

Appendix

Asset building is catching on in the YMCA. People from YMCAs all over the United States and Canada are realizing the power of assets to help young people succeed, and they're looking for new and creative asset-building ideas. As the Abundant Assets YMCA movement grows, so does the need for specific information on what individuals and groups can do. That's what this appendix is for: to provide handouts that you can reproduce and distribute.

We hope you will use these handouts often. That is what they are designed for. You can make as many copies as you want, and give them to as many people as you want. (See below for licensing and copyright information.) Use these sheets to help spread the word about asset building in your YMCA, your community, and beyond.

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Printing Tips

These handouts will be more effective at getting the word out about asset building if copies you distribute are neat and easy to read. Here are some things you can do to get high-quality reproduction without spending a lot of money.

- Consider having the handouts reprinted by an inexpensive quick-print shop rather than doing it on a photocopier at your Y. You'll get

better quality reproduction for just a little extra cost. This higher quality will make a better impression on the people who receive these handouts.

- Always copy from the original. Copying from a copy lowers the reproduction quality.
- Store the originals in a safe place where they won't get bent or damaged.
- Make copies more appealing by using bright colored paper or even colored ink. Often a quick-print shop will have daily specials on certain colors or ink.
- Consider printing each handout on a different color paper for variety.
- If you are using more than one handout or a handout that is more than one page, make two-sided copies.
- Make sure the paper weight is heavy enough so the words don't bleed through. Tell your print shop to use at least a 60-pound offset paper. A 20-pound paper (which is usually what your copier at the YMCA uses) could show through.
- Print 10 percent more copies than you think you will need. It's cheaper to print in higher numbers than to reprint because you've run out.

Contents

There are 24 handouts grouped into three sections. Below is a list of each section and handout. The fourth section outlines other useful YMCA handouts from *Pass It On! Ready-to-Use Handouts for Asset Builders*, published by Minneapolis-based Search Institute, which includes 92 reproducible handouts or asset-building efforts.

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Part 4: Asset-Building Ideas for Other YMCA Uses

YMCAs also can use reproducible handouts from other Search Institute publications. This list of handouts is from *Pass It On! Ready-to-Use Handouts for Asset Builders*. The number of the handout refers to the number within *Pass It On!*, which has 92 photocopyable handouts.

- Asset-Building Ideas for All Adults (handout #20)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Senior Citizens (handout #21)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Youth (handout #22)
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- Asset-Building Ideas for Parents and Guardians (handout #24)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Grandparents (handout #25)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Brothers and Sisters (handout #26)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Baby-Sitters (handout #28)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Child-Care Workers (handout #29)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Volunteer Coordinators (handout #37)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Mentors (handout #38)
- Asset-Building Ideas for Coaches (handout #39)

Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Executive Leaders

Your role as a YMCA executive leader is to lead the way in your YMCA's journey of becoming an asset-rich YMCA. Staff members, volunteers, and YMCA members look to you for knowledge, guidance, and steps to take. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to be an asset-building YMCA executive leader? Here are some tips:

- Use the asset approach to guide every decision, program, practice, and endeavor you undertake in your YMCA. Ask yourself: How would this decision advance or hinder our asset-building efforts?
- Raise awareness among board members, staff members, and volunteers about asset building in your YMCA.
- Discuss and promote asset building through staff meetings, board meetings, signage, and on brochures.
- Use asset building as a regular process for strategic planning, including the determination of your goals and objectives, long term and short term.
- Show your YMCA staff members, volunteers, and YMCA members how your YMCA core values fit with the positive values within the developmental asset framework.
- Lead your YMCA in creating an asset-building vision and use that vision to guide your strategic planning.
- Evaluate your asset-building approach to operations, membership, and programs.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership at your YMCA.
- Designate parking for pregnant women and families with young children up near the front door.
- Be intentional about building assets in your teen employees.
- Meet with staff members and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets at your YMCA.
- Shape your programs and services to advance the asset-building vision, even for services that don't have direct impact on children, teens, and families. Think of the indirect ways you touch their lives. Examine YMCA policies, programs, and services to improve them.
- Show your YMCA staff members, volunteers, and YMCA members how your YMCA goals fit with the the developmental asset framework.
- Create asset-building task forces within your YMCA. Involve staff members, volunteers, teens, and parents.
- Recognize and celebrate asset-building actions.
- Encourage teens as decision makers and leaders: as board members, referees, assistant coaches, facilitators, and project leaders.
- Challenge yourself to do more with asset building. If possible, have each young person at your YMCA assigned to one staff member or volunteer so that each young person can have at least one adult with whom they can have a close relationship.
- Assess your community's needs and capacities as part of your asset-building planning process.
- For teen employees, include a 30-minute or one-hour timeframe (depending on the number of hours they work) to completing their homework under supervision as part of their paid time at the YMCA.
- Encourage all staff to take time to attend activities of their children, such as parent-teacher conferences, sport games, and plays.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Front-Desk Workers

Your role as a YMCA front-desk worker is to greet people as they arrive and help them find the materials and assistance they need. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to be an asset-building YMCA front-desk worker? Here are some tips:

- Smile and greet each person who enters the YMCA, no matter how old or young they are.
- Post the list of 40 assets at the front desk so everyone can see the list.
- Keep the front desk area clean and welcoming to members.
- Become a walking example of asset building. Model positive ways to interact with young people.
- Go out of your way to greet members, volunteers, staff members, and young people at the Y, even when you're away from the front desk.
- Meet with other front-desk workers and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Make greeting people and helping them feel welcome the number-one priority of your work.
- Have asset-building materials available for members, volunteers, staff members, and community residents to pick up and take with them.
- Consider giving stickers to young children as they arrive.
- Learn the names of children, teens, and parents who come on a regular basis.
- Be warm, sincere, and positive when you talk with people at the front desk.
- Educate other front-desk workers and volunteers about the 40 assets and why they are important.
- Consider volunteering to read books or lead a short activity in your YMCA's child care program or another program on a regular basis so that you can get to know some young people.
- Remember that your interactions with young people have an impact. Make every interaction a positive one.
- Hang up letters and artwork made by young people in the lobby to show your YMCA's commitment to asset building.
- Make eye contact with each person you welcome to the YMCA, including children and teens.
- Squat so you can be a child's eye level when talking with a young child.
- Provide a space in the lobby with books and magazines for young people to read while waiting for parents to pick them up from the YMCA.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Office Workers

