

Teens, the Environmental Movement, and Libraries

Teens have often been a driving force for social change, marching in protests, staging sit ins, or creating or joining groups in the pursuit of a larger social movement. Doing so allows them to feel a sense of inclusion; that they are part of something bigger and that their actions matter. Strandbu and Krange have proven that "...young people from highly educated groups, especially from 'non-productive' sectors of the economy (public services, teaching, etc.), are found to have a relatively strong affinity to the environmental movement" (Strandbu & Krange, 2003).

A prominent cause for the last several decades, the environmental movement is even more in the news lately, and teens are anxious to get involved and do their part. Some examples of how teens are getting involved and contributing to the movement (*Teens Going Green*) are featured throughout this issue of *YA Hotline*.

The value of teens becoming part of this movement is evidenced in the display and attainment of several of the External and Internal Assets as outlined by the Search Institute in their *40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents*. In the former category, teens achieve, at the very least, a feeling of empowerment and the opportunity to use their time constructively. Within the latter category, teens develop positive values, and a sense of purpose (Search Institute, 2006).

In a paper on *Youth Civic Development*, the authors reiterate the value of teen social involvement and development and write that "...civic attachment implies a feeling that one matters, has a voice and a stake in public affairs, and thus wants to be a contributing member of the community" (Flanagan, Faison, 2001). To that end, they continue, "There is a pivotal role for adults who work with young people ..." and "public programs [should] provide all young people with practice in working as teams toward mutually defined goals..." (ibid).

In this issue of *YA Hotline*, you will find options for programming, title suggestions and web resources to share with your teens who are interested in the environmental movement.

References

- Flanagan, C.A., Faison, N. (2001). Youth civic development: implications of research for social policy and programs. *Social Policy Report: Giving Child and Youth Development Knowledge Away*, 15, 1.
- Search Institute. (2006). *40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents (ages 12-18)*. <http://www.search-institute.org/system/files/40AssetsList.pdf>
- Strandbu, A., Krange, O. (2003). Youth and the environmental movement - symbolic inclusions and exclusions. *The Sociological Review*, 51, 2, 177.

