



Building Life Skills

April
Citizenship

Young people are empowered to make positive changes in their community; they recognize and live up to their social and civic obligations.



40 Key Building Blocks to Help Kids Succeed

Search Institute has identified 40 building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible. These building blocks are referred to as "assets." Local schools have united in identifying monthly "asset" themes for schools and communities to help kids reach their potential.

I often volunteer my services in the community.

I make choices that help me feel safe at home.

I make choices that help me feel safe at school.

I make choices that help me feel safe in my neighborhood.

I make choices that help protect our environment.

I abide by the laws of my community, my state, and my country.

MONTHLY THEMES

April.....Citizenship
 May.....Volunteerism
 June.....Support
 July.....Constructive use of time
 August.....Commitment to learning
 September.....Decision-making
 October.....Respect
 November.....Responsibility
 December.....Caring
 January.....Fairness
 February.....Trustworthiness
 March.....Positive Identity

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Lorain County Board of Mental Health Collaborates with Community Partners To Build Self-Esteem and Develop Future Leaders with Innovative Program: Girls With Sole

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Sometimes you need to take care of yourself before you can take care of others. In order to be a good citizen, make good choices and help others you must first learn those skills yourself.

Girls with Sole is a wellness and fitness program designed to empower the minds, bodies and soles of pre-teen and teenaged females. The program offers girls the opportunity to learn to enjoy fitness as they develop the physical and emotional strength needed to meet personal goals. Many of the girls who participate in this program begin with little or no interest in moving their bodies, and end by participating in a 5K race. The founder and executive director of Girls with Sole is Liz Ferro.

Liz credits athletics and fitness for giving her the self-esteem and inner strength needed to overcome difficult times, including a childhood that exposed her to both foster care and to abuse. Liz is now an author and a competitive triathlete with a passion for helping girls and young women to find their own sense of mastery by developing physical and emotional strength. Liz Ferro was one of three national recipients of the prestigious 2012 Longines Women who Make a Difference Awards. Longines along with Town & Country honored women who have made an impact on the lives of children through their charitable work.

"Lorain County Girls are so fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from this inspirational leader" said Kathleen Kern, Associate Director of the Lorain County Board of Mental Health, who coordinated bringing Girls With Sole to Lorain County.

"Although she is a nationally recognized role model, when she is in an elementary school gym in Lorain, the most important thing to Liz is helping the participating girls attain their personal best. Her energy and focus set an excellent example and the group provides the opportunity for girls to recognize strength that they may not have known was within them."

One of the most exciting aspects of this program is the level of community collaboration that has occurred to bring it to fruition. The Medical Mutual Foundation of



Liz Ferro, founder and executive director of Girls with Sole, center, poses with Girls With Sole participants savor "Lacing Up for a Lifetime of Achievement" at last year's Cleveland West Road Runners Club Fall Classic." The girls are showing off the medals they won for finishing the race.

Ohio and the Lorain County Board of Mental Health have partnered to fund the staff required to implement the program. The Lorain County Boys and Girls Club has coordinated programming within multiple sites so that girls from around the county, including in some Lorain City School Sites, may benefit.

The Soul to Sole program founded by Lori Campana has funded the provision of new running shoes for the girls who participate. The Community Foundation of Lorain County has funded the sports bras that the girls need for group participation.

The Lorain County Mental Health Board is funding the registration for the girls to participate in 5K races.

Finally, community mental health clinicians from Bellefaire JCB and from Guidestone, two local community mental health agencies, have allocated time to support and learn how to run the Girls with Sole Program.

According to Charlie Neff, Executive Director for the Lorain County Board of Mental Health, "We are excited to participate in such an empowering program. Our hope is that these young ladies will learn skills that they will use throughout their life and eventually want to give back like Liz, become good citizens, make a difference and help others succeed."