



AFTERSCHOOL: THE SEED FOR STEM TO GROW

Blowing things up to learn what it means to be an engineer. Cooking with pros to learn chemistry and math. Creating a mock crime scene and using new technologies as you investigate and find the culprit.

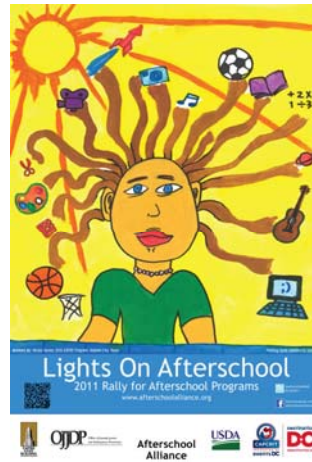
The afterschool arena is uniquely suited for fun and engaging projects like these, which provide engaging, educational, hands-on lessons in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), according to a [new report](#) released by the Afterschool Alliance at a Capitol Hill briefing for policy makers in September.

Afterschool programs also reach female and minority students, who often are left behind in STEM learning, with these activities. “Girls meet real-life scientists and engineers, and they realize that science is not just for geniuses. They build relationships with these adults and can see themselves in these careers,” said Connie Chow, Ph.D., Executive Director of the [Science Club for Girls](#) at the congressional briefing. “The nimbleness of afterschool to quickly adopt STEM curricula makes it an ideal environment, and helps bridge the ability and confidence gap we often see in students.”

In addition to Chow, the briefing featured: Fernando Laguarda, Vice President for External Affairs and Policy Counselor, Time Warner Cable; Bronwyn Bevan, Ph.D., Director, Center for Informal Learning and Schools, Exploratorium; and [Anita Krishnamurthi](#), Ph.D., Afterschool Alliance Director of STEM Policy, who led the report. The [briefing](#) was sponsored by the House and Senate Afterschool Caucuses.

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TURN THE LIGHTS ON FOR AFTERSCHOOL THIS WEEK



This Thursday, October 20, Friendship Fountain in Jacksonville and LOVE Fountain in Philadelphia will be lit up, children holding candles will illuminate the Battleship Texas in La Porte, Texas, and the La Grande

Vitesse sculpture in Grand Rapids, Michigan will be lit with multi-colored lights. These are just a few of the 7,500 *Lights On Afterschool* events that will take place in nearly every community in the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide this week. A million people are expected to join these events, which will feature children’s performances, youth art exhibits, science experiments, robotics demonstrations, sports tournaments, spaghetti dinners, and much more. This year marks the 12th annual *Lights On Afterschool*, organized by the Afterschool Alliance.

For the fifth year in a row, the Empire State Building will be lit up in yellow to commemorate *Lights On Afterschool*. This year, as part of the “Light Up a Landmark” contest sponsored by jcpenny and the Afterschool Alliance, 17 other landmarks across the country will also be lit up in support of the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. They are:

Lights On continued on page eleven...

OUTREACH

As reported in the *Afterschool Advocate* ([Volume 12, Issue 9](#)), the U.S. Department of Education put afterschool funding at risk in September when it released a waiver package that allows states to bypass some of the legislative requirements of *No Child Left Behind*. The Administration offered states the chance to set their own student achievement goals and interventions for low-performing schools. States that apply for and are granted waivers will be exempt from ten of the law's requirements.

In addition – and most troubling to the educators, students, parents and others who rely on afterschool programs – the Administration offered states the chance to apply for an optional eleventh waiver that would allow them to use 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) funds to add time to the regular school day, rather than to support afterschool programs.

Last week, at least 39 states notified the Department of their intent to apply for the waivers. Now, the afterschool community is urging State Education Agencies (SEAs) not to apply for the optional eleventh waiver, and not to divert afterschool funds if they do. *For a list of SEAs, click [here](#).*

Following is a sample email message to send if your state is one of them:

Dear [Name]:

I was dismayed to see that the U.S. Department of Education offered states an optional waiver to divert 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) afterschool funds as part of its *No Child Left Behind* waiver package. Since not a single public letter from a state complained of burdens related to 21st CCLC, it was a gratuitous and unjustified move for the Department to include this option, and one I hope you will reject.

