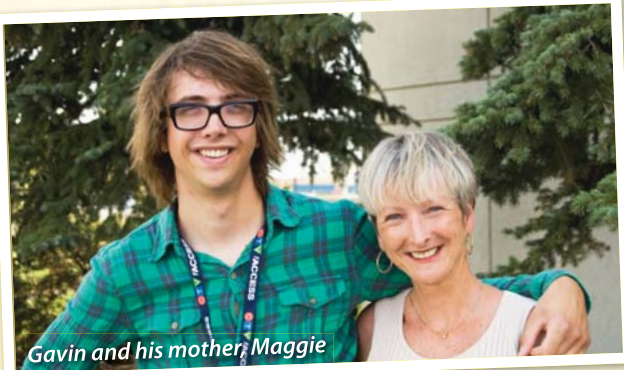




Community caring is time well spent

The 40 Developmental Assets® is a City of St. Albert initiative that calls on the entire community to support our youth. Together, we can ensure our youth receive the support they need to lead healthy lives and achieve personal success. Building assets is easier than you think. In fact, it's already happening all around us. Check out Gavin's story below and start thinking of more ways that you can be a part of the sum of success for youth.



Gavin and his mother, Maggie

Gavin Thomas is following in his father's footsteps.

The 20-year-old, who graduated from the Radio and Television program at NAIT, works as a videographer at CTV, the station where his father Reg Thomas was news director. Because of positive mentors, the support of his family and opportunities offered by his religious community, Gavin has succeeded despite a tumultuous high school experience and the loss of his father.

"I think Gavin is pretty proud to be working where his dad used to work," CTV Photo Supervisor and local resident Barry Fontaine said. "He has a love for what he's doing and puts in a good effort every day. A lot of young people come in and think that they know everything, but Gavin knows to keep learning. I think he's endeared himself to a lot of people because of that."

Fontaine, who worked for Gavin's father, said that everyone at CTV respected Reg Thomas and many of the current staff had met Gavin as a child at Christmas parties and staff events.

"To me, CTV is kind of like a family," explained Gavin. "My dad used to bring me into the office when I was younger, I got to hang out with some of the guys. I know a lot of the people and I feel at home. Barry has been absolutely amazing, he's been showing me the ropes and has been a mentor."

Since autumn 2008, the City of St. Albert has been part of an Asset Development program that examines the ways that the community can foster

positive life skills in youth. One of the key features of Asset Development is encouraging adults to be mentors and role models for youth.

"If he looks to me as a mentor, that's great, and of course we'll offer him support and encouragement at work," Barry said. "He's a nice guy and he's good to work with. That's really important."

Barry notes that Gavin has earned the success he's had so far and has approached the news industry the right way, by going to school, working hard, excelling in his studies and learning from his co-workers.

"Barry has been there for him and made the learning of how to get into the work world a better thing," said Gavin's mother Maggie.

"Barry has been absolutely amazing, he's been showing me the ropes and has been a mentor."

As a youth, Gavin hadn't planned to go into the media. When he was in high school, he had been actively looking at studying either business or graphic design.

Early in the school year, when Gavin was in Grade 11 at Paul Kane High School, Gavin's father died of a brain tumour. Gavin, who was experiencing difficulties with his peers at school, said that it was an extraordinarily challenging year.

"I didn't have many friends in high school and, during that time, they didn't do much for me," Gavin said. "I had done some photography in high school and started doing some video work at my

local church. That's where I met Luke [Raymond] and Tim [McCallum]. They wanted to hang out with me, they wanted to help me and they cared."

At the St. Albert Alliance Church, Gavin had access to top-end video editing software and learned a lot working on videos for the church, as well as personal projects.

"We could see that he was a happier kid for sure," said Maggie. "The boys that he met through church were just wonderful guys. He had somebody else that he could talk to other than me."

St. Albert's Asset Development program encourages youth to participate in their religious community or to get involved with a community group.

"The church was a really big part of my life," Gavin explained. "You don't have to be religious to be involved in it – obviously it's a bonus if you are – but there are a lot of programs that they offer for young people."

With the help of caring people and his involvement with the church, Gavin has truly found himself to be on the path to personal success.



From Left to Right: Gavin Thomas and Barry Fontaine



40 Developmental Assets the sum of success for youth

The 40 Developmental Assets are divided into two sections that include four different categories each. This week, we discover the four assets that speak to the kind of **CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME** our young people need.

- 17. Creative Activities:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theatre or other arts.
- 18. Youth Programs:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community.

- 19. Religious Community:** Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
- 20. Time at Home:** Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

The list of 40 Developmental Assets® is reprinted with permission from Search Institute.®