

A Snapshot of Our Youth

The promotion of healthy development of our youth takes place in many forms in our community. Many of us have been active participants in trying to ensure our young people have a good environment in which to grow.

How do we know how we are doing? Perhaps more to the point, how do we know how our youth are doing? The recent results of Search Institute's™ *Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*™ survey are highlighted in this report and provide interesting insights into the answers to these questions. You may find some of the results reassuring and much of it unsettling.

A few key survey results:

- The average number of assets of the youth in Gogebic and Ontonagon counties is 16.7 out of 40
- Boys ranked lower than girls did on 29 of the 40 Developmental Assets
- 21% of youth surveyed have 10 or fewer of the 40 assets
- 30% of youth have 21 or more assets
- 26% of eighth graders and 53% of seniors reported using alcohol once or more in the 30 days prior to taking the survey

There were a total of 532 youth from grades 8, 10 and 12 who participated in



the survey. Of those, 266 were girls and 263 were boys.

A new focus on **Sparks** and the eight asset categories outlined in this report can help our community learn more about how to help our youth do their best. Please take the time to read the enclosed information and consider a renewed commitment to being an effective builder of youth assets.

2009 Gogebic and Ontonagon County Youth by Asset Levels

While there is no "magic number" of assets young people should have, youth with at least half of the 40 Assets are much less prone to risk-taking behavior. Yet, as the chart shows, only 30% of youth in Gogebic and Ontonagon counties have 21 or more assets and, perhaps more concerning, 21% of the youth surveyed have 10 or fewer of the 40 Assets.

Totals in this report may not equal 100% due to rounding.

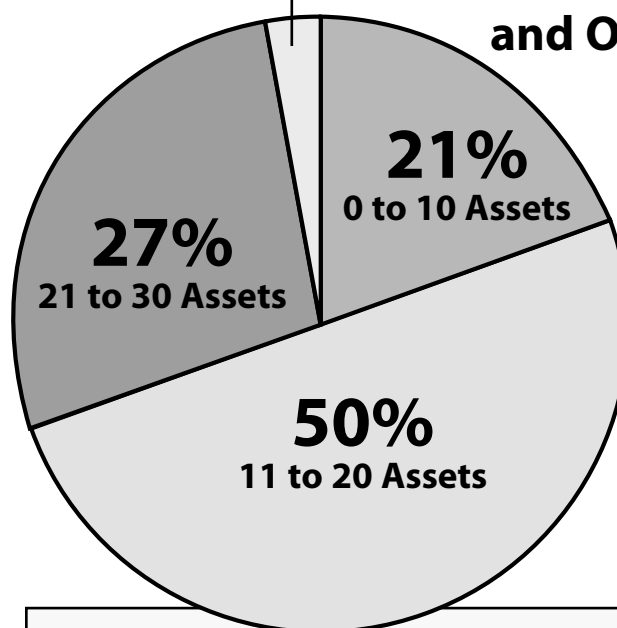
MOST COMMON ASSETS

Positive View of Future	72%
Family Support	68%
Honesty	67%
Responsibility	65%
Integrity	64%

LEAST COMMON ASSETS

Creative Activities	13%
Community Values Youth	16%
Youth as Resources	17%
Adult Role Models	17%
Caring School Climate	19%

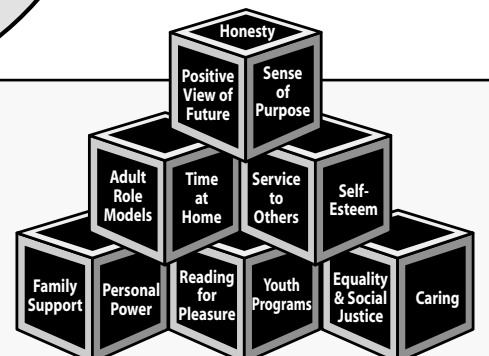
31 to 40 Assets **3%**



Percentage of Gogebic and Ontonagon County youth who experience each of four levels of assets

WHAT ARE ASSETS?

They are the strengths, or building blocks, that kids need to grow up healthy, competent and caring. Research tells us youth with more assets experience more success in life and participate in fewer risk-taking behaviors.



THE POWER OF ASSET BUILDING

Search Institute studies have consistently shown that young people who experience more of the assets engage in fewer risk-taking behaviors and are more likely to report thriving indicators. This means the more assets a young person experiences, the more likely he or she will choose a healthy lifestyle. This has been shown to be true regardless of age, gender, or region of the country.

