

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 27- Equality and Social Justice

To Build Asset # 27 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Show kindness and care to all people. Teach respectful communication to younger generations.

— Sitka

Form a family charity account, for everyone to contribute to, and decide as a family who to give it to several times each year. Discuss what happens with the money, and why it is important to share what we have with others less fortunate.

— Wasilla

Discuss issues of social justice as they come up: from watching news programs, TV programs, newspaper stories, or just what happens in your child's life. Help your child understand how things would be different if we had greater social justice and equality.

— Fairbanks

Each day, notice and comment about something you are grateful for, something easily taken for granted but which other people lack. When you share these things with your kids throughout the normal day, it has more power than when it is part of a "talk."

— Anchorage

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset # 27

Definition: Youth respects self and others; places high value on sharing and cooperation.

Teach your children humility. Teach them that no one is better than them, and that they are better than no one.

— Kluti-Kaah

Have Elders talk before basketball games about respect, respect in everything. This is values education.

— Unalakleet

Try to set a good male/female example.

— Akiachak

Have Elders come into the classroom and tell the stories of sharing the catch and why this tradition is important to us.

— Chuathbaluk

When the youth goes on a moose hunt, it is important for the youth to clearly understand his role. He must complete his role for the good of the common goal — the moose hunt.

— Kluti-Kaah

At fish camp, it is the tradition to share the bounty with others. We always cut, dry, and store more than we need because we will share with the village. The whole family is involved in cutting fish. It is our tradition to give the best meat away.

— Shaktoolik

At a pay-off party, we celebrate the life of the one who has died by giving away all his possessions to people throughout the village. People often save things for years for this potlatch time, so they could be very generous and celebrate the passing.

— Hoonah

Asset # 27 — Equality and Social Justice

Kids place high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.

45% of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

*Based on Search Institute surveys of almost 100,000 6th to 12th grade youth throughout the United States

What are Assets?

Assets are 40 key building blocks to help kids succeed. Like a dream catcher, assets are the supporting threads in a young person's life that can keep away harm and invite goodness.

Words of Encouragement

Youth places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.

Jennifer Loesch

I remember growing up in Petersburg there were always plenty of opportunities to give to others. There were often canned food drives at school, the individual classes would compete against the other classes to see who could bring in the most food. The church I grew up in also had a food bank and I remember my mom bringing food in regularly. In high school I remember one particular world event that planted an idea in a teachers mind. I can't remember the specific event but there were a lot of people without clothing. She asked all the high school students to bring in their used clothing, and specifically asked the girls to bring in their used prom dresses. The commons area filled up within days, bag after bag of clothing. The spirit of giving was contagious in the school. I remember getting goose bumps when I saw the results of that one idea.

Chances are if you plant a good idea in a student's mind they will run with it and it will spread like wild fire through the school. Can you think of suggestions you could make to a student?

Some ideas are; a food drive, a clothing drive, or an event when everybody rallies together to serve food at the shelter or sort through donations at the Salvation Army. These are all ideas you can present to your child, a friend's son or daughter, a teacher, or a student body government. There are so many ways that adults can encourage youth to promote equality and reduce hunger and poverty.

I hope that you will encourage youth in your community to stand up for what they believe is right, as well as helping others out who may not have food or money. It is great to see a community where the youth take the initiative to act and the adults support them!

Research

When youth promote equality and place high value on reducing hunger and poverty they are more likely to grow up healthy and successful. There are internal and external rewards to possessing this asset, some examples are;

Greater competence

(Call, Mortimer, & Shanahan, 1995)

Higher perceived scholastic competence, less worry about school

(Johnson, 1993)

Higher levels of prosocial behavior

(Eisenberg, Miller, Shelly, McNalley, & Shea,

1991; Estrada, 1995; Ford, Wentzel, Wood,

Stevens, & Siesfeld, 1989; and others)

Better formal reasoning skills

(Darmody, 1991)

Quotes:

"If you want to make beautiful music, you must play the black and the white notes together."

-Richard Milhous Nixon

"Choose your friends by their character and your socks by their color. Choosing your socks by their character makes no sense, and choosing your friends by their color is unthinkable."

-Anon.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

-Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from the Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by the
Association of Alaska School Boards'
Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE)
316 West 11th Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tel: (907) 586-1486
Fax: (907) 586-1450
Email: alaskaice@asab.org