



NASP CHILDREN'S FUND, INC.

**c/o Philip B. Bowser, NCSP
1419 Valley View Drive N.W.
Roseburg, OR 97470**

Call for Youth Empowerment Mini-Grants

The *Children's Fund Inc.*, a charitable affiliate of the *National Association of School Psychologists*, announces a new program designed to support student-initiated projects. Based on the work of Peter Benson and the *Search Institute*, the *Children's Fund* will fund a limited number of projects that are created and implemented by youth to promote asset development.

Benson's research identified 40 "developmental assets[®]." These are relationships, opportunities, and values that youth experience in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods. Youth who possess 30 or more of these assets are highly likely to be successful and less at risk for making bad decisions. On the other hand, a higher risk for difficulty in life is associated with access to 10 or fewer assets. The *Children's Fund* believes that young people are acutely aware of the strengths and needs of their communities but may not have the resources or encouragement to effect change. The intent of the Mini-Grant Program is to empower youth to use their personal power to build better neighborhoods by giving them the means to design and implement ideas that will create access to assets.

How to Obtain a Grant

Young people can learn about Peter Benson's Developmental Assets by reading the enclosed list or by visiting the website of the *Search Institute* at www.search-institute.org. Then they would need to form a small group of people willing to work on a project that would be specifically linked to one or more of the 40 Assets. The project requires that youth generate the idea and implement the program, but adults can provide many kinds of support and encouragement. At the very least, young people will need to seek the sponsorship of adults for the financial aspects the project.

The next step is to complete the application form. The application is really simple. The students need to identify who is in the group, what problem they have noticed, what they plan to do, and which assets will be developed as a result. They also need to identify an adult who will act as the responsible fiscal agent for their group. This individual will ensure that the funds are spent in the manner described in the proposal. The responsible fiscal agent will also submit receipts from expenditures to the *Children's Fund* for accounting purposes. While no budget is necessary, the need for financial support should be evident from the project description. Grants for amounts up to and including \$500 will be considered.

Applications should be sent to the *Children's Fund Inc.* (see address below.) Two Trustees will review them and make the final decision. The Fund may request more information before deciding. Grants will be awarded throughout the year, so there is no application deadline. Send in the application when it is ready.

After the project is well underway, the group is required to send a follow up letter about how things are going. (Snapshots add interest to the report!) Although the *Children's Fund* can only contribute to a specific project once, the *Fund* will consider applications for new projects when groups can demonstrate success from previously funded efforts.

Obtain applications from and mail them to:

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EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

1. High school students were concerned that their elementary school libraries were lacking in books because of budget cuts. They interviewed teachers and librarians to create a list of great books. They negotiated with booksellers to get those books at a discount. When they delivered the books to the elementary school, they read the books to the children in a “Read-A-Thon” celebration. (This builds the “Reading for Pleasure” asset.)
2. Middle school students wanted to help “save the earth” by building and repairing trails through a national forest. They used their mini-grant funds for travel and food expenses, funding the rest of the project from a variety of sources. (This builds the “Sense of Purpose” & “Positive View of the Future” asset.)
4. Finding “nothing to do” in their small town, a group of high school students organized a series of “coffee house” events. Students took turns at the open microphone singing their songs, and reading their poetry. (This builds the “Youth Programs” and “Creative Activities” assets.)
5. Noticing that nobody used a playground because vandals destroyed the basketball poles, youth used their mini-grant funds to repair the backboards, hoops, and nets. Then they organized a series of 3-on-3 tournaments-complete with trophies! (This builds the “Caring Neighborhood” asset.)
6. Native American students compared their traditional beliefs to the 40 Developmental Assets. They developed a presentation that compared and contrasted the two. They gave their speech to local service clubs, school groups, and a state convention of tribes to show how different cultures can have similar core values. (This builds the “Cultural Competency” asset.)

GRANT PROCESS CHECKLIST

- Learn about the 40 Assets.
- Plan a way to increase the number of assets in your area.
- Get others to help you, including a “responsible fiscal agent.” This is a person, probably an adult, who you trust to hold the grant money, pay the bills on time, and send the receipts to the *NASP Children’s Fund*.
- Send an application to the *NASP Children’s Fund*.
- If your project is accepted, start to work your plan.
- As you spend money on your project, send the receipts to the *NASP Children’s Fund*.
- When you are done, send a short report to the *NASP Children’s Fund* to tell us how it all turned out. (We like to see your photos and hand-drawn illustrations, too!)
- Celebrate!