

# DAILY JOURNAL

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## **Gearing up for Youth Development Week**

*By Marie Franco and Mara Burger*

April 3 through April 8 is the first San Mateo Youth Development Week, a week in which various groups across the county plan events to celebrate the empowerment of youth.

Youth Development Week aims to help youth better themselves through contributing to the community, the acquisition of new skills and confidence.

On April 8, the Big Event at the Expo Center will take place. At the Big Event, youths or youth groups are invited to set up a booth to showcase the great work youth are doing in their community.

Youth Development is: helping the community, learning to make good choices, being involved in making changes, learning your capabilities, staying safe, working with adults and young people and developing the 40 Developmental Assets to better yourself and others.

For those unfamiliar with the 40 Developmental Assets, they were developed in Minneapolis by the Search Institute. They include both internal and external assets, which fall into the following categories: Support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.

Youth Development Week is a product of the Youth Development Initiative of San Mateo County which hopes to bridge the gap between youth and adults. YDI is a branch of the Youth and Family Enrichment Services of San Mateo which provides crisis hotlines for both youth and parents.

The Youth Development Initiative promotes projects at various schools and around the community to get youth more involved.



At Hoover Magnet (Middle) School, YDI works with students in an effort to involve them in the development of their school. The Youth Asset Team focus on informing and training the community of the importance of youth involvement through the Internet, print media, and presentations.

At Sequoia High School students participate as Youth Advisory Board members, who work with the YDI program coordinator to incorporate new programs to serve Sequoia students, peer educators or as members of the Latina Curves-Moving Towards Health organization.

The Youth Development Initiative also supports youth commissioners who are matched with an adult member on a nonprofit board of directors or county commission to promote youth needs and learn about leadership, advocacy, social justice and civic engagement.

Some suggestions for youth getting involved include: Planning an event at school or in the community, help plan a county-wide event, attend Youth Development Week events or help spread the word about youth development. In order to set-up a booth at the Big Event at the Expo Center submit an application form, which can be found at [www.bethedifference.org](http://www.bethedifference.org), to John Yap via fax 401-775.

For more information visit [www.yfes.org](http://www.yfes.org) or call 401-8617.

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