

How to Hold

A

YOUTH

SUMMIT



Planning Guide

A SEARCH INSTITUTE PUBLICATION



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About Search Institute

Search Institute is an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities. The institute collaborates with others to promote long-term organizational and cultural change that supports its mission. For a free information packet, call 800-888-7828.

About This Resource

This resource is part of Search Institute's national Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth (HC • HY) initiative, which seeks to motivate and equip communities across the country to build assets for youth.

Across this great nation people are trying to find ways to give young people an authentic voice and meaningful roles in their community. More and more, they are using youth-led Youth Summits as a tool to make this happen. This planning guide represents our best learning about how to develop and hold an effective Youth Summit, based on the experience of adults and young people from across the country.

Special thanks go out to those who shared their experiences with hosting Youth Summits to create this guide: Karen Atkinson, Monica Elenbaas, Donna Gillen, Ruth Jelinek, Zac Sideras, and Paul Vidas.

We hope this planning guide is a useful tool to help you plan and host a Youth Summit in your area. *Remember, however, that this is your event.* Feel free to tailor these suggestions with your ideas to meet your needs. We just ask that any event marketed as a Youth Summit reflects the spirit of authentic youth engagement, networking and shared learning. Best of luck to you!

Major support for Search Institute's Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth (HC • HY) initiative, including the development of this guide, is provided by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Lutheran Brotherhood, now Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, is the founding national sponsor for HC • HY.

Search Institute would like to help you host a Youth Summit in your area!

Check out the "How can Search Institute help with our Youth Summit?" section to learn how Search Institute can help you host a successful Youth Summit.

How to Hold A Youth Summit Planning Guide

Kristie Probst

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What is a Youth Summit, and Why Should We Hold One?

A Youth Summit provides a forum for young people to organize, network, learn new things, and share their hopes and concerns in a public setting. At Search Institute, we see young people addressing the issues they care most about and that often affect them most directly. This might be in their schools, neighborhoods and youth-serving organizations. We see young people playing active roles in addressing issues being a part of creating solutions. Our inspiration and knowledge from these young people is what prompted the creation of this resource. We wanted to create something easy to use, to walk you through using a summit model, as well as share good ideas from a few communities that have been holding summits for years.

Search Institute also believes in the power of youth-adult partnerships. Adults play an important role in “creating the space” and engaging youth in planning, implementation, and follow-up for a summit experience. For adults committed to building assets (For more information about Developmental Assets, see the “What are the Developmental Assets™ and Asset-Building Principles?” section.), working with young people means not only asking young people about their experiences, but figuring out ways to work together with young people to improve the communities in which they live!

At the Youth Summits we’ve featured in this guide, all participants (young and old) are both learners and teachers. The hope is that an intergenerational planning team will use a thorough and fun planning process to focus on the summit’s purpose and outcomes (what you want people to walk away with – see the logic model on page 4 & 5) to create an event where all participants have every opportunity to share their experience and ideas, ask questions, and get connected to like-minded individuals. By the end of the event, you want young people (and adults) to be excited and ready to make a difference in their community. And obviously, Youth Summits should be fun for everyone!

A Youth Summit can have any kind of theme, from encouraging youth volunteerism to stopping violence. No matter what the theme is, the Youth

Summit can, if done well, be an excellent opportunity to build the Developmental Assets of young participants – assets like planning and decision-making, seeing youth as resources, and helping community members hear youth talk about what it is like to walk in their shoes. Do young people live in a place where they feel the adults in the community value them? Do they experience caring neighborhoods and schools? Do adults hold high expectations for youth and believe they not only will do well but will excel? (For more information about Developmental Assets, see the “What are the Developmental Assets™ and Asset-Building Principles?” section.)

Some other benefits to holding a Youth Summit can include:

- ☐ Learning more about what young people experience in the places they spend time (like school, neighborhood, family);
- ☐ Figuring what could be changed to make those places better;
- ☐ Providing young people the skills and knowledge to make that positive change;
- ☐ Understanding how to connect with adults or others as allies;
- ☐ Learning and sharing what others are already doing;
- ☐ Energizing your community’s efforts to support young people;
- ☐ Strengthening the network of supportive youth and adults; and
- ☐ Reinforcing participants’ personal commitment to their community.

The specific example we will use in this guide will focus on a youth/adult summit that is designed to help participants understand more about asset building, what asset-building activities are already underway, what else could be done, and how to do it. If you are thinking about holding a summit with a slightly different focus, this planning guide will still work for you, and many of the practical suggestions and tools can be applied to any type of summit.

Why should we hold a Youth Summit?

Participants receive very important benefits when they attend a Youth Summit:

- An opportunity to hear from young people who are working for positive youth development in their community;
- A place to learn from other young people and adults about what works, what lessons they have learned, and what future asset-building possibilities they see for their community; and
- A renewed energy to continue to make their community a place where young people thrive.

And when a group of young people and adults gets fired up to create positive change, it's good for the whole community! If your Youth Summit is successful, some benefits for your community can include:

- More young people with the skills to get involved with making your community a better place;
- More opportunities for young people to be leaders in the community;
- More people of all ages who understand how they can build assets; and
- More young people who get more assets in their lives.

One Youth Summit can look very different from another, depending on what your purpose is for hosting one. From our conversations with people across the country, we've found two different purposes for Youth Summits:

1. Youth Summits that equip young people to make a difference in their community – these Youth Summits focus on teaching young people about asset building, equipping them with skills and support to be effective youth leaders, and asking them to take action to make their community a better place for young people.

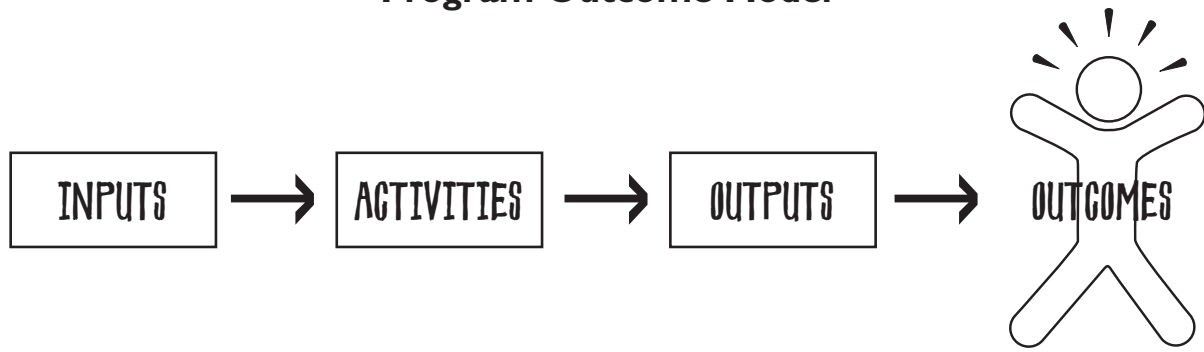
2. Youth Summits educate adults about the needs and potential of young people in their community – these Youth Summits focus on showcasing the abilities and voices of young people, so that adults can learn more about what young people need and want in their community.

Both kinds of Youth Summit events aim to get adults to see young people as resources in their community. While it may be possible to host a Youth Summit that has both of the above purposes, it may be easier for you to focus on one or the other. You want it to be very clear what you want participants to get out of the day, and that will be easier if you select one focus for the meeting.

Logic Models

To make sure your Youth Summit leads to the outcomes you hope it will for participants, your planning team may want to consider using some kind of intentional planning process. One idea is to use a “logic model,” like the example below from the United Way of America. Unlike reading a book, you start on the right of the model and move to the left. Having your planning team use a model like this will help you pick the most effective activities and predict potential problems, as well as to stay focused on what you want to accomplish at the end of the day.

Program Outcome Model



Resources dedicated to or consumed by the event

- e.g.
- money
 - staff and staff time
 - volunteers and volunteer time
 - facilities
 - equipment and supplies

Constraints on the program

- e.g.
- laws
 - schedules
 - funders' requirements

What the event does with the inputs to fulfill its mission

- e.g.
- trains young people to be leaders
 - empowers young people to provide their input into important issues
 - supports young people to step up their ability to make a difference

The direct products of event's activities

- e.g.
- number of young people who sign up to volunteer for next year
 - number of young people who sign up for volunteer opportunities
 - number of participants served

Benefits for participants during and after event activities

- e.g.
- new knowledge
 - new skills
 - motivated to get involved in community

*Adapted From: Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach
Copyright © 1996 United Way of America*

Creating an Effective Planning Team

While one person or one organization can plan and host a Youth Summit, some real benefits can be generated by creating a planning committee for the event, either in person or via conference call or e-mail.

A good planning committee can make your event better by:

- ☐ Providing a variety of creative ideas to the event;
- ☐ Creating shared ownership in the success of the event;
- ☐ Providing input on various concerns that young people in your area have;
- ☐ Spreading out responsibility for completing tasks; and
- ☐ Drawing on the planning team members to recruit people to attend the Youth Summit.

