

Young Health Programme in the US

Physical, social and emotional well-being is essential for the academic success of Delaware's adolescents. Evidence shows that young people, aged 12 to 15 years of age, are especially susceptible to a range of health and learning risks and are experiencing rapid developmental changes that can make them susceptible to negative behaviours including drug and alcohol abuse and risky sexual activities.

The Young Health Programme in the US, IM40, provides the resources necessary for adolescent youth to live healthier lives through a proactive focus on their strengths and assets, based on the highly successful 40 Developmental Assets model created by the Search Institute.

The Programme is in partnership with United Way of Delaware, and engages adults, parents, teachers, coaches, and mentors, mobilising them towards the shared goal of increasing assets of youth in their communities.



AstraZeneca 

Young Health Programme

A global community investment initiative

in partnership with



Young Health Programme in the US



Factors that impact on youth success include risky behaviours such as substance abuse, early sexual activity, pregnancy and parenthood, body image and eating disorders.

Protective assets include social and emotional skills, physical fitness and activity, healthy weight and nutrition, adequate sleep and nurturing connections with caring adults.

What do we want to achieve through the Programme?

Build a movement promoting positive youth development and healthy behaviours, which will:

- Protect from risky health behaviours such as smoking, substance abuse, and early sexual activity
- Promote improved health such as physical fitness and better nutrition
- Reduce the burden of chronic disease through adolescent health behaviours and development
- Promote social and emotional well-being
- Promote better school performance such as attendance, academic performance, and school behaviour

Build communities that support adolescent health and school performance, which will:

- Strengthen community resources that support positive youth development
- Broaden access to health resources for youth
- Engage youth in designing and implementing critical aspects of the YHP
- Create a model of positive youth development that can be used in other communities

The programme is initially aimed at 12 to 15 year olds who live in high-need neighbourhoods in each of Delaware's three counties. It will be rolled out to other communities throughout the state in coming years.

What activities are taking place locally?

- Using a model to promote positive youth development that engages youth, their families, volunteers and communities in acquiring developmental assets
- Mobilising young people as YHP "Champions" to act as peer mentors
- Educating youth, civic and government leaders regarding the health needs of young people and encouraging them to increase resources that foster good health and academic success
- Empowering teachers, parents, clergy and other adults to help young people achieve academic success by connecting them to existing programmes and resources that promote positive youth development and reduce risky health behaviours
- Training key stakeholders including families, teachers, health providers, youth-serving professionals, community leaders and volunteers to provide supportive relationships, accurate information, and skill building opportunities for targeted youth

What has been achieved so far?

Creating a state-wide innovative communications platform to engage and empower youth as community leaders and elevate the youth voice

- Launched www.IM40.org website to stimulate youth engagement through social media
- A statewide youth leadership council that consists of 12 youths, who are trained and participate consistently in leadership opportunities with the YMCA Youth In Government Program

Organizing and initiating grassroots activities that build youth, parent and community capacity to understand and enhance developmental assets

- United Way of Delaware has aligned their Community Impact funding with outcomes that link with Developmental Assets as a framework. The first example was the 2012 Eastside Summer Camp initiative in which nonprofits provide Summer Camp programming to youth in the Eastside of Wilmington.
- YHP: IM40 strategic partners include three grassroots organizations, as Community Mobilizing Organizations (CMO). These organizations are working to embed the principles of the YHP program at the community level,

Creating strong partnerships to expand the movement and create future sustainability

- The News Journal, the lead media partner serving the entire State of Delaware, is investing many of its own resources to support educating communities about YHP. It's doing this through advertising, hosting topical community conversations with youth and chronicling articles quarterly about efforts, individuals and families across the State engaged in the movement.
- Partnership with the Governor's Office and the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF). YHP:IM40® is being integrated in the effort by Governor's Office to expand mental health services for youth in middle school grades and into an evolving State plan that focuses on youth.

Local Partner

United Way of Delaware

Founded in 1965, United Way of Delaware (UWD) works to advance the common good by focusing on the three building blocks to a good life: Education, Income and Health. UWD is engaged in a long-term strategy to eliminate the root causes of Delaware's most pressing social problems in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties. UWD works collectively with business, government, social service agencies, academic groups, community organisations and concerned individuals to establish positive, long-lasting solutions for today and into the future.