



*Here today. Here tomorrow.*

## POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Life House utilizes the Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory of change when working with youth. At its core, PYD is about people, programs, institutions and systems that provide youth with the support and opportunities they need to empower themselves. This approach recognizes that all youth have strengths and that they will develop in positive ways when these strengths are aligned with resources for healthy development in the various settings in which they live and interact.

Developmental scientists have suggested that positive youth development encompasses psychological, behavioral, and social characteristics that reflect the "Five Cs." (Eccles, J. S., & Gootman, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.):

- Competence: intellectual ability and social and behavioral skills
- Connection: positive bonds with people and institutions
- Character: integrity and moral centeredness
- Confidence: positive self-regard, a sense of self-efficacy, and courage
- Caring/Compassion: humane values, empathy, and a sense of social justice.

A child or adolescent who develops each of the Five Cs is considered to be thriving. Moreover, developmental scientists believe that these thriving youth develop a sixth "C": contribution (to self, family, community, and civil society). (Lerner R. M. (2005). *Promoting Positive Youth Development: Theoretical and Empirical Bases*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences.)

When staff at Life House engages our youth from this perspective, we are bringing about positive change.