Community Mapping for Youth!

This is a guide to use during the **investigation** stage of your service project planning to identify community assets and potential partners. In project planning, it is important to discover what skills students and community members can contribute and what resources already exist within the community. Students are encouraged to indentify resources, or assets, and brainstorm ways they can collaborate to achieve the goals of their project. For example, students may partner with a local park to plant a garden, learn about the environment or host a park clean-up day.

COMMUNITY MAPPING AND COMMUNITY ASSETS

Community Mapping refers to the process of collecting data that identifies assets, or resources, within a defined area. A **community asset** can be described as any resource that has the potential to improve the quality of community life. A person can be a community asset; every individual has their own set of skills, talents, and knowledge which can be leveraged in creative ways to meet the needs of the community. A physical structure or place such as a school, hospital, church, library, recreation center, or social club can be an asset. The groups of people that make up community organizations and institutions are valuable community assets.

Use this guide to help students identify the potential of community assets to improve the community. Through investigations, students will become familiar with the resources in their own neighborhoods!

ACTIVITY

This guide is intended as an activity guideline, and should be modified to meet your particular age group.

PURPOSE: Community mapping allows students to become familiar with the resources in their own neighborhood, and is an integral step to planning a service project. Students develop valuable research skills while identifying potential partners to collaborate with for future projects.

Objectives:

Students will:

▶ Discuss and define the term "community";

▶ Learn the definitions of asset, institution, organization and association;

▶ Create a list of community resources or assets in their neighborhood.

> **MATERIALS:**
>
> Whiteboard, chalkboard or large blank paper and markers
>
> Printed handout of page 3 and 4 of this document (at least one per group)

> **VOCABULARY WORDS:**
>
> ▪ Community: People with common interests living in a particular area (work with your students to create a more comprehensive definition).
>
> ▪ Asset: A resource that enhances a person's quality of life.
>
> ▪ Community Asset: A resource that has the potential to improve the quality of life within a community.
>
> ▪ Association: A group of individuals united around a common goal.
>
> ▪ Institution: An established organization, such as a park, library, police station, or hospital.

PROCEDURE:

▶ **INTRODUCTION:** Begin with a discussion of the term "community" as a class or in small groups. If working in small groups, have students share their definitions and come up with a single definition as a class.

▶ **LESSON**: Work with the students to define their community geographically. Once they have done so, introduce the concept of *community assets* (see description above). Have students brainstorm what community assets could look like and create a master list. Once you have a list, introduce the concept of *community asset mapping*, and define the vocabulary words. Have students work in small groups to complete the print-out by identifying associations, organizations and institutions in their community. They may use the phone book or the internet if access is available. Once they have identified assets in each category, have the students share what they have found and compile a master list.

▶ **CLOSING:** Brainstorm with the students how they might improve the community by partnering with the assets during a service project.

generationOn

LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS ARE COMMUNITY ASSETS

Associations and organizations are valuable community assets. An **association** is a group of citizens joined together around a common goal. *Examples: Neighborhood Crime Watch, Boys and Girls Scouts, Habitat for Humanity.*

Directions: *Identify what organizations and associations are present in your community:*

Organization Name	Description (What do they do?)	Contact Information
e.g. The Y (YM/YWCA)	e.g. The Y (YM/YWCA)	Address, Phone, Email

generationOn

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS ARE COMMUNITY ASSETS

Institutions are established organizations. They can be public, private or nonprofit and can include local businesses, schools, parks, libraries, police stations, social service agencies, community colleges and hospitals.

Directions: *List institutions in your community:*

Type of Institution	In Your Neighborhood
Parks	*e.g. Maria Hernandez Park*
Libraries	
Hospitals	
Schools	
Community Colleges	
Police	

generationOn