

Message to People from Distressed Communities

As noted in Search Institute's *The Possible Dream* (2000), "Research strongly suggests the power of neighborhoods to increase the likelihood that their young residents will grow up with the Developmental Assets they need to succeed." The key message, then, to people from distressed communities is that, indeed, they can make a difference. You can take an "assets" approach with this audience, i.e., help them to identify the strengths and resources they have, and work with them to focus those strengths and resources to build assets for and with their young people. Many families earning low incomes are working extremely hard and succeeding in giving their children every advantage they can. However, they're not accustomed to being appreciated for what they do and often may not even be aware of all the good things they're doing. Citing the asset approach, then, as identifying and building on strengths may resonate with this audience.

Messages specific to this audience:

- Families from distressed communities deserve credit for all their hard work and successes.
- Building assets doesn't require great amounts of money.
- Communities that work together toward a common good can achieve their goals.

Ways that members of this audience might help build assets:

- Identify effective organizations and institutions within their community that can take the lead in coordinating efforts to build assets.
- Establish safe spaces-parks, community centers, and so on-where people of all ages can gather to form positive connections with one another.
- Identify informal systems of support and be more intentional about how they help young people.