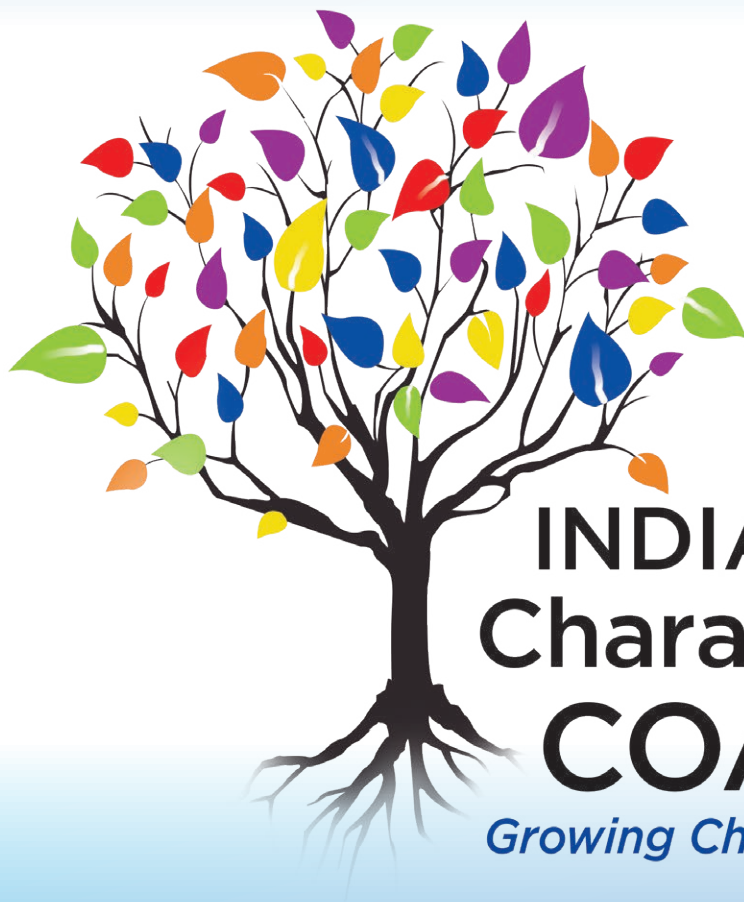


# 2018 STUDENT SUPPORT CARD



## INDIAN VALLEY Character Counts! COALITION

*Growing Character in the Community*

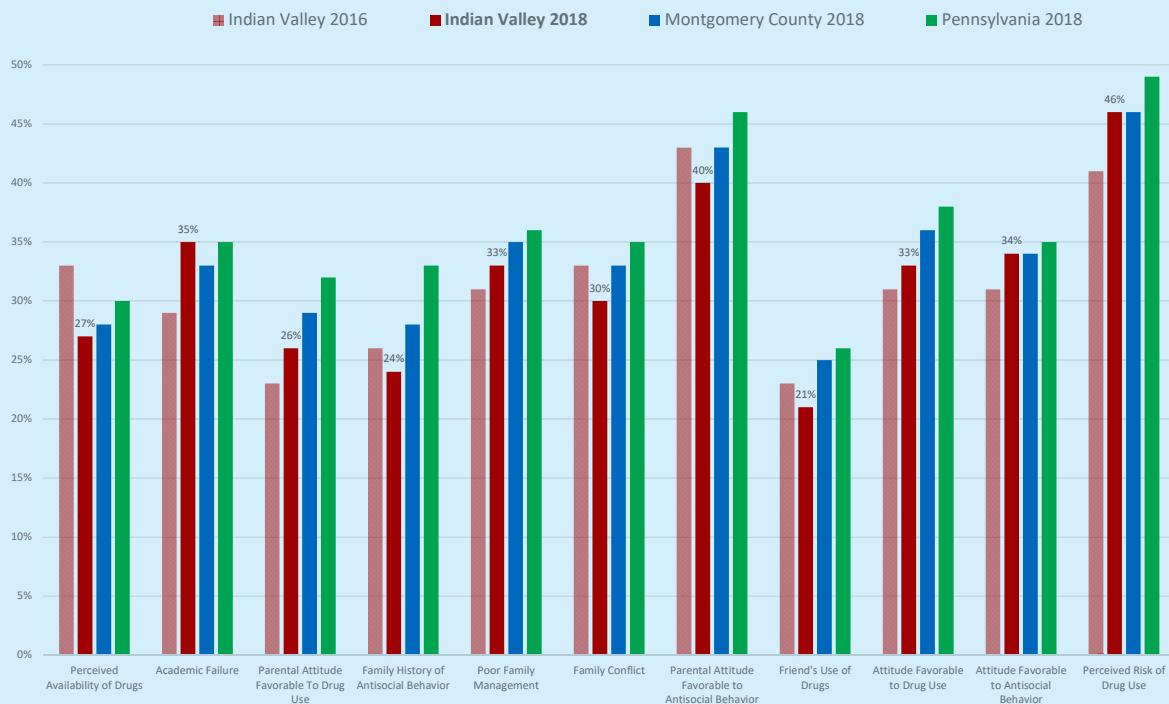
A survey of 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade secondary students  
from the Indian Valley community in Montgomery County.