At its meetings, the planning committee needs to determine:

- ☐ When and where to hold the event;
- ☐ What the event will look like;
- ☐ Who are potential facilitators for sessions;
- ☐ How to pay for the event expenses; and
- ☐ How to handle invitations and publicity:
 - If you're mailing invitations, what mailing lists to use,
 - If you're advertising, where to advertise the event that will get the most exposure to young people,
 - What geographic area(s), youth-serving organizations, or schools to target, and
 - Who will take charge of sending invitations, designing and posting advertising, and tracking registration.

Here are some tips for running a smooth planning meeting:

- ☐ Make sure you have sent a written agenda to the committee before the meeting. Also have copies of the agenda available at the meeting.
- ☐ Start and end the meeting on time.

- ☐ Keep the committee on task.
- ☐ Write down who agreed to do what tasks at the meeting. Take notes at the meeting (or ask someone else to record the notes). Also complete an assignment sheet to document who volunteered to complete tasks and the time line. (See the "Sample Youth Summit Materials" section for a sample assignment sheet.) Send both meeting notes and the assignment sheet out to planning committee members promptly after the meeting.
- ☐ Prepare some recommendations for meeting details prior to the meeting and have committee members react to those recommendations. This gives the committee a starting point for discussion and also keeps the meeting more efficient.
- ☐ Be conscious of the different needs of "thinkers" and "doers" within a small group. Make sure the meeting allows time for discussion of "big picture" issues (such as how your community's young people could benefit from the event), but also make sure that all the tasks on your agenda get done in a timely fashion.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans can be a resource to you:

Search Institute is grateful for continuing support during 2004 and 2005 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. With this support, Search Institute is able to provide resources and technical assistance to Thrivent Financial chapters, Lutherans, congregations, and communities building developmental assets. Talk with your Region's Manager of Lutheran Community Services and chapter leaders about involving Thrivent Financial volunteers who can help to access fundraising opportunities.

Locate your Thrivent Financial chapter:

https://service.thrivent.com/mbr_fraternal/org/chapter/ChapterLocator.jsp

Find more information on how you can connect with your local Thrivent chapter's resources: www.search-institute.org/congregations/thriventpartnership/ThriventGuideHandout.pdf

What Does a YOUTH SUMMIT Event Look Like?

If you've decided you want to host a Youth Summit, the first thing you need to be clear about is why you are hosting it. In the first section of this guide, called "What is a Youth Summit, and why should we hold one?" we outlined two very different purposes for a Youth Summit. If your purpose is to equip and excite and connect young people, your Youth Summit should look very different than if you choose to educate adults about the issues and needs of young people. See the "Examples of Youth Summits" section for examples of Summits that have been designed for one of these two purposes. Their experiences will give you some idea about how to structure your own Youth Summit.

In general, three types of activities are used during a Youth Summit:

1. **Presentation** on the main topic. For our example of a Youth Summit to teach more about asset building, we would start with a fun presentation on the asset framework or a specific set of assets (positive values, expectations), and how everyone can be an asset builder in the lives of young people;
2. **Formal Networking Opportunities** with other people on specific topics related to building the assets of young people in their community; and
3. **Informal Networking Opportunities** to share ideas and build relationships, such as during breaks and at meals.

The "Examples of Youth Summits" section also outlines sample Youth Summit agendas from other organizations' experience.

1. Presentation

Most Youth Summits begin with a presentation and then move into sharing sessions. Many participants have told us that the presentation time is a good way to make certain that participants all hear the same message at the beginning of the event. The introductory presentation also can serve as a great way to set expectations for the rest of the meeting.

Some Youth Summits have used the presentation as a chance to tell people about a specific topic,

like youth leadership, building a more positive school climate, or even asset building. If we use asset-building as an example, the purpose of this kind of presentation could be:

- To inform people about the Developmental Asset framework;
- To motivate people to be asset builders in their personal and professional lives;
- To give people practical ideas they can do to build assets in the young people around them; or
- To share research findings from surveys or studies that either the young people conducted or other adults conducted about young people.

Some suggestions for the presentation:

- Since the chances are quite good that a portion of your audience will be relatively new to the presentation topic (in this case, the asset framework), address the asset framework, the power of assets to promote and protect, and the need for all people to play a role – youth and adults.
- Resist the temptation to turn the whole Youth Summit into a series of presentations. Nobody wants to sit and listen to "talking heads" all day!
- While presentations can be very helpful and valuable to participants, the central focus of a Youth Summit should be on learning from each other, not from just a few "experts."
- Make sure presenters make handouts for everyone of any documents, overheads, or slides they talk about in their presentation.

For information on how to contract a Search Institute trainer to present at your Youth Summit, see the "How can Search Institute help us with our Youth Summit?" section.

2. Formal Networking Opportunities

Formal networking sessions, or "sharing sessions," are designed for participants to be both teacher and learner. All participants should have an opportunity to ask questions, get answers, and offer ideas based on their experience.

Some suggestions for formal networking opportunities:

Have the right size and mix of people in your sharing sessions.

- The right size group depends on a lot of things: the total number of people who come to the Summit, how much time is on your agenda for sharing sessions, and the size and set-up of the place where you host the event. In general, try to keep sharing session groups smaller than 10 people. That way everyone in the group can have good conversation, and facilitators can more easily make sure everyone has a chance to participate.
- Consider having tables that easily seat six to eight people around it comfortably. Or offer other spaces where people could sit and talk where it is comfortable and not too noisy.
- Make sure that sharing session groups are not too close together in the room. It's hard to participate in your own group when you can't hear your fellow group members because there's too much noise in the room.
- You may want to find ways to mix people up, so that they end up in sharing session groups with people they don't necessarily know very well. For example, you can randomly put different colored dots on people's name tag before they check in. Then each table could be assigned a color, so people sit at the color that's on their name tag dot.

Each sharing session should have at least one facilitator. See the "Sample Youth Summit Materials" section of this guide for a sample group facilitator guide, which includes the roles and expectations of that person. Some suggestions:

- The facilitator may or may not be an expert on the topic he or she is facilitating. If you choose facilitators who have knowledge in a specific topic, emphasize that he or she will not be a presenter. Stress that the facilitator's role is to help the group stay on task and make sure everyone gets to contribute to the conversation.
- Consider having as many facilitators as you have total sharing sessions for the day. For instance, if you have chosen four sharing session topics, and you are offering them at both 1:00 and 2:10, enlist at least eight facilitators. This way, if Jane is facilitating a 1:00 session, she can then participate in a 2:10 session without facilitating.

- Have the facilitator ask for a volunteer to take notes. As the organizer of the event, make sure you collect all the notes at the end of the meeting.

Make sure to leave time for reporting small group discussions back to the whole audience. While people will learn a lot from the discussions in their own group, there will also be much to learn from hearing what other groups talked about. Some suggestions:

- Before the small groups report out to the larger group, have the emcee remind everyone of the importance of mutual respect, including the importance of respecting the person who is speaking out by avoiding side conversations.
- During the sharing session, have the facilitator ask for a volunteer to report out to the larger group. A small group of volunteers can also share this responsibility as a team.
- Don't have every group report every single thing they talked about. Instead, have them identify the two or three most important ideas that came out of their discussion.
- If you have a large group in a large room, consider having a microphone available, so that everyone can hear the reports.

3. Informal Networking Opportunities

Participants often find unstructured times of a Youth Summit such as lunch, breaks, and transition time between sessions to be as beneficial for sharing and learning as the structured sessions.

Some suggestions for informal networking opportunities:

- Work at least 45 minutes of unstructured time into your lunch break.
- Offer a 10-minute break between sessions.
- Other tools you can use to encourage informal networking among participants include:
 - Networking tables, where participants can be available to answer questions regarding their initiative and display materials;
 - Resource tables, where materials from participants' organizations and communities can be collected and displayed for sharing with others.

Other learning techniques that can be used during the day:

Action Planning

Participants will learn new ideas that they may want to implement either in their initiative or in their own daily lives. (See the “Sample Youth Summit Materials” section of this guide for a sample action planning worksheet.) Participants can engage in action planning during a Youth Summit in a number of ways:

- During the day, as participants hear new ideas they would like to try, they can use the worksheet to document the idea and begin to sketch out its implementation process.
- At the end of the day, teams of participants can work together on this worksheet to decide how to make their new learnings come to life after the meeting. Teams could be set up by community, region, school, or a sector of a community (such as schools, congregations, business, etc.).

Most Promising Practices

The Most Promising Practices worksheet (see the “Sample Youth Summit Materials” section of this guide) can be used as a discussion starter at lunch to give participants a way to structure a discussion around what works in their community or groups in which they are involved. Otherwise participants can fill in the worksheet throughout the day. These documents can be collected at the end of the day and compiled into a summary after the Youth Summit is over, to be sent to participants so they can reconnect with other participants.

Tips on the structure of the day:

- Make sure the schedule allows for plenty of movement and not too much sitting. Young people have told us they have much less interest in sitting in hour-long sharing sessions than adults.