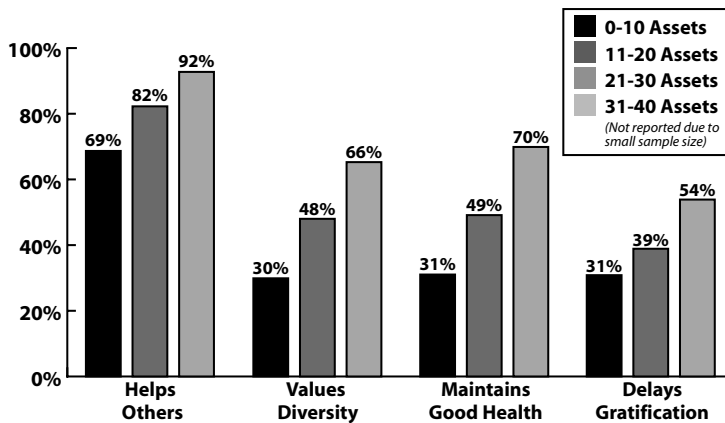
THE POWER TO PROMOTE

The 2009 Gogebic and Ontonagon counties survey results reveal that the more assets youth have, the more likely they are to help friends and neighbors, value diversity, maintain good health and not spend their money quickly. Youth who have more assets are also more likely to be leaders, resist dangerous activities, and not give up when things get difficult.

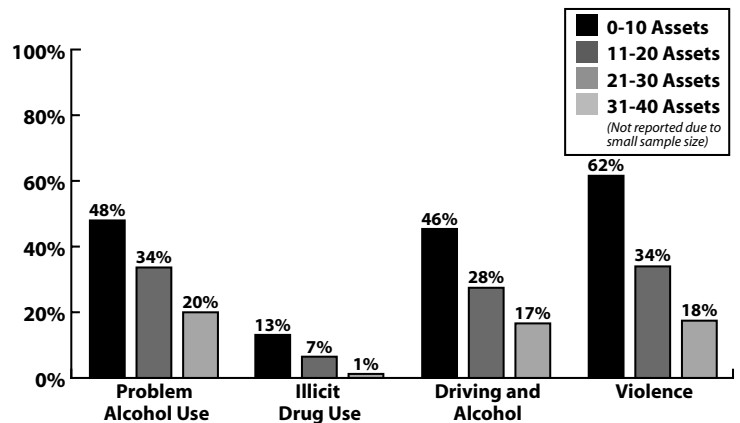
THE POWER TO PROTECT

The survey results indicate that the more assets youth have, the less likely they are to participate in risk-taking behaviors. As illustrated by these charts, youth with more assets are less likely to be involved in alcohol and illicit drug use, sexual activity and violent behavior.

Percentage of Our Youth Reporting these Thriving Indicators in 2009



Percentage of Our Youth Reporting these Risk Behaviors in 2009



PERCENT OF OUR YOUTH REPORTING THRIVING INDICATORS

Category	Thriving Indicator Definition	Total	Gender		Grade		
			M	F	8	10	12
Helps Others	Helps friends or neighbors one or more hours per week	78%	74%	82%	83%	75%	77%
Values Diversity	Places high importance on getting to know people of other racial/ethnic groups	48%	40%	56%	46%	51%	48%
Maintains Good Health	Pays attention to healthy nutrition and exercise	52%	49%	54%	56%	53%	46%
Delays Gratification	Saves money for something special rather than spending it all right away	44%	45%	42%	49%	40%	41%

PERCENT OF OUR YOUTH REPORTING SUBSTANCE USE RELATED RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS

Category	Risk-Taking Behavior Definition	Total	Gender		Grade		
			M	F	8	10	12
Alcohol	Used alcohol once or more in the last 30 days	40%	48%	34%	26%	43%	53%
	Got drunk once or more in the last two weeks	30%	37%	23%	19%	31%	40%
Tobacco	Smoked cigarettes once or more in the last 30 days	24%	30%	19%	11%	31%	33%
Marijuana	Used marijuana once or more in the last 12 months	28%	30%	25%	9%	39%	36%
Other Drug Use	Used other illicit drugs once or more in the last 12 months (Includes cocaine, LSD, PCP or angel dust, heroin, and amphetamines)	12%	12%	13%	6%	15%	16%
Driving & Alcohol	Rode (once or more in the last 12 months) with a driver who had been drinking	51%	50%	52%	54%	48%	49%

40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

In Search Institute terms, **assets** are key individual or environmental resources that enable and nurture young people to develop in healthy, positive ways. Percentages are for the 532 8th, 10th and 12th grade students in Gogebic and Ontonagon counties who were surveyed in 2009.