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

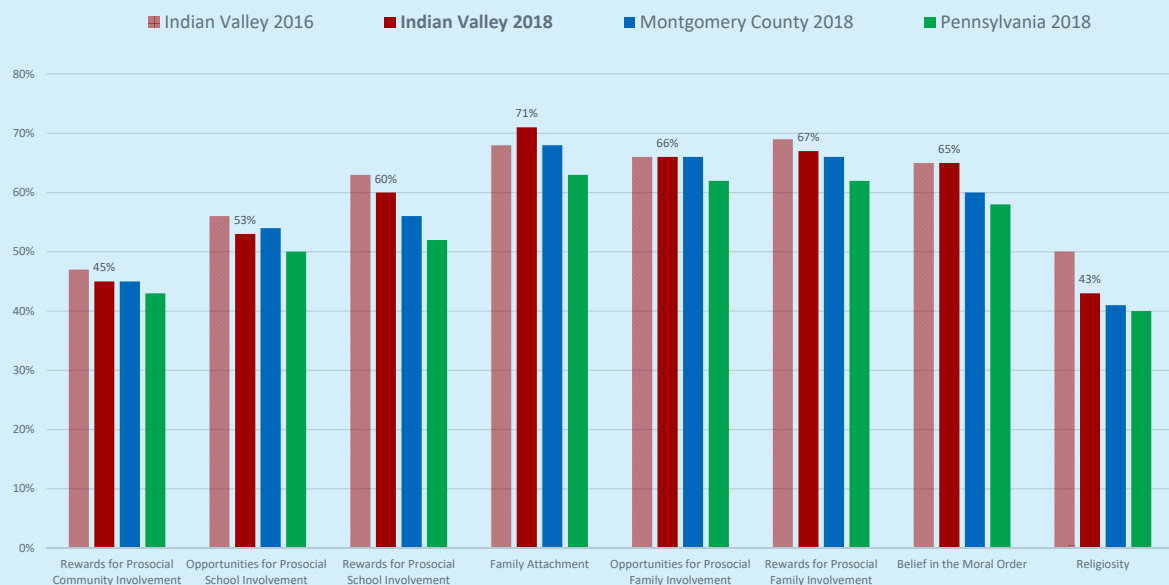
This model is based on the simple premise that to prevent a problem from happening, we need to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce the risks. Just as medical researchers have found risk factors for heart disease such as diets high in fat,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

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

**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.



# 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.

### BEHAVIORS: WHAT YOUTH ARE TELLING US

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS** The positive influences that buffer youth against mental health problems

- Opportunities and rewards for prosocial involvement
- Family attachment

- When asked if they "felt depressed or sad most days," 32% of students agreed
- 30% of students reported that "at times, I feel no good at all" and 16% reported "all in all, I'm inclined to think I am a failure"
- 15% of students surveyed had considered suicide, and 20% agreed with the statement "sometimes I think that life isn't worth it"

**PRIORITY RISK FACTORS** These are the risk factors that are known to predict 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 do 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.

