

# ideas for parents

## Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

### FAST FACTS

#### ASSET #9: Service to Others

*Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they serve others in the community one hour or more per week.*

**51%**

*of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.\**

#### What Are Assets?

*Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Service to others" is one of four empowerment assets.*

\* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

## 10 Benefits of Serving Others

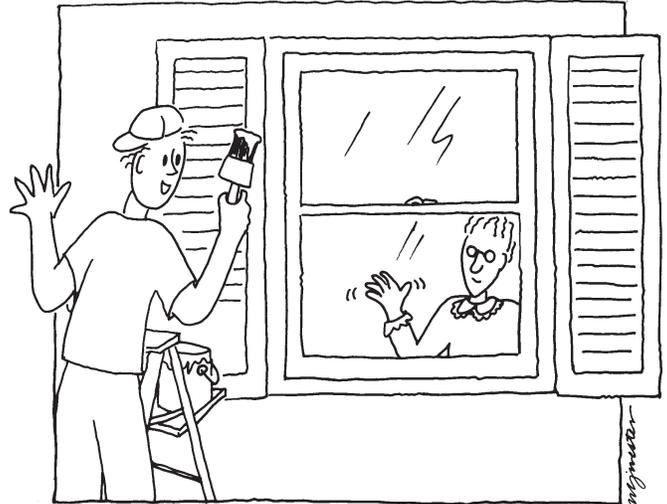
**T**o many children, the world is small. It is made up of their school, their home, their neighborhood. They may assume all schools are like their school. And they tend to think the world revolves around them.

When children start to reach out and help others, their world grows and so does their confidence. Independent Sector, an organization that studies nonprofit groups, surveyed teenagers who volunteer to help others. The young people said that through their volunteer experience they:

1. Learned to respect others.
2. Gained satisfaction from helping others.
3. Learned to be helpful and kind.
4. Learned how to get along with and relate to others.
5. Learned new skills.
6. Learned to understand people who are different from them.
7. Learned how to relate to younger children.
8. Developed leadership skills.
9. Became better people.
10. Became more patient.

By giving their time and energy, many said they received more in return. By serving others, they felt they made a difference in the world.

**Quick Tip:**  
Be a role model for your children by serving others.



### talk together

- Questions to discuss with your child:
- What gets you excited about doing things for others?
  - When is it easiest to serve others? When is it more difficult?
  - How can we make a difference in the world? How can we as a family begin?

### time together

Three ways to encourage your child to serve others:

1. Together help a neighbor. Maybe
  - an elderly neighbor would appreciate your mowing the lawn or shoveling snow.
2. Help your child put together a
  - weekly schedule of activities that includes some kind of service to others.
3. Together, think of 10 ways your family can serve others. Choose one idea. Pick a date to do the activity. Afterward, talk about your experience.

## 10 Ways to Serve as a Family

You don't need to volunteer at a shelter or do a large project to make a difference. Together as a family, do 2 of these 10 simple things for someone:

1. Play music at a nursing home.
2. Cook a meal for a single parent.
3. Take a child to a playground.
4. Provide a ride to an appointment or errand.
5. Bake cookies or another treat.
6. Give a "one-hour" coupon that's good for any project of the recipient's choice.
7. Take a dog for a walk.
8. Visit or call someone who can't leave home.
9. Change the oil in a car.
10. Cat-sit. House-sit. Child-sit. Plant-sit.



## Organizations for Kids

Check your phone book or the Internet to see if any of these organizations have chapters near you. Many of these give youth



- opportunities to serve others:
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America
  - Boy Scouts of America
  - Camp Fire USA
  - Girls Inc.
  - Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
  - Greenwing (or Ducks Unlimited)
  - Habitat for Humanity
  - Kids Against Crime
  - Kids Against Pollution

- Kids Can Free the Children
- Kids for Saving the Earth
- National Network of Youth Advisory Boards
- Students Against Drunk Driving
- United Way
- YMCA or YWCA
- Youth Service America

Also check with local schools, congregations, or community organizations for ways to serve.

## More Help for Parents

**The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference** by Barbara A. Lewis. From simple projects to large-scale initiatives, this book has over 500 suggestions for young people who want to make a difference. (Published by Free Spirit.)

## Final Word

**"There is nothing to make you like other human beings so much as doing things for them."**  
—Zora Neale Hurston

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by Search Institute, [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org); 800-888-7828. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005 by Search Institute. Major support for Search Institute's *Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth* initiative is provided by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Healthy Communities Healthy Youth, Old Saybrook is part of the Search Institute's national Healthy Communities Healthy Youth network.

Our local initiative has opportunities for anyone interested in joining our effort to increase the number of developmental assets for ALL Old Saybrook youth.

For more information contact HCHY Coordinator Wendy Mill at Youth and Family Services, 860-510-5050 or via email at [wmill@town.old-saybrook.ct.us](mailto:wmill@town.old-saybrook.ct.us).