BUILDING ON OUR FUTURE

YOUTH ASSET SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Clark County, Washington • May 12, 2000

LISTEN TO THE VOICES OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Clark County has a unique opportunity to listen and respond to an important group within the community—OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Nearly 12,000 young people in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 shared their insight in a 1999 survey administered throughout Clark County. The results show that Clark County young people have many strengths and hopes, but some of our youth are not receiving the support they need to grow up healthy, caring and successful.

As you read this report, search for something that speaks directly to you.

UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF ASSETS

Why do some young people thrive and others struggle?

The Search Institute, a nationally recognized research organization, has identified 40 essential elements called "developmental assets." Young people need these assets to make wise decisions and choose positive paths in their lives. The more assets young people have, the better able they are to live healthy, enriched lives and avoid dangerous risk-taking behavior.

On average, Clark County youth have approximately 20 of the 40 assets, and research shows that they need at least 30 to succeed. Although our youth have slightly more assets than the national average of 18, they have far fewer than what they need.

TAKE ACTION AND BUILD ON OUR FUTURE

A county-wide initiative called HopeWorks is focused on the common hope and concern we have for our children. It is parallel to two other significant efforts: Family Resource Centers Network and Community of Care. HopeWorks needs your committed support. Get involved and build on our future!

40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Search Institute has identified the following building blocks that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible.

	CATEGORY	Clark Cty %	National %*	ASSET NAME AND DEFINITION	Clark Cty %	National %*
EXTERNAL ASSETS	SUPPORT	42%	37%	1. **Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.	70	64
				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).	32	26
				3. **Other adult relationships**—Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.	43	41
				4. **Caring neighborhood**—Young person experiences caring neighbors.	37	40
				5. **Caring school climate**—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	30	24
				6. **Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	38	29
	EMPOWERMENT	38%	37%	7. **Community values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	23	20
				8. **Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community.	29	24
				9. **Service to others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	50	50
				10. **Safety**—Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.	50	55
	BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS	50%	44%	11. **Family boundaries**—Family has clear rules and consequences.	49	43
				12. **School boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.	57	46
				13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	49	46
				14. **Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	29	27
				15. **Positive peer influence**—Young person's best friends encourage him or her to do well.	68	60
				16. **High expectations**—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	47	41
	CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME	45%	48%	17. **Creative activities**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	20	19
				18. **Youth programs**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.	54	59
				19. **Religious community**—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	54	64
				20. **Time at home**—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	51	50
INTERNAL ASSETS	COMMITMENT TO LEARNING	57%	49%	21. **Achievement motivation**—Young person is motivated to do well in school.	69	63
				22. **School engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning.	68	64
				23. **Homework**—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every day.	57	45
				24. **Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school.	61	51
				25. **Reading for pleasure**—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	29	24
	POSITIVE VALUES	61%	53%	26. **Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people.	51	43
				27. **Equality and social justice**—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	54	45
				28. **Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.	72	63
				29. **Honesty**—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."	71	63
				30. **Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibilities.	66	60
				31. **Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.	53	42
	SOCIAL COMPETENCIES	46%	38%	32. **Planning and decision-making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	32	29
				33. **Interpersonal competence**—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	53	43
				34. **Cultural competence**—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	47	35
				35. **Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	46	37
				36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.	51	44
	POSITIVE IDENTITY	57%	54%	37. **Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."	44	45
				38. **Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.	50	47
				39. **Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."	60	55
				40. **Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.	73	70

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For information on asset-building and Search Institute's national *Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth Initiative*, call (800) 888-7828 or visit Search Institute's web site at http://www.search-institute.org.
For more information about HopeWorks, please contact (360) 397-2034, or write HopeWorks, P.O. Box 5000, Vancouver WA 98666, or email HopeWorks@co.clark.wa.us.

*The ability to compare local and national data may be limited due to demographic factors including socio-economic levels, age, gender and ethnicity.

BUILDING BLOCK ONE

YOUNG PEOPLE POSSESS MANY INNER STRENGTHS

Clark County young people have a healthy number of internal assets. These essential elements comprise half of the 40 developmental assets, and are grouped into four categories: commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity. Our youth possess the inner strengths of motivation to achieve—they participate in school, and have the personal values of honesty, integrity and responsibility. More than 70 percent of Clark County young people have a positive view of their future. However, our youth need more support in building their personal power, social skills, resistance skills and cultural competency, and they should be encouraged to read for pleasure.

Achievement Motivation (asset #21)	School Engagement (asset #22)	Integrity (asset #28)	Honesty (asset #29)	Positive View of Personal Future (asset #40)
69%	68%	72%	71%	73%

BUILDING BLOCK TWO

YOUNG PEOPLE NEED MORE EXTERNAL SUPPORT

What Clark County youth lack most are external assets. These assets represent the support youth receive from their community, family, friends, neighbors, peers and schools. They account for half the assets youth need and are grouped into four categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time.

More than half of Clark County young people engage in community service each week, yet only 23 percent of youth feel valued by the community. Adults must provide young people with more positive role-modeling, positive family communication, caring school climates and outlets for creative activities.