Your role as a YMCA office worker is to complete your assigned tasks so that your YMCA runs efficiently and becomes an asset-rich YMCA. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to be an asset-building YMCA office worker? Here are some tips:

- Include asset-building tips on fax cover sheets, payroll check stubs, note cards, calendars, and other inter-office communication pieces.
- Put an asset-building message on your computer screen saver.
- Meet with other office workers and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Educate other office workers and office volunteers about the 40 assets and why they are important.
- Mentor children in YMCA child care programs by eating lunch with them regularly (weekly or twice a month).
- Smile and greet young people by name when you see them.
- Remember that your interactions with young people have an impact. Make every interaction a positive one.
- Hang up letters and artwork made by young people in your office area.
- Create part-time jobs (or periodic, seasonal jobs) for teens.
- Post the list of the 40 assets in your work area.
- Display photos of the children and teens you know in your office.
- Mentor a teen who is interested in your field of work.
- Squat so you can be at a child's eye level when talking with a young child.
- Although many of your responsibilities are task oriented, see the power in the relationship-oriented work you do.
- When parents bring their children to the office, greet each family member and help them feel welcome.
- Learn the names of some of the children, teens, and parents who come to your Y on a regular basis.
- Become a walking example of asset building. Model positive ways to interact with young people.
- When you're away from your desk, greet members, volunteers, other staff members, and young people at the Y.
- Have asset-building materials at your desk to distribute to members, community residents, volunteers, and work associates.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Program Leaders

Your role as a YMCA program leader is to lead the way in making your program an asset-rich YMCA program. Other staff members and volunteers look to you for knowledge, guidance, and steps to take in providing an effective and meaningful program. As an individual asset builder, you make a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to be an asset-building YMCA program leader? Here are some tips:

- Learn the names of all the members in your program.
- Use the asset approach to guide every decision, program, practice, and endeavor you undertake in your YMCA.
- Make a point of talking with each member at least once every time your program meets.
- Raise awareness among other staff members and volunteers who work in your program area about asset building.
- Create and maintain a positive atmosphere in your program so that members want to come.
- Discuss and promote asset building through program meetings and trainings.
- Focus on helping members improve in skills and knowledge. This will help reduce their fear of failure and give them permission to try new things and stretch themselves.
- Care about your members' lives outside of the program and show them they are valuable people.
- Meet with other program leaders and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Learn about the demographics in your community so that you can attract and retain people of different ages, income, abilities, races, and religion to your program.
- In the Y, everyone wins. Know that highly competitive YMCA programs often can cause a great deal of stress for young people. Keep the program fun and watch for warning signs of stress in members.
- Adapt your leading style and language to the members' age level.
- Avoid scheduling YMCA events (and other community events) that conflict with families' school, cultural, and religious commitments.
- Use the asset approach as one of the ways you make decisions about programs—from how they are led, to whom they serve, to what is taught, to how they are managed.
- Set goals for both individuals and your program as a whole.
- Talk about assets in your program and encourage members to build assets in themselves and others.
- Catch kids doing things right. Be quick to praise their efforts. Encourage every member at least once at every meeting, practice, or game.

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- Create formal and informal evaluation procedures to obtain feedback from your members about asset building.
- Insist that all members treat one another with respect. Have a zero-tolerance policy for teasing and hurting other people's feelings.
- Be specific about a code of conduct and expectations for members, parents of members, and program leaders.
- Encourage members to do well in school and be motivated to achieve.
- Learn the names of all the parents of your members.
- Keep relationship building at the forefront of your programming.
- Find ways for each member to contribute in a meaningful way.
- Develop leadership skills in all members, not just those who are natural leaders.
- Use the sandwich approach to correcting a member's mistake: first praise then constructively criticize, then praise again.
- Listen to and encourage members' dreams, concerns, and desires.
- Take time at the end of your program session to have the group offer positive comments about each member's contribution for that day. Make sure no one is left out.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Volunteers

Your role as a YMCA volunteer is to assist in making your YMCA an asset-rich YMCA. Other staff members and volunteers look to you for invaluable skills and delivery of services that otherwise would not be provided. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to be an asset-building YMCA volunteer? Here are some tips:

- Use the asset approach to guide every decision and endeavor you undertake in your YMCA.
- Learn more about asset building and why your YMCA thinks asset building is important.
- Notice kids doing things right and quickly praise their behavior.
- Smile at young people you see at the YMCA.
- Keep relationship building at the forefront of your volunteer efforts.
- Commit to at least one act of asset building every day, whether you're at the YMCA or somewhere else.
- Take time to nurture your own assets by spending time with supportive people, using your time constructively, and reflecting on your own values.
- Attend concerts, programs, and activities of young people you know.
- Post the list of the 40 assets on your refrigerator at home to remind you to build assets every day.
- Meet with other volunteers and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- As you get to know young people at the YMCA, greet them by name when you see them.
- Integrate asset building into your unique volunteer role at the YMCA.
- View interruptions to your work by young people as your most important work. It may not always be efficient, but taking the time to talk with young people will make your YMCA a more caring environment.
- Ask your supervisor (or volunteer coordinator) if you can attend professional asset-building development opportunities, such as an asset-building workshop, seminar, or conference.
- If your community has an asset-building coalition, get involved.
- Praise young people when you see them building assets in their peers.
- If you feel uncomfortable around young people, ask your supervisor or volunteer coordinator for training opportunities that can build your listening, leadership, and conversational skills.
- Talk with other volunteers at the YMCA about how they're incorporating asset building into their role at the YMCA and in their role as individual asset builders in the community.
- Volunteer to mentor a young person in your YMCA and in your community.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Members

Whether you realize it or not, you are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them. At this YMCA, we believe that in order to create an asset-rich YMCA environment for young people, everyone has an important role to play—including you. We're not asking you to spend a lot of time and energy but to start seeing the small but significant ways you make a difference in the lives of young people at the YMCA.

