**The Future of American Youths**

Most American youths look forward to their future with hope and optimism. According to the survey "The Mood of American Youth," teenagers "place a high priority on education and careers. While filled with high hopes about the years before them, today's students are not laboring under any misconceptions about what they must do to realize their aspirations. They admit that hard work lies ahead and claim they are willing to make the sacrifices needed to reach their goals."

Many young people are headed toward four-year colleges and universities. More than half of all students in the United States plan to earn a college degree. Many others look forward to getting a job after high school or attending a two-year junior college. Others plan on getting married. The median age for males getting married for the first time is 26.2 years old, for females, 23.8 years old.

Other young people intend to join the armed forces or volunteer organizations. For some, travel is the next step in gaining experience beyond high school.

During the early 1980s, career success was the prime goal of most young people. But, by the end of the decade, attitudes were changing and young people were becoming more idealistic. A 1989 survey of high school leaders showed that "making a contribution to society" was more than twice as important to young people as "making a lot of money."

American youth are concerned about problems confronting both their own communities and the world around them. In a 1990 poll, American young people Young people in the United States are also concerned with global issues such as nuclear war and world hunger. They care for other people around the world, as is evident by such efforts as "The Children for Children Project," in the course of which a group of New York City children worked to raise $250,000 to help the starving children of Ethiopia in 1985. Then they challenged other students in the United States to join in the fund-raising activities. Also in 1985, a benefit called "Live Aid" staged two rock music concerts simultaneously in England and the United States and raised about $50 million to bring relief to starving people in Africa.