		Asset Type	Asset Name & Definition	Percentage
EXTERNAL ASSETS	SUPPORT	1	Family Support – Family life provides high levels of love and support	68%
		2	Positive Family Communication – Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s)	24%
		3	Other Adult Relationships – Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults	45%
		4	Caring Neighborhood – Young person experiences caring neighbors	37%
		5	Caring School Climate – School provides a caring, encouraging environment	19%
		6	Parent Involvement in Schooling – Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school	25%
	EMPOWERMENT	7	Community Values Youth – Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth	16%
		8	Youth as Resources – Young people are given useful roles in the community	17%
		9	Service to Others – Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week	42%
		10	Safety – Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood	60%
	BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS	11	Family Boundaries – Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts	37%
		12	School Boundaries – School provides clear rules and consequences	47%
		13	Neighborhood Boundaries – Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior	45%
		14	Adult Role Models – Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior	17%
	CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME	15	Positive Peer Influence – Young person's best friends model responsible behavior	51%
		16	High Expectations – Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well	35%
		17	Creative Activities – Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts	13%
		18	Youth Programs – Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community	57%
		19	Religious Community – Young person spends one or more hours per week in a religious institution	38%
		20	Time at Home – Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week	57%
INTERNAL ASSETS	COMMITMENT TO LEARNING	21	Achievement Motivation – Young person is motivated to do well in school	61%
		22	School Engagement – Young person is actively engaged in learning	61%
		23	Homework – Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day	37%
		24	Bonding to School – Young person cares about her or his school	45%
		25	Reading for Pleasure – Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week	27%
	POSITIVE VALUES	26	Caring – Young person places high value on helping other people	40%
		27	Equality and Social Justice – Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty	42%
		28	Integrity – Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs	64%
		29	Honesty – Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy"	67%
		30	Responsibility – Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility	65%
		31	Restraint – Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs	26%
	SOCIAL COMPETENCIES	32	Planning and Decision Making – Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices	28%
		33	Interpersonal Competence – Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills	41%
		34	Cultural Competence – Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds	23%
35		Resistance Skills – Young person can resist negative peer pressure	32%	
POSITIVE IDENTITY	36	Peaceful Conflict Resolution – Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently	34%	
	37	Personal Power – Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me"	44%	
	38	Self-Esteem – Young person reports having a high self-esteem	48%	
	39	Sense of Purpose – Young person reports that "my life has a purpose"	60%	
	40	Positive View of Personal Future – Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future	72%	

BE AN ASSET BUILDER

Who can be an Asset Builder?



Any person, youth or adult, who commits time, energy or resources to making a difference in the community by promoting healthy youth

Basic Keys to Asset Building



1. Everyone can build assets
2. All young people need assets
3. Relationships are key
4. The more assets, the better
5. It takes the whole community

Simple Asset Building Ideas

Families

- Eat at least one meal together as a family daily
- Set aside at least one evening a week for family activities
- Serve others as a family; together with your child, help a neighbor
- Know where your children are, who they are with and that activities are alcohol and drug free

Adults

- Build at least one sustained, caring relationship with a youth
- Learn the names of all children and teens who live near you or work in shops you frequent; greet them by name
- Bring the Youth & Adult Partnering for Community Change workshop to your community

Youth

- Be a positive influence on your friends
- Join with friends to plan fun activities that are alcohol and drug free
- Be a positive role model for younger youth

Churches

- Involve youth in leadership roles in the church and in worship services
- Intentionally foster intergenerational relationships by providing activities for all ages within the congregation
- Provide your facilities for community youth activities
- Volunteer in the MLK Service Day Initiative

Schools

- Encourage all students to do well in school
- Schedule asset building training for students, teachers, bus drivers, coaches, etc
- Participate in the GLCYD activity Star Power and make sure every child is connected to a caring adult at school
- Empower students to become engaged and involved in their school

Organizations

- Involve youth in leadership and programming
- Develop ways youth can volunteer and serve others
- Recognize them for their efforts
- Thank people who work with youth and show them that you value them
- Support Excellence in Education

SPARKS is a new concept out of the Search Institute that can help you build Developmental Assets in the young people in your life. The Great Lakes Center for Youth Development is using the research on Sparks to help adults build stronger relationships with young people in our communities.



SPARKS are...
the hidden flames in kids that excite them and tap into their true passions.

SPARKS CAN BE:

- Artistic
- Athletic
- Intellectual
- Relational

SPARKS come from...

the gut. They motivate and inspire. They're authentic passions, talents, assets, skills and dreams.

SPARKS can...

ignite a lifelong vocation or career, or balance other activities to create an emotionally satisfying life.

SPARKS get...

kids going on a positive path, away from the conflicts and negative issues—violence, promiscuity, drugs and alcohol—that give teens a bad name and damage relationships between youth and adults.

How to unleash the power of Sparks in the youth around you:

- One:** Recognize the power of Sparks (which includes knowing what your own Sparks are)
- Two:** Know teenagers as individuals
- Three:** Help discover teens' Sparks
- Four:** Support teens in pursuing their Sparks (be the captain of a teen's "Spark Team")
- Five:** Keep teens' Sparks lit



This report was prepared by the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development. For more information on the 40 Developmental Assets and the State of Youth Report, log on to www.soyreport.org.

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