Here in [your city], [number] of students and families rely on the [name of your program] to keep children safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. I am proud that every afternoon, we offer students [homework help, tutoring, healthy snacks, physical fitness, STEM activities, and opportunities for hands-on learning that are not available during the regular school day]. We keep children safe and supervised until parents return from work by offering enriching activities in conjunction with community-based partners, taking care to align our activities with the schools to ensure that students get the help they need most. The activities we offer are both educational and fun.

To divert afterschool funds to much more expensive extended day programs would mean students in many more communities unsupervised and at-risk after the school day ends, working parents in many more communities without the peace of mind that comes with knowing that their children are safe, and more students in many more communities missing out on hands-on opportunities to learn.

If our state applies for the waiver, I urge you to reject the optional eleventh waiver and instead continue using afterschool funds for afterschool and summer learning programs. I am available at your convenience to discuss this further and look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your name, title, program and phone number]



FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance's website has numerous resources for afterschool providers looking for new ways to raise money for their programs, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities.

GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

Scholarships to Study Abroad

The U.S. State Department is sponsoring merit-based scholarships for older youth to study foreign languages and cultures overseas. The National Security Language Initiative for Youth sponsors the study of seven critical languages: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Korean, Persian (Tajik), Russian or Turkish. The deadline for the 2012-2013 school year is November 3. *For more information, click [here](#).*

Grants for Service-Learning

State Farm and Youth Service America are sponsoring grants of \$1,000 for activities that engage youth from public schools in service-learning projects. Projects that begin on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 16, 2012) and culminate on Global Youth Service Day (April 20-22, 2012) are preferred. The deadline to apply is November 9. *For more information, click [here](#).*

Grants for MLK Day of Service

Youth Service America and the Corporation for National and Community Service are sponsoring grants of \$4,000 for projects that engage youth and their families in community service on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 16, 2012). Projects should address education, health, the environment, economic opportunity, or disaster relief. The deadline to apply is November 18. *For more information, click [here](#).*

Grants for Youth Gardens

The National Gardening Association and Home Depot are sponsoring awards for schools and community organizations to create gardening programs in their communities for children between the ages of three and 18. Five programs will receive gift cards valued at \$1,000 to purchase materials for their gardens, and 95 programs will receive a \$500 Home Depot gift card. The deadline is November 28. *For more information, click [here](#).*



MIDDLE SCHOOL – THE RIGHT TIME TO ADDRESS AND PREVENT BULLYING

The Afterschool Alliance has released a new MetLife Foundation Issue Brief examining how afterschool programs can [address and prevent middle school bullying](#). In recent years, several highly-publicized incidents – including extreme forms of teasing, physical beatings and bully-induced suicides – have raised the national profile of bullying and middle school students are particularly vulnerable. Middle school youth are undergoing physical, social and emotional transitions, making these years crucial to promoting healthy youth development.

Afterschool programs that provide access to caring adults and offer a more informal environment that is distinct from the school day allow children to feel safe from peer pressure, build confidence and learn how to deal with bullies. Skilled programs around the country are aiding in the effort to stop bullying and teach children that aggressive and detrimental behaviors should not be taken lightly.

“Afterschool programs, with their unique position as a less formal and more open learning environment, can provide middle school youth with the knowledge and attitudes necessary to combat bullying both in school and online, leading to healthy youth development and a happier generation of students,” the Issue Brief says.

The Brief offers statistics on the prevalence of bullying and examples of afterschool programs across the country that are addressing the issue and encouraging pro-social behaviors.

This Brief is part of a series of Issue Briefs examining the vital role played by afterschool programs. It is sponsored with generous support from the MetLife Foundation. It is the second in a series of four Issue Briefs examining critical issues facing middle school youth and the vital role afterschool programs play in addressing these

issues. These issue briefs feature: the importance of aligning afterschool with the school day; bullying awareness and prevention; service learning opportunities for middle schoolers; and literacy education. *Read the new Issue Brief on bullying [here](#).*



THREE RURAL OK TEENS WIN TORANI ART CONTEST

For the first time ever, three talented young artists were chosen from the same state, town and afterschool program as winners of [Torani’s national Art for Kids label design contest](#). This fall, Torani Cherry, Raspberry and Sugar Free French Vanilla Syrups will sport new, limited-edition art labels designed by students from [Stratford SAFE Bulldog Academy](#) afterschool program in Stratford, Oklahoma. The ninth-graders’ artwork was selected from hundreds of entries submitted by afterschool students around the country. The winning selections were celebrated at a pizza and Italian soda party sponsored by Torani at their afterschool program last month.

