

2001

# What Can I Do To Help Youth Succeed In My Community?

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## Recommended Citation

Lee, Tom, "What Can I Do To Help Youth Succeed In My Community?" (2001). *All Archived Publications*. Paper 265.  
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**A weekly question/answer column**

**What Can I Do To Help Youth Succeed In My Community?**

*Tom Lee\* answers:*

As parents, grandparents, and other adults concerned about the youth in our communities, we might wonder what we can do to help youth succeed. Some things we can all do on an individual basis to interact with youth and help them succeed are:

- Smile at youth. Acknowledge youth as you pass them in the community.
- Learn the names of youth in your neighborhood or congregation. Choose a few youth to learn their names and say “Hi” regularly.
- Take an interest in the activities of youth. Talk to them about their interests. Youth need support from caring adults outside their family. Help them feel important.
- Support community efforts to see youth as resources rather than problems. Help others see youth as resources rather than liabilities
- Recognize people who are dedicating their time to children and youth. Sometimes those such as teachers or volunteers in youth organizations don't get recognized for the vital role they play. Take time to thank them.
- Involve youth in the decisions that affect them— in the home, in the church, in the school, and in the community. Youth have creative ideas and great energy. Involving them leads to good decisions that they will support.
- Volunteer to work with youth. Give some time. Their future is our future. Besides, they're fun to be around!
- Provide good work environments for youth as an employer. Employers can build character and skills in youth as they mentor youth, foster initiative, and compliment good work.
- Support policies that allow employed parents their needed flexibility to be involved in the lives of youth. Employers that give parents flexibility in work schedules so that they can attend a parent-teacher conference or take a child to the doctor are strengthening youth by supporting the family.

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