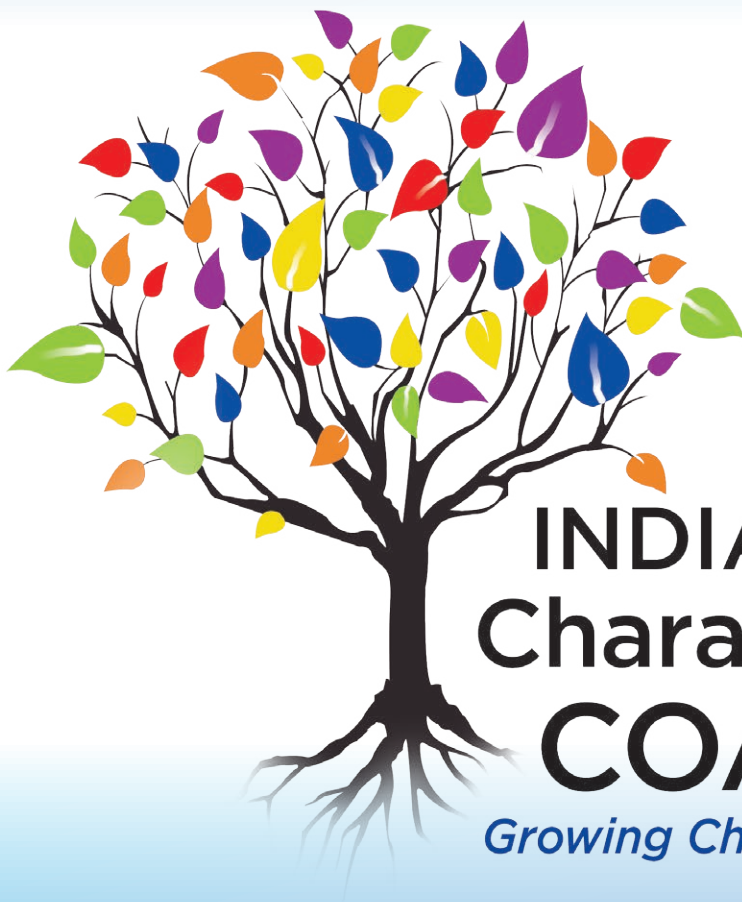


# 2016 STUDENT SUPPORT CARD



## INDIAN VALLEY Character Counts! COALITION

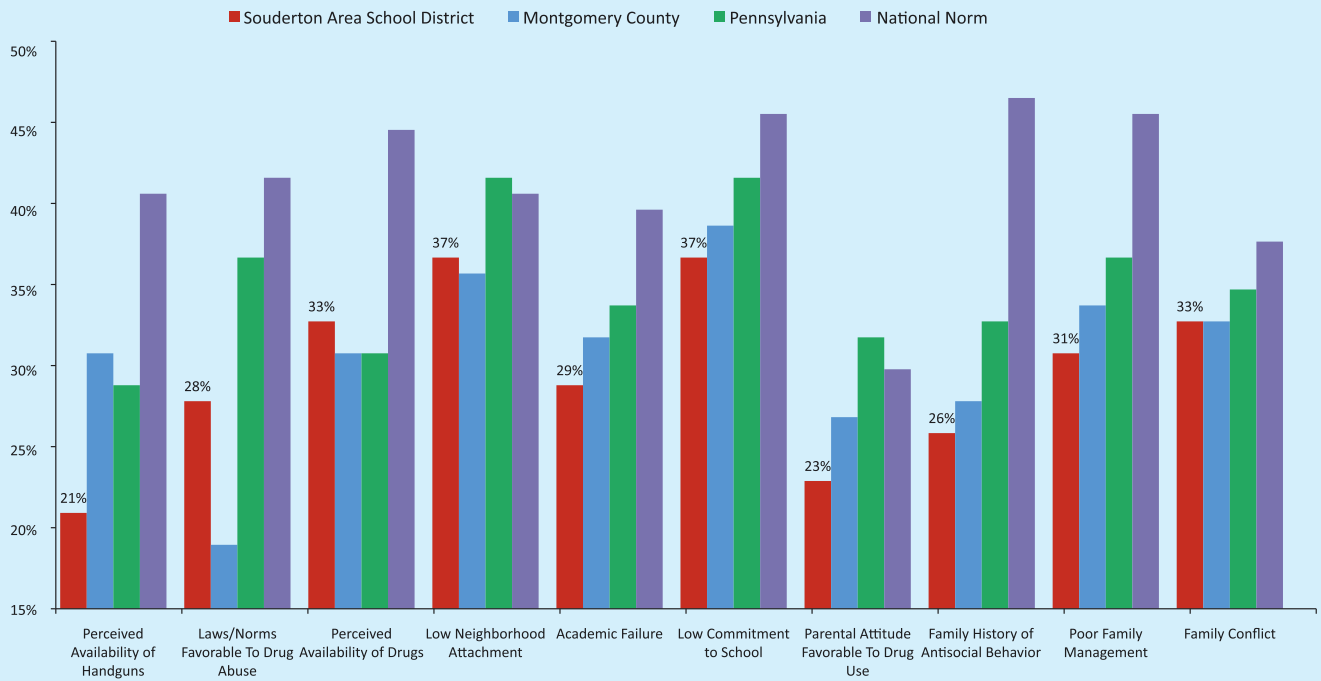
*Growing Character in the Community*

A survey of 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade secondary students from the Indian Valley community in Montgomery County.

**PREVENTION IS A SCIENCE.** The Risk and Protective Factor Model of Prevention is a proven way of reducing substance abuse and its related consequence.

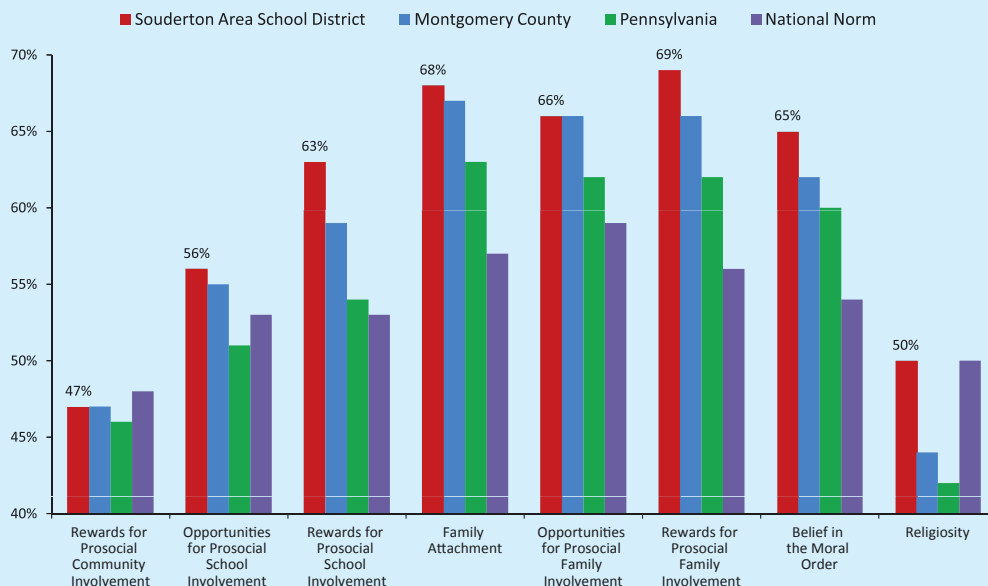
This model is based on the simple premise that to prevent a problem from happening, we need to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce the risks. Just as medical researchers have found risk factors for heart disease such as diets high in fat, lack of exercise, and smoking, a team of researchers at the University of Washington have defined a set of risk factors for youth problem behaviors.

**RISK FACTORS** are characteristics of community, family, and school environments which are known to predict increased likelihood of drug use, delinquency, school dropout, and violent behaviors among youth.



**PROTECTIVE FACTORS** exert a positive influence and buffer against the negative influence of risk, thus reducing the likelihood that adolescents will engage in problem behaviors.

The charts below depict the risk and protective factors possessed by adolescents in the Indian Valley as compared to others in Montgomery County, across the state, and throughout the nation.



# COALITION PRIORITIES

The Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition has identified two key priorities based on results of the PAYS and 40 Assets surveys

## MENTAL HEALTH\*

Important mental health habits including coping, resilience, and good judgement help adolescents to achieve overall well-being and set the stage for positive mental health in adulthood. Resilient adolescents are those who have managed to cope effectively, even in the face of stress and other difficult circumstances, and are poised to enter adulthood with a good chance of positive mental health.

The “Pennsylvania Youth Survey” or “PAYS” has provided the following data for our consideration:

Just as depression is the number one risk factor for suicide for teens (a risk amplified in teens self-medicating with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs), other factors can and will predict the likelihood of these undesirable behaviors. Family conflict, poor family management, and academic failures are also strong risk factors to consider when looking for indicators for potential depressive behaviors. Young people who are depressed are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and are more likely to use drugs. Additionally, survey research and other studies have shown a link between depression and other youth problem behaviors.