[Torani](#), the number one specialty syrup in North America, will donate five percent of sales of Torani Raspberry and Torani Sugar Free French Vanilla with limited edition labels from September through December of this year to the Afterschool Alliance. Five percent of sales from the third student winner’s cherry blossom art, on Torani’s Cherry Syrup, will benefit children’s relief programs in Japan following the tsunami.

The winners are Haven Prine for the [Raspberry Syrup label](#), Brook Minor for the [Sugar Free French Vanilla label](#) and Rachael Jones for the [Cherry Syrup label](#). At the time the contest was held this spring, the three youth were in eighth grade and attending an afterschool program run by [Afterschool Ambassador](#) Laticia Wade.

“Torani is in its seventh year of partnership with the Afterschool Alliance to sponsor the Art for Kids contest for afterschool students, and year after year we are amazed and impressed by the results,” said Lisa Lucheta, Torani principal and family-owner. “Torani has a long history of bringing splashes of color and creativity into people’s everyday lives. We are thrilled that Art for Kids and our partnership with the Afterschool Alliance allows us to brighten many more lives, and helps young people everywhere participate in exciting, colorful experiences after the school day ends.”

“It is unfortunate that many schools have had to cut back on the arts and limit creative opportunities for students. Afterschool programs have always embraced the arts, supplementing programs in school,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Sadly, recent cuts have meant that, in many school systems, afterschool programs are one of the few outlets left to nurture the creative talents of students. That is why we are especially happy to be able to partner with Torani on Art for Kids. These colorful labels provide an extraordinary venue to showcase the talent nurtured in afterschool programs each day. This contest and Torani’s remarkable generosity support afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.”

The rural Stratford SAFE afterschool program serves approximately 150 students in kindergarten through eighth grade, offering tutoring and homework help, arts and crafts enrichment, computer courses, golf, archery, forensic science, music lessons, aerobic dance and core training and more.

Torani’s Art for Kids contest supports afterschool programs. *Click [here](#) to view a video about the winners.*



20 AFTERSCHOOL LEADERS CHOSEN AS ‘AFTERSCHOOL AMBASSADORS’

The Afterschool Alliance announced the selection of 20 afterschool providers and advocates from around the nation to serve as 2011-2012 [Afterschool Ambassadors](#) earlier this month. The 20 local leaders hail from 17 states. Each Ambassador will continue directing or supporting a local afterschool program while also serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, and building support for afterschool programs.

“Quality afterschool programs are invaluable to students, families and communities,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire students to learn. But in Washington, D.C. and all across the country, the afterschool programs that families rely on are being threatened by budget cuts and efforts to divert afterschool funds to other programs. We need to spread the word about the urgent need to make opportunities to attend afterschool programs available to all children who need them. Each of these 20 Afterschool Ambassadors brings great skill, energy and talent to that work. I look forward to working with each of them to build even stronger support for afterschool programs among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers and others. We are proud to have them on our team.”

This year’s class of Afterschool Ambassadors is the 12th group selected for the honor. Past Ambassadors include a variety of state and local afterschool leaders – more than 150 in all who are still active in the field.

