



For Immediate Release  
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## To Be Released May 19, Findings From Extensive Research Project Show Critical Need Locally For Community-Wide Collaboration In Fostering Positive Teen Development

In an unprecedented regional study funded by the United Way of Greater Cincinnati, four large youth serving non-profit organizations led by the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati (collectively called the Asset Builders Alliance) went straight to the source – 6,300 teens themselves – to determine if young people were acquiring the necessary building blocks they need to grow into responsible adults. The results show, there is a critical need locally across socio-economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds for Greater Cincinnati to do more to nurture and engage youth in positive development.

The data will be released at a Monday, May 19 event, *A Regional Snapshot: Benchmarking the Developmental Assets of our Kids*, aimed at jumpstarting a collaborative county-by-county engagement effort. More than 300 people from Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati representing schools, religious organizations, government, social service agencies, civic groups, parents, businesses, and neighbors – all of whom share a common interest in the well-being of children – have registered to attend. (Specific details of event are attached.)

At the event, one of the world's leading authorities on positive human development, Dr. Peter Benson, president and CEO of the Minneapolis based Search Institute who developed the survey content, will share his insight based upon research that has pioneered new thinking and mobilization in hundreds of cities across the United States. Shelby Andress, a trainer with the Search Institute, will share the findings of the Asset Builders Alliance research. She, along with local students, will also facilitate dialogue among attendees aimed at generating ideas, prioritizing next steps, and ultimately making personal commitments to the future of our youth.

"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. Benson. The Alliance was initiated by the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati, Boy Scouts Dan Beard Council, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati.

Already, in anticipation of release of the regional snapshot findings, the Asset Builders Alliance has been working with counties to mobilize in developing action plans. Boone, Kenton and Campbell Counties have each established an alliance, and Clermont County is in the beginning phase of developing an alliance.

Following the May 19 event, the Asset Builders Alliance will continue providing information and working with communities to develop strategies for building assets in teens. Training opportunities and a series of networking/brainstorming sessions will be offered.

**“In our five-county region, there are nearly 400,000 children under age 19. The healthy development and growth of each one of these kids is dependent on every adult a young person interacts with,” said Leigh Ann Luttrell, director of the Asset Builders Alliance director. “We have only just begun this process. If every adult could make a personal commitment to one small act on behalf of a child, it will make a huge difference.”**

### **About the local research**

Teens, grades 7 and 11, in a five county area – Boone, Kenton, and Campbell in Northern Kentucky; and Hamilton and Clermont in Ohio – were surveyed last fall about whether they felt they were acquiring building blocks called Developmental Assets, of which there are 40. Search Institute studies have consistently shown the more of these Assets a child develops, the less likely he or she is to engage in risk-taking behaviors and the more likely that child is to succeed in academics, health, community service and relationships. Thirty-one Assets are recommended.

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.

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## **A Regional Snapshot: Event Details for Coverage Opportunities**

**Location:** Cintas Center at Xavier University (1624 Herald Ave; 45207)

- 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Dr. Benson, Shelby Address, and Leigh Ann Luttrell will be available to share research results with media, and answer questions  
LOCATION: Cintas Center Board Room
- 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Hosted by the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati, luncheon with community leaders. Dr. Benson will lead discussion about what other communities have done and how Greater Cincinnati can apply what is learned to benefit young people.  
LOCATION: Room next to Board Room
- 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. Event with community participants.  
LOCATION: Cintas Center Ballroom
- 2:15 to 2:45 p.m. (approx.)  
Dr. Benson to share his insight from work with other communities, talk about adults' role in building developmental assets, and what Greater Cincinnati can accomplish
- 2:45 to 3:10 p.m. (approx.)  
Discussion of reaction to Dr. Benson's speech and introduction of teens
- 3:10 to 3:30 p.m. (approx)  
Students and Shelby to lead interactive discussion of research findings and developmental assets
- 3:30 to 3:45 p.m. (approx)  
Students and Shelby talk about boundaries and expectations.  
Two students to share remarks on how an organization is helping them build those assets.
- 3:48 to 3:55 p.m. (approx)  
Students talk about external developmental assets and ask participants to choose one way they can make a difference.
- 3:55 to 4:05 p.m. (approx)  
Students to talk about what their 'spark' is, whether a talent or interest.
- 4:05 to 4:15 p.m. (approx)  
Shelby leads discussion of five action steps to create spark in kids