### BEHAVIORS: WHAT YOUTH ARE TELLING US

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS** The positive influences that buffer youth against substance abuse

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

- 17% of 10th graders and 42% of 12th graders reported using alcohol in the prior 30 days, with 10% of 12th graders reporting driving under the influence
- 10% of 10th graders and 25% of 12th graders reported using marijuana in the prior 30 days. 16.7 of the district's 12 graders reported driving under the influence of marijuana
- 24% of 10th graders, 36% of 12th graders reported using e-cigarettes/"vaping" in the last 30 days; additionally, the use of nicotine in the vaporizers is up 18% since 2015.

**PRIORITY RISK FACTORS** These are the risk factors that are known to predict the likelihood 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

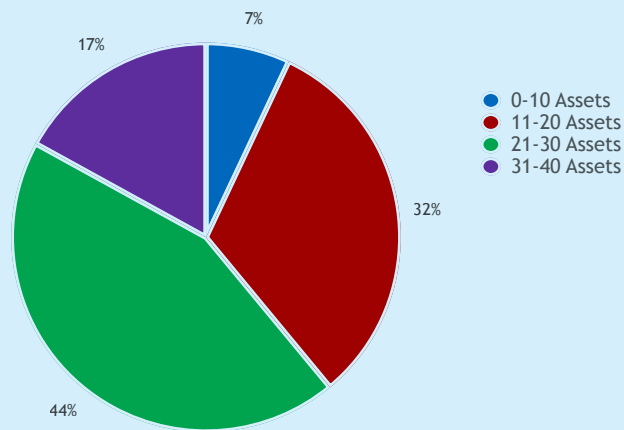
## → REASONS TO CELEBRATE

- 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 lives. In 2009, area youth possessed an average number of 19.3 assets and only 43% of youth possessed more than 20 assets. (40 assets)
- 66% of students have 3 or more protective factors in place in their lives, and only 37% of students have a significant number of risk factors in their lives (5 or more for 6th and 8th graders, 7 or more for 10th and 12th graders, approx.). (PAYS)
- We are making progress as a community. Since 2009, 31 of the 40 developmental assets have increased in the youth of our community. (40 assets)
- 90% of youth say family rules are clear and 94% report that parents “know where I am and who I am with.” (PAYS)
- A majority of our students report that they have not been bullied, and 73% report that adults at school work to stop bullying when they are aware of it. (PAYS)
- A majority of the youth surveyed do not regularly drink alcohol, use tobacco, abuse prescription drugs, or use marijuana (77%, 96%, 98%, and 87% respectively – in a prior 30-day period). (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. In 2009, these were 71% 68%, and 64%, respectively. (40 assets)
- 71% of students reported strong family attachment. (PAYS)

## → REASONS TO STAY CONNECTED

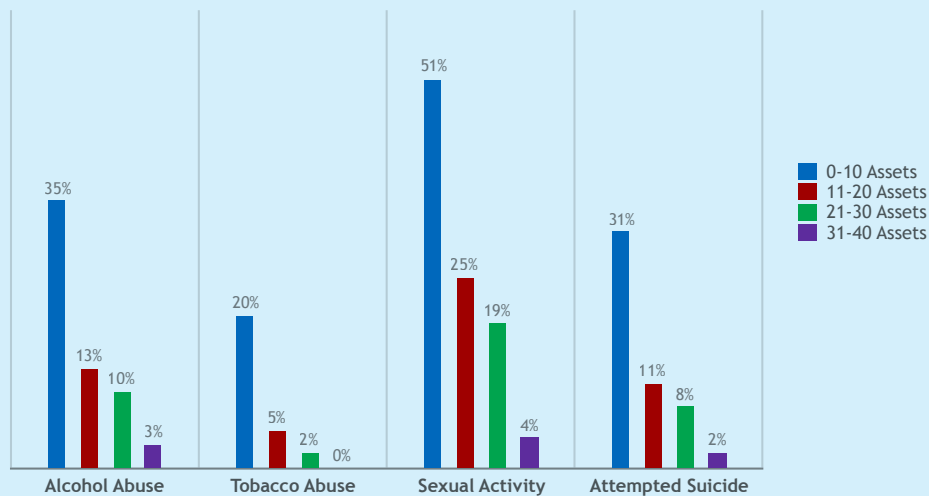
- Only 29% of our youth perceive that adults in our community value youth. (40 assets)
- “Vaping” is increasing rapidly amongst area youth, with 37% of seniors reporting vaping within the prior 30 days.
- 25% of 12th graders report using marijuana in the past 30 days and 17% drove after marijuana use in the past year. (PAYS).
- In general, there is an increase in depression and suicidal thoughts and attempts. 15% of 8th graders report self-harm behaviors and 19% have considered suicide. (PAYS)
- 68% 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)
- 26% of 10th graders and 37% of 12th graders reported using e-cigarettes or vaping in the last 30 days, over 20% higher than the national average. (PAYS)
- During the past 30 days, 23% of 12th graders and 10% of 10th graders have used marijuana. (40 assets)
- In the past 12 months, 32% of our youth have been to a party where other kids their age were drinking. (40 assets)
- Perception of risk for use of marijuana (only 47% believe it is harmful) is significantly lower than the perception of harm for use of tobacco (81%), alcohol (70%) and prescription drugs not prescribed to them (84%). (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.