The 2011-2012 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama, Loxley:** Cherry Penn, Afterschool Childcare Program Supervisor, 21st CCLC;
- **California, Santee:** Pamela Brasher, Director, Out-of-School Time Programs;
- **Tampa, Florida:** Ralph Smith, Executive Director, Computer Mentors;
- **Hawaii, Honolulu:** Paula Adams, Program Manager, Fun 5 Program;
- **Illinois, Orland Park:** Priscilla Steinmetz, Founder & Executive Director, The Bridge Teen Center;
- **Kentucky, Corbin:** Karen West, Special Projects Curriculum Supervisor, Redhound Enrichment and Corbin Independent Schools;
- **Michigan, Saginaw:** Christine Benecke, Program Director, Youth First;
- **Montana, Havre:** Tim Brurud, Club Director, Boys & Girls Club of the Hi-Line;
- **Montana, Libby:** Kaide Dodson, CCLC Afterschool Coordinator and Enrichment Coordinator, Libby High School;
- **Minnesota, Faribault:** Lisa Wetzel, Kids World School Age Child Care;
- **New Hampshire, Bristol:** Elizabeth Colby, Extended Learning/Afterschool Director, Newfound Area School District;
- **New York, New York:** Esther Grant-Walker, Afterschool Program Coordinator/Director of School Age Programs, Isaacs Center Afterschool Program;
- **New York, Jamaica:** Deepmalya Ghosh, Director of Youth Development Programs, Child Center of NY;
- **North Carolina, Durham:** Michelle Gonzales-Green, Executive Director, SeeSaw Studio;
- **Pennsylvania, Etters:** Thierry Malley, State Program Director, PA Area Council of Boys & Girls Clubs;
- **Pennsylvania, Nesquehoning:** Jeanne Miller, Director of Carbon and Schuylkill County Education Services, SHINE Program at Lehigh Carbon Community College;
- **South Carolina, Spartanburg:** Greg Tolbert, President, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Upstate;
- **Tennessee, Chattanooga:** James McKissic, Chief Operating Officer, Urban League Chattanooga;
- **Washington, Tacoma:** Noah Prince, Partnership Administrator, Tacoma 360; and
- **Wisconsin, Racine:** Katherine Dunkerson, Director of Extended Day Programs and Community Engagement, Racine Unified School District.

The Robert Bowne Foundation is sponsoring the Ambassadorships of Deepmalya Ghosh and Esther Grant-Walker of New York; and Bright House Networks is sponsoring the Ambassadorship of Ralph Smith of Florida.

More information on the new Afterschool Ambassadors is available [here](#).



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

“The afterschool arena is often less structured than the regular school so therefore there’s more freedom and more flexibility to do interesting, creative things with kids that you might not be able to do during the typical school day... An essential aspect of changing academic outcomes is changing the attitudes of kids towards learning. If kids have become so turned off that they basically have given up, that’s what we have to change. How do you get people to not give up? Not just by pushing harder, but by enticing them into learning again.”

-- Pedro Noguera, Ph.D., professor in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University and executive director of the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, [Development](#)

[Without Limits' Please Speak Freely podcast](#),
June 14, 2011

Voices from the Afterschool Storybook...

“Although I have just completed my second year of teaching, I like to think my career really began eight years ago when I was assigned to work for the 21st Century Afterschool Program at Hanshaw Jr. High... The 21st Century Program did so much for my future and for the future of the students who experienced the program. It was more than afterschool tutoring and recreation. We developed entities at our program that brought culture, self-esteem, happiness, life-skills, and support to so many children. For some, we were the only the positive adult figures in their lives. I was so lucky to be there. I worked with people who loved children and truly cared about their well-being. I will never forget my experiences at Hanshaw. Through them, I learned the real life issues involved in teaching.”

-- Gloria Hernandez, Modesto, CA

To read the story by Gloria, and read more afterschool voices from across the country, click [here](#). Share your story [here](#).



IN THE NEWS...

California – Ten students outran the world’s fastest man in an event last month designed to raise money for the Los Angeles STAR afterschool program. Three-time Olympic champion Usain Bolt raced students in 100-meter dashes around a makeshift track at Greystone Park before signing autographs and taking pictures with students and chaperones. One of Bolt’s sponsors had pledged to donate \$10,000 to his child-focused foundation for each student who beat him to the finish line and to help him set up an athletic competition for the STAR program, the *Los Angeles Times* reports. “For me it’s a lot of fun,” Bolt said.

“I really like to work with kids because they’re so full of energy.”

Georgia – An afterschool program designed to teach middle-school girls healthy lifestyle habits has expanded to include a popular dance exercise program, the *LaGrange Daily News* reports. Zumba, a fast-paced, Latin-inspired dance, is now offered two days a week. The funds to purchase sound and video equipment and provide certification for teachers came from a local organization, Heart of West Georgia, which works to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease, women’s health and childhood obesity. “Everyone can do it,” teacher Rebecca Mitchell said. “There’s no messing up. You just keep moving, and you’re getting exercise.”

