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MAKE SPARKS FLY

Use Your Spark in School

Make your school community a better place: Have you ever thought to yourself, “Does my voice really matter?” or “Can I really make a significant difference in my school community?” The answer is, “YES!” According to a study conducted by Search Institute, “youth with sparks are more likely to be confident about their community impact... and believe they can make some or a great deal of difference.”¹ Your energy and passion are resources to your community right now, not just for the future. So, begin to use your voice and take action to improve your school community.

Brainstorm some of the current needs in your school community. These needs could be related to the school building, a specific group of students or anything else you feel could use some resources for improvement. Record your ideas below.

Using the list you created, choose one need that matters most to you. Now, consider how you can use your spark to make a difference. Write some specific things you can do to take action and make things better.

Find people who are making their communities better places: Select a story in USA TODAY about people who are positively impacting their communities throughout our country and world. Once you have read the article, write a brief summary explaining the difference this is having in the community. Following your summary, write about how this story can be an inspiration to teens who want to use their sparks to enrich their own school communities. Share your ideas with a partner or small group.

Connect with other teens who are making a difference at their schools: One way to share your voice and benefit your school is to choose an issue or idea that is important to you. Check out the “Richard’s Rwanda” video about a group of students who had a significant influence in their school community by helping people in another country. To find out more, go to at15.com and become a member. Click on “Contests and Scholarships” and then scroll down the page and click on “Best Buy @15 Challenge.” Here you will find the “Richard’s Rwanda” video. Once you view the video, decide how YOU can use your spark to make a difference in your school!

¹ “Teen Voice 2009: The Untapped Strengths of 15-Year-Olds. Search Institute, Minneapolis: 2009.

