



MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS

YMCA Project Cornerstone

Project Cornerstone supports a wide variety of Middle School activities and clubs on campus. School activities and clubs empower staff, parent volunteers, and students to create experiences, spaces, and opportunities that develop skills and talents and promote forming caring relationships. The list below describes some of the successful and vibrant programs found in Middle Schools throughout the area.



Expect Respect Help students from different social groups work together to find common ground and create a “new normal” for their school where all students are accepted and supported by their peers. A diverse team of students attend an intensive half-day workshop led by Project Cornerstone staff where they learn about creating a positive school climate. The team creates an action plan to implement school-wide to improve the overall school culture.

Zen Lounge (or The Lounge/Zen Den) A relaxing and safe space on campus hosted by 2-5 adult volunteers. Lounges are typically filled with soothing images, calming music or nature sounds, soft seating, scent diffusers, stress balls/sensory fidgets, bulletin boards or white boards with reflective thoughts about a topic or

a question of the day, and snacks. The idea is to make the space as spa-like and calming as possible. Students engage in various mindfulness activities. Students may participate in drawing, gentle yoga, painting with water, reading in a comfortable book nook, playing quiet games, chatting quietly, or simply sitting in the relaxing space to decompress, alleviate stress, and relax.

Open Studio A space hosted by 3-5 adults with different activities based on the interests, talents, and skills of parent volunteers. Students sign up for activities that interest them. Examples of past offerings include yoga, Bollywood dancing, meditation, gardening, water painting, zentangle, and finger or cup weaving. The opportunities are endless. Mini-classes could include anything parents at your school want to share.

Respect 360 Youth and their influencers (parent volunteers, teachers, other staff) can partner in groups or one-on-one to redefine respect, practice the 8 Respect Basics, break cycles of disrespect and thrive. The Respect 360 toolkit contains hundreds of group and one-on-one mentoring activities, discussion questions and Common-Core aligned journaling assignments all on easy to follow cards. The 8 Respect Basics provide themes for implementation in classrooms, grade levels, or the whole school.

Middle School Book Club Adult volunteers meet weekly with students who read and then discuss a book. A caring adult volunteer provides a safe, respectful place to talk about the book, how it relates to their lives and what they can learn from the characters and experiences in the books. Project Cornerstone has a list of books appropriate for middle schoolers and provides discussion questions for volunteers and students.

Club 41 Asset 41 is POSITIVE CULTURAL IDENTITY. Positive cultural identity means youth feel comfortable with and proud of their identity, including but not limited to ability status, body size, ethnicity, faith/religion, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, language, race, and sexual orientation. Adult volunteers meet weekly with students and empower them to create a club and activities that support positive cultural identity.

Just Be Nice/Kindness/Project Cornerstone Club Adult volunteers meet weekly with students and empower them to create a club and activities that support just being nice.

Parent Volunteer Opportunities There are a wide variety of opportunities for parents to be involved at their Middle Schools. Some ideas include:

- **Middle School SEL Curriculum Facilitator** Volunteer to facilitate the Project Cornerstone Middle School SEL Curriculum in classrooms.
- **PTSA/PTA/Home and School Club** Join as a board member, event chair, or participant in your school's parent association.
- **Career Day** Parent volunteers organize a career day by getting parents to share about their jobs and career paths.
- **School Wide Events** Help run school wide events like Harvest Fests, Fun Runs, Book Fairs, art shows, carnivals, performances, etc.
- **Chaperone/drive on field trips** Provide transportation or attend class outings, athletics, club activities, and band, music, or drama events.
- **Classroom Coordinator** Help your child's classroom teacher/homeroom teacher communicate with other parents and run class events and activities.
- **Parent Coffees** Set up and/or attend informal gatherings to connect and educate parents on campus.
- **Office/Library/Student Store help** Offer regular help in various places on campus.



Project Cornerstone serves schools and communities from Redwood City to Gilroy. Our work is supported through individual gifts, foundation and corporate grants, and contracts with schools and organizations. Schools outside of our service area are welcome to contact us about costs of our services. For more information about Middle School programs, contact Debbi Headley, Project Cornerstone School Partnerships and Middle School Director at 408-351-6498 or debbi@projectcornerstone.org.