- Use ice breakers and other activities throughout the day to get people active and engaged. The purpose of some ice breakers is purely to provide fun and energy. However, other ice breakers can provide fun and energy while at the same time also educating people about things like Developmental Assets, community change, or leadership. See the “Sample Ice Breakers and Activities” section for a few possible ice breakers. Also, the “How can Search Institute help us with our Youth Summit?” section lists resources that can also give you ideas.
- Build in as much time for structured and informal networking as possible. Sharing is at the heart of a Youth Summit. Allow plenty of time for sharing, less time for listening to presentations.
- The length of the event can be as short as a few hours or as long as a full day. From other people’s experience, a four to six hour length works best.
- The starting time depends on a number of factors, including:
 - How far away attendees live,
 - Whether or not youth are coming on a weekday during the school year.
- Try to keep the schedule uncomplicated. Optimize every minute you have people together. It’s not wise to pack so much into one event that it feels rushed.
- Make sure participants understand the importance of staying until the end of the meeting. Our experience tells us that the event loses impact for participants who do not get closure at the end of the day. The conclusion of the event should contain compelling activities that draw people together and asks for their commitment to action in their community.

Who Do We Invite?

The purpose your planning team chooses for your Youth Summit will determine who you should invite to participate. Remember the two different purposes we outlined in the “What is a Youth Summit, and Why Should We Hold One?” section of this guide? Depending on which purpose you have chosen for your Youth Summit, you may have a very different invitation list.

1. Youth Summits that equip young people to make a difference in their community – As we said earlier, these Youth Summits focus on teaching young people about asset building, equipping them with skills and support to be effective youth leaders, and asking them to take action to make their community a better place for young people. If you choose to have a youth event with this main purpose in mind, you will obviously want to invite young people...lots of them! However, you will need to think about which young people to invite:

- *What age or grade range do we want to target?* If you only invite seniors, once they graduate they may leave your community, and your Youth Summit’s impact will leave with them. Consider having a mixture of older and younger students. It could be that seniors could be involved as “mentors” or “facilitators” during the Summit, but focus on having the event hosted by and attended by students mostly somewhere between grades 7 and 11.
- *Are there specific kinds of students we want to participate?* If you are looking to get new young people to step up and be leaders in your community, you may have to find new and creative ways to get them to your Summit, since they may not naturally or comfortably participate in these kinds of events on their own. Consider ways to get a broad spectrum of young people to your Youth Summit, not just the ones that are already involved in leadership positions.
- *Do we want adults to participate too?* You can give young people awesome leadership skills, but they will still need to be connected with adults who can help create opportunities for young people to contribute to their community. Even though most adults have good intentions about working with young people, some adults need to understand how to better engage young people in leadership positions. Your

Summit may give adults ideas about how to be better at this. It can also start to build relationships between adults and young people that can last beyond the event.

- *Who should invite them, and how?* You may need to use a variety of strategies to get young people to attend, including written invitations (by mail, e-mail, or handed out in school), personal invitations (either a young person or a respected adult personally asking specific young people to attend), and broad advertising (posters, announcements, flyers).

2. Youth Summits educate adults about the needs and potential of young people in their community

– Since these Youth Summits focus on showcasing the abilities and voices of young people, so that adults can learn more about what young people need and want in their community, obviously there needs to be both adults and young people participating in the Summit. Think about these questions:

- *Who are the adults that need to learn about the potential of young people in your community?* Consider inviting “decision makers” from your community, such as the mayor, city council, business leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, leaders of youth-serving organizations (such as a YMCA, Scouts, Boys & Girls Club, etc.) and/or your school’s superintendent. You may also want to consider inviting people who are not necessarily in positions of “power,” but who are viewed as leaders in the community. Do you have a coach in your school that is highly respected by the community? What about a minister or other clergy member from a congregation? Are there volunteer scout leaders or PTA members that people admire?
- *Who should invite them, and how?* In order to get the attention of these adults, you may want to consider who should invite them, and how. They may need both a written invitation (like a letter or invitation card) as well as a personal call to follow up and encourage them to come. It may be most effective for the invitation and card to come from someone who already has a relationship with the adult (either an adult or young person). It may also be helpful for the written invitation to come from both an adult and a young person.

Event Details

You don't need a fancy or expensive facility to host a Youth Summit. Find an inexpensive place to help keep down costs, making the event charges (if you need to charge to cover the cost of the event) more reasonable and giving more participants the opportunity to participate. Many planning committees have preferred such settings as a school, church, or community center because they seem more welcoming and comfortable to many people.

Facilities that have worked well as Youth Summit sites:

- ☐ Community centers;
- ☐ Schools;
- ☐ Colleges and universities;
- ☐ Congregations;
- ☐ Local businesses with meeting space;
- ☐ Libraries with meeting space;
- ☐ City halls or government centers; and
- ☐ Hospitals.

The facility needs:

- ☐ *One main room large enough to hold all participants.* Seating can be set up in a theater style (without tables), classroom style (tables with all chairs facing the front), or with round tables. Round tables with seating for eight or more are conducive to sharing among participants.
- ☐ *Other rooms large enough to hold anywhere from 10 to 30 participants.* These can serve as breakout rooms for sharing sessions, if you are having sharing sessions. Set up these rooms with chairs (with or without tables) in a circle. You may also use your main room as a breakout room, especially if you need to pay rental for each room or there aren't enough breakout rooms for all the small groups. Just ask participants in sharing sessions to pull their chairs into circles. Make sure the main room is big enough that the groups can have plenty of space between them, to keep down the noise level during discussions.
- ☐ *A place to hold a meal.* This may or may not be your main room. Make sure your facility will serve meals and refreshments for you or will accommodate caterers.

- ☐ *Parking that is accessible and reasonably priced.* Inconveniences such as lack of parking or paying to park can really start the event off on the wrong foot.

Other details to remember:

- ☐ Remember to request any audio/visual equipment either from the facility or from someone who will supply it.
- ☐ Make sure tables are available for registration and any displays. Make signs that indicate:
 - Directions to get to rooms;
 - Session names, to be placed on the room door; and
 - Thanks to any sponsors of the event.

A sample check-off list of details to remember when coordinating a Youth Summit is included in the "Sample Youth Summit Materials" section.

Covering the costs of a Youth Summit:

Not surprisingly, hosting a Youth Summit will probably come with some costs. ***It's very important to only spend what you have the money to cover!*** Some things you may have to pay for:

- ☐ Invitations and advertising,
- ☐ Food;
- ☐ Speakers;
- ☐ Audio/visual equipment rental;
- ☐ Follow-up mailings; and
- ☐ Renting a space.

Some ways you may need to cover costs:

- ☐ *Work with a local school or non-profit organization that gets grants.* They may already receive funding that would be able to cover some of your event costs (or they might have the ability to help you raise funds to do so). Often these kinds of events can be funded by grants aimed at alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention grants.
- ☐ *Ask for donations.* Any of the above expenses may be donated by a local organization, business, or person. If you decide you need to charge registration fees (see the next bullet below) you may want to ask local businesses and groups if they would be willing to pay for registration fee "scholarships" for young people to attend.

- ❑ *Charge a registration fee.* This is probably a last resort, since it not only makes participation difficult for some people, but it also adds a lot of extra work for you and your planning group. Remember that if you do decide to charge a registration fee you will want to keep it as low as possible, because not everyone will be willing or able to pay to attend. If you are going to invite young people to attend through their schools, you may be able to ask the schools if they can pay for registration fees.

If you do receive funding or donations, make sure you thank the donor by writing them a personal thank you note. In that thank you note, consider providing pictures or quotations from young people who attended that show the funder that their money or donation was worth it. You will also want to publicly thank them at the Youth Summit on signs, handouts, and with an announcement at the beginning of the event. Also, be sure to acknowledge their support in any invitations and advertising for the Summit.

Here is a general planning timeline you can use to give you a sense of when key activities need to get done. You will need to adjust this to fit your Youth Summit's needs:

Six to twelve months before the event:

- ❑ Begin holding planning committee meetings.
- ❑ Begin the process of deciding what the purpose is for your youth summit, and what you will need to do to make sure the summit achieves that purpose.
- ❑ If you're booking a professional speaker, contact them and begin making arrangements.
- ❑ Reserve a meeting space.

Two months before the event:

- ❑ Finalize the agenda.
- ❑ Begin creating invitations.
- ❑ Gather mailing lists.

Six weeks before the event:

- ❑ Invite guests.
- ❑ Start releasing publicity for the event (ads, posters, flyers, etc.).
- ❑ Create database for entering information of people who register.
- ❑ Arrange for food catering and choose what food you'll be having.
- ❑ Arrange for audio-visual equipment.

The week before the event:

- ❑ Provide caterer with estimates of numbers attending.
- ❑ Make name tags.
- ❑ Make signs that direct people to the event and thank the sponsors.
- ❑ Make a master list of everyone who has registered, and if you are charging registration fees highlight anyone who has not yet paid.

Registration

The invitation to a Youth Summit may be a letter, card, memo, or brochure.

