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Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

Learn more at: DrugFreeActionAlliance.org

Know! is a program of:

DFAA Drug Free Action Alliance

LIFETIME PREVENTION | LIFETIME WELLNESS

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**Start Talking!**

*Building a Drug-Free Future*

# Know! Doing Good is Good for Them

*April 15th – 17th is Global Youth Service Day, a campaign by Youth Service America, calling on young people to serve in their schools and communities, and highlighting the contributions made by children and youth year-round.*

If you've ever volunteered your time and efforts to a meaningful cause, you've not only made a positive difference for someone in need, but you've likely experienced the good feeling it generates within. It is no surprise that young people who volunteer are just as likely to experience those same wonderful feelings when helping others. But did you know that when youth regularly serve others, it can have an incredible impact on their childhood development and adulthood success?

From early childhood through adolescence, there are certain positive qualities that influence young people's healthy development, increasing their likelihood of growing into caring, responsible and productive adults. Search Institute, an organization dedicated to discovering what kids need to succeed, calls these positive qualities *Developmental Assets*. Research shows that the more developmental assets youth possess, the more likely they are to thrive and the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviors like problem alcohol use, violence, illicit drug use and sexual activity.

There are *40 Developmental Assets* that are broken down into eight categories: Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, Constructive Use of Time, Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity. Search Institute identifies service to others as a "gateway asset" and says that it can have positive effects on at least 20 of the 40 Developmental Assets.

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Multiple studies also credit service-learning as leading to increased academic achievement, a reduction in high school dropout rates, and improved career and workforce readiness.

Serving others can also have a profound impact on health. Youth Service America highlights a volunteer and health study that showed the far majority of people who had volunteered in the past 12 months, regardless of age, said that serving others made them feel healthier, improved their mood and lowered their stress.

Doing "good" for others clearly does "good" for our kids as well. Many times a young person will first volunteer to fulfill needed service hours for school. But what starts out as a "have-to-do" can easily turn into a "want-to-do," once they see the impact they have had on someone else's life. And once that switch is flipped, the possibilities of creating positive change are limitless.

Fellow students can play a huge role in positively influencing their peers' volunteering habits, setting them on a path to lifelong service. In fact, one study found that 75.9% of those whose friends volunteer on a regular basis also volunteer.

Youth from five to 25 are encouraged to volunteer, create change and feel the joy of serving others through Global Youth Service Day. They can join an existing project or start their own. For a variety of ideas, tips and planning resources visit *Youth Service America* to help get them started right away.

Sources: Youth Service America: Global Youth Service Day. Search Institute: 40 Developmental Assets. YSA-referenced studies: 2013 Health and Volunteering Study and DoSomething.org Index on Young People and Volunteering.

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Visit *starttalking.ohio.gov* to get the conversation going !!!