### WHAT YOUTH ARE TELLING US

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS** which buffer youth against mental health problems

- Opportunities and rewards for prosocial involvement
- Family attachment

- 32% of students reported feeling sad or depressed on most days in the prior 12 months
- 33% of students reported that “at times, I feel no good at all”
- 24% of 10th graders and 21% of 12th graders reported engaging in self-harm (cutting, scraping, burning) in the prior 12 months
- 11% of students surveyed had considered suicide, and 6% had attempted suicide

**RISK FACTORS** which increase the likelihood of youth mental health problems

- Family history of antisocial behavior
- Poor family management
- Family conflict
- Academic failure

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE\*

Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana are the drugs first and most commonly abused by youth. Because these drugs generally enjoy more social acceptability, their use may normalize the larger idea of drug use as acceptable. Another potential risk is their use may “prime” the brain for addiction to other substances.

Young people who do not feel part of society, are not bound by rules, don’t believe in trying to be successful or responsible, or who take an active rebellious stance toward society, are at a higher risk of abusing drugs. Young people who not perceive drug use to be risky are far more likely to engage in drug use. When young people are given more opportunities to participate meaningfully in important activities in school and community, they are less likely to engage in drug use.

### WHAT YOUTH ARE TELLING US

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS** which buffer youth against substance abuse

- Opportunities and Rewards for prosocial involvement
- Belief in the moral order
- Family attachment and religiosity

- 20% of 10th graders and 37% of 12th graders reported using alcohol in the prior 30 days, with 14% of 12th graders reporting binge drinking in the prior two weeks
- 15% of 10th graders and 25% of 12th graders reported using marijuana in the prior 30 days, with 15% of 12th graders reporting driving after marijuana use
- 13% of 10th graders, 21% of 10th graders, and 35% of 12th graders reported using e-cigarettes/”vaping” in the prior 30 days

**RISK FACTORS** which increase the likelihood of youth against substance abuse

- Perceived availability of drugs and perceived risk of drug use
- Attitudes favorable toward antisocial behavior and drug use
- Poor family management or family history of antisocial behavior

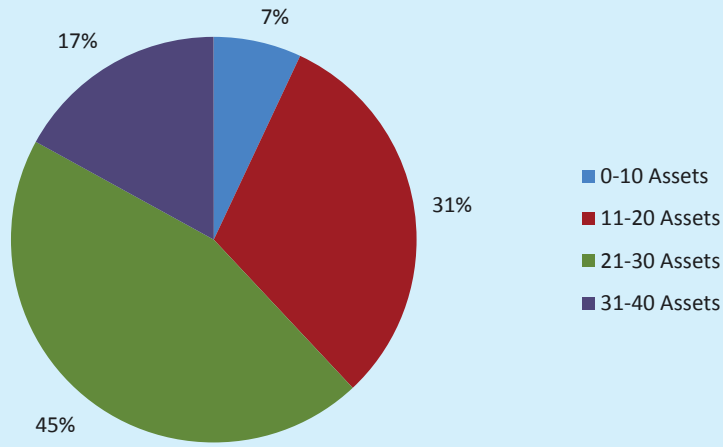
\*Source: 2015 Pennsylvania Youth Survey Report– Souderton Area School District

## → REASONS TO CELEBRATE

- The average number of developmental assets reported by our youth was 22.5 assets out of 40, with 61% of youth with more than 20 assets in place in their life. In 2009, this average number of assets was 19.3 assets and only 43% of youth possessed more than 20 assets. This is an important priority of the Coalition. (40 assets)
- 74% of our youth reported that they have an optimistic view of their futures (40 assets)
- Our youth value integrity, honesty and responsibility in their lives and in others. These assets were reported as 80%, 75% and 76% respectively. (40 assets)
- A majority of the youth surveyed do not regularly drink alcohol, use tobacco, abuse prescription drugs, or use marijuana (79%, 93%, 96%, and 88% respectively – in a prior 30-day period) (40 assets)
- 82% of all youth surveyed reported that they had never had sexual intercourse. (40 assets)
- Only 11% of our students report that it would be easy to get a handgun. (PAYS)
- 91% of youth report family rules are clear and 95% report that parents know “where I am and who I am with” (PAYS)