Important information to include in an invitation:

- ☐ The date, times, and locations of the event;
- ☐ An explanation of what a Youth Summit is;
- ☐ Who is invited;
- ☐ Goals of the day;
- ☐ The agenda for the day (if you have room on your invitation);
- ☐ The registration fee, as well as who they can make a check payable to (if there is a fee);
- ☐ A map directing people to the place;
- ☐ Thank you to all event sponsors;
- ☐ The deadline for sending their registrations;
- ☐ Any expectations for participants (i.e. "Please bring brochures or other materials your group has used to share with other participants"); and
- ☐ A contact name, phone number, and e-mail address where people can go to ask questions.

Important information to ask for on a registration form:

- ☐ Important information about the registrant:
 - Name, title, organization;
 - Address;
 - Phone;
 - Fax;
 - E-mail; and
 - Whether the participant is a youth or adult;
- ☐ Ask about any special accommodations or dietary needs;
- ☐ Request permission to use contact information for participants under age 18; and

If you are charging participants a registration fee:

- ☐ Their method of payment (cash, check, credit card, if you can accept credit cards);
- ☐ Payment requirements (i.e. "All participants must pre-pay to register"); and
- ☐ Where and how to send the registration form and payment (your address and fax number).

Some suggestions for tracking registrations:

- ☐ Keep all copies of original registration forms people send in.
- ☐ Enter the registration information into a data base or spreadsheet, so you can create a list of all the registrations you have received. You can use this list to check off people as they arrive at your Youth Summit, so you know who (and how many) actually attended.
- ☐ Create blank registration forms for the day of the event. Have people who haven't yet registered fill out a form, so you know who attended and how you can connect with them after the Summit.

If you are charging participants a registration fee:

- ☐ On your list of registrations, highlight any people who may owe registration fees, and be sure to ask for their fee when they arrive.
- ☐ Bring a cash box to the event that contains:
 - Enough change for anyone who is paying at the door;
 - A receipt book with carbon copies, so you can give them a receipt once they have paid; and
 - Receipts appropriate for collecting credit card payments (if you can accept credit card payment);
- ☐ If a participant needs to be billed for his or her registration after the event, make sure to get their address.

The Big Day: Holding the Youth Summit

Participants appreciate packets of useful information. **Information packets may include:**

- An agenda of the day, including room locations, speaker names, and facilitators;
- A participant roster, including name, organization, address, phone, and e-mail;
- Scratch paper for taking notes;
- Information about your local asset-building efforts;
- Asset-building resources, generated by your initiative or from Search Institute. Go to the “How can Search Institute help us with our Youth Summit?” section to see a list of potential resources that might be helpful.
- An evaluation form for the day. See the sample form is included in the “Sample Youth Summit Materials” section. It is very important to ask people what they thought of their experience at the youth summit, so you know what worked well and what could be improved for the next time around.

All Youth Summits need the help of several volunteers to run smoothly. **These tasks are good ways to involve volunteers:**

- **Set-up and pre-meeting:**
 - Staffing the registration table (You may need two or three people, depending on the size of the audience you anticipate);
 - Hanging signs;
 - Food and beverage set-up;
 - Setting up displays; and
 - Overseeing room and audio-visual set-up.

- **During the event:**

- Giving directions to rooms within the facility;
- Watching the registration table for latecomers;
- Overseeing any roster changes that need to be made (for example, fixing misspelled names and incorrect addresses);
- Food and beverage set-up;
- Take photos;
- Interview attendees for articles that can be included in newspapers or newsletters;
- Providing the welcome and overview of the day;
- Facilitating small groups; and
- Acting as emcee, leading people through the day, and keeping the event on time.

- **Post-event:**

- Collecting evaluations; and
- Taking down signs and displays, and cleaning up meeting areas.

Be sure to thank all volunteers both during the Summit (with an announcement in the beginning, and with a list of volunteers in people’s packets) and after the event (with a personal thank you note and maybe a little gift).

Follow-up After the Youth Summit

Tips for wrapping up the Youth Summit event:

- ☐ Pay all bills for the facility, caterer, printer, etc.
- ☐ Compile evaluation results to share with the planning committee.
- ☐ Type up any notes that are taken during the Youth Summit.
- ☐ If you charged registration fees, send out any invoices that need to be paid.

Ways to follow up with participants after the event:

- ☐ Make sure any follow-up mailing includes a note thanking participants for their time, energy, and dedication to young people and making positive change.
- ☐ Send an updated participant roster that contains any new additions and corrected information.
- ☐ Send out any meeting notes or minutes that may have been taken. Consider using email or your organization's web site to post these notes in a cost-effective way.
- ☐ If you have participants complete the Most Promising Practices summary (see the "Sample Youth Summit Materials" section), compile those responses into a summary.
- ☐ Send a special thank you note, along with evaluation results and any follow-up mailing information, to members of the planning committee.
- ☐ Create group list serves to stay connected with participants.

Ways to follow up with the planning committee members after the event:

- ☐ Send a thank you note;
- ☐ Have a meeting to celebrate the event's success and talk about:
 - Whether or not you should host another Youth Summit in the future. If so:
 - What went well, and what could be improved.
- ☐ Send or hand out a summary of evaluations from the event;
- ☐ Send or hand out a questionnaire that asks about their satisfaction with the planning process and how it could be improved.

Give us Feedback!

To make certain we are developing a useful resource for users, we need to hear your comments. Please complete this feedback form and mail it to:

Search Institute
Attention: Youth Summit Guide
615 1st Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Thanks for your help!

Did you use this guide to host a Youth Summit? Yes No

Are you planning to host a Youth Summit using this guide? Yes No

	NOT USEFUL			USEFUL	
Overall, how useful was this planning guide?	1	2	3	4	5

Did this planning guide meet your needs for:	DID NOT MEET				MET
1. Understanding what a Youth Summit is	1	2	3	4	5
2. Planning a Youth Summit	1	2	3	4	5
3. Hosting a Youth Summit	1	2	3	4	5
4. Providing ideas for materials to use at the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
5. Providing activity ideas	1	2	3	4	5

What were the most useful aspects of the planning guide?

What pieces of information were missing for you?

What pieces of information were not clearly presented?

What other kinds of tools like this would be useful to your asset-building work?

Other comments, suggestions, or ideas:

What are the Developmental Assets™ and Asset-Building Principles?

Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets are concrete, commonsense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets have the power during critical adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.

The Developmental Asset framework is categorized into two groups of 20 assets. (See the list on pages 18 & 19.) External assets are the positive experiences young people receive from the world around them. External assets identify important roles that families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods, and youth organizations can play in promoting healthy development.

The twenty internal assets identify those characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive internal growth and development of young people. The internal Developmental Assets will help young people make thoughtful and positive choices and, in turn, be better prepared for situations in life that challenge their inner strength and confidence.

Search Institute has surveyed over two million youth across the United States and Canada since 1989. Results show that the greater the numbers of Developmental Assets are experienced by young people, the more positive and successful their development. The fewer the number of assets present, the greater the possibility youth will engage in risky behaviors such as drug use, unsafe sex, and violence.

The reality is that the average young person surveyed in the United States experiences only 18 of the 40 assets. Overall, 62% of young people surveyed have fewer than 20 of the 40 assets. In short, the majority of young people in this country—from all walks of life—are lacking in assets needed for healthy development.

Can anything be done to increase the assets young people experience? The answer is a resounding and hopeful yes! Adults and youth—in big and small ways—can help increase Developmental Assets in the daily lives of young people. What's needed is an understanding of what actions and behaviors breed success, willingness to apply that knowledge, and most importantly, a desire to see young people grow up happy, healthy, and confident.

40 Development Assets™



EXTERNAL ASSETS

Support

- 1. Family support:** Family life provides high levels 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 nonparent 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.

Empowerment

- 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.

Boundaries and Expectations

- 11. Family boundaries:** Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors 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.

Constructive Use of Time

- 17. Creative activities:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, 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 community organizations.
- 19. Religious community:** Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
- 20. Time at home:** Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

INTERNAL ASSETS

Commitment to Learning

- 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.



Positive Values

- 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.

Social Competencies

- 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.

Positive Identity

- 37. Personal power:** Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
- 38. Self-esteem:** Young person reports having a 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.

This chart may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial uses only. Download this and information on assets for younger children at www.search-institute.org. Copyright © 2002 by Search Institute, 800-888-7827. Data are from the 1999-2000 school year surveys of 217,277 students grades 6-12 in public and private U.S. schools.

Asset-Building Principles:

- **Everyone can build assets.** Building assets isn’t just about great families or schools or neighborhoods. It requires consistent messages across the community.
- **All young people need assets.** While it is crucial to pay special attention to youth who struggle – economically, emotionally, or otherwise – nearly all young people need more assets than they have.
- **Relationships are key.** Strong relationships between adults and young people, young people and their peers, and teenagers and children are central to asset building.
- **Asset building is an ongoing process.** Building assets starts when a child is born and continues through high school and beyond.
- **Consistent messages are important.** It is important for families, schools, communities, the media, and others to all give young people consistent and similar messages about what is important and what is expected of them.
- **Intentional repetition is important.** Assets must be continually reinforced across the years and in all areas of a young person’s life.