So what does it involve to be an asset-building YMCA member? Here are some tips:

- Smile at young people when you see them at the YMCA.
- Recognize that young people are still learning and growing. Be patient when they misbehave, and encourage them to act in more positive ways.
- Get to know the names of a couple of young people at the YMCA. When you see them, greet them by name.
- Catch kids doing things right. Be quick to praise their efforts.
- Commit to at least one act of asset building every day, whether you're at the Y or somewhere else.
- Meet with other YMCA members and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in your YMCA's asset-building efforts.
- Take time to nurture your own assets by spending time with supportive people, using your time constructively, and reflecting on your own values.
- Learn more about the 40 assets and why they're so important for young people.
- Attend concerts, programs, and activities of young people you know.
- Post the list of the 40 assets at work and on your refrigerator at home to remind you to build assets every day.
- If your community has an asset-building coalition, get involved.
- Examine your attitudes about children and teenagers. See young people as resources rather than as problems.
- Send birthday cards to the children and teenagers that you know.
- Remember that you're a role model at the YMCA. Young people are always watching you, even if they never talk to you. They're learning from you the way to act at the YMCA.
- Volunteer at the YMCA. You'll find one-time, easy opportunities if you don't have a lot of time.
- Help out a parent at the Y who may be overwhelmed with the children or carrying a lot of stuff. Offer to help carry something or entertain a small child within eyesight of the parent for a few minutes.
- Think about the way you were parented and how that affects your relationships with the young people around you.
- Evaluate your own assets. Which are strongest? Which need to be stronger? Focus on building the assets in yourself so that you can then build assets in others.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Van and Bus Drivers

Transporting young people from place to place is a big responsibility in terms of safety (asset #10) and boundaries and expectations (assets #11-#16). Make your time together in the van or bus a positive experience for yourself and your passengers by being an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to be an asset-building YMCA van or bus driver? Here are some tips:

- Learn the names of all the young people who ride in your van or bus.
- Get to know the young people who ride in your van or bus. Focus on building a relationship with each one.
- Pay attention to transporting young people safely to and from their destination.
- Think of yourself as a role model for the passengers.
- Post the list of 40 assets in your van or bus.
- Be clear from the first time young people ride with you about the behavior you expect from them.
- Meet with other van and bus drivers (if your YMCA has others) or with YMCA staff members to brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership during van and bus rides.
- Consider creating a “rules or ridership” contract that both young people and their parents sign.
- Greet passengers by name when they get on or off the van or bus.
- If you drive for the same group on a regular basis, drop in on their activities periodically and show your support. Talk with them afterward about how things went.
- Hang up newspaper clippings and pictures of young people on the walls and ceiling of your van or bus.
- Make the atmosphere on the van and bus supportive and fun within safety limits.
- Get to know the bullies in the group and be clear about your expectations for them.
- If you have difficulty with some young people who don't follow the rules, give a piece of candy or some other small trinket to reward those who follow the rules. Sometimes a small incentive will encourage better behavior.
- Take pictures at the beginning of the program year of each individual young person. Send the picture to the young person on his or her birthday or as a holiday greeting from you.
- Make the time of travel enjoyable. Encourage conversation. Sing songs together. Play music on the stereo that participants enjoy.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Board Governance

Your role as a YMCA board is to set the policies and effectively govern the process of becoming an asset-rich YMCA. Staff members, volunteers, and YMCA members look to you for knowledge, guidance, and steps to take. Board members also are individual asset builders who make a difference in the lives of young people by the way they interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to be an asset-building YMCA board? Here are some tips:

- Bring asset-building success stories and achieved asset-building milestones to the board to celebrate the accomplishments being made. Recognize staff members and volunteers who are building assets at your YMCA.
- Evaluate your asset-building approach to operations, membership, and programs.
- Include young people on your board to represent the diversity of your service area in terms of age in addition to gender, income, race, and religion.
- Use the asset approach to guide every decision, program, practice, and endeavor you undertake in your YMCA.
- Shape your programs and services to advance the asset-building vision, even for services that don't have direct impact on children, teens, and families. Think of the indirect ways you touch their lives. Examine YMCA policies, programs, and services to improve them.
- Create asset-building task forces within your YMCA. Involve staff members, volunteers, teens, and parents.
- Invite young people to tell about their YMCA asset-building experiences and to give ideas on how to improve YMCA programming for children, teens, and families.
- Encourage all board members to take time to attend activities of their children, such as parent-teacher conferences, sport games, and plays.
- Use asset building as a regular process for strategic planning, including the determination of your goals and objectives, long term and short term.
- Encourage board members to help in enhancing your YMCA's public asset-building image by sharing key message and making presentations.
- Meet with other board members and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide some type of leadership in your board meetings.
- Recognize board members for the contributions they make to build assets at the YMCA, in their places of employment, and in your community.
- Assess your community's needs and capacities as part of your asset-building planning process.
- Train board members in the asset approach and their individual roles as asset builders.
- Encourage board members to mentor young people in your YMCA and in your community.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Facilities, Property, and Maintenance

Your role at the YMCA is to ensure that YMCA facilities are equipped, managed, and maintained not only to meet the mission of the YMCA but also to create an asset-rich YMCA environment. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to manage YMCA facilities, property, and maintenance from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Create a maintenance plan that empowers staff members with clearly defined expectations for the daily and ongoing needs of the facility. Examine how your maintenance plan can support an asset-rich YMCA environment.
- Evaluate your long-range plans for facility improvements, additions, and renovations based on how they will improve your YMCA's ability to provide programs and operate in ways that encourage the development of assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Create ways for staff members, volunteers, and YMCA members to offer input and assistance in improvements, additions, and renovations to YMCA facilities.
- Learn the names of children, teens, and parents who come to your YMCA on a regular basis.
- Meet with other people who work in this area and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Create directional signage that is clear and positive. Clear, positive signage is one way to build developmental assets at your YMCA.
- Perform a safety review of all gathering spaces and high-traffic areas of your YMCA facility. Complete any work needed to create the safest possible environment for young children and families. This includes spaces that are typically not considered program areas.
- Provide a space in the lobby with books and magazines for young people to read while waiting for their parents to pick them up from the YMCA.
- Create standards and expectations for staff members, volunteers, and YMCA members to care for YMCA facilities. Make these standards clear to staff members, volunteers, and YMCA members.
- Smile and greet young people when you see them using the YMCA facilities.
- Find creative ways to engage young people in property management, such as caring for flower beds, growing a vegetable garden, or creating an outdoor mural.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Fundraising and Philanthropy

