigate and implement
• Local youth bureaus to find out about resources

**Asset #24: Bonding to School**

**Strategies**

• Teacher education
• Choices, more electives
• More clubs and activities
• Flexibility
• Consequences and rewards
• Better equipment
• Better teacher training
• Involving youth in evaluating teachers and youth workers

Whose/What help is needed?
• Consistent enforcement
• Higher quality of teachers
• The system needs to be youth focused

**Asset #13: Neighborhood Boundaries**

**Strategies**

• Targeting young
• Organized/supervised activities (8-12 pm)
• Have older “kids” teaching younger
• Neighborhood based activity!
• Play
• After-school programs

Whose/What help is needed?
• Neighborhood watch groups
• Village board
• Local mayor

The Western/Genesee Finger Lakes Region Forum was held at Genesee Community College on August 2, 2002.

The region included the counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates.

“These kinds of forums are ideal for keeping the lines of communication open between youth and adults. There was an excellent turnout and there were so many good ideas exchanged today.”

-Participant, Western/Genesee Youth Forum, August 2, 2002
Asset #5: Caring School Climate

Strategies

- Kids have a chance to give feedback to administration and teachers
- Mandate teacher and student training on assets. Set asset building performance target and hold school accountable down to class level
- Funding incentives for schools to focus on assets. Give performance target on assets. Require teachers to be trained in assets
- Family support must go with school support. Teach young children about family expectations
- Use pressure of high NYS standards for positive action
- Student council run lock-ins, retreats, open pool, open gym, mentoring, peer mediator, dances

Whose/What help is needed?

- Invitations/free tickets for teachers at sports events, etc. “Come join us...show support!”
- More funding for PTA/PTO
- Offer more extracurricular activities
- Help from politicians-go to schools-assembly with youth and teachers

Asset #4: Caring Neighborhood

Strategies

- Youth-led community projects (service, etc.)
- Bring focus on good things, job shadowing
- Kids host neighborhood picnic, street newsletter, garage sales, exchanges neighborhood projects, annual block party, community/block club
- Consider role for faith community; help engage parents and community
- Recreation centers-draw in and use centers for structural support for asset building
Whose/What help is needed?
- Good media on youth, block parties, neighborhood clean-ups
- Provide incentives
- Bring adults in with incentives sponsorships, donations, tax breaks.
- Youth
- Faith-based community

**Asset #10: Safety**

**Strategies**
- Monitored hallways in schools
- Awareness → Let adults and community leaders know what’s going on
- More visible security personnel in the neighborhood
- Curfew → Enforce it
- Community Watch
- Anger management-continuous K→HS
- Home: respect law, use common sense
- After-school programs
- More frequent safety checks (fire drills, locker checks, drug testing)
- Realistic, enforced safety plan
- Meet and greet new neighbors
- OPEN the schools 24/7
- Police on bikes and patrol cars to watch over neighborhoods. Make a petition to get this to happen!

Whose/What help is needed?
- Crossing guards
- Enforcement → Police, neighbors
- Better-trained law enforcement
- Safe houses
- Bus monitors
- School resource officers
- Neighborhood watch groups
- Volunteer peer mediators
- Neighborhood block parties
- Youth mentors
Asset #18: Youth Programs

Strategies
- Get involved in the community
- Advertise (publicly)
- More participation from everyone!!

Whose/What help is needed?
- Good location
- Money
- Town Meeting
- Make activities

Asset #31: Restraint

Strategies
- Talk to an outside youth counselor!
- Talking to teachers, parents and friends
- Use resources who have gone through life experiences
- No help from TV such as commercials and certain TV shows
- “Baby think it over” for 6th-9th graders
- Peer education-sharing stories/experiences, detailed/useful information
- Showcase youth activity in their community
- Open microphone nights
- Advertising to promote youth creative activities
- Display graphic pictures of STDs (Health Dept, Drs., Nurses, Insurance Co., Parents)
- Monitor the media with sexually explicit programs.
- Utilize neighborhood watch program to report drug users. More police-quicker response
- Security guards should be used in liquor stores and small stores (will stop minors from buying alcohol). Jail time for people who sell alcohol to minors.

Whose/What help is needed?
- Role models* (for younger kids)
- Bring in people that have experience
- Galleries
- Youth friendly media
- Speakers (Real users, alcoholics, drug users). *Speakers/programs should take place wherever kids are (parks, programs, etc.) concerning the above
The Long Island Regional Forum was held at Saint Mary’s Children and Family Services on August 6, 2002. The region included the counties of Nassau and Suffolk.

“Establishing the Office of Youth Development was a GIANT step in the right direction. Let’s see our youth from a strengths perspective – set high standards for all youth – and develop ways that youth and adults can partner together.” -Participant, Long Island Youth Forum, August 6, 2002

Asset #5: Caring School Climate

Strategies

- Broaden social, ethnic, and cultural awareness
- Incorporate ideas with implementation in an academic environment
- Continue promoting school and community collaborations via after school programming
- Increase the ability to promote school safety
- Expand peer mediation.

Whose/What help is needed?

- Boards of Education
- Local Police Departments
- Teacher training
- Guidance Counselors
- Parents/guardians
- Local government – Town and County boards
- Students (Student governments)

Asset #4: Caring Neighborhood

Strategies

- Place youth on school boards, CBO boards and community-based committees.
- Help create places for youth to go during free time
- Increase support for cooperation and understanding

Whose/What help is needed?

- Local Police Departments
- Local governments
- Local non-for-profits (Rotary, Lions Club)
- Boards of Education
- Youth (Student governments)
Asset #18: Youth Programs

**Strategies**

- Make programs that are available, affordable to all.