Adapted from The Asset Approach: 40 Elements of Healthy Development, Copyright © 2002 by Search Institute. All rights reserved.

Examples of Youth Summits

PARK RIVER, NORTH DAKOTA

“Link ‘n’ Learn” Meetings

Background

This group has hosted seven “Link ‘n’ Learn” meetings in the past few years. Their Link ‘n’ Learn meetings are hosted twice a year, and because this is a rural area, young people from schools across a multi-county region are invited to attend.

Their first Link ‘n’ Learn meeting was only attended by adults. When they started inviting young people, the events worked better. Now the events are held primarily for young people, with adults along to support youth in using their skills and ideas once they leave the event.

Purpose of Youth Summit

Two Link ‘n’ Learn meetings are held each year. The first one in the fall helps teach young people about Developmental Assets. The second one in the spring teaches and empowers them to become leaders in their schools.

Number of people who participated

About 60 people participate (mostly young people). About 20 of those are facilitators who are trained before the event.

Agenda

- ☐ Welcome
- ☐ Presentation on Developmental Assets
- ☐ Small group work
- ☐ Report to the larger group
- ☐ Closing

Cost to host Summit, and how costs were covered

The event costs about \$2,000 to host. The costs are covered by a combination of prevention grants and registration fees of \$15 per student (which are paid by the schools).

Sponsors of the Summit

Park River Healthy Communities Coalition; Region IV Children’s Coordinating Board; Thrivent Financial

for Lutherans; the local Park and Recreation department; and various prevention groups. Local volunteers are tapped to donate and serve food, as well as to help with other event details.

Ongoing work with youth post-Summit

At the spring Link ‘n’ Learn meeting, young people plan activities that would make the culture of their schools more healthy and conducive to learning. Adults who attend (primarily teachers) work with students to implement those projects.

Results from the Summits

The first fall Link ‘n’ Learn meetings are an opportunity to identify future leaders both for facilitating the spring event and in their schools.

One school that participates has written their students’ participation in these meetings into their school improvement plan.

Advice for Using a Youth Summit

Having young people attend two events (fall and spring) gives the Healthy Communities Coalition more of an opportunity to reach young people. Like adults, young people don’t always catch on to the message the first time, so repeated exposure to it is more effective.

Make sure that none of your activities feel too much like being in school.

Put young people into teams who are in charge of leading activities. It makes them feel more included in the event, and it gets all young people involved.

Having young people attend two events (fall and spring) gives the Healthy Communities Coalition more of an opportunity to reach young people. Like adults, young people don’t always catch on to the message the first time, so repeated exposure to it is more effective.

Make sure that none of your activities feel too much like being in school.

FOX CITIES AREA, WISCONSIN

Various Youth Summits and Conferences

Background

The United With Youth coalition believes that if you want to build assets #7 (community values youth) and #32 (planning and decision making), you have to include young people in your event planning and the very fabric of community life. The various youth events they have sponsored are a mechanism to engage youth in conversation and invite them to become asset building partners in their community.

Since 2000, United With Youth has hosted six different Youth Summits:

- Teen Symposiums in 2000 and 2004
- United With Youth Conferences in 2001 and 2002
- Caring Conferences (about caring schools) in 2003 for the region, and one specifically for Menasha, WI

To make these summits more interactive and exciting, United With Youth has placed a heavy emphasis on using technology in their Teen Symposiums to enhance the experience for everyone. For example, United With Youth had the resources to have large video screens in their auditorium to be able to zoom in on speakers and to add fun as well (including “commercial breaks”). After small groups had some discussions, a representative was chosen from each group to report highlights to the large group. The “reporters” had the chance to practice what they would say with their group, and then they reported out with microphones and were shown on the large video screens.

Purpose of Youth Summit

The purpose of each of their events is purposeful asset building. They don’t want youth to just “feel” valued, they need valuable roles in their community and that is modeled at all levels of the summit planning, execution and evaluation of impact. These events give them real planning and decision making roles.

Number of people who participated

Teen Symposiums have 350-450 young people from the Fox Cities area.

United With Youth Conferences have teams of 50-70 youth and 50-70 adults.

Caring Conferences have 300 freshmen, with upperclass-people as facilitators.

Agenda

Each of their different youth summits had slightly different purposes. However, each followed the same general pattern. The events were held from 9 am to 2 pm (5 hours).

- Ice breakers to energize people
- Presentation on Developmental Assets to the large group – what they are, why they are important, how young people can build them in others.
- Look at results of the Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors survey (that measures how young people in a community are experiencing Developmental Assets).
- Call to action – young people work in smaller groups to produce plans for how they are going to get involved with building assets. They should leave the Youth Summit with a plan in their hands for what they will do to build assets when the Summit is over.
- An energizing closing that inspires young people to get involved.

Cost to host Summit, and how costs were covered

Because the United With Youth summits rely heavily on audio-visual equipment to implement their events, costs run from \$5,000-14,000. The costs were covered by donations from United Way, YMCA, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, and Appleton Papers.

No registration fees were charged to young people.

You can’t skip the process. Even if this is not the first time you’re hosting a youth summit, the planning process is as important as the event itself.

Use logic models. Start with having the planning group define the community need they are trying to address, then from there get commitments from folks who can help make it happen.

(Continued on page 22)

Sponsors of the Summit

United With Youth

United Way Fox Cities

Ongoing work with youth post-Summit

Teams who attend the Youth Summits are responsible for implementing their action plans.

Make sure you have training for everyone involved in the event. Have training materials for facilitators.

Results from the Summits

Many community-wide asset-building groups in the area began because they participated in one of these Youth Summits. Those groups are still going.

A database of teens interested in giving volunteer time and providing input on various asset-building activities in the community was created from participants in Summits.

Advice for Using a Youth Summit

You can't skip the process. Even if this is not the first time you're hosting a youth summit, the planning process is as important as the event itself. Don't skip any of the steps.

Use logic models. Start with having the planning group define the community need they are trying to address, then from there get commitments from folks who can help make it happen. This process will also help you recruit the people you need involved who may not yet be involved.

Make sure you have training for everyone involved in the event. Have training materials for facilitators.

If you are using audio-visual equipment, have a practice with the equipment before the event to make sure everything works well and that those operating the equipment are comfortable with it.

After the Summit, write a report to funders. Include in it results from evaluation forms and from people's action plans. Also report this information to the community at large (through the newspaper, radio, television, etc.).

KETTERING, OHIO

Youth Summits

Background

The Kettering Youth Council has hosted six annual Youth Summits in their community. They were started by adults who wanted to "do something about youth/adult relationships." Now the events are entirely planned and run by young people, with adults to support them and take care of business issues (contracts, payments, etc.).

Purpose of Youth Summit

For the Kettering Youth Council, the purpose is to educate young people about what is going on in the community and how they can make a difference and be leaders.

When they recruit attendees, they lure them to the event by giving them a day out of school and free food. They do not necessarily tell them about what they will learn, or they may not be interested in coming. Once young people are there, they get excited and participate.

Number of people who participated

These events now draw 350-400 young people each year.

Agenda

8:45 – Students arrive on buses from schools;
Registration begins; Breakfast of bagels, donuts, coffee, and juice is served.

9:30 – Welcome Addresses from the Mayor, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts, Kettering Youth Council (KYC) President, Corporate Sponsor Representative, and Keynote Speaker.

10:00 - High School students - Listen to Keynote;
Middle School students - KYC
Presentation/Topic Rooms

Start about a year out planning the event. Just know that you will learn a lot after the first year.

Have fun while you plan!

If you are hiring a speaker, make sure to research their background thoroughly.

11:30 – Lunch

12:15 – High School students - KYC
Presentation/Topic Room; Middle School
students - Keynote Speaker

1:45 – Closing remarks by Vice President/
Summit Chair

2:00 – Buses load up and ship students back
to school.

Cost to host Summit, and how costs were covered

The last event cost them about \$4,400. The funding came from local sponsors. No registration fees were charged.

Sponsors of the Summit

Kettering Youth Council, the city's Healthy Youth board, the Parks and Recreation department, Time Warner Cable, United Way of Greater Dayton supports the event (however, they do not give money)

Ongoing work with youth post-Summit

Each year a follow-up social event is held for participants in the Youth Summit.

Results from the Summits

More young people know about Developmental Assets.

A skate park was built as a result of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th summits they held. A professional skateboarder grew up in Kettering, and now he and his family have helped create the world's first and largest street skate park in the country.

Advice for Using a Youth Summit

Start about a year out planning the event. Just know that you will learn a lot after the first year.

Have fun while you plan!

It is not necessarily bad to have adults organize the event the first year. As part of their work, they can identify youth who can jump in to plan the next event.

Make sure to have participants fill out emergency forms in case a young person gets sick or hurt.

If you are hiring a speaker, make sure to research their background thoroughly.

ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA

Mayor's Summit

Background

The "Children First" initiative has been going in St. Louis Park, Minnesota since 1992. Children First is a call to individuals, families and organizations to reclaim their responsibility for young people and provide the guidance, support and attention young people need to be successful.

The Mayor of St. Louis Park had the idea that, in order to be a community that puts children and youth first, we need input from everyone, including young people. He brought the idea to an existing youth development committee in town, and they were game to hold a summit. St. Louis Park has now hosted four Mayor's Summits.

Purpose of Youth Summit

For the mayor and other adults in the community to get youth input (grades 4-12) on what is good about St. Louis Park and what needs to be improved.

Adults can come to the Mayor's Youth Summit, but their role is to listen. If they want to ask a question, they submit the question in writing to a young person who is facilitating the discussion.

Number of people who participated

200 people, over half were young people.

Agenda

5:30 dinner and opening comments

6:30 to 8:30 Eight small group discussions about different topics facilitated by students. They are repeated, so people could attend two of the eight topics during the evening.

8:30 brief closing and ice cream

In the past we held the event at the school, but it didn't seem very special. This year we'll host it at the community center.

Don't just have a summit to let kids talk. Make sure something comes out of it.

Cost to host Summit, and how costs were covered

About \$1,500. The site was free, and other expenses were covered by local donations. There were no registration fees.

Sponsors of the Summit

The mayor, high school students, representatives from youth serving agencies and the schools. (This past year the students on the committee were high school aged. In previous year they are grades 4-12.)

Ongoing work with youth post-Summit

The Mayor and community leaders who attend use what they hear from young people to inform decisions they make in the community.

Results from the Summits

There is a new skate park in the community as a result. Young people helped design it.

Changes were also made in the school lunch program.

Advice for Using a Youth Summit

In the past we held the event at the school, but it didn't seem very special. This year we'll host it at the community center.

Don't just have a summit to let kids talk. Make sure something comes out of it...adults don't have to "do it for them," but work with them to achieve goals.

YMCA YOUTH AND COMMUNITY LEADER FORUM

Seattle, Washington

Background

The YMCA of Greater Seattle believes that positive adult interaction can profoundly impact young people's lives, and that it isn't just parents and teachers who are responsible. Their goal for their summits is to support dialogue between key adult decision makers and young people in King County in order to explore what's working and what more could be done. The YMCA has hosted nine of these events since 1998.

The YMCA pulls together top business leaders (including the CEO of Microsoft and The Seattle Times newspaper) to participate with local young people in the summit.

Purpose of Youth Summit

To give young people a chance to talk with business leaders, break down stereotypes, and exchange fresh ideas.

What is learned in the forum is then taken to a "town meeting" held on a later date, where adults and youth can pose questions to each other and explore ways to address the concerns brought up in the first forum.

Number of people who participated

100 young people and 100 adults.

Agenda

4:00 Welcome

4:10-5:15 Small group sessions facilitated by youth workers

5:15 Large group discussion

5:45 Closing

Cost to host Summit, and how costs were covered

The YMCA covered all costs for the event. There was no registration fee.

Sponsors of the Summit

The YMCA of Greater Seattle

Ongoing work with youth post-Summit

Personal invitations are what bring people through the door, not mass invitations. This is true for both youth and adults.

Try to have at least one media representative at each table. Youth have said after each forum how much it meant to be able to view someone from the media as a real person.

Food and beverages make a big difference. At the very least, have plenty of snacks and beverages available.

Results from the Summits

Articles were written about the Summit by the YMCA and Puget Sound Business Journal.

Advice for Using a Youth Summit

Adjust the discussion questions and format to your community needs and pressing issues

Identify and confirm your “hosts” as early as possible. They should have a “name draw” that is significant to both adults and youth. Past moderators for our forums have included political officials (Seattle’s mayor, a city councilmember, a suburban county councilmember), major corporate executives (Microsoft CEO, Starbucks President, Boeing Sr.VP) and media representatives (president of The Seattle Times, local television anchor/reporters, well-known newspaper columnist).

Youth should slightly outnumber adults. In our forums, we shoot for 60 percent youth, 40 percent adults at the table (and are satisfied with 50:50).

Recruit high, to accommodate for no-shows. (In our experience, 10-15 percent of adults and 15-20 percent of youth are last-minute cancellations.)

Try to have at least one media representative at each table. Youth have said after each forum how much it meant to be able to view someone from the media as a real person. Young people appreciate the chance to tell reporters how they feel when they see such negative news about youth. Reporters and editors have a chance to share what it means to be on the side of delivering the news.

Food and beverages make a big difference. At the very least, have plenty of snacks and beverages available.

Recruit for balanced diversity (mix of youth is reflected in mix of adults). One of our challenges in Seattle is that our youth are often more diverse than the leaders who come to the table. We continue to work on this area – it works best to state this expectation from the beginning with those who will be recruiting others.

Carefully assign tables two or three days in advance. In our process, we print out labels with the names of all those planning to attend, with a brief description of who they are and what they care about or their involvement. Look for matches between youth and adults (for example, the reporter who writes about the environment at a table with a member of YMCA Earth Service Corps, a camp counselor and the CEO of a company that gives to environmental causes). Shoot for male/female balance, both in youth and adults. If you have 10 tables and 10 kids from camp, put one at each table to spread out their “voice.”

Choose a location that makes participation “easy.” Parking is important for adults, and mass transit or YMCA vans improve youth attendance. Corporate and community college cafeterias and chamber board rooms have also been used successfully in our forums – youth think its “cool” to feel welcome in places that might normally feel closed to them.

Personal invitations are what bring people through the door, not mass invitations. This is true for both youth and adults. Youth come because someone they know and admire (usually the staff member or volunteer who runs their program) personally asks them to attend. It’s a very powerful message to say, “These adults want to hear from young people, and I really think you have important things to say.”

Sample Youth Summit Materials

Sample Assignment Sheet	page 27
Facilitator Guidelines	page 28
Action Planning Worksheet	page 29
Most Promising Practices Worksheet	page 30
Most Promising Practices Summary	page 31
Check-Off List of Details	page 32
Sample Evaluation Form	page 33

Sample Assignment Sheet

MEETING

DATE _____

PRESENT

[illegible]

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Youth Summit Sharing Session Facilitator Guide

A Youth Summit provides a forum for young people to organize, network, learn new things and share their hopes and concerns in a public setting.

THE FACILITATOR OF THESE SHARING SESSIONS HAS THE FOLLOWING ROLES TODAY:

- To make sure that participants are able to gather as many new ideas from each other as possible,
- To keep the discussion on task,
- To keep the discussion on time,
- To ensure that all participants have an opportunity to contribute,
- To assure that a recorder is assigned, and
- To briefly share some of your own experiences around this session topic.

HERE IS A BASIC FORMAT FOR THE SMALL GROUP SESSION:

1. Have everyone share brief introductions: name, initiative, and why each of us is here today. (Maximum of 30 seconds each)
2. You as facilitator can then share some basic ground rules for the session:
 - Encourage full participation of everyone in the discussion,
 - Encourage a balanced discussion in which no one person (including the facilitator) dominates a discussion,
 - Encourage active listening and respectful discussions. Not all ideas work for all communities, but encourage participants to use this session as an opportunity to think about their community's initiative in a new way. There should be no "side" conversations.
 - Encourage ideas and decisions that are inclusive of many people's ideas.
3. Ask for a recorder to take notes and a time keeper (you may choose to be one of these),
4. As facilitator, spend 2-3 minutes sharing your own experience related to the sharing session topic with participants.
5. After your presentation, prompt the participants to begin the discussion based on your presentation and their own experiences with the sharing session topic. Ask questions of those who are not contributing. Gently cut off or ask for a wrap-up of anyone who begins to monopolize the discussion.
6. When there is five minutes of discussion time left, you should wrap up the discussion by encouraging participants to provide summary statements and highlights from the discussion that can be reported back to the larger group.

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Sample Action Planning Worksheet

WHAT I LEARNED AT THE YOUTH SUMMIT

	1st	2nd	3rd
	One thing I can do...	Another thing I can do...	And a third thing I can do...
New or improved activities I can do as a result			
Action steps to make it happen			
Timeline			
People who I will work with to make it happen			

(Name of your Youth Summit)
(date)
(location)

MOST PROMISING PRACTICES...

What are three creative things groups you are involved with have done that have really proven to be effective to involve and engage young people?

1.

2.

3.

If you could name one challenge your community faces when trying to engage young people in leadership or partnership roles, what would it be?

NAME

Please leave these in the center of the table. The Youth Summit Committee will compile the lists and send them to participants 3 to 4 weeks after this Youth Summit.