Your role in YMCA fundraising and philanthropy is to generate contributed income for your YMCA to meet its goals and fulfill its mission. Use the asset approach as a way to engage donors in new ways. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to raise funds and lead philanthropic activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Use asset building as a case for support, emphasizing the needs of young people, families, and the community.
- Develop a way for teens to raise funds for you YMCA.
- Create an asset-building fundraising activity.
- Apply for grants and United Way funds by using the asset framework to make a scientific case for funding. (See the “United Way of Our Area Outcome Measurement Report” on page 7-136 and “Making the Case: Measuring the Impact of Youth Development Programs” on page 7-38.)
- Include asset building in your YMCA capital campaign.
- Meet with staff members and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Encourage teenagers to contribute financially to your YMCA and recognize those who do.
- Include asset building in your annual report.
- Use the asset approach to develop creative fundraising campaigns and updates. See what Tina LaRoche, associate executive director of the Ketchum Downtown YMCA branch in Los Angeles, does with dollar bills on page 6-12.
- Create a YMCA teen foundation where young people can apply for grants, and a group of teen financial advisors determine who will receive grants.
- Include the developmental asset approach in your financial development.
- Teach young people about financial planning and management skills with *An Asset Builder’s Guide to Youth and Money*, published by Search Institute.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) as a way to show outcomes based on the asset framework for potential funders.
- Mentor teenagers who are interested in philanthropy.
- Consider creating an asset-building endowment.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Human Resources

Your role in YMCA human resources is to set and uphold clear administrative and human resource policies while hiring and keeping qualified staff members. Use the asset approach as a way to enhance your human resource capacity. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to work in human resources at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Include asset building in your YMCA human resources policy.
- Designate specific asset-building roles for each grade and salary range for all paid positions.
- Encourage employees to set personal, annual asset-building goals.
- Develop work and family policies for paid staff members so that parents have some flexibility and support to balance work and family issues.
- Empower employees by asking them which incentives and benefits they would most desire.
- Use the asset approach during the process of hiring new employees. See page 6-35.
- Meet with staff members and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Include specific asset-building responsibilities within YMCA written job descriptions.
- Train employees and volunteers in the asset framework and the expectations of what it means to be an asset builder at your YMCA.
- Include asset building as part of your new employee orientation.
- Provide ongoing asset-building development for all employees at all levels, full time and part time, exempt and non-exempt.
- Encourage employees to attend other asset-training programs and opportunities.
- Include asset building in regular performance appraisals.
- Communicate regularly and openly with employees and volunteers during staff meetings about asset building.
- Measure employee and volunteer satisfaction in your asset-building efforts at the Y.
- Regularly seek employees' and volunteers' opinions and evaluations of your asset-building efforts.
- If possible, include teenagers on interview teams for hiring new staff members. Teenagers often ask questions you may not think of (although you need to prep them so they don't ask certain questions that are against the law).
- Offer flexible scheduling for staff parents, time to volunteer, tax-deferred child care payment options, and other family-friendly policies and benefits.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Marketing and Communications

Your role in YMCA marketing and communications is to provide high-quality information for staff, volunteers, and YMCA members. Use the asset approach as a way to enhance your marketing and communication strategies. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to work in marketing and communications at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Include asset building in your YMCA marketing and communications policies.
- Create a written communications strategy and plan for asset building at your YMCA.
- Have your communications strategy aim to engage all key audiences to become asset builders for and with young people.
- Target key audiences with customized messages and materials that stress the benefits of becoming an asset builder for young people.
- Learn as much as you can about the asset approach and the 40 developmental assets so that you can become an effective individual asset builder and also use the asset approach in your work.
- Promote and publicize the broad range of how your YMCA builds assets.
- Meet with staff members and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Regularly measure public opinion of asset building at your YMCA to gauge your progress in becoming an asset-rich YMCA.
- Regularly provide information about asset-building at your YMCA to the media and act as a resource for the media as they develop stories.
- Provide local media with public service announcements (PSAs) to promote asset building.
- Create an easy-to-read, one-page fact sheet that highlights key information about asset building at your YMCA.
- Collect asset-building success stories to share with members.
- Get a signed release form from the subjects of any photos to use for promoting asset-building efforts.
- Create asset building displays, bulletin boards, and posters.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Membership

Your role in YMCA membership is to provide helpful information for individuals interested in becoming members and to program participants and members so that they continue to use the Y. Use the asset approach as a way to enhance your membership strategies and show individuals how asset building is transforming your YMCA and the relationships within your Y. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to work in membership at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective?

Here are some tips:

- Train all staff members and volunteers who work in membership in the asset framework and why it is important to your YMCA.
- Learn about the demographics of your community so that you can attract and retain people of different ages, income, abilities, races, and religions.
- Use the asset approach as one of the ways you make decisions about membership and programs—from how they are led, to whom they serve, to what it teaches, to how they are managed.
- Create formal and informal evaluation procedures to obtain feedback from your members and program participants about asset building.
- Include asset building in your financial assistance policy.
- Meet with staff members and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Follow a member involvement model that includes asset building at your YMCA and in your community.
- Include items about asset building in your membership satisfaction survey.
- Add asset building to your membership handbook.
- Include asset building in your new member orientation.
- Place asset-building messages on your YMCA marquee and in membership brochures.
- Provide opportunities for teen internships with concrete learning experiences, good supervision, and support.
- Post young people's artwork in YMCA hallways. Create a friendly environment that's welcoming to children, teens, and families.
- Create a bulletin board with information about young people who are doing well in school, who have done a designated number of service hours to the Y, and those who have provided leadership in some way at the Y.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Technology and Information Systems

