



For Immediate Release
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Nation's Action Tank For Growing Great Kids - Search Institute - Chooses Cincinnati To Host National Conference More Than 800 Expected November 5 To 7

On November 5 to 7, 2009, Cincinnati will host more than 800 teens and adults from across the country (including from the Tri-State) – all visionaries working to create a world where young people thrive – at a conference aimed at shifting attitudes from keeping teens out of trouble to a mindset of helping them succeed. The conference will be held at the Duke Energy Center in downtown Cincinnati – Thursday (9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.); Friday (8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.); Saturday (9 a.m. to Noon).

Unique to this conference, teens are equal planners and participants helping to teach, learn and create strategic ideas that will make the most positive impact on their own development and communities.

Presented by the Minneapolis-based Search Institute, the nation's leading action tank for helping communities grow great kids, with support from the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati, this 13th Annual **Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth[®] Conference** will include more than 100 learning sessions, exhibits, intergenerational social activities, nationally renowned experts in positive youth development. Attendees will also participate in a 'Give Back' event, packaging meals for more than 100,000 children to be distributed by Kids Against Hunger. (For more information, please visit www.searchconference.org.)

Lemonade Day - Growing Kids Through Literacy, Creativity and Play – Add Spark To Your Teaching With Social and Emotional Learning – Making Assets Out Of Bullies – Making Greatness Attainable By All – Integrating Assets Into Congregations – Stand For Peace: Students Making A Difference are among the sessions that will be offered.

Among the conference speakers will be:

- **Dr. Chris Peterson & Dr. Nansook Park**, Positive Psychology pioneers will reinforce the implementations of creating asset rich, strength based environments.
- **Dr. María Guajardo**, licensed child psychologist and executive director of the Mayor's Office of Education and Children, will share her personal story and how she became an award winning educator.
- **Peter Block**, renowned author, speaker, and consultant, will speak about creating communities that work for all through the use of constant connectedness.

Why Cincinnati?

Last year, the Greater Cincinnati region caught national attention with an unprecedented collaborative effort to help young people thrive through developmental asset building. Four large youth serving non-profit organizations led by the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati formed the Asset Builders Alliance with a two-fold goal – to determine if local young people were acquiring essential building blocks to succeed in life and using that information to begin a sustained, collaborative energy focused around creating an environment where young people would succeed. (The Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, and Boy Scouts Dan Beard Council are also members of the Alliance.)

More than 500 people representing diverse backgrounds and groups attended an event to learn the survey results and participate in a dialogue facilitated by the Search Institute on next steps. Since then more than 1000 individuals have been trained in utilizing the data to develop strategies for helping young people find their 'spark' and thrive. Over 60 organizations and school districts are incorporating asset development into their programs and visions.

The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is just one of many examples. It has become the YMCA's strategic vision that 'All Kids Deserve As' meaning children and youth in our community need **Asset-Rich** experiences; **Adults who Care**; **Access to Opportunities**; **Activities that Build Confidence, Life Skills and Resilience**; and **Advocates**. To that extent, each of the YMCA branches has at least one Assets Champion overseeing the development of asset programs.

Some other examples include the Boone County Library that is training teens and adults on creating opportunities to enrich families and the Clermont County Alliance that continues to pull together assets champions.

"The Asset Builders Alliance is creating exactly the kind of community-wide collaboration that is critical to growing successful and healthy young people. The Alliance, I am sure, will become a beacon of light to many other cities seeking to ensure that all kids receive the supports and opportunities essential for success," said Dr. Peter Benson, president of the Search Institute at last year's kick-off event.

What are Developmental Assets?

The Developmental Assets are 40 common sense, positive experiences and qualities that help influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.

There are two types of Developmental Assets. External assets are positive developmental experiences that surround youth with support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and opportunities for constructive use of time. Internal Assets are a young person's own commitments to learning, positive values and social competencies, and positive identity.

To learn more, please visit: <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets>

Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth (HC • HY) is a national initiative launched by Search Institute in 1996 to equip and support communities around the world that are engaging multiple sectors to build

Developmental Assets® in young people. The 2009 Search Conference is sponsored by: Ready by 21, Best Buy @15, HoltHouse- Prepared 4 Life, Houston Endowment, Lilly Endowment Inc., ASAP Center, Project 40, United Way of Greater Cincinnati and Park Nicollet. Supporting partners include the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati and MVParents. www.searchconference.org

Search Institute® is an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities. To accomplish this mission, the institute conducts research, communicates new knowledge, and brings together community, state, and national leaders. For more information, visit www.search-institute.org.

As the area's largest youth and family-focused not-for-profit, the YMCA reinforces character values through assets-based programs and services to more than 143,000 individuals, kids and families annually. Adult mentors encourage young people to be caring, responsible, respectful, and honest through sports, summer camps, structured child and afterschool care, and leadership building programs. Branches offer quality time for families, resources for parents, and a variety of opportunities for seniors to be active. The Membership for All sliding scale fee structure means everyone, no matter their ability to pay, can always benefit from the YMCA. Last year alone more than 17,400 families and individuals enjoyed healthier and happier lives because generous partners helped the YMCA in its vision to be accessible to all.

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