Sparks! Fanning the Flames that Motivate Youth
Grow & Lead helps communities **GROW** a culture that supports youth by strengthening nonprofits to **LEAD** community progress.

A U.P. where all youth thrive
Sparks!

“Without inspiration the best powers of the mind remain dormant. There is a fuel in us which needs to be ignited with sparks.”

—Johann Gottfried Herder
A spark story

THE PERILS
OF
A
DANCE HALL
FLOOR

A+

Don’t lose any of this paper.

By Linda Szilagyi
What are SPARKS?

• Hidden flames that light a young person’s proverbial fire

• Those things that bring energy, joy, purpose and motivation

• Passions, talents, skills, strengths, dreams

• Can be musical, athletic, academic, intellectual, relational etc.
Sparks studies

• Gallup poll of 2,000 12 to 17-year-olds and 2,000 parents

• Online poll of 1,000 11 to 17-year-olds

• Online interviews with 400 15 to 17-year-olds
What they found

- 62% could name their spark
- Most common category of sparks was **creative arts**
  - 43% male, 65% female
- Second most common was **sports**
  - 37% male, 16% females
- 37% said their parents encouraged their sparks
- 31% said their schools encouraged their sparks
- 6% said their neighbors knew and nurtured their sparks
5 steps to help ignite sparks in youth

1. Recognize the power of sparks
2. Get to know teens
3. Help discover and reveal their sparks
4. Be the captain of their spark team
5. Keep their spark lit
1. Recognize the power of sparks

• Think about your own sparks

• Can you name your own sparks?

• How have they impacted the direction of your life?
2. Get to know your teen

- Notice their strengths and personality type
- Show that you appreciate their unique personality
3. Help discover and reveal their sparks

Talk about sparks! Here are some conversation starters:

• What makes you want to jump out of bed in the morning?
• What makes you dread getting out of bed?
• If you could spend a whole day doing anything you wanted, and money and resources were no issue, what would you do?
• What makes you feel really happy?
• What have you done that you’re most proud of?
4. Be the captain of their spark team

No matter your position, you can be that one caring adult that sees what is unique and special in them and what they bring to the human party.
5. Keep their spark lit

Sparks need:

- A place to grow
- Time to grow
- Discipline to grow
- People to encourage their growth
**Sparks resources**

For spark champions:
- **Sparks: How Parents Can Help Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers** by Peter L. Benson

For teens:
- **Fire in the Heat: A Spiritual Guide for Teens** by Deepak Chopra
- **Hoot** by Carl Hiasson
- **Mr. Holland’s Opus** (movie)
Questions?
Thank you!

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