

# ideas for parents

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

### FAST FACTS

**ASSET #27:  
Equality and  
Social Justice**  
Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they place high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.

**52%**  
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. "Equality and social justice" is one of six positive-values assets.

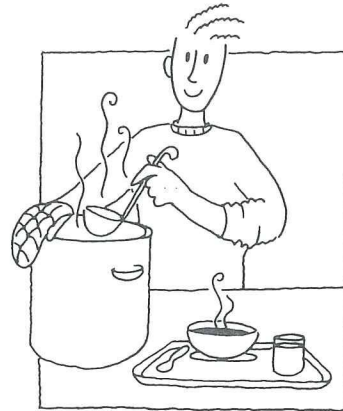
\* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

## A World Full of Care

**A**s we watch the images on television of people starving or suffering from a terrible injustice, the pictures may stir something within us. But that stirring can easily be lost once we turn off the television and walk away.

Kids who are concerned about equality and reducing hunger and poverty may or may not know what life is like for those who suffer from these conditions, but they do discover that it's a good idea to care for people—all people. They care about people they don't know, who live a world away and who may have many critical needs. They want to do something to make the world a better place.

Trevor Ferrell was 11 years old when he saw a news story about homeless people. That evening, he begged his parents to drive him to downtown Philadelphia to hand out blankets and pillows to people with no homes to go to.



The next night, he and his family delivered hot food to people in the same neighborhood. By the time he was 16, he and his family had

opened a 33-room shelter called "Trevor's Place," where homeless people could stay for a short time before eventually finding jobs and moving on to permanent housing.

"One person can make a difference," Ferrell says. "Just do what you can and follow your heart."

### Girls and Boys: Different Responses

Girls are much more willing than boys to promote equality and social justice, report researchers at Search Institute. Here are the percentages of boys and girls who say it is important to:



	Girls	Boys
Help reduce hunger and poverty in the world	60%	41%
Help make sure all people are treated fairly	80%	64%
Speak up for equality	81%	65%

### time together

Three ways your family can focus on equality and social justice:

1. As a family, discuss your views about equality and social justice. Choose one cause to follow and help.
2. Together, write a letter to the editor about a social issue that concerns you.
3. If you have experienced hardships such as being poor or going without food, tell your story. People will listen to those who speak from experience.

## Questions to Ask

One way to promote equality and social justice is by giving your time, money, or talent to an organization that seeks to reduce hunger, poverty, and injustice. Before you do, however, Louis L. Knowles, author of *Guide to World Hunger Organizations*, suggests you find out the answers to these questions:

1. What's the organization's purpose?
2. What type of action does the organization do?
3. Who's in charge?
4. How does the organization relate to people in need?
5. Where does the organization's money come from?
6. Where does the organization's money go?
7. Who decides which justice projects to do?

## More Help for Parents

*The Kids' Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose—and Turn Creative Thinking into Positive Action* by Barbara A. Lewis shows involved kids how to get results for their cause. (Published by Free Spirit.)

## Final Word

**"When one helps another, both gain strength."**

—Ecuadorian proverb

### Quick Tip:

Let your words and actions show that you care about those who suffer.

## talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- How do you feel when you are treated unfairly by others? Why?
- Which injustices in the world bother you most? Why?
- What can our family do about injustice, hunger, and poverty?