

### **Message to People in Law Enforcement**

A good way to show that police officers, for example, have something in common with the asset framework is to emphasize that building Developmental Assets with young people helps to protect them and therefore benefits the community in general. You can encourage people from law enforcement to see that focusing on building assets will make their jobs more pleasant: They won't always be thinking about taking care of something after it's too late to prevent, or interacting with young people only because they've done something wrong. The perspective of looking for what's right in young people (even the seemingly most "incorrigible" young people), as opposed to always focusing on what's gone wrong, can be both refreshing and challenging to those who work in law enforcement. In addition, building assets complements the work they do, from preventing crime to promoting restorative justice to community policing.

#### ***Messages specific to this audience:***

- Police officers are often very visible in their communities, and that gives them opportunities (through their attitudes and through their interactions with residents) to positively influence young people.
- People who work in juvenile justice have an opportunity to focus on young strengths as well as their deficits, which may give both the workers and the community they serve a more positive, optimistic attitude.
- People who work in law enforcement have opportunities to systematically adapt and promote a Developmental Assets philosophy, i.e., to focus on and draw other people's attention to young people's strengths.

#### ***Ways that members of this audience might help build assets:***

- When handling family disputes or arguments between people, encourage peaceful conflict resolution.
- Volunteer to visit a school to talk about safety and how everyone can contribute to a healthier, safer neighborhood climate.
- Work with families with teenagers to create "safe houses" that will host teenage parties where liquor will not be available or tolerated.
- Train resource officers in particular in how to have positive interactions and relationships with young people.
- Sponsor open intergenerational forums at which community members can share their thoughts on and experiences in the neighborhood with young people.