

# ideas for parents

## Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

### FAST FACTS

#### ASSET #26: Caring

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they place high value on helping other people.

**50%**

of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.\*

#### What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Caring" is one of six positive-values assets.

\* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

## Caring Begins at Home

**O**ne family decided to show an elderly widow that they cared about her by cleaning up her yard and planting flowers. The five children were so excited about the idea, they told their friends. On the day of the project, 15 kids showed up to help. The parents had to ask neighbors to help drive everyone to the woman's home.

After completing the project, the young people decided to start what they called the Kids Care Club and began planning their next event. This time, 25 kids showed up. They packed bag lunches (and decorated them) for a soup kitchen.

Since then, the Kids Care Club has been a model for other families, neighborhoods, communities, congregations, and schools. You can start your own Kids Care Club in your family with one small project. Then register your club with the National Kids Care Clubs. Write a letter explaining why you want to help others and send it to Kids Care Clubs, 975 Boston Post Rd., Darien, CT 06820. You will receive newsletters that include ideas from other young people who are doing acts of caring.

### The Definition of Caring

**Caring about others includes caring for a lot of different people: those in your family, neighborhood, school, community, state, country, and world. It can include caring for animals and the environment, too.**



### Who Cares?

According to Search Institute researchers, girls are much more likely than boys to value caring. Of the girls surveyed, 84% said helping other people was important to them, and 76% said it was important to help make the world a better place. For boys, the percentages were 66% and 62%, respectively.

**Quick Tip:**  
A smile is a quick way to show someone you care.

## time together

Three ways to help your child value caring:

1. Volunteer as a family at an animal shelter, a nature center, or a food bank.
2. Visit neighbors and extended family who live alone.
3. Spend money on a family in need instead of each other at holiday time.

## 4 Keys to Caring

Caring includes reaching out to others and respecting the environment. Teach your child these four ways to care:

★ **HOLD THE DOOR FOR THE PERSON AFTER YOU WHEN YOU WALK INTO SCHOOL.**

★ **SIT WITH SOMEONE ON THE BUS WHO USUALLY SITS ALONE.**

★ **COMPLIMENT AT LEAST ONE PERSON EVERY DAY.**

★ **PICK UP LITTER AROUND YOUR SCHOOL OR NEIGHBORHOOD.**



## talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- How important is it for you to help other people, including siblings? Why?
- When have you enjoyed helping others? What happened?
- In what way would you like to help others now?

## Two Types of Caring

Caring for others can take place in two ways: through direct caring (which involves human interaction) and indirect caring (when we do things for people but don't see them). It's important for young people to be involved in both direct and indirect caring. Look at the two lists below. Where does your family put forth most of its caring energies?

**Direct caring**—Spending time with people needing care; interacting with others; getting direct feedback from people you're caring for.

**Indirect caring**—Collecting money, food, or other items to give to people who distribute the items to those in need; hearing feedback from organizers who help the people.

## More Help for Parents

Teaching Your Kids to Care: How to Discover and Develop the Spirit of Charity in Your Children by Deborah Spaide. A book that suggests practical ways to develop the spirit of caring in children. (Published by Replica Books.)

## Final Word

**“The true measure of an individual is how she/he treats a person who can do him absolutely no good.”—Ann Landers**

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by Search Institute, [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org); 800-888-7828. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005 by Search Institute. Major support for Search Institute's *Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth* initiative is provided by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.