Your role in YMCA membership is to provide helpful systems, reporting formats, data collection, and ongoing analysis to provide the knowledge necessary not only to be an effective YMCA but also to become an asset-rich YMCA. Use the asset approach as a way to enhance your strategies for technology and information management and to show YMCA leaders the progress being made in asset building. You also are an individual asset builder who makes a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to work in technology and information management at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Include asset building in your data collection systems in order to provide specific information about asset building. For example, include a question of whether members, volunteers, and staff members have heard of the term “asset building.” As you become an asset-rich YMCA, you can include questions about how people build assets and how many young people at your YMCA they know by name.
- Analyze data on asset building on a regular basis.
- Inform YMCA staff members and key volunteers about your asset-building data and trends.
- Recruit teens to input non-confidential data into your database.
- Educate Y staff members in e-mail etiquette. Train staff members and volunteers to include asset messages as part of their e-mail signature.
- Get to know some of the children and teens who are at your YMCA.
- Publicize the Web site that has information about asset building at the YMCA at www.abundantassets.org.
- Mentor teens in computer systems and other technological systems at your Y.
- Encourage YMCA staff members to take the asset approach in setting up positive, friendly voice-mail messages.
- Educate Y staff members and volunteers about technology so that they have more realistic expectations about technological systems. People who don't have a lot of background or training in certain technological systems often get frustrated when technology becomes complicated or doesn't work in the ways they had hoped.
- Meet with staff members and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in this area.
- Hang up letters and artwork made by young people in your office area.
- Add information about asset building to your YMCA's Web site.
- Smile and greet young people by name when you see them.
- Ask technological-minded teens to help train staff members and volunteers who are reluctant to learn new computer applications. Many teens have skills and creative ideas that you may not have even thought of yet.
- Post the list of 40 assets in your area.
- Encourage staff members, volunteers, and YMCA members who are building assets to get involved in the asset listserv. See page C-3 for information about how to join this listserv.
- Create a network of technologically knowledgeable people that includes staff members, volunteers, members, and teens.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Adult Development

Your program category of adult development is to provide programs and activities for adults to develop to their full potential. Use the asset approach as a way to enhance your strategies for adult development and to show members how asset building can help them develop into more well-rounded adults. As an asset builder, you make a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

So what does it involve to plan and implement adult development programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Use the asset framework to teach adults how to build their own assets and get the support they need. Asset-rich adults build asset-rich young people.
- Encourage adults to talk about the young people in their lives: their neighbors, their children, their grandchildren, and other significant young people.
- Recognize adults who are building assets in young people.
- Team up with program leaders in child care, youth development, and/or family strengthening from time to time to create intergenerational programming and activities.
- Encourage adults to have lunch with YMCA children who attend full-time YMCA child-care programs.
- Train adults about the 40 developmental assets and why they are important.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within this program category and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in programs and activities.
- Get adults involved as rockers, helpers, readers, and playmates with infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers in your nursery or child-care program.
- Encourage adults to smile at YMCA young people when they see them.
- Find ways to team up adults with young people so that adults can teach young people a skill, such as carpentry, knitting, cooking, floral design, gardening, metal work, and so on.
- Become a walking asset builder. Model to other adults how to interact with young people in your YMCA.
- Encourage adults to volunteer as advisors in a YMCA teen development program.
- Learn the names of the young people who hang out at your YMCA. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Aquatics and Scuba

Integrating asset building into aquatics and scuba is key to bringing out the best in young people. Young people with a strong foundation of assets are more likely to succeed and to grow up to be caring, competent, responsible citizens. You can build assets and make a difference in the lives of young people through each of your programs and activities.

So what does it involve to plan and implement aquatics and scuba programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of aquatics and scuba classes.
- Encourage adults to talk about the young people in their lives: their neighbors, their children, their grandchildren, and other significant young people.
- Offer flexible volunteer opportunities for parents and members who want to get involved but may not have a lot of time. Find one-time activities, such as providing monthly refreshments or volunteering to assist a swim coach.
- Recognize adults who are building assets in young people. Recognize young people who are building assets in children and teens.
- Create intergenerational aquatics activities, such as adult-teen swim races.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within this program category and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in programs and activities.
- Become a walking asset builder. Model to other adults how to interact with young people in your YMCA.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) to evaluate the swimming programs for children and teens.
- Engage teens as leaders and decision makers within your program area. For example, teenagers can become assistant swim coaches and lifeguards.
- Set high standards for how young people, coaches, instructors, members, staff members, and volunteers are expected to behave in and around the pool.
- Avoid scheduling swim team practices that conflict with the family dinner hour.
- Learn the names of the young people who hang out at your YMCA. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.
- Set expectations for individuals who participate in YMCA swimming events. Create a caring environment where skill improvement is celebrated and everyone wins.
- Offer aquatic programs for young people in the prime idle hours (between 3 and 6 p.m.) so that young people can be actively engaged.
- Train staff members, coaches, instructors, and young people in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.
- Collaborate with other program leaders to offer an aquatics and scuba component to child and teen development programs.
- Encourage aquatics instructors and coaches to build relationships with members in addition to teaching them swimming skills.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Arts and Humanities

Integrating asset building into arts and humanities is key to bringing out the best in young people. Young people with a strong foundation of assets are more likely to succeed and to grow up to be caring, competent, responsible citizens. You can build assets and make a difference in the lives of young people through each of your programs and activities.

So what does it involve to plan and implement arts and humanities programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of arts and humanities classes.
- Offer flexible volunteer opportunities for parents and members who want to get involved but may not have a lot of time. Find one-time activities, such as a working at a special event, demonstrating how to play a unique instrument or perform a certain art technique, or leading a one-time class.
- Recognize adults who are building assets in young people. Recognize young people who are building assets in children and teens.
- Create intergenerational arts and humanities activities that people of all ages would enjoy and find stimulating.
- Become a walking asset builder. Model to other adults how to interact with young people in your YMCA.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) to evaluate the arts and humanities programs for children and teens.
- Engage teens as leaders and decision makers within your program area. For example, teenagers can teach a class in something they're good at (such as writing poetry or playing an instrument), leading a special event, or overseeing art or music schedules.
- Set high standards for how members, young people, instructors, staff members, and volunteers are expected to behave in your programs and activities.
- Involve teens as reporters and have them write articles on your program area for your YMCA newsletter.
- Provide a space with books and magazines for young people to read while waiting for parents to pick them up at the YMCA.
- Learn the names of the young people who hang out at your YMCA. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.
- Train staff members, volunteers, instructors, and young people in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.
- Encourage instructors and program leaders to build relationships with participants in addition to teaching them skills in the arts and humanities.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within this program category and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in programs and activities.