Maryland – The Prince George’s County Policy Department’s Gang Unit recently donated 50 unclaimed bicycles to an afterschool program at the Latin American Youth Center in Riverdale, where students will restore the bicycles and get a chance to keep them. The bicycle program, which started two years ago, partners AmeriCorps members and students from the University of Maryland to teach the students the basics of bicycle repair. “The bikes are a very attractive hook to get these youths interested and have them interested in our other programs,” Luisa Montero, director of the Maryland branch of the Latin American Youth Center, told the *Washington Post*. “While we have them, we’re also working on their academic skills, helping them with their homework and providing some job-readiness skills.”

New York – A new playground in Skiddy Park is guaranteed to be just what the children of Syracuse want, because they had a say in planning it. Students in the PEACE Inc. and Imagine Syracuse afterschool programs participated in a planning session with the firm designing the new park, offering suggestions – from the practical to the

implausible. The students did coloring exercises, voted on equipment they liked and came up with park rules. A professional firm will incorporate their feedback into the design, ahead of the installation in late October, the *Post Standard* reports.

Pennsylvania – Teenagers in Erie are learning how to S.A.I.L., staffing sailboats around Lake Erie and learning other maritime skills like boat-building and maintenance. But between sailing 42-foot tall boats, students at the Bayfront Maritime Center’s Project S.A.I.L. (Successful Apprenticeships and Investments in Learning) also are working on their resumes, doing SAT prep and participating in mock job interviews. The six-week afterschool program uses hands-on experience to teach entry-level job skills to teenagers, ages 15 to 18.

South Carolina – A one-of-a-kind afterschool program in Charleston that teaches emotion skills will expand to another city, thanks to a \$1 million donation from a board member and a multi-year, \$4.5 million fundraising campaign. The WINGS for Kids program, which has served 3,500 students since it began in 1996, teaches students how to control their tempers, deal with nerves and make good choices, the *Associated Press* reports. Although the program has not selected the city to which it will expand, leaders hope to be operating in at least two elementary schools in the chosen city by next fall.

Washington – A culinary program at the Bainbridge Island’s Boys & Girls Club continues to be one of its most popular afterschool choices, the *Associated Press* reports. Many students don’t help cook at home, program leaders say, so learning how to cook in the afterschool environment teaches them new skills and introduces them to new foods, while reinforcing math skills when taking measurements for recipes. The community has also supported the program; it

has received a raised garden bed and new kitchen equipment from local nonprofits and private partnerships.



SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS AGREE – AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS RAISE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Four in five elementary and middle school superintendents across the country (82 percent) agreed that educational programs beyond the traditional school day are not only important, but improve learning and social interaction and are highly successful at supplementing in-class curriculum.

Those are among the findings from a recent survey by extended learning provider [Champions®](#) and the [National AfterSchool Association](#), which underscores the importance of out-of-school time programs to students.

The survey found that an overwhelming majority of elementary and middle school superintendents agree on the benefits students receive from attending an afterschool program:

- improving in-classroom academic performance (93 percent);
- improving in-classroom engagement (92 percent);
- increasing social interaction skills (92 percent);
- improving study skills (87 percent); and
- improving test scores (86 percent).

The phone survey was designed and analyzed by Ketchum Global Research Network and fielded by Braun Research. It reached 100 superintendents or associate/assistant superintendents from June 30 to July 18, 2011, and has a margin of error of +/-9.77 percent. *Read more about the survey [here](#).*



HELP NAME A SPACECRAFT

NASA is looking for help from students in grades K-12 to [rename two robotic spacecraft orbiting the moon](#). The two ships – currently named Gravity Recover and Interior Laboratory (GRAIL)-A and GRAIL-B – took off last month from Cape Canaveral, on a three-and-a-half month mission to learn more about the moon’s composition and to create a gravity map.

Students must submit a justification for the names they pick, and final judging will be chaired by former astronaut Sally Ride and GRAIL principal investigator Maria Zuber, a researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Submissions must come from a student’s teacher, using an [online submission form](#). The deadline is November 11. *For more information, click [here](#).*



FILL UP ON NEWS AT AFTERSCHOOL SNACK!

