

## Doing Things Right

Several years ago a group of forward thinking Abilene citizens formed a group called the Asset Building Coalition (ABC). This group presented information about the qualities needed in a community to nurture child development. The research used was based on the Search Institute's 40 developmental assets.

I am not aware of any quantitative data to support this project, but I conclude this project has had a positive impact on our children. A recent Facebook post would attest to this, "We served 200 pancakes to approximately 35 students today for free pancake Friday. Though others may see them in a different light, I must say, Abilene has some of the most polite, and well-behaved teenagers I have ever met. Everyone had fun, and filled their bellies.....and that's what it's all about". Thanks Sips Espresso Bar.

By focusing on and reinforcing positive behavior of children, this community and our schools have created a culture that produces some really great young people. People who carry out groceries with a smile and deliver meals to your car displaying great customer service.

Periodically reminding ourselves of the 40 developmental assets can continue to keep our culture healthy. A few of the assets are as follows:

*Community Values Children* – Young people are welcomed and included throughout the community life.

*Caring Neighborhood* – Young person experiences caring neighbors.

*Service to Others* – Young person has opportunities to serve in the community with adult support and approval.

*Neighborhood Boundaries* – Neighbors and friends' parents help monitor the child's behavior and provide feedback to the parent(s).

*Adult Role Models* – Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior and encourage the child to follow these examples.

*Youth Programs* – Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.

So next time you see a young person "doing things right," remind yourself this community has a history of pulling together for our children. It takes all of us to make Abilene a great place to raise a child.

(You can find a complete list of the 40 developmental assets on the Superintendent's webpage [www.abileneschools.org](http://www.abileneschools.org))