

STEPPING STONES IN BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE ADULT ALLY

1. Let youth decide if you're an ally, don't assume they want or need you.
2. Listen....just listen to what youth have to say. Let them express themselves freely.
3. Don't talk down to young people. Assume that young people know stuff.
4. Use and understand youth friendly language
5. Get involved for the right reasons, not to stroke your own ego or think of this as a job.
6. Treat being an adult ally as an equal partnership that benefits all involved
7. Treat youth as individuals. One youth cannot represent all youth, and must learn how to represent themselves. Youth have the right to be treated as an individual and not as a category or group. Teach them.
8. Have a real conversation. Ask a youth what they want to do, how they feel and find out how you can help make that happen. By doing this, you will gain a clearer and deeper understanding of the youth you are trying to engage.
9. Actively support youth-led action projects however possible, including working with youth on their time to accomplish their goals.
10. Respect youth as you do adults. Don't expect more from them than you do adults and don't interpret for youth what they can say and do for themselves. Create a 'space' for youth to feel comfortable and respected.
11. Connect with and learn from other adult allies who want to involve youth meaningfully in the community
12. Be an advocate for youth involvement and youth/adult partnerships throughout the community
13. Acceptance: Look at youth as they really are; strengths and weaknesses, positive and negative feelings, attitudes and behaviours. Acceptance is not approval, it is seeing, recognizing, and allowing youth to reveal themselves completely while having a non-judgmental attitude
14. Let youth make decisions: recognize the right and the need for youth to make their own choices and decisions in their project