## → REASONS TO STAY CONNECTED

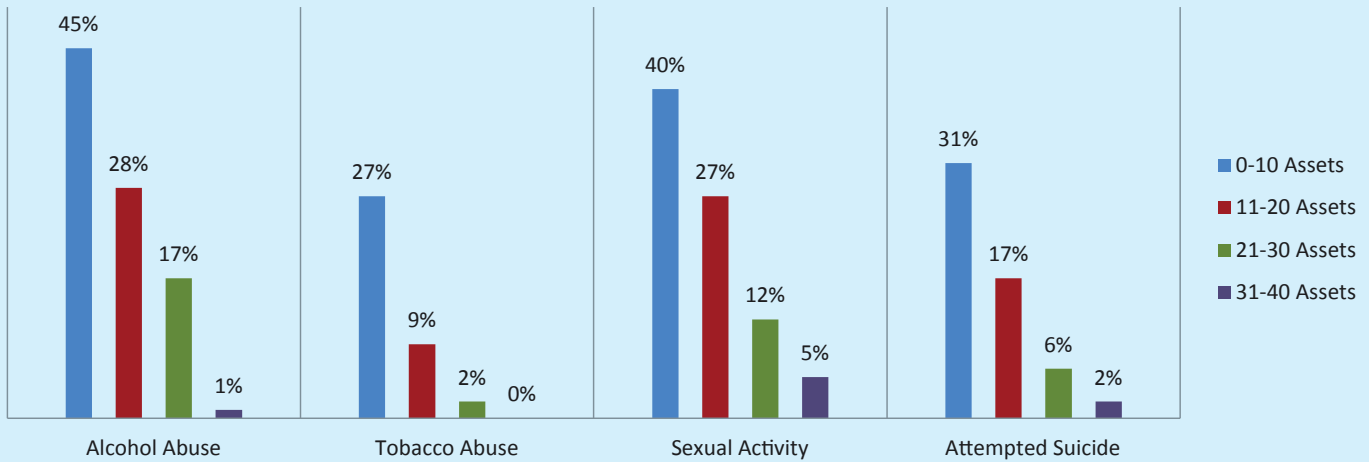
- In the past 12 months, 22% of our youth have ridden in a car whose driver had been drinking. (40 assets)
- 57% of our youth reported they aren't sure or disagree that there are people who care about them in their neighborhood. (40 assets)
- 13 % of our youth reported they have hit or beat up someone. (40 assets)
- In the past 12 months, 36% of our youth have been to a party where other kids their age were drinking. (40 assets)
- Only 43% of our youth perceive that adults in our community value youth. (40 assets)
- Of those students that have reported taking prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them in the past 12 months, a majority took them from a family member living with them (67% of 6th and 8th graders) or a family member gave the drugs to them (75% of 12th graders). (PAYS)
- Perception of risk for use of marijuana (only 50% believe it is harmful) is significantly lower than the perception of harm for use of tobacco (87%), alcohol (75%) and prescription drugs not prescribed to them (89%). (PAYS)
- 73% of 12th graders report it is easy to get beer, wine or hard liquor. Many say that friends and family get it for them. Also, 82% report that they would not be caught by the police for drinking. (PAYS)
- \* **Although taking drugs at any age can lead to addiction, research shows that the earlier a person begins to use drugs the more likely they are to progress to more serious abuse. This may reflect the harmful effects that drugs can have on the developing brain. Additionally, teens who drink before age 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who began drinking at age 21.**