How successful is afterschool in engaging youth in STEM activities? How can afterschool programs access funding to provide meals? Who won the national *Lights On Afterschool* poster contest? Find out all this and more in recent *Afterschool Snack* posts, some examples below include:

- [New York Times Gathers Opinions on Longer School Day](#)
- [Guest Blogger Andee Press-Dawson: California Launches The STEM In Out Of School Initiative](#)
- [Digital Badges For Lifelong Learning Bring 21st Century Knowledge To Social Networks](#)

And be sure to tune in every Wednesday for a national news round-up, and throughout the week for your daily dose of afterschool. *Check out Afterschool Snack [here](#).*



STEM continued from page one...

Connecting STEM Afterschool to Tomorrow’s Workforce

[STEM Learning in Afterschool: An Analysis of Impact and Outcomes](#) finds that reforms in formal K-12 education are necessary to fully address widely recognized shortcomings in STEM subjects – a gap that jeopardizes United States competitiveness with more STEM-savvy countries. But, the report notes, children in the U.S. spend less than 20 percent of their waking hours in school, leaving untapped opportunities for supplemental STEM learning.

At the briefing, Bevan summarized the research being conducted in this area, noting that children’s experiences outside the school day can have a tremendous influence on whether a child will stay in STEM or leave. Furthermore, researchers are showing that envisioning oneself in a STEM career early is a better predictor than grades of whether a student will pursue a STEM-related career, she said.

Laguarda explained that businesses such as Time Warner Cable care about STEM education because of the importance of STEM skills to their workforce. “We need a population that is trained, STEM-competent and STEM-literate. This is about partnerships and re-thinking how we can approach education. No one can do this alone. The private sector has a tremendous opportunity to step up.”

At Time Warner Cable, employees are encouraged to think of themselves as “STEM Connectors” and to take time to mentor youth. “We have learned through our afterschool STEM work that there is a real spark and engagement when you teach kids in a compelling way that is outside of the classroom,” Laguarda said. Time Warner Cable is the sponsor of [Connect A Million Minds](#), an initiative that encourages mentoring in STEM fields.

“It’s crystal-clear that a more STEM-literate citizenry and workforce are crucial to the future competitiveness of the United

States,” Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant said. “And it’s equally clear that a STEM-literate workforce will be even stronger when it is more diverse. What’s been less clear until now is how to get to where we need to be with STEM learning. This report lays out solid examples that demonstrate the invaluable role afterschool programs can play in moving the country forward. Afterschool programs give students the chance to build robots, explore the stars, learn how plants process sunlight and what makes airplanes and rockets fly. They have time to try, fail and try again. Much of that isn’t possible during the regular school day.”

Utilizing evaluations from afterschool STEM programs throughout the United States, the report identifies trends and outcomes that demonstrate the significant and specific contributions afterschool programs are making to STEM education.

Evaluating Afterschool’s Contribution to STEM

The Afterschool Alliance’s review of evaluations found that high-quality STEM afterschool programs yielded STEM-specific benefits in three broad categories: improved attitudes toward STEM fields and careers; increased STEM knowledge and skills; and increased likelihood of graduation and pursuing a STEM career.

In the first category – improved attitudes toward STEM fields and careers – researchers have shown that an early interest in STEM subjects is a better indicator than grades of whether a student will pursue a STEM-related career. An early interest is also necessary to motivate students to develop the knowledge and skills required to pursue more rigorous math and science courses in high school.

For example, FIRST surveyed participants from 1999 to 2003 in New York and Detroit, finding that 80 percent of respondents reported increased understanding of the role science and technology play in everyday life. Eighty-six percent reported an increased interest in science and technology; 69 percent

had an increased interest in STEM careers; 89 percent reported increased self-confidence; and 70 percent had an increased motivation to do well in school.

In the second category – increased STEM knowledge and skills – the report focuses on evaluations of nine programs that use the afterschool setting to cultivate skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. These are crucial to the knowledge-based jobs of the present and future. Project IT Girl’s evaluations, for example, showed that 82 percent of participants were more confident in gaining high-tech skills; and 79 percent gained a better understanding of STEM-related careers.