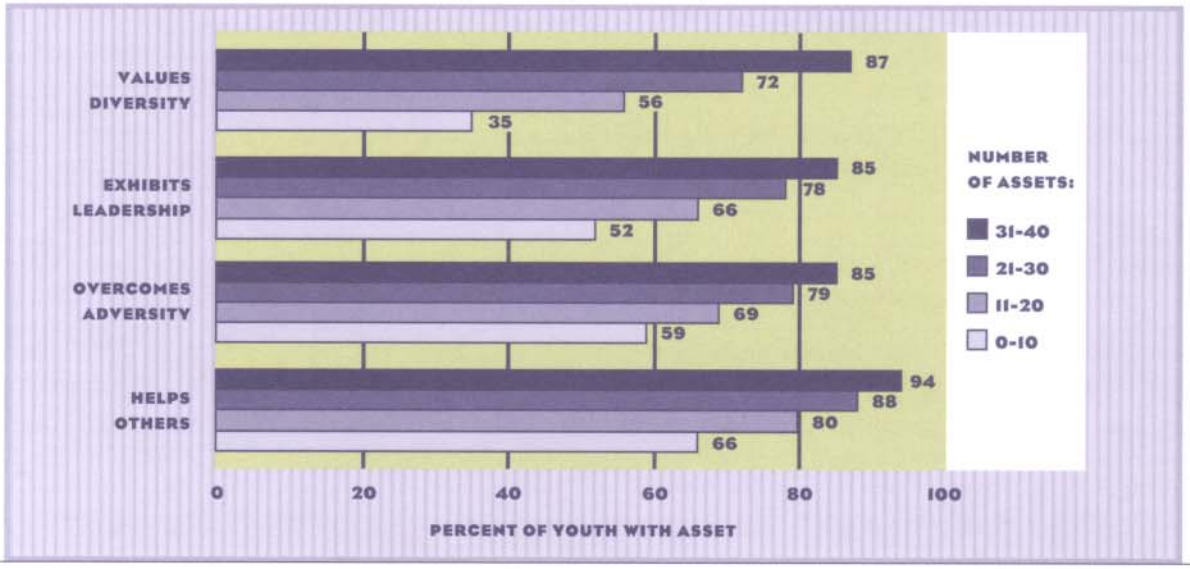
Positive Family Communication (asset #2)	Caring School Climate (asset #5)	Community Values Youth (asset #7)	Adult Role Models (asset #14)	Creative Activities (asset #17)
32%	30%	23%	29%	20%

BUILDING BLOCK THREE

THE MORE ASSETS, THE MORE YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE

Research shows a direct link between the number of assets young people possess and their ability to succeed. The more assets young people have, the more likely they are to thrive and exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors.

Figure 3: Percentage of Youth Reporting Thriving Patterns by Asset Level

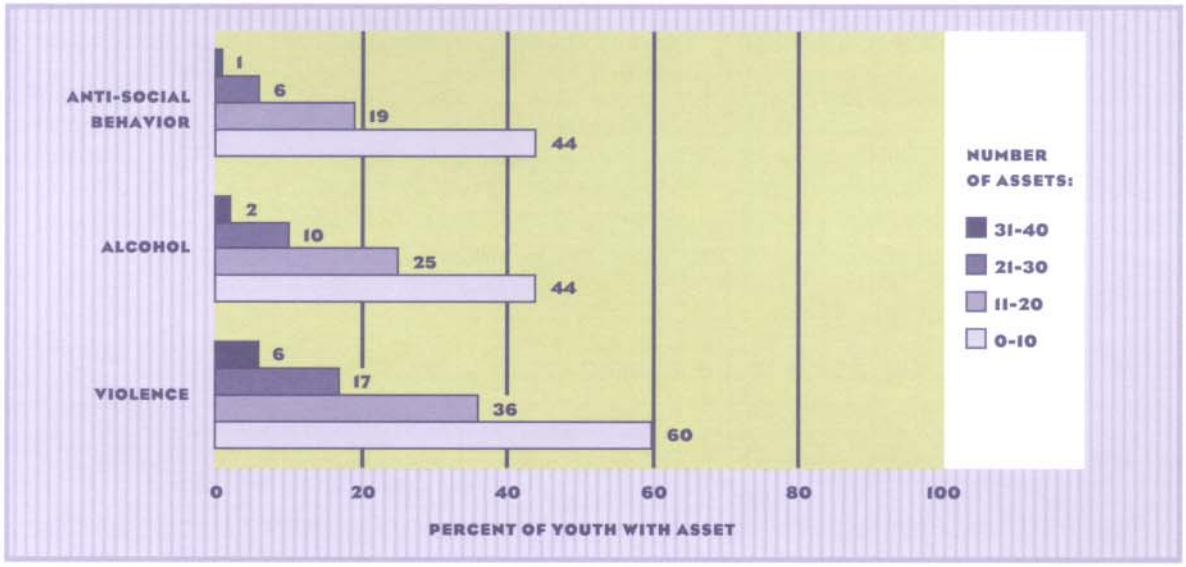


BUILDING BLOCK FOUR

FEWER ASSETS RESULT IN MORE HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS

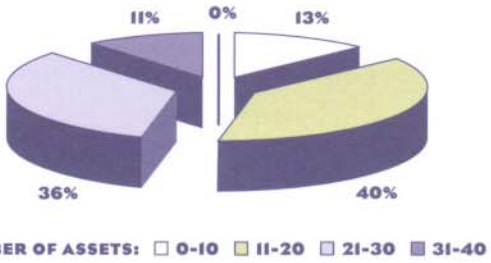
Developmental assets protect our young people from dangerous and harmful choices. Research indicates that the fewer assets young people possess, the more likely they are to engage in negative, high-risk behaviors such as abusing alcohol, skipping school, carrying a gun, attempting suicide or using drugs.

Figure 5: Percentage of Youth Reporting High-Risk Behaviors by Asset Level



THE CLARK COUNTY CHALLENGE

The findings in this report confirm much of what we intuitively know about helping our young people succeed. Now, clear data speak to the importance of helping our young people build assets, and our community has specific challenges to address. The ultimate challenge for our community is to support the 89 percent of Clark County young people who need many more assets to be successful. We challenge you to join us as we build on our future!



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