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Sample Most Promising Practices and Challenges Summary

NAME	WHAT YOUR GROUP DOES WELL TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE	CHALLENGES TO ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

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SAMPLE YOUTH SUMMIT CHECKLIST

EVENT

LOCATION

PLANNING CONTACT

LOCATION CONTACT

Convene planning committee

- ☐ call committee members
- ☐ determine location
- ☐ develop planning committee agenda and cover memo
- ☐ send planning committee agenda and cover memo
- ☐ prepare packets for planning committee meeting
- ☐ determine potential dates and locations
- ☐ determine presentation and sharing session topics
- ☐ identify potential facilitators, volunteers

Secure facility

- ☐ one large room per presentation (1 large enough for all participants), round tables
- ☐ one breakout room per sharing session, U-shape or circle
- ☐ registration table
- ☐ tables for display materials
- ☐ order lunch/beverages/refreshments from facility or caterer
- ☐ equipment
- ☐ determine costs
- ☐ get a map, address, and directions to share in the invitation
- ☐ sign contract and send deposit, if applicable

Send Invitations and Do Publicity

- ☐ prepare brochure
- ☐ get brochures printed and folded
- ☐ get mailing labels
- ☐ arrange for volunteers to label and tape brochures
- ☐ give press release template to local newspaper
- ☐ create and send e-mail invitations
- ☐ create and distribute flyers and posters

Coordinate Registration

- ☐ write check number, amount, and date sent to accounting on registration form
- ☐ make copies of checks
- ☐ enter registrants into database
- ☐ develop a list of registered participants for a handout

Determine Presenter and Facilitator Needs

- ☐ ask planning committee to ask potential facilitators
- ☐ identify presenters
- ☐ determine equipment needs

Gather Materials and Supplies

- ☐ participant roster
- ☐ agendas
- ☐ evaluation forms
- ☐ folders for packets
- ☐ Search Institute publications for packets
- ☐ nametags
- ☐ markers
- ☐ pens
- ☐ cash box
- ☐ flip charts

Coordinate Follow-Up Activities

- ☐ compile evaluations
- ☐ send compiled evaluations to planning committee
- ☐ send compiled notes to participants, along with thank you
- ☐ planning committee review of compiled evaluations and best practices

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(Name of your Youth Summit)
(Date)
(Location)

SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM

To what extent did the Youth Summit meet these objectives?

	DID NOT MEET				MET
1. Overall, did this youth summit meet your expectations	1	2	3	4	5
2. Did you get new ideas from others?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Did you learn about strategies and actions that are working in other groups?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Did you talk with others facing similar challenges and opportunities?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Did you learn about new opportunities and resources available to you?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Were you energized to continue to be a leader your community (or to take a leadership role, if you haven't before)?	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate your satisfaction with the following:

Program Content:	NOT SATISFIED			VERY SATISFIED	
7. Opening Remarks	1	2	3	4	5
8. (name of presentation)	1	2	3	4	5
Small Group Discussions: (Please rate only the one you attended)					
9. (topic name)	1	2	3	4	5
10. (topic name)	1	2	3	4	5
11. (topic name)	1	2	3	4	5
12. (topic name)	1	2	3	4	5

Please share your ideas for future Youth Summits:

☐ Yes, I would be willing to help plan the next Youth Summit

YOUR NAME _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

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Sample Ice Breakers and Activities

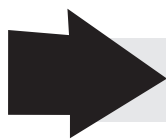
(Taken from *Get Things Going!: 50 Asset-Building Activities for Workshops, Meetings, and Presentations*, a Search Institute publication.)

ICE BREAKERS:

Asset-Building Grand Pandemonium	page 35
Fill in the Blanks	page 36

ACTIVITIES:

IALAC Activity	page 37
Redesigning your Community	page 38
Mixed Messages	page 39



Asset-Building Grand Pandemonium

Purpose: To give participants an opportunity to find out a few things about each other and to start the meeting on a high energy level.

Suggested Group Size: At least 12.

Estimated Time: 12 minutes.

Materials Needed: One copy of the Asset-Building Grand Pandemonium sheet from page 8 for each participant; pencils or pens; a bell, chime, or a way to blink the lights to signal time (avoid whistles; they remind many people of negative school experiences).

Directions

1. Distribute an Asset-Building Grand Pandemonium sheet facedown to each participant, asking them not to read their sheets until you have distributed them all.
2. Ask participants to turn the sheets over and read them. Explain that they will have 10 minutes to follow the instructions on the sheet and that you will signal when it is time to return to their seats.
3. Ask participants to try not to use the same person as a resource more than once.
4. Signal the end of the activity in 10 minutes.
5. Ask for a show of hands of people who completed their task (filled in all the blanks). Ask for a show of hands for those who did not. Ask for a show of hands for those who didn't and are upset about that.

Asset-Building Teaching Point

Process activity in a lighthearted way to point out that it can be okay not to “finish” some tasks; learning is often in the experience and not the final product.

Tips for Success

This activity requires enough space for participants to circulate and chat. It is not appropriate for theater-style seating. Pay attention to the activity and energy level of the group. Be prepared to end the activity if energy levels drop or if group members move off the task of meeting new people. Also, have extra copies of the sheet available for people to take with them if they want to.

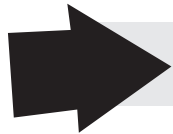
Variations

Change the questions to suit your group. Make more of them silly, or more of them serious. Make them seasonal or custom design them for your audience.

Activity contributed by Cynthia Sosnowski,
Stone Harbor, New Jersey.



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Fill in the Blanks

Purpose: To help participants learn one another's names and to begin to see how they can be resources to one another.

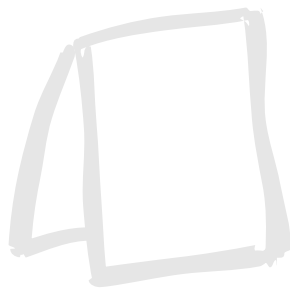
Suggested Group Size: 10 to 100.

Estimated Time: 10 to 15 minutes.

Materials Needed: Table tent for each table with these two statements: "I usually can answer a question about _____," and "I've always wanted to ask a question about _____."

Directions

Participants are seated around enough tables to accommodate the number of people. Ask participants to introduce themselves to others at their table by sharing their names and "filling in the blanks" in the two statements on the table tent.



Asset-Building Teaching Point

Close with this type of dialogue: "There are resources all around us! Giving children, teenagers, adults, and elders the opportunity to share their own unique gifts or talents can benefit everyone. Take a few minutes to answer the following questions: What gifts can you share with your community? What do you most want to receive from people in your community?"

Tips for Success

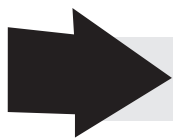
This activity works best when people are seated at tables of 6 to 10. Specify a time limit so that chatty participants will not overshadow more introverted members of the group.

Variations

Tailor the questions to be more specific to what your presentation or meeting is about. For example, if you're working with a group of teachers, you might write, "What I'd most want to share with the students in my classroom is _____" or "What I'd most like to ask my students is _____."

You could also post the questions on an overhead projector for a large group, or put them on poster board and position it in the middle of a smaller group circle.

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IALAC Activity

Purpose: To remind participants of the importance of a supportive, encouraging environment for youth.

Suggested Group Size: Any.

Estimated Time: 10 minutes.

Materials Needed: The IALAC worksheet from page 45 (one for each participant).

Directions

1. Tell participants that IALAC stands for "I Am Lovable and Capable," and distribute the worksheets.

2. Give the group a story or scenario similar to the following:

Every young person should have the opportunity to feel loved and capable. Unfortunately, some parents, teachers, and other adults in our communities don't always make supporting and encouraging our youth a priority. Listen to a story about a typical day for a young man named John. Each time you hear something in the story that could lead John to believe that maybe he is not so capable and lovable, tear off a piece of your IALAC sign.

John is 12 years old. He lives in the country and attends middle school in a nearby town. John awakens to the sound of his mother pounding on his bedroom door, yelling, "John, you better get up. I've called you three times already and you're going to miss the school bus if you don't get your lazy bones out of bed." John doesn't remember hearing his mother call him, but he rolls out of bed. He sees that it is late and he doesn't have time to take a shower or eat any breakfast.

As John races out the door, his father yells at him, "You better get home right after school tonight. You have chores to do and I'm not doing them for you." John had wanted to stay after school tonight to try out for the school play. He realizes that that isn't an option.

As John gets on the school bus, the bus driver tells John he has to sit in the front seat. One of the little kids on the bus said John had pushed him yesterday. He didn't do it, but there was no sense in arguing. The bus driver never believes him anyway.

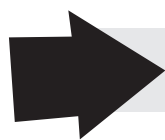
John takes out his math book to study for his test that day. When he gets to school, he forgets his book on the bus and has to run back to get it. The principal meets him at the school door and says, "Almost late again, John. I suppose I'll be seeing you in my office later, if this is any sign of how your day is going to go."

At lunch, John's friends dare him to ask Jenny to the school dance being held on Friday night. John really likes Jenny, but he is nervous about asking her. When he finally gets up the nerve to ask her, she says, "Whatever made you think I would go to the dance with you? No way!" His friends watch and laugh.

John really messes up on his math test. One wrong formula makes him get half of the problems wrong. The math teacher gives him an angry look as he corrects his paper, but John doesn't have enough time to explain.