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- Conduct an annual essay contest for young people on character or leadership and have the winning essays read at your annual meeting or a special YMCA event.
- Create a book or movie study group (that could be an intergenerational activity or a family activity) that gives participants the chance to read and reflect on books with asset-building themes.
- Post artwork, poems, and essays in your YMCA hallways.
- Collaborate with other program leaders to offer an arts and humanities component to child, family, and teen development programs.
- Plan asset-building learning activities as part of your programming. For example, set aside 15 minutes for young people to read for pleasure (which builds asset #25).
- Empower young people by encouraging them to tell their stories via written, visual, or oratory ways.
- Create visual symbols of asset building.
- Read biographies or view videos about musicians and artists. Discuss the assets young people see in the lives of these creative people.
- Collaborate with staff members from aquatics and scuba and from health and fitness to add a health component to your arts programs.
- Choose a quote a day that emphasizes one of the 40 assets.
- Ask young people to collect information about their heroes, famous and not-so famous.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Camping and Outdoor Enrichment

Integrating asset building into camping and outdoor enrichment is key to bringing out the best in young people. Young people with a strong foundation of assets are more likely to succeed and to grow up to be caring, competent, responsible citizens. You can build assets and make a difference in the lives of young people through each of your programs and activities.

So what does it involve to plan and implement camping and outdoor enrichment programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of camping and outdoor enrichment activities.
- Recognize adults who are building assets in young people. Recognize young people who are building assets in children and teens.
- Create camping activities that build family relationships, such as family camps or weekend family retreats.
- Become a walking asset builder. Model to other adults how to interact with young people in your YMCA.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) to evaluate the camping and outdoor enrichment programs for children and teens.
- Engage teens as leaders and decision makers within your program area. For example, teenagers can become lifeguards, camp tour guides, teaching assistants for children, mentors for first-time campers, and so on.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within camping and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in camping programs and activities.
- Set high standards for how program participants, staff members, and volunteers are expected to behave at your camp.
- Learn the names of the young people who come to your YMCA camp. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.
- Train staff members, volunteers, camp counselors, and young people in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.
- Use your program time to also promote asset building. When you have projects, build in time to discuss and reflect on these projects from an asset-building perspective.
- Provide a space with books and magazines for young people to read while waiting for parents to pick them up from your camp or camping program.

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- Create outdoor learning activities that encourage young people to expand their knowledge about nature and biology.
- Collaborate with staff members from aquatics and scuba and from health and fitness to add a health component to your camping program.
- Teach campers about the asset framework and encourage them to build assets in themselves and each other.
- Spend time getting to know parents during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Encourage young people to write to their families (even if it's just a short postcard) during residential camps. Provide stamps and postcards for young people who may not have brought these items.
- Collaborate with staff members from arts and humanities to add an arts component to your camping program.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Child Care

Your program area of child care is to provide programs and activities for children and youth that help them to grow and develop socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Use the asset approach as a way to enhance your ability to accomplish this goal. Share these strategies with parents and older participants to show them how asset building can help children and school-age children develop to their full potential. As an asset builder, you make a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

How can you plan and implement child care programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of child care programs and activities.
- Recognize adults who are building assets in young people. Recognize and celebrate the role YMCA staff members, volunteers, parents, and significant role models play in building assets in young people.
- Teach, model, reinforce, and celebrate character development values: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility while also teaching the positive values assets (assets #26-#31). Confront behaviors that are inconsistent with these values. Help children understand the consequences of their choices.
- Create activities that build relationships within the family and between family members, such as a family night or a program for families put on by the children.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within child care and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in child care programs and activities.
- Become a walking asset builder. Model to other adults how to interact with young people in your YMCA.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) and the blue kit *Evaluating YMCA Child Care* to evaluate your programs.
- Post the list of 40 assets in your program areas. Currently there are five different lists for children and teenagers: one for infants, one for toddlers, one for preschoolers, one for elementary-age children, and one for teenagers. (See pages 1-28 through 1-32 for these lists.)
- Engage older children and teens as leaders and decision makers within your program area. For example, older children and teenagers can become teaching assistants for young children, entertainers for parties and celebrations, and reading buddies.
- In working with children, set high standards for how program members, staff members, and volunteers are expected to behave in your program. Set standards that emphasize the positive rather than the negative.
- Learn the names of the young people who come to your YMCA programs and activities. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.
- Train staff, volunteers, and program leaders in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.

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- Use your program time to also promote asset building. When you have a project, talk about which assets the project is building.
- Keep parents informed about your asset-building curriculum. If you focus on one asset a week (in addition to integrating asset building into your overall program and practices), give parents information about that asset through a newsletter or flyer.
- Create an asset-building book corner for children to use during self-directed time to build asset #25: reading for pleasure. Equip the book corner with books that depict characters making positive choices and contributing in significant ways.
- To build relationships and your credibility as an asset builder and consultant, spend time getting to know parents during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Designate times in an after-school program to help children with their homework, which builds asset #23: homework and shows how you value the commitment-to-learning assets (assets #21-#25).
- Recognize children successes with a written note, a call to the parents, or verbal praise.
- Thank staff members, parents, volunteers, and members when you see them building assets in young people. For example, recognize a member who acknowledges children in the building and treats them with respect, a volunteer who spends time in your child-care center reading to children, a parent who balances a child's busy schedule with extracurricular activities that contribute to assets, such as activities in the arts (asset #17), recreation (asset #18), or spiritual development (asset #19).
- Notice what's working. Tell children when they are doing something right.
- Take YMCA participants outside the walls of the YMCA to enjoy and participate in activities with other young people and other asset-building adults.
- Take photographs of children and hang them up in your room or in the hallways.
- Give each child one-to-one attention at some point during the program.
- Collaborate with staff members from arts and humanities to add a new arts dimension to your child care program.
- Give young people age-appropriate activities that encourage them to grow and build their skills.
- Be consistent with daily schedules so that young people know what to expect.
- Read to young people every day. Make connections between what children read and what they experience in their own lives.
- Model a calm response and patience, even during the most trying moments.
- Schedule annual or semi-annual conferences with parents to let them know how their child is progressing in your program.
- Keep group sizes small, and if possible, assign each child a particular child care worker so that each child has at least one adult that he or she can form a close relationship with.
- When you photograph events, get double prints. Keep one set for you program and give the extra photographs to family members of the young people in the photo.
- Offer parent-education classes that focus on a particular age group so that parents can learn how to build assets in their children.
- Collaborate with staff members from aquatics and scuba and from health and fitness to add a health component to your child care program.
- Offer programs during after-school hours so that children have stimulating activities to do when their parents still are working.
- Designate time in each staff meeting to brainstorm and discuss new ways to help build and strengthen assets in YMCA programs.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Community Development and Resources

