



## **The Critical Years: 10-15**

**Our Community. Our Children. Our Commitment.**

### **THE CRITICAL YEARS COMMUNITY PLEDGE**

**Our Community. Our Children. Our Commitment.**

#### **Working Together to Support the Next Generation of Genesee County Citizens**

Young people between ages 10 and 15 are the next generation of Genesee County citizens. And an investment in their future is an investment in our community's future.

It's during these critical years that youth are particularly vulnerable to influences that lead to dropping out of school or getting involved with drugs, drinking or other negative behaviors. This window of time in their growth and development marks the last chance to easily and positively affect their life path so they become successful, engaged adults.

So what will it take to help these young people succeed and in turn, create a strong, healthy and vibrant future for our entire community?

*Positive and consistent relationships with caring adults.*

It's that simple. The #1 concern of youth in our community is "does anyone care about me?" Feeling valued and important, whether by a teacher, a parent, a neighbor or a complete stranger, will make a positive difference in their lives and to the future of Genesee County as a whole.

Each of us, every day, has the power to make any interaction that we have with a 10 to 15 year old a positive and meaningful one. Even if he or she is not your child, your student or your neighbor, what you do – or don't do – can make a significant difference.

They need us and they need us now, before it's too late.

By taking The Critical Years Community Pledge, you are making a conscious commitment to positively support the next generation of Genesee County citizens – young people between ages 10 and 15 – with your thoughts, words and actions each and every day: