



# Parents Are the Foundation

## Five Fundamental Resources

February 2008

Every child and teen in America should have the confidence, character, competence, and connections needed to live healthy, fulfilling life and contribute positively to society. America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth has identified five fundamental resources that, if consistently provided, contribute to youth development and help reduce problems facing America's youth. The five resources are:

1. Ongoing relationship with caring adults
2. Safe places and structured activities during non-school hours.
3. A healthy start for a healthy future
4. Marketable skills through effective education
5. Opportunities to serve

The goal of America's Promise is to connect additional young people, from birth to age 20, to all five fundamental resources. These connections will occur primarily through support systems in neighborhoods and communities – families, neighbors, youth organizations, human service agencies, religion instructions, schools, businesses, and youth themselves. Our communities must work together to provide these resources for our children and adolescents.

### Resources Area 1: Ongoing Relationships with Caring Adults

Young people need caring adults who provide care, support, or guidance to young people, whether formal or informal, spontaneous or sustained. They include parent and family, neighbors, and other involved with young people, such as coaches, teachers and youth workers. In many cases, caring adults may also be mentors – individuals who, along with parents and family, provide youth with social support, counsel and friendship.

#### Iowa County Youth Caring Adults

- Youth who say parents give them help and Support 82%
- Youth who say teachers care about them 53%
- Youth who say neighbors care about them 52%
- Youth who have a formal mentor 27%
- Youth with mentors who see her/him once a week or more 44%

### Resource Area 2: Safe Places and Structured Activities During Non-School Hours

Young people need safe places and structured activities – community places where young people can go before and after school for structured, stimulating, adult-supervised activities that are physically safe, emotionally supportive, developmentally challenging, accessible, and affordable. These activities should be developmentally and culturally appropriate, responding to the expected changes in youth's skills, interests and shifts in neighborhood life. They should tap neighborhood resources – libraries, schools, businesses, faith organizations and recreation centers – engaging neighbors and young people themselves.

#### Iowa County Youth Safe Places and Structured Activities

- Boys who feel safe in the place they go after school\* 83%
  - Girls who feel safe in the places they go after school\* 82%
- 
- Boys who are involved in structured activities for 3 or more hours per week\*\* 66%
  - Girls who are involved in structured activities for 3 or more hours per week\*\* 73%

\* Youth reporting they never feel unsafe or afraid in the places they go after school.

\*\* Structured activities refer to participation in school or community sports teams; club or organizations at or outside of school; programs, groups, or service at a church, synaogue, mosque, or other religious or spiritual place; and /or music, art, drama, or dance lessons or practice.



### Resource Area 3: A Healthy Start for a Healthy Future

Young people need health care and education for a healthy start in life. Health or nutrition problems can be prevented or managed so children get a good start in school. High-risk health behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and sexual activity can be prevented or managed so that young people stay on track in school. Beginning with good prenatal care for pregnant women and comprehensive relationship with a health practitioner who knows the family and is able to manage the entire range of care. Dental health, good nutrition, and psychological needs must be met as well.

#### Iowa County Youth Health Start

- Youth who have been to a dentist in last 12 months 87%
- Youth who have been to a doctor for a checkup or physical in the last 12 months 71%
- Youth with access to a nurse's office or clinic at school. 82%

### Resource Area 4: Marketable Skills through Effective Education

Young people need to develop marketable skills to make a successful transition from school to the labor force. Preparation for this transition does not begin in high school; it begins in the early years. Young people need to build the strong academic skills (e.g., reading, math, science) and career skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, problem solving) that are necessary for success in higher education, occupational training, and jobs. Before high school, they need to understand the links between school, work, and future employment through opportunities to make workplace connections.

### Iowa County Youth Marketable Skills

- Youth who know how to use a computer to do things like schoolwork, finding information, or typing papers 89%
- Youth who agree that "skills I am learning in school are preparing me for a future job" 70%

### Resource Area 5: Opportunities to Serve

Young people need to be challenged, inspired, and given opportunities to serve through their families, schools, communities of faith, and community organizations. In order to be of the highest quality, service experience should be sustained over time, have identifiable results, help solve real community problems, and be structured to include preparation, action, and reflection.

#### Iowa County Youth Opportunities to Serve

- Boys who spend 1 or more hours per week helping other people without getting paid\*\*\* 31%
  - Girls who spend 1 or more hours per week helping other people without getting paid \*\*\* 41%
- 
- Youth who have been asked 3 or more times in the last year to help on service or volunteer projects 23%

\*\*\* Helping other people without getting paid is defined as helping out at the hospital, daycare center, food shelf, youth programs, or community service agency, or doing other things to make their city, village or town a better place for people to live.

## PARENTS ARE THE FOUNDATION !

"Parents are the Foundation" is a monthly, school-year newsletter containing information from the 2005 Survey of Student Resources and Assets in Iowa County Schools by America's Promise and the Search Institute and the University of Wisconsin-Extension Iowa County. This series is adapted from the UW-Extension Teen Assessment Project "Whose Kids?...Our Kids!" newsletter series. This issue was written by Ruth Schriefer and edited by Deb Ivey and Sarah Weier. Thanks are extended to the 1,264 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Highland, Mineral Point, Pecos and River Valley who participated in the survey. For more information, contact us at UW-Extension Iowa County, 608-935-0391 or on the web at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/iowa/>