



S.T.E.P.S.

Southington's Town-wide Effort to Promote Success

May 2009

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S.T.E.P.S.

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Look for our
monthly column
in The Citizen!

Developmental
Assets are the
key building
blocks kids need
to grow up to be
caring,
competent and
successful
individuals.

Our Mission:

A Southington community initiative aimed at developing healthy and successful youth.

Featured Asset:

This month's featured asset is "**Community Values Youth**" – Youth perceive that they are valued by the adults in their community.

According to the Search Institute's statistics, only 22% of students who completed the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey across the United States reported having this asset. That means 78% of students do not believe they are valued by other members in their community.

Questions in the survey that students responded "no" to were, "Do the adults in your town or city make you feel important?", "Do the adults in your town or city listen to what you have to say?", "Have you been given chances to make your community a better place?" and "Do the adults in your town or city care about people your age and make you feel that you matter to them?"

Youth need to feel that their community values their ideas, gifts, talents, and encourages them to be fully involved. If a community neglects its youth, high-risk behaviors become manifest throughout the society. The community needs to interact with its youth and show that youth matter to everyone.

Facts From Community Members:

One aspect of the "Community Values Youth Asset" is to remind our youth to remain drug and alcohol free this upcoming prom season, along with reminding parents they are responsible for their children's actions. Southington resident, Attorney Tony Sheffy, provided us with useful questions and answers on this topic:

- Q: Can my parents serve alcohol to my friends at a private party at our house?
A: No. Connecticut makes it against the law for a parent to serve alcohol to any guest who is less than 21 years old. Remember, having everyone stay the night at the house is not an exception to the law.
- Q: Do my parents have to take action when they know that my friends have brought alcohol into the house?
A: Yes. In fact, if parents know high school students are drinking at the house, the law requires parents to take reasonable steps to stop the party.
- Q: Are the penalties serious if the law is violated?
A: Yes. The first penalty is the public embarrassment to your parents who appear in the police blotter. The second penalty is a stiff fine. For a second or third offense, parents may be fined up to five hundred dollars or imprisoned for up to one (1) year or both. Beware Prom-Goers. It is possible that your parents could be charged with more serious offenses depending on the circumstances of the party. Don't risk it!
- Q: Do my parents have other potential legal responsibility?
A: Absolutely. Should one of your friends or guests at a party cause an accident or injury to someone else, your parents may have direct legal and financial responsibility. This means that your parent's house and everything that they own could be at risk.
- Q: What if I have a party when my parents aren't home?
A: Possession of alcohol on public or private property by anyone under 21 is illegal and is punishable by a fine (and even more importantly loss of your license). In addition your parents may still have legal responsibility for your actions.

This is not Legal Advice. For More Information Contact Tony Sheffy or go to Sheffylaw.com.

Ways the
"Community
Values Youth"
asset can be
built:

Encourage youth
to get involved
in their
community.

Show kids that
even small
efforts can make
huge differences
now and in the
future.

Support young
people's insights
and suggestions.

Always make
sure young
people know you
are available for
them.

Next time you
are doing a
community
activity or
project, ask
young people to
help and
participate.

When young
workers wait on
you, either at a
restaurant or in
a store, be
patient with
them and be
extra friendly.
Even try to
compliment
them on the
great job they
are doing.

These and other
ways to build assets
with children can be
found on the Search
Institute's website
www.search-institute.org
&
www.mvparents.com

S.T.E.P.S. Members of the Month: The S.T.E.P.S. Events Committee



Steps Spring Summit – May 2, 2009

WOW – What an event! We are certainly taking STEPS in the right direction and the momentum from the May 2nd Spring Summit should keep us moving toward making Southington a better place to live for your youth and teens. Our STEPS Spring Summit had over 80 people in attendance, a combination of teens, parents and community leaders. The theme for the day was "Hooking Kids Into Something Positive"! We started off the day with five terrific keynote speakers: Bob Lasbury, James Germaine, Kelly Reiniger, Victoria Triano and Diana Sheard. Each one of them spoke about the positive influence that getting involved or "hooked" into something positive had on their lives.

From there, Christina Simms and I led a teambuilding activity that focused on the strengths and areas for improvement in the town of Southington. At the conclusion of the activity, we broke up into four teams and began brainstorming a list of positive things that youth and teens can get hooked into in the town of Southington. The next step will be to develop a master list of programs and activities offered in town. This list will be used as a resource for the teens in attendance to share with their peers as well as being available at the Youth Services office for local families.

We concluded the event with an activity that had small groups of one teen, one parent and a couple of community leaders talking about strategies to get kids hooked into these positive programs and activities. Dr Erardi, School Superintendent, closed the day asking those in attendance to do some specific things:

- Teens – Be true to yourselves and help us get others involved in positive programs and activities
- Parents – Help us spread the word to other families and parent groups about the STEPS initiative and the 40 developmental assets
- Community Leaders – Consider being a mentor to a young person and help guide them in the right direction.

Overall the day was a huge success. We now have in our possession a list of hundreds of great programs and activities that will get kids "hooked into something positive" We have an inspired group of teens, parents and community leaders ready to spread the word about STEPS. We have some positive momentum to move us forward and continue to help guide the youth and teens of Southington make good decisions and become productive members of the community.

I would like to thank the entire STEPS Events Committee for their work on the Spring Summit as well as all in attendance for making this event such a big success.

Mark Pooler
STEPS Events Committee Chair



Every month, S.T.E.P.S. will feature a member or group in the community that has gone above and beyond with our initiative. If you or anyone you know has done something to help, please email the story to Kelly Berkmoes at Berkmoesk@southington.org.