

Spark Champions: Look Around You!



Getting some support from caring adults (and peers!) to pursue and develop your sparks can be the difference between a dream and a dream-come-true. When you gather enough spark champions around you, they can form just the “dream team” you need. People rarely find all the support they need from their family, though. You can find more support and encouragement, options and opportunities, for your spark from other adult mentors—if you just ask. If you’re ready to start building your “dream team” of supporters, try these ideas. *(P.S. Don’t give up if the first person is busy.)*

YOUR FAMILY

Lots of youth find their greatest encouragement and support from their family: parents or guardians, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and siblings. Not sure whether family members know what your sparks are? Why not tell them, ask about their sparks, and see whether you have one or more in common?

YOUR NEIGHBORS

Neighbors can be some of the most under-used resources in a community. Ask your parents or other adults you live with whether they know any good neighbors who share your interest in engineering, gardening, or animals.

YOUR COMMUNITY

If your family belongs to a church, temple, synagogue, or mosque, that can be a great place to search for spark champions. Responsible, caring adults there could be mentors, teachers, coaches, or fans of your abilities in gymnastics, cooking and baking, or chemistry. If you belong to a youth organization like Boys and Girls Clubs or YWCA/YMCA, that is another possibility. And mentoring organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters can match a young person with an adult mentor.

YOUR SCHOOL

Teachers, counselors, coaches, social workers, and paraprofessionals want to help young people find themselves, their sparks, and their path. If you don’t have a strong connection with any adults at your school, ask around. Your peers may know who has experience in law enforcement or politics, or who might be willing to start a club for juggling, diving, or playing chess.

YOUR FRIENDS (AND FRIENDS-TO-BE)

Knowing and exploring your sparks can lead you to better relationships with your current friends. It can also lead you to new friends who share your spark. Take a look at who your friends are and what you do together. Remember that the best friends support and encourage you in your unique sparks. They may even work together with you on it.