



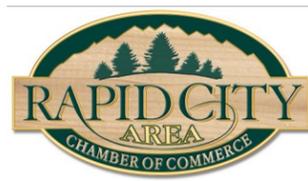
*We should view youth not as recipients of services but as citizens becoming more actively engaged and involved in the processes that affect them. Young people have unique perspectives, a new energy and individual strengths to make Rapid City a better city.*



## 2010-2011 Annual Report

*Rapid City's youth and adults:  
Building a thriving community together*

By supporting youth and providing them with leadership opportunities, the Rapid City Authentic Youth Civic Engagement is making long-term, meaningful change for Rapid City, South Dakota



**Gwendolyn L. Stearns  
Foundation**



## Why AYCE?

Young people want to be involved in matters that affect them. We must begin to systematically incorporate youth in ways that not only acknowledge them as citizens but provide them with opportunities for their active involvement.

Developmental Assets are 40 common sense, positive experiences and qualities that help influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults. The Developmental Assets framework has become one of the most widely used approach to positive youth development in the United States. Developmental assets include support, empowerment, constructive use of time, positive values, commitment to learning and social competencies among others. While there is no “magic number” of assets young people should have, our data indicate that 31 is a worthy, though challenging, benchmark for experiencing their positive effects most strongly. In January, 2010, 930 randomly selected young people in grades 6 – 12 were surveyed to determine how youth developmental assets tie to behavior.

Here’s what we learned:

- Youth with more developmental assets were much less likely to have used alcohol in the past month than youth with fewer assets.
- Almost half of Rapid City’s youth (46%) report having 0 – 20 developmental assets.
- Only 29% of youth believe that Rapid City’s adults value them and only 33% are given roles within the community

Involving our youth in our community, with their voice impacting and influencing outcomes, not only helps to develop better young citizens, it makes Rapid City a better community.



## What is AYCE?

In 2007, Rapid City created the Mayor’s Strengthening Families Task Force, which identified priority needs within the community. One of the top five needs demonstrated in the community was the need for more youth engagement. Authentic Youth Civic Engagement, AYCE, became one of the five committees within the Mayors’ Strengthening Families Task Force.



The AYCE organization is driven by a broad base of community leadership including representation from City government, the Rapid City Area Schools, law enforcement, local alcohol and drug prevention agencies, community Youth service agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, the John T. Vucurevich Foundation and youth. The development of AYCE has been guided by nationally recommended consultant Richard Goll, Onsite Insights in Hampton, Virginia. The AYCE committee members, the AYCE Core Committee, worked on three subcommittees, city, schools and community, to develop a strategic plan which incorporates authentic youth engagement throughout Rapid City.

Our mission statement is “Youth and adults building a thriving community together”

ACYE developed a focus on two initial goals – to educate the community on the value of our youth, and to build better opportunities for youth voices to be heard.

## The City Committee

“Youth and adult voices joined for a better Rapid City”

The City Committee has selected the following areas of focus because the youth would have the greatest potential to save the city money and resources, have the greatest impact on developing future leaders; and have the greatest likelihood of positively shifting how the city’s adult leaders view and value the youth in the community.

- Develop a working partnership with the Rapid City Police and Fire Departments
- Create a Youth Advisory Council to the Mayor and City Council
- Youth representation within the Central States Fair Board, Civic Center Board, Humane Society Board and City Parks and Recreation Board committees.



## The Schools Committee

“Empowering students to use their voice to impact their learning experience”

The Rapid City Area Schools have demonstrated their commitment to involve student input within the schools. This committee is working with School administration to incorporate the youth voice throughout the district. The youth in the schools committee are creating a structure in which the student voice will have impact within their school buildings and administration.

- The Student Councils are being reinvented. Their structure and goals will permit more students to participate in decisions impacting the education experience beyond activities.
- The high schools will have a Principal’s Advisory Group, students who will provide input and suggestions within their building.
- A group of students will represent their buildings as a part of a Key Communicators group who will provide input and work directly with the Superintendent.
- Students will advocate as representatives on various School Board subcommittees.



## The Community Committee

“Committed to strengthening a positive community, empowering youth and adults of all ages.”

The Community committee has 21 active member, 11 adults and 10 youth whose focus includes:

- Working with the United Way of the Black Hills to develop a Student United Way funding drive and to add youth representatives to the United Way board.
- The AYCE youth partnership with the United Way and its agencies includes brining awareness to youth about the United Way, the programs it supports, fundraising, fund allocation, and volunteering.
- Partnering with the SDSU Nursing students to develop awareness of the 211 helpline.
- Working with the Chamber of Commerce to form a Youth Advisory Committee who will develop a youth mapping process designed to illustrate our city and its resources from a young person’s perspective.
- Developing an initiative to encourage more of our city’s young people to return to the Rapid City area for their careers.