Integrating asset building into community development and resources is key to bringing out the best in young people. Young people with a strong foundation of assets are more likely to succeed and to grow up to be caring, competent, responsible citizens. You can build assets and make a difference in the lives of young people through each of your programs and activities.

So what does it involve to plan and implement community development programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Offer community development programs for young people during after-school hours so that they have stimulating activities to do when their parents and guardians still are working.
- Post the list of 40 assets in your program areas.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within community development and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in community development programs and activities.
- Convene foundations and funders to educate them on the power of the assets.
- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of community development programs and activities.
- Include information about asset building in all communication pieces regarding community development.
- Be an advocate. Your YMCA can play a pivotal role in shaping public policy. Advocate for more asset-building opportunities within your community.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) to evaluate your community development programs.
- Set high standards for how members, staff members, and volunteers are expected to behave in your program. Set standards that emphasize the positive rather than the negative.
- Learn the names of the young people who come to your YMCA programs and activities. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.
- Work with schools, congregations, and community groups to avoid scheduling YMCA events (and other community events) that conflict with families' school, cultural, and religious commitments.
- Train staff, volunteers, and program leaders in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.
- Recognize adults who are building assets in young people. Recognize young people who are building assets in children, youth, and teens.
- Use your program time to also promote asset building. When you have a project, talk about which assets the project is building.
- Educate others in the community on asset building. Figure out how community agencies can work together to support each other's efforts.
- Collaborate with staff members from aquatics and scuba and from health and fitness to add a health component to your community development programs.
- Notice what's working. Tell members when they are doing something right.
- When you photograph events, get double prints. Keep one set for you program and give the extra photographs to family members of the young people in the photo.
- Start or join a community-wide asset-building coalition. Network with others on behalf of young people.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Family Strengthening

In your program area of family strengthening, provide programs and activities for families that help them to grow closer. Use the asset approach as an effective strategy for family strengthening and to show families how asset building can help them develop even further as individuals—and as a family. As an asset builder, you make a difference in the lives of young people by the way you interact and talk with them.

How can you plan and implement family strengthening programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Empower families to take a role in making plans and decisions in YMCA family programs.
- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of family programs and in child care and youth development programs and activities.
- Create opportunities for families to get to know other families at your YMCA. Do community building and getting-to-know-you activities during family programs.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) to evaluate how your family programs are impacting young people from an asset-building perspective. The kit includes a survey for school-age children, for teenagers, and for parents.
- Get to know families and their interests. Focus on what they like to do in and out of the YMCA.
- Post the list of 40 assets in your program areas. Currently there are five different lists for children and teens: one for infants, one for toddlers, one for preschoolers, one for elementary-age kids, and one for middle- and high-school teens. (Photocopy these lists in English from pages 1-28 through 1-32, in Spanish from pages C-12 through C-16, and in French from pages C-19 through C-23.)
- Photocopy the list of 40 assets to distribute to parents. Ensure that they get copies of the lists that cover the age range of all the children in their family.
- Learn the names of each family member who comes to your YMCA programs and activities. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.
- Train staff members, volunteers, and program leaders in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within family strengthening and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in family strengthening programs and activities.
- Ask family members for suggestions on how to improve family programs.
- Use your program time to also promote asset building. When you have a project, talk about which assets the project is building.

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- Create a book or movie study group that gives family members opportunities to read books or watch movies together with asset-building themes.
- Take photographs of families and hang them up in your room or in the hallways.
- Offer parent-education classes that focus on particular age groups so that parents can learn how to build assets in their children.
- Help families understand their role to teach, model, celebrate, and reinforce the character development values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility in addition to instilling the six positive values assets (assets #26-#31).
- Collaborate with staff members from aquatics and scuba and from health and fitness to add a health component to your family strengthening programs.
- Create tips for asset building and include them in program newsletters or YMCA brochures. For example, talk about setting boundaries and expectations, suggest concrete ways to get involved in a child's education and school, give parents tips on how to select activities to round out a child's free time without overscheduling the child or stressing out the parent.

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Asset-Building Ideas for

Integrating asset building into health and fitness is key to bringing out the best in young people. Young people with a strong foundation of assets are more likely to succeed and to grow up to be caring, competent, responsible citizens. You can build assets and make a difference in the lives of young people through each of your programs and activities.

