

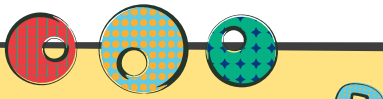


# Ideas for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

## 8. YOUTH AS RESOURCES

Young people are given useful roles in the community.



### What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

**Youth as resources** is one of four empowerment assets.

26% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.\*

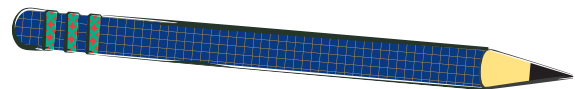
\*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Start or maintain a youth advisor and/or student leaders program in your school.
- Help students create extracurricular programs that suit their interests.
- Allow student participation in decisions about school life and culture.

### Being Resourceful

In order to fully engage students in their daily school life, they must feel empowered by it. If we give students meaningful and useful roles in school, they'll come to feel invested in the welfare of their school. They will care more about its success and be more willing to make good decisions regarding its long-term survival.

- Start young with room leaders who complete certain daily tasks.
- Allow older students to participate in the creation of certain class rules.
- Research and institute a peer mediation program for solving classroom conflicts.
- Ask for suggestions when trying to improve certain activities or solve a problem.



Remember that young people are learning how to be useful members of the community. Check in with the students frequently to let them discuss successes or failures or ways to improve their level of involvement. Make sure the students' roles are actually useful and not meaningless. Take all of that useful youthful energy and harness it—your daily teaching experience will be richer for it.

### What's the Use of Feeling Useful?

What is the long-term cost to you if you have days that leave you wondering, "What did I *do* today? Who did I help? Did my showing up today even matter?" Mark Twain once said, "No one is truly useless in this world who lightens the burdens of

others.” How does carrying that thought into each day change your thinking about what you do with your time and talents?

This week, actively seek usefulness. The path toward usefulness is simple and direct:

1. Identify a need or question facing someone in your workplace or classroom.
2. Identify a practical and immediate response you can make to this need.
3. Make that response.
4. Repeat until it becomes a habit.

Let this be the week that propels you to never question your usefulness.

