

## By helping others, we learn to help themselves

To many young people, the world is small. It's made up of their school, home, and neighborhood. And, when they're very young, they may think the world revolves around them. But when young people start to reach out and help others, their world grows and so does their confidence. In fact, many young people report that when they give of their time and energy, they receive much in return. Serving others can help us feel good about ourselves and recognize we can make a difference in the world. This **Service to Others** is one of Search Institute's Developmental Assets, qualities, experiences, and relationships that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Research shows that young people who serve others in the community for one or more hours a week are more likely to be respectful of others, helpful and kind, and patient. They also tend to value diversity. In 2020, 34% of Hoosiers volunteered, ranking us 20<sup>th</sup> among states ([Serve.gov](https://www.serve.gov)). Search Institute estimates about 48% of youth (ages 11–18) serve in the community one hour or more a week. This Volunteer Week, Upstream encourages everyone to find a way to give back and encourage others to recognize the value of helping others.

To intentionally build this External Asset, we build on our previous asset of being a strong Adult Role Model. Activities such as providing a meal to a new parent, driving a neighbor to an appointment, or babysitting can make a huge difference in someone's life. Look for service opportunities to do with a young person. Join organizations that involve—and provide leadership roles for—both young people and adults. You can also think about developing this asset:

**In your home and family** – as a group, brainstorm 10 different ways your family can serve others. Choose one, and pick a date to do it! Afterward, talk about your experience.

**In your neighborhood and community groups** – consider joining or supporting an organization that teaches and provides opportunities for serving others. This could be the Boy or Girl Scouts, Habitat for Humanity, United Way, etc.

**In your school or youth program** – if you lead a group of youth, seek out opportunities for the youth members to engage in community service projects. You can also bring community resources into the classroom to show the importance of giving back and service to others.

This week (the third week of April) is [National Volunteer Week](#) – so a perfect time to build up this asset – through a formal volunteer opportunity, or simply providing support to a neighbor or friend. As you engage in Service to Others, challenge those around you to also get involved!

Want to know more about the 40 Developmental Assets and ideas for helping young people build them? You can learn more about what Upstream is doing at [www.upstreamprevention.org/assets](http://www.upstreamprevention.org/assets), or go directly to the Search Institute source at [www.search-institute.org/assets](http://www.search-institute.org/assets)

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Developmental Assets® are positive factors within young people, families, communities, schools, and other settings that research has found to be important in promoting the healthy development of young people. Upstream created this content modified from the *Instant Assets: 52 Short and Simple E-Mails for Sharing the Asset Message*. Copyright © 2007 by Search Institute You can find more of their information at [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org).