So what does it involve to plan and implement health and fitness programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Have front-line staff greet everyone who enters your fitness facilities, including young people.
- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of health and fitness classes.
- Match adult members with young people as fitness “buddies.”
- Teaching skills to young people in fitness, nutrition, and CPR.
- Involve young people as leaders and contributors in Healthy Kids Day activities.
- When supervising the strength-training facility or gym, focus on the positive side of boundaries. If a teenager cuts in line, remind him or her of the importance of being a role model (asset #14).
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within health and fitness and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in health and fitness programs and activities.
- Create intergenerational and family health and fitness activities, such as family walk-a-thons (which families could also bring kids in strollers, wagons, and on bicycles) or intergenerational aerobics for beginners.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) to evaluate the health and fitness programs and activities for children and teens.
- Engage teens and train them to be leaders and decision makers within your program area. For example, teenagers can become assistant instructors in your first aid or exercise classes. Or older teenagers could mentor younger teenagers who want to get into better shape.
- Learn the names of the young people who hang out at your YMCA. Get to know them and ask them about what’s going on in their lives.
- Offer health and fitness programs for young people between 3 and 6 p.m. when most have free time so that young people can be actively engaged.
- Train staff members, volunteers, instructors, and young people in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.
- Encourage health and fitness instructors to build relationships with members in addition to teaching them skills.
- Collaborate with other program leaders to offer a health and fitness component to child care, family strengthening, and youth development programs.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Sports and Recreation

Integrating asset building into sports and recreation is key to bringing out the best in young people. Young people with a strong foundation of assets are more likely to succeed and to grow up to be caring, competent, responsible citizens. You can build assets and make a difference in the lives of young people through each of your programs and activities.

So what does it involve to plan and implement sports and recreation programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Engage teens as leaders and decision makers within your program area. For example, teenagers can become assistant soccer and basketball coaches. Or older teenagers could mentor younger teenagers in gymnastics or wrestling.
- Avoid scheduling sport practices and games that conflict with the family dinner hour.
- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of sports and recreation classes.
- Create intergenerational and family sports and recreation activities, such as a YMCA softball playoff (between individuals who have been members five years or more versus those who have been members for less than five years), a volleyball competition between your adult volleyball league players and your teen volleyball league players, or a family T-ball game.
- Learn the names of the young people who hang out at your YMCA. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.
- Set clear expectations for referees, coaches, parents and members for YMCA sporting events. Create a caring environment where skill improvement is celebrated and everyone wins.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) to evaluate the sports and recreation programs and activities for children and teens.
- Encourage sports and recreation instructors and coaches to build relationships with program participants in addition to teaching them skills of a particular sport.
- When supervising the locker room or gym, focus on the positive side of boundaries. If a teenager cuts in line, remind him or her of the importance of being a role model (asset #14).
- Offer youth and teen sports and recreation programs in the prime idle hours (between 3 and 6 p.m.) so that young people can be actively engaged.
- Train staff members, coaches, instructors, and young people in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within sports and recreation and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in sports and recreation programs and activities.

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- Offer flexible volunteer opportunities for parents and members who may want to be involved but may not have a lot of time. Ask for one-time volunteers to be a timekeeper at a meet, to tally the monthly statistics for your team, or to referee a game.
- Remember the top two reasons young people play sports (according to Leonard W. Wankel and Philip S. J. Kreisel in the *Journal of Sport Psychology*) is to have fun and be with their friends. Winning is not one of their top reasons.
- Collaborate with staff members from aquatics and scuba and with health and fitness to add an additional health component to your sports and recreation programs.
- Listen to and encourage athletes' dreams, concerns, and desires.
- Ensure that team members clean up after themselves at the gym or on the field. Teach players to respect the opposing team.
- At the end of season celebrations, take time to say a few positive things about each player.
- Care about your athletes' lives outside of the sport and show them they are valuable people as well as team members.

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Asset-Building Ideas for YMCA Youth Development

Integrating asset building into youth development is key to bringing out the best in young people. Young people with a strong foundation of assets are more likely to succeed and to grow up to be caring, competent, responsible citizens. You can build assets and make a difference in the lives of young people through each of your programs and activities.

So what does it involve to plan and implement youth development programs and activities at the YMCA from an asset-building perspective? Here are some tips:

- Take photographs of young people and hang them up in your room or in the hallways.
- Give each young person one-to-one attention at some point during the program.
- Use the asset framework in designing the program content of youth development programs and activities.
- Notice what's working. Tell young people when they are doing something right.
- Make a designated space (like a teen center or a teen room) an asset-building space where young people can hang out, be safe, and do homework.
- Recognize adults who are building assets in young people. Recognize the young people who are building assets in children and other teens.
- Assign each young people a particular program leader or volunteer so that each teen has at least one adult that he or she can form a close relationship with.
- Attend other activities that young people are involved in outside of your YMCA.
- Create a climate where young people's opinions and experiences are valued and respected.
- Use *The YMCA Purple Kit: A Tool for Evaluating Asset Building for and with Young People* (formerly known as *YMCA Youth Programs*) to evaluate your youth programs.
- Set high standards for how program participants, staff members, and volunteers are expected to behave in your program. Set standards that emphasize the positive rather than the negative.
- Post the list of 40 assets in your program areas.
- Help shape young peoples' personal identity by helping them discover their sense of purpose and to help them internalize their faith and beliefs.
- Recognize and celebrate youth service.
- Meet with other staff members and volunteers within youth development and brainstorm six ideas on how to build assets.
- Recruit young people as volunteers to provide leadership in youth development programs and activities.
- Invite young people to discuss their experiences at the YMCA with board members. Encourage teens to give board members ideas on how to improve YMCA programming for children and teens.

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- Offer youth programs during after-school hours so that young people have stimulating activities to do when their parents and guardians still are working.
- Engage teens as leaders and decision makers within your program area and in other YMCA program areas. For example, young people can become teaching assistants in child care programs, referees and assistant coaches in sports and recreation programs, leaders within your youth programs, and members of your YMCA board.
- Learn the names of all the young people who participate in your YMCA youth programs and activities. Get to know them and ask them about what's going on in their lives.
- Train staff members, volunteers, and program leaders in the asset framework. Explain why it is important.
- Use your program time to also promote asset building. When you have a project, talk about which assets the project is building.
- Spend time getting to know parents and guardians during drop-off and pick-up times.
- When you photograph events, get double prints. Keep one set for you program and give the extra photographs to young people in the photo.
- Provide teen internships with concrete learning opportunities, good supervision, and plenty of support and guidance.
- Offer parent-education classes so that parents and guardians can learn how to build assets in their children and teenagers.
- Teach young people about the 40 assets and help them set goals for building their asset base.
- Help young people create life-planning portfolios that include goals and dreams. Have young people follow it for one year before updating it and tracking their challenges and accomplishments.

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