

Free to Be Addresses Developmental Assets

EXTERNAL ASSETS

- **Free to Be Provides Support**

By providing support for the choice of sexual abstinence and positive role modeling, Free to Be offers the youth of our community a climate that encourages healthy decisions. Parents are empowered to talk with their children and are more equipped to provide the support and positive communication their children will need to navigate the sometimes rough waters of adolescence. Our committed, caring staff members all spend quality time interacting with our volunteer youth in various settings. Our volunteer youth are given the opportunity to work side by side with various teachers in Sonoma County to more effectively reach other students.

- **Free to Be Empowers**

Our volunteer youth are the “heroes” of our program. Teachers, principals, youth group leaders, Free to Be staff members, as well as their peers all give on-going support to our youth volunteers for the positive influence they have on the youth of Sonoma County. We are an exclusively peer-to-peer program. Our adult staff trains, moderates, and mentors our youth volunteers, but it is our peer educators who inform and educate others, each contributing between 25-60 hours per school year in service.

- **Free to Be Encourages Boundaries and Expectations**

Parents are given the resources and knowledge to establish healthy boundaries and expectations for their children through parent education. Our youth volunteers are exposed to Free to Be’s positive, responsible staff members as well as other Free to Be volunteer teens who are making healthy choices through presentations, socials, and educational workshops. Each peer educator signs a “role model” agreement before they speak for us, clearly defining expectations.

- **Free to Be Provides Constructive Use of Time**

Volunteer youth use their time wisely and constructively through their involvement in Free to Be presentations, socials, and educational workshops.

INTERNAL ASSETS

- **Free to Be Values a Commitment to Learning**

In order for youth to be given the opportunity to speak for us they must first show they can maintain a 3.0 GPA. Our staff encourages school involvement and participation as an avenue for building self-esteem and becoming better role models.

- **Free to Be Promotes Positive Values**

Youth volunteers are encouraged to help others, promote equality, act on their convictions, stand up for their beliefs, “tell the truth even when it’s not easy,” take personal responsibility, and refrain from using alcohol and other drugs, or from being sexually active.

- **Free to Be Promotes Social Competencies**

Youth volunteers are encouraged to plan ahead in order to maintain their school success while participating as peer educators in our program. They cultivate empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills through our training process, while speaking to a wide variety of teens, and while interacting with our diverse Peer Educator base. Our Bilingual Component brings together youth with various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds so our peer educators have a more well-rounded experience. Our youth receive comprehensive training and support in resisting peer, social, and internal pressure.

- **Free to Be Promotes Positive Identity**

Youth volunteers build a sense of personal power as they are challenged to make the healthiest decisions, which are not necessarily the easiest. Volunteering for Free to Be gives our peer educators a sense of purpose and self-worth and reinforces the respect they have for themselves. Our youth consistently get the message that healthy and fulfilling lives in the future come from the good decisions they make today.