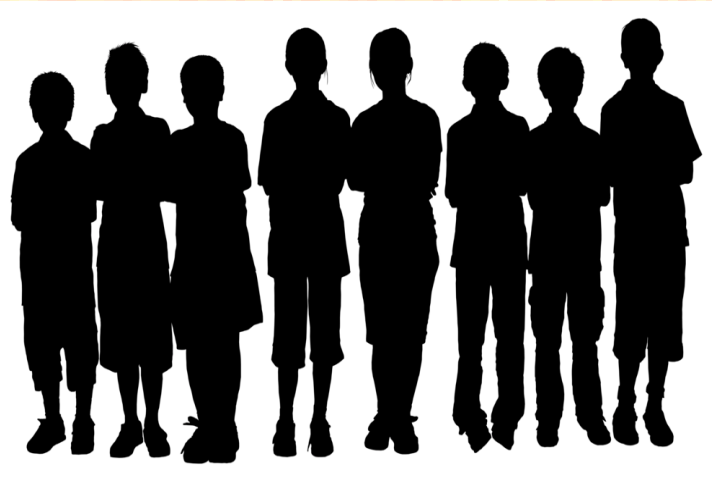


**"The future of any society depends upon the character and competence of its young. In order to develop character and competence, young people need guidance to provide them with direction and a sense of purpose. They need relationships that embody and communicate high standards. They need to experience activities that are challenging, inspiring, and educative. Many of the conditions for the development of character and competence in the young have deteriorated in**



**recent years. Instead of finding guidance and clear standards, young people often encounter inattention, low expectations, cynicism, or community conflict. In many places, families, schools, religious institutions, and neighborhoods have weakened. Mass media transmit messages that are confusing at best and corrupting at worst. All of these conditions must be changed if we are to create a society where youngsters can attain their full potential. The future of our society depends upon it."**

- from The Youth Charter, by William Damon  
Director, Stanford Center on Adolescence  
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/adolescent.ctr>