

# Asset Development Theory Drives Core Life



## Research Foundation for Core Life

Core Life has its theoretical foundation from the research conducted by the Search Institute. Connections to the Search Institute’s 40 “Developmental Assets” are outlined below.

**Support** – The Parent “Fridge Friendly” cards in Core Life encourages stronger parental/child connections by suggesting activities for dining, playing, and volunteering together. In addition, teachers and other school personnel are encouraged to incorporate activities that build a supportive school climate through such activities as greeting each child at the door when they come each morning, acknowledging good work or good behavior when observed, and other “kernels” of prevention as described by Dr. Dennis Embry. And, the community around the school is encouraged to reinforce the message in the themes being studied, giving coupons and other rewards for parents/students, and providing more family/youth friendly positive activities.

**Empowerment:** One of the themes in the Core Life series is volunteering. Children with their parents are encouraged to “make a difference” in their community (school and surrounding).

**Boundaries and Expectations:** One of the themes in the Core Life series is about rules and boundaries. The parent tips sent home explain the importance of family boundaries. All adults involved in the program are reminded of their important role as a role model. Youth mentors from the high school are encouraged to participate as reading partners and positive role models about the themes of the program.

**Constructive Use of Time:** The parent tips (fridge friendly cards) include creative activities and constructive use of time at home and in the community. Literacy is encouraged through the local libraries (they are engaged as a community partner in the Core Life implementation).

**Commitment to Learning:** Reading for pleasure is encouraged through the distribution of donated books to all the families. Parents are being encouraged to engage in parent led teams to enhance their child’s learning environment.

**Positive Values:** This is the category of assets that is most closely aligned to the Core Life program. Caring (empathy), equality and social justice (tolerance), integrity, empathy, responsibility, and restraint (moderation) are all themes of the Core Life program.

**Social Competencies:** Addressed in the Core Life themes of Setting Goals, Empathy, Respect, Tolerance, and Healthy Living.

**Positive Identity:** The Core Life theme of Optimism addresses this category. Activities are woven into the parent fridge friendly card for the reinforcement of a positive outlook on the future as well as school activities.

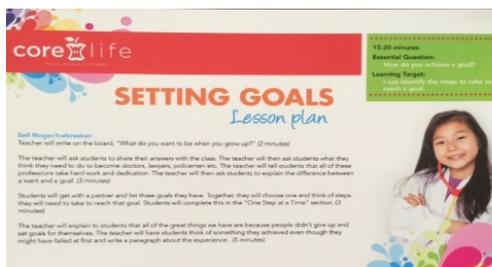
## Program Design and Implementation

- The program was designed as a program to integrate character development into the academic curriculum.
- The program was created by educational professionals who used “asset development” as the conceptual framework for the program.
- The program is considered theory-informed but draws from the research of “developmental assets.”
- The program was named “Core Life” and addressed 15 character traits essential to happy, healthy, and successful lives: respect, responsibility, rules, goals, volunteering, empathy, gratitude, tolerance, healthy living, moderation, honesty, wisdom, optimism, perseverance, and courtesy
- A major goal of the program was to help create a school culture conducive to learning.
- The initial pilot studies were conducted in third and fourth grades.
- Initial data revealed the program significantly impacted individual behaviors. (See the evaluation section for more information.)

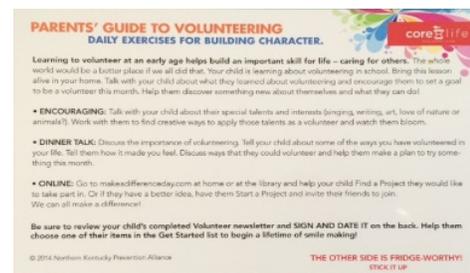
## Primary Program Components

- Beautifully designed, educationally sound, and community-friendly teaching/learning materials were developed.
- Learning materials included: teacher lesson plan, student activity leaflet, and a parent card for each trait.
- Incentives for promoting the character concepts were Core Life t-shirts, pencils, water bottles, etc.

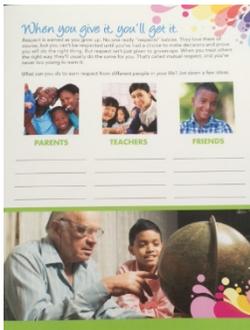
### *Teacher Lesson Plan*



### *Parent Card*



### *Student Leaflet (Pages 1-4)*



## Relevancy of the Program

- Reinforces Kentucky Academic Standards.
- Addresses the child holistically
- Develops students who enrich and enhance the school culture.
- Develops the personal traits of lifelong learners.