

# YOUTH AS ASSET

*Dr. Jody Kretzmann's*

## **“10 COMMANDMENTS” FOR INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES**

1. Always start with the gifts, talents, knowledge and skills of young people. Find out what they like to do and are good at doing.
2. Always look for the positive in the unique individual. For example, it should be, “Maria with the lovely voice,” not, “Maria the pregnant teen.”
3. Every community is filled with useful work and service opportunities for young people. The corollary of this is that there is no community, institution or organization that cannot find a useful role for a young person.
4. Always distinguish between real work and games or simulations, because young people can.
5. Fight age segregation. Youth today are the most age-isolated generation in our history, to everyone's detriment.
6. Avoid aggregating people, especially young people, by what they don't have. Too often, we group people by their deficiencies instead of letting those who can help those who can't.
7. Move as quickly as possible beyond “youth advisory boards” or committees with only one youth on them.
8. Constantly cultivate opportunities for young people to teach and lead.
9. Constantly reward and celebrate creativity, energy and effort – loudly and with spirit. Whenever possible, let young people take the lead in the form the celebration will take.
10. Amplify continuously “we need you.” Young people are not a problem, they are our solution.

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