



# Building Life Skills

**July**  
**Constructive use of time**

Young people are given constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home.



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## 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.

### Sheffield Middle School kids helping kids



Sheffield Middle School students work on collecting stuffed animals.

One of our most precious gifts is time. So, how do you use your time? 8th grade students at Sheffield Middle School use some of their time to help others. Spearheaded by Andrew Smith, School Social Worker for the Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City Schools, he was chosen in 2006 as one of 11 teachers across the nation to participate in a week-long program in Oklahoma City to remember the 10-year anniversary of the bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The purpose of this training was to help educators understand the impact of violence, take knowledge back to their school districts, and how to instill the trait of “hope” in children’s lives.

Andrew not only returned with information regarding traumatic events but also with stuffed animals. Hundreds of them are left each year at the bombing location. These stuffed animals are cleaned and washed and then something magical happens.

Students at Sheffield Middle School pick a stuffed animal and write and design a compelling book

associated with that animal. The stories are inspirational and offer messages of hope and caring. The stories do not refer to the Oklahoma City bombing but instead rely on the student’s imagination to come up with unique ideas that incorporate positive messages. The stuffed animals and books are given to local child-serving agencies for distribution. These “Stories of Hope” are for children to keep who need support and ‘hope’ as they journey on a road to a healthier life.

According to one of the student-authors, “You know that your animal and story will help a child, but you never meet the child who gets your story. It allows you to continue to use your imagination.”

The creativity and penmanship are student-developed with the constructive use of time, while the process is facilitated by 8th grade language arts teachers Jessica Schremp and Carolyn Beckett.

So, what can you do with your time? Look around your community. Maybe you can help out at a food bank or do a car wash to benefit an animal shelter. The opportunities are endless. And, you just might find it makes you feel really good.

Andrew believes in giving back to the community, too. He is on the Board of Directors for the

Lorain County Board of Mental Health. According to Andrew, “I think it is important that I lead by example. I joined the Board to provide input on mental health issues pertaining to schools, students, and the families we serve. I feel it is imperative that we all work together to provide the mental health services children and families need.”

The Lorain County Board of Mental Health provides a comprehensive system of mental health services to Lorain County residents regardless of ability to pay. For more information call 440.233.2020. Visit the website at [www.LCMHB.org](http://www.LCMHB.org) for a complete listing of services or to take a free online depression screening.