**Current Level of Assets 2016**

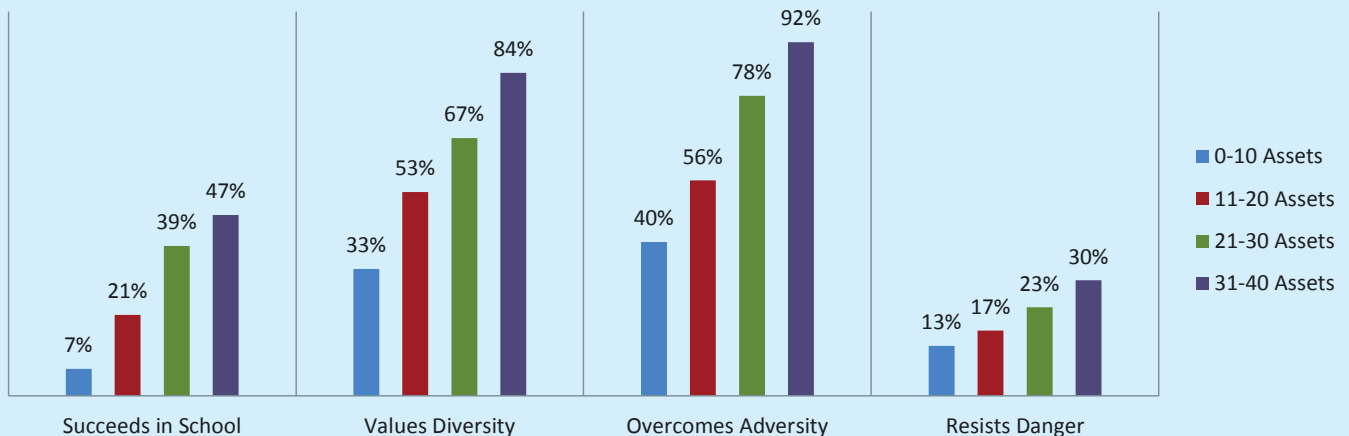
### More Assets = Fewer Risk Behaviors

Assets have the power to protect youth from harmful and unhealthy choices. The charts below show how youth in the Indian Valley with the most asset are least likely to engage in these risk behaviors.



### More Assets = More Thriving Behaviors

In addition to protecting youth from high risk behaviors, having more assets increases the chances that young people will have positive attitudes and behaviors as shown in the charts below.



# 2016 STUDENT SUPPORT CARD

## What is the Indian Valley Student Support Card (IVSSC)?

First, a few points on what it is not: The IVSSC does not measure proficiency in reading, writing, or mathematics. The IVSSC does not measure SAT scores or Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores. Instead, it measures the quality and the quantity of support that young people feel in their lives. The data contained in the IVSSC is derived from two individual surveys. The first set of data is obtained from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS). Since 1989, the Commonwealth has conducted the PAYS survey of school students in the 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades to learn about their behavior, attitudes and knowledge concerning alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and violence. The PAYS, is sponsored and conducted every two years by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The second set of data was obtained from the "Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors." Search Institute, a research organization based in Minneapolis, MN, developed the survey instrument and coined the term "Developmental Assets."

The Search Institute surveys measure social and emotional health and tell us how much external support youth feel from their school, family, faith community, and community at large. Also measured are internal strengths such as character and personality traits that compel each student to make positive, healthy decisions. The PAYS survey provides critical information concerning the changes in the patterns of the use and abuse of harmful substances and behaviors, the risk factors that are related to these behaviors, and the protective factors that help guard against them. Data from the two surveys has been overlaid and assessed to provide an accurate snapshot of adolescents in the Indian Valley.

The IVSSC gives each teacher, youth program professional, parent, guardian, neighbor, and public official a tool to understand what kinds of support young people need to be successful and is helpful in directing prevention resources to areas where they are likely to have the greatest impact.

## Why is this important?

The IVSSC shows the level of Developmental Assets our youth have and the relationship and correlation between asset levels and risk behaviors and protective behaviors. The IVSSC shows that we all (i.e. parents, extended family, community members, schools, faith community leaders, neighbors, coaches, business leaders, etc.) can impact the levels of assets possessed by youth and can increase the protective factors that decrease risky behaviors in our youth. For too long, focus has been put upon educational organizations and other professionals to "fix" the problems experienced by many youth. While school districts are being held accountable for increasing challenging academic benchmarks mandated by the state and federal governments, the IVSSC tracks the progress we are making in regards to a young person's social and emotional health. We know that academic achievement increases if a student's social and emotional life is healthy. Schools cannot do this alone. We all must do our part to ensure that young people are ready for school and are supported in making the right choices. The research is clear, and has finally confirmed what we have known all along, KIDS NEED US –ALL OF US.

## What to do?

Consider getting involved with the Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition (IVCCC). Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 12:00PM at the Souderton Area School District Office. You can also do your part by intentionally establishing more relationships with young people in and around your life. Share with them the facts you learned by reading the IVSSC. Ultimately, the name of the game is RELATIONSHIPS.

**IVCCC Mission Statement:** To promote positive youth development by providing information, supporting programs and strengthening community relationships that promote the principle of Character Counts! and that build assets to help youth stay healthy safe and drug-free.

**Executive Committee:** Dr. Christopher Hey, Donna O'Hara, James Brophy, Janet Raslowsky, Betty Linko

**Community Mobilizer:** DonnaLea Pyrz; Volunteer Project Coordinator: Karen Schulte  
Indian Valley Character Counts Coalition-215-723-3569, ext. 116

**Thank you to our supporters:** Belmont Behavior Hospital, Clemens Food Group LLC, Faith Bible Fellowship Church, Rotary Club of Harleysville, Souderton Area School District, Souderton-Telford Rotary Club, North Penn YMCA, Univest Bank-Banking, Insurance, Investments and the Harleysville Jaycees