## 40 Assets Data - Assets Possessed by Indian Valley Youth 2018



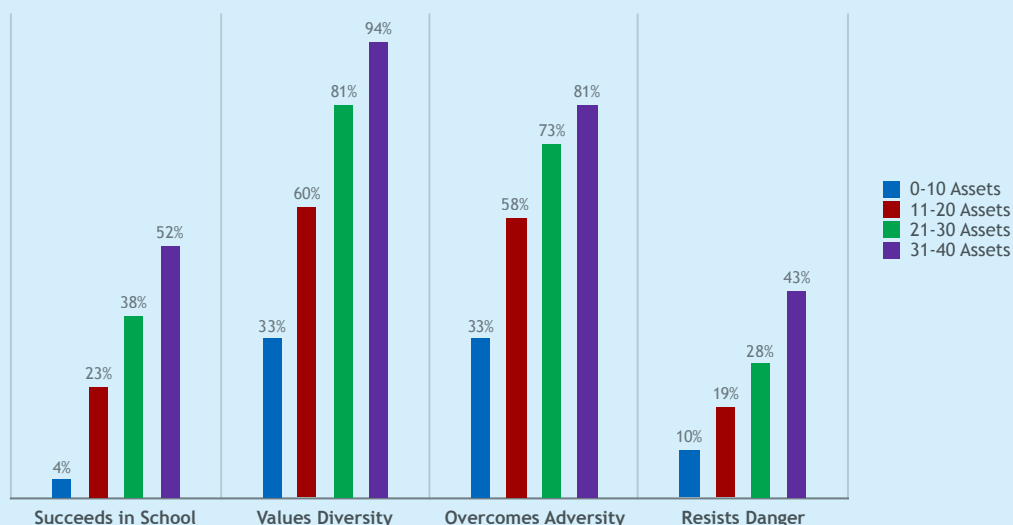
### More Assets = Fewer Risk Behaviors

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 assets are least likely to engage in these risk behaviors



### More Assets = More Thriving 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 assets are least likely to engage in these risk behaviors.



# 2018 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. 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). 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 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 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. 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 is the Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition doing?

The Coalition's work is focused on prevention. By building awareness amongst key community stakeholders, looking closely at data, and sponsoring evidence-based programs, the Coalition endeavors to delay or prevent the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by youngsters in our community. In recent months, the Coalition has been instrumental in bringing a number of programs to community youth, including Strengthening Families, Second Step, and Signs of Suicide. The Coalition's Community Action Plan will soon be released providing more information about its goals and future programming. For more information on evidence-based programs, readers can visit [blueprintsprograms.com](http://blueprintsprograms.com)

## What can you do?

Consider getting involved with the Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition. Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at noon 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, Janet Raslowsky, Kelly Maloney, Betty Linko

**Community Mobilizer:** DonnaLea Pyrz; Volunteer Project Coordinator: Karen Schulte

**Thank you to our local partners:** Harleysville Jaycees, Abington Hospital Jefferson Health, Faith Bible Fellowship Church, Rotary Club of Harleysville, Souderton Area School District, North Penn YMCA, K. J. Door Services, Inc., Harleysville Bank, Souderton-Telford Rotary, LCBC Church Branch Creek Campus, Godshall'S Quality Meats and The Weimer Group.

**SUPPORTED BY:  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT  
OF THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL'S  
PREVENTION PROJECT**