After school, the math teacher catches John in the hall and wants to talk to him about his math test. John misses his bus and has to walk four miles home. His father is angry and makes him work through supper to finish his chores. After he finishes, John eats supper alone. John stays up late to finish his homework. He will probably be tired in school tomorrow.

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Redesigning Your Community

Purpose: To identify specific strategies to make communities more conducive to asset building.

Suggested Group Size: 10 to 60.

Estimated Time: 15 to 20 minutes.

Materials Needed: Ten sheets from a self-adhesive flip chart (such as 3M Post-it™); colored markers.

Directions

1. Before the activity begins, label each flip chart sheet with titles similar to the following:

- In schools
- In congregations
- Among businesses
- For parents/families
- For adults/mentors
- For law enforcement officials
- For any organization
- For government agencies
- For child-care providers
- For the media
- In neighborhoods

2. Place the sheets and markers around the room. Ask each participant to think of specific ways to make her or his community more conducive to building assets. Ask participants to pretend that they have the power to redesign their communities. Each easel sheet represents one of the 10 areas they may address.

3. Give participants the following instructions:

a. Choose the three areas that most interest you.

b. Take a few minutes to think about what specifically you would like to do in these areas. Think creatively; don't be limited by traditional ways of doing things. What can you do physically, emotionally, and socially to build assets in your community?

c. After a few minutes you will be asked to write your ideas down on the appropriate sheet. When several people have gathered by a sheet, choose one person to record ideas. You will be told when to move on to another sheet.

4. Begin. Give participants about five minutes per station or area to discuss and record.

5. Reconvene the group and choose several volunteers to share their ideas.

Asset-Building Teaching Points

Each part of our community can become a place to build assets. It just takes our creativity and willingness to spread these very important messages to people like teachers, business owners, neighborhood organizations, media representatives, and law enforcement officials. The purpose of this activity was for us to brainstorm how we can go about making asset building and the best interests of youth our top priority every day.

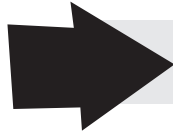
Tips for Success

This activity can create a lot of conversation, so be careful to watch the time.

Variation

Personalize this activity by creating sheets that speak specifically to your audience. For example, if you are doing a presentation for teachers, you may target areas within school environments such as, "In the Classroom," "On the School Bus," and "In the Hallways."

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Mixed Messages

Purpose: To illustrate the importance of consistency and redundancy when communicating about asset building.

Suggested Group Size: 8 to 100.

Estimated Time: 12 minutes.

Materials Needed: An object to give away, such as a candy bar, can of soda, or mug; several recent newspapers or flip chart paper and markers for each group of four participants.

Directions

1. Ask a volunteer to leave the room.
2. While he or she is out, tell the rest of group that you are going to play the game "Hot and Cold." Instruct one-half of the group to guide the volunteer to the candy bar or other object you have chosen. Tell the other half of the group to guide the volunteer to a pen or book that is on the other side of the room. Tell groups that they will do this *at the same time*.
3. Call the volunteer in. Say that group will guide her or him to an object by saying, "hot" or "cold"; then let the game begin. After a minute or so, ask the volunteer, "How do you feel about this game? What do you think about your chances for succeeding?"
4. Ask the entire group, "What does this say about giving mixed messages to young people?" After a brief discussion, award the candy bar or other object to the volunteer for being a good sport.

5. Have participants get into teams of four and give each group several newspapers. Ask each person to find an example of something that sends a message that is very different from the messages asset initiatives are trying to give young people—something that contradicts asset building.

6. Ask small groups to share ideas about how to send consistent positive messages to youth in their communities. Let each table or group share an idea or two with the larger group.

7. Ask, "What will you remember about this exercise tomorrow?"

Asset-Building Teaching Point

Every day young people are bombarded with hundreds of mixed and confusing messages in homes, schools, among peers, on television programs, in music, and in movies. It's important for us to remain as clear and honest as we possibly can with youth and let them know that if they're feeling confused they can or should seek advice from an adult they trust.

Variation

Give each team flip chart paper and markers and ask them to compose the headlines for the front page of a newspaper that give positive and consistent messages about youth and about a community's feelings and expectations for them.

Adapted with permission from Bob Wittman,
*Taking Asset Building Personally: A Guide
for Planning and Facilitating Study Groups*
(Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1999).

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How can Search Institute help us with our Youth Summit?

Search Institute has found that Youth Summits can be a powerful tool to inspire and equip asset builders of all ages. Because we believe in the importance of Youth Summits, Search Institute is available to assist you as you plan your Youth Summit by:

1. Helping plan your event. Search Institute staff are available on a contractual basis to actively provide technical assistance to your event. Technical assistance includes:

- Participation by phone in up to 2 planning committee meetings;
- Up to 4 technical assistance phone calls between planning meetings and prior to the event;
- Staff availability to review materials (agendas, evaluation forms, etc.) as requested; and
- A discount on your next order of Search Institute resources.

Contact Search Institute for more information on our consulting services.

2. Providing Search Institute trainers at your Youth Summit. Vision Training Associates, the authorized provider of Search Institute training, is available to present at your Youth Summit. Contact Vision Training Associates at 1-800-294-4322 or go to www.search-institute.org/training to learn more.

3. Offering a variety of Search Institute publications. For free handouts that list the Developmental Assets, download them from Search Institute's Web site at www.search-institute.org/assets/assetlists.html.

If you have a budget that allows you to provide your Youth Summit attendees with resources to help them become more effective asset builders, check out Search Institute's publications. Our online catalog is available at www.search-institute.org/catalog. (Note: you need a credit card to order online. If you do not have one, you can order by calling us toll free at 1-877-240-7251.)

Some of the resources that might be most useful include:

HANDOUTS, POSTERS, AND GIVEAWAYS:

40 Ways Anyone Can Build Assets poster

Want to inspire people to build assets? Get them started with this handout/poster. Unfold it and display it as a poster!

Me@My Best: Ideas for Staying True to Yourself – Every Day

Speaking directly to young people, the booklet introduces the framework in a youth-friendly way, encourages them to explore what the categories mean to them personally, and inspires them to find and build upon their own strengths.

Take It to The Next Level: Making Your Life What You Want It to Be

Created just for teens and young adolescents, Take It to The Next Level helps young people focus on their successes, explore what they really want and how to get it, and celebrate their efforts and accomplishments.

Personal Commitment Cards

Give students these sturdy, credit-card-size reminders of positive commitment that should guide them in life. One side of the card states a personal affirmation: "I am taking steps to change my world for the better by building developmental assets for myself and with my friends," and family and includes a signature bar for youth to sign their commitment to the statement. The other side lists specific asset actions the young person can commit to.

Positive Values Cards

Give students these sturdy, credit-card-size reminders of the positive values that should guide them in life. One side lists the six assets dealing with positive values, and the other side gives questions to help young people make reasonable choices. Positive Values Cards also include a signature bar so that students can sign their commitment to these values.

BOOK RESOURCES:

Step by Step!: A Young Person's Guide to Positive Community Change

This workbook gives young people the skills, ideas, and motivation they need to bring about positive

change in their community. Written by youth and youth workers, it will help young people identify neighborhood/community issues, brainstorm possibilities for change, and recruit adults to work with them to develop and implement community change plans.

Get Things Going! 50 Asset-Building Activities for Workshops, Presentations, and Meetings

Give your meetings or presentations an asset kick! Get Things Going! is a resource full of engaging meeting openers, mind benders, closings, and other useful meeting activities connected to the asset framework.

Building Assets Together: 135 Group Activities for Helping Youth Succeed

Use any of these fabulous, fun activities and worksheets with young people and in less than 30 minutes, the power of positive energy will ripple throughout the room.

More Building Assets Together: 130 Group Activities for Helping Youth Succeed

This volume II is filled with 130 challenging and fun activities to engage youth. Recharge your gathering with these creative activities.

Working Shoulder to Shoulder: Stories and Strategies of Youth-Adult Partnerships That Succeed

Working Shoulder to Shoulder is filled with inspiring, true stories about youth and adult partnerships and practical steps to get positive relationships started.

What other resources are out there to help us?

RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP:

Power of Five Kit

A service-learning tool that engages 11 to 14-year-olds (tweens) in discussion and service around the Five Promises framework of America's Promise. Designed specifically for educators, small group leaders, youth ministers, coaches and other individuals who work with young people, this tool can be integrated into classrooms and out-of-school

activities. Contents include: instruction folder with activity ideas and resources, one full-color poster, 30 copies of a parents and guardians guide explaining the program and an instructor's reply card.

www.poweroffive.org

Youth Partnership Team Fact Sheet

Learn about this special group of young people selected to help lead and grow the campaign for children and youth.

www.americaspromise.org/youth/informed/project.cfm#team

Planning a One-Day Volunteer Event

Simple guide on planning a one-day community volunteering event.

www.pointsoflight.org/downloads/pdf/planOneDayVol.pdf

ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP:

Points of Light Foundation
1400 I ("Eye") Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005

Tel: 202-729-8000
Fax: 202-729-8100

www.pointsoflight.org
info@pointsoflight.org

America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth
909 N. Washington Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314-1556

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