**Whose/What help is needed?**

- Provide funding for more after school programming
- County grant writers
- Marketing (Media)

Asset #7: Communities Value Youth

**Strategies**

- Form community youth advisory boards
- Provide an opportunity to listen to youth.

**Whose/What help is needed?**

- Local Newspaper (Local Media)
- Local government (Mayors, trustees)
- Youth Bureaus
- Youth
- Parents

Asset #6: Parent Involvement in Schooling

**Strategies**

- Exchange healthy dialogue with youth
- Play an increased role in school related issues
- Be supportive and listen

**Whose/What help is needed?**

- Boards of Education
- Youth Bureaus
- County Services (Health, Social)
- Local Booster Clubs (Sports, Music)
- Teachers
The Capital District/North Country Regional Forum was held at Adirondack Community College on August 12, 2002.

The region included the counties of Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Saratoga, Schenectady, St. Lawrence, Warren, and Washington.

“By having more of these types of forums where youth and adults sit-down and talk about issues is important to both groups.” - Participant, Capital/North Country Youth Forum, August 12, 2002

**Asset #7: Community Values Youth**

**Strategies**

- Join youth organizations/groups
- Attend board meetings
- Community youth mapping
- Youth/adults forum to discuss meaningful roles within community
- Be responsible – respecting others and their property
- Community-wide projects (youth)
- Positive results
- Put more positive articles about your in newspaper
- Sending letters to the editor
- Volunteering at senior centers
- Organize a youth week
- Partnership with service organization

Who/What help is needed?

- Interact with local youth bureaus
- Forum relationship with a caring adult in your community
- Youth
- Media
- Community organizations
Asset #18: Youth Programs

Strategies
- more youth leadership
- After school activities - ask for youth voice in the planning process
- recreational activities - gather peer involvement (other than school based)

Whose/What help is needed?
- More clubs/anyone can join
- More adult involvement
- Youth
- Funders

Asset #40: Positive View of Personal Future

Strategies
- Character development classes
- Asset-based programs
- More youth empowerment programs
- Enlightened on available resources

Whose/What help is needed?
- Program networks
- Community leaders (parents, teachers etc.)
- Funding
- Administration
- More positive media coverage
- More encouragement
- Motivational speaking
At the conclusion of each forum, the “airplane activity” was conducted to encourage participant’s to turn their ideas into action soon after the forums. Everyone was asked to fill out a “Personal Action Form” listing their home address and a personal action that they could do as an individual to support asset building in your community. Then everyone was instructed to create a paper airplane with his or her sheet of paper. Finally, all participants were asked to form a large circle that wrapped around the room. With the help of a countdown from ten to trigger the release of the airplanes, they sailed randomly across the circle. Each person then picked up the airplane closest to them and pledged to mail the personal asset form to its owner in thirty days. This served as the reminder to begin work on Asset building.
The following is an annotated agenda used in five out of the six forums. It was included in this report to serve as a starting point for youth who expressed interest in organizing a local youth forums in their community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Staff Activity/ Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 - 10:30am</td>
<td>Registration/ Refreshments</td>
<td>Registration table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>Encourage participants to take their seats. Youth and Adult participants seated at assigned round tables. Table assignments made that maximize the diversity of youth and adults. Ideally no one at the table would know each other. Balancing for gender, race/ethnicity, age, location.</td>
<td>Event Leader asks participants to be seated- Facilitators nudge too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Welcome – Overview-Thank you’s- logistics- agenda</td>
<td>Event Leader: Handshake exercise- everyone speaks and moves.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce table level facilitators – stand up</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce YLSC member to talk about recruitment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two minute room level ice breaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Kickoff Speaker - discuss YD &amp; Development Assets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Instruction: take 10 minutes by yourself to compare your life experience with the 40 development assets. Youth: Which of these assets do you believe you have? Adults: Which of these did you have when you were 14-16? There are no right or wrong answers. You will be asked to discuss this with others. Its your choice to share or not.</td>
<td>Event Leader Poster/ 40 Developmental Assets worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
<td>Pair and share. Participants asked to pair up and introduce themselves to one person at the table. Preferably youth paired to adults when possible. It should be someone they don’t know. Introduce yourself. Were you surprised by anything you found on the asset survey. Share one or two of your positive assets. Share those assets that are missing that bother you most.</td>
<td>Event Leader gives instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Table level introductions. Facilitator asks participants to introduce themselves. Share with us your name, where you are from and what you hope you will accomplish here today.</td>
<td>Event leader gives instruction. (Table level facilitators reinforces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Table level facilitators reinforces)</td>
<td>Facilitators go first to model the behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:35</td>
<td>Which of the 40 development assets are most commonly missing in your community? Select one or two of the developmental assets to focus on for developing community solutions after lunch. Which need the most work? Which might we impact?)</td>
<td>Event leader gives instruction. (Table level facilitators reinforces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Table group - What might you and your peers do to improve this situation at the community level? Whose help do you need? What do you need from them?</td>
<td>Event leader gives overall instruction. (Table level facilitators reinforces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Table group – Either focusing on the asset chosen above, or from the “bigger picture”, how can OCFS help young people find meaningful ways to contribute and make a difference. Looking for specifics. Record on OCFS Feedback Form</td>
<td>Event leader gives overall instruction. (Table level facilitators reinforces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Icebreaker or stretch</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:10</td>
<td>Using the Personal Action Form in the folder. Each participant writes down the specific actions they are committed to beginning within the next 24 hours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>A participant from each table reports one personal action OR one of the community solutions OR one OCFS recommendation. If time go back over the tables.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45</td>
<td>Questions and Evaluation - Participants asked to fill out questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 pm</td>
<td>Closing- paper airplanes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>