In the third category – increased likelihood of graduation and pursuing a STEM career – evaluations of STEM programs show that participants are more likely to pursue higher education and study STEM fields. Tracking students long-term, the report notes, is a resource-intensive approach that only a few programs can afford. The ACE Mentor Program for example, which had 61 percent minority participation in 2008-2009, conducted a survey of 933 alumni in 2009. ACE students who were seniors in high school in 2009 graduated at a rate of 97 percent compared to the 73 percent national graduation rate as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics; and 66 percent of alumni from the ACE program are studying architecture, engineering, construction and the skilled trades, or are already working in one of these fields.

The report concludes that, although more outcome studies and impact data from STEM afterschool programs will help clarify these promising trends, existing data already show that the afterschool setting is playing a key role in supporting STEM learning. Future STEM education policy, the report says, should include afterschool as a key component of STEM education reform efforts.

To learn more about STEM in afterschool, visit the Afterschool Alliance's special [STEM website](#).



Lights On continued from page one...

- **Arizona, Lake Havasu City. Lake Havasu City London Bridge;**
- **California, Compton. Civic Center Monument;**
- **Florida, Jacksonville. Friendship Fountain;**
- **Florida, Viera. Kennedy Space Center NASA Rocket Garden;**
- **Kentucky, Monticello. Hot Air Balloon;**
- **Michigan, Grand Rapids. La Grande Vitesse Sculpture;**
- **Minnesota, Duluth. Enger Tower;**
- **Mississippi, Gulfport. Biloxi Town Green;**
- **Montana, Great Falls. Historic Tenth Street Bridge;**
- **Ohio, Newark. Newark Courthouse, Chase Bank Tower and Longaberger Basket;**
- **Oklahoma, Del City. Del City Neighborhood;**
- **Pennsylvania, Bethlehem. Bethlehem Steel Corporation Blast Furnaces;**
- **Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. LOVE Fountain, Boathouse Row and PECO Building's 27th-floor Crown Lights;**
- **Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh. Fred Rogers Memorial Statue;**
- **Texas, La Porte. Battleship Texas;**
- **Wisconsin, Rice Lake. Lincoln Clubhouse; and**
- **Germany, Ramstein. Kaiserslautern Military Community Center Mall.**

A special feature at the Jacksonville, Florida "Light Up a Landmark" event will be the official release of the *2011 State-by-State Afterschool Progress Reports and Consumer Guides*, which consists of 50 state reports that examine how each state is helping keep the lights on for kids and families after school. Produced by the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by jcpenny, the progress reports review state policies, funding and other

activities that affect afterschool programs, examine the need in each state for these programs, offer tips to parents seeking afterschool programs for their children, and suggest ways that all state residents can support afterschool.

On Thursday, click [here](#) to see the progress report from your state.

At all the *Lights On Afterschool* events, parents, kids, educators and others will urge lawmakers not to deny or divert crucial federal funds from the afterschool programs that families rely on.

Texas 5th Grader Wins 2011 *Lights On Afterschool* Poster Contest

A talented ten-year-old has designed [artwork](#) that will be featured at thousands of *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country. Nicole Tanner of Haltom City, Texas – a student at the Birdville Independent School District's After School Program Inspiring and Reinforcing Education (BISD ASPIRE) – won the national contest to have her painting used on the official 2011 [Lights On Afterschool poster](#). Her painting illustrates some of the exciting and fun activities available in afterschool programs, from playing soccer to building rockets to learning the violin to painting, music and computer programming.

In addition to having her painting selected by the Afterschool Alliance for its 2011 poster, Tanner won a trip to Washington, D.C., with air travel provided by American Airlines.

"Nicole's painting is a wonderful representation of the range of fun and educational activities available to children who participate in quality programs," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Afterschool programs do so much more than keep kids safe. They help working families, and they provide children and youth with exciting ways to engage in hands-on learning and discover new skills, talents and interests. This year's poster celebrates active

learning and the great variety of activities afterschool programs offer.”

“To me, the most exciting part about winning the *Lights On Afterschool* poster contest was finding out I won the trip to Washington, D.C.,” Nicole said. “I’ve never been on a plane before, and I’m excited to see where the president lives and visit the Lincoln Memorial. My whole family is coming with me.”

To learn more and register your Lights On Afterschool event, or access materials to help with last-minute planning, click [here](#).



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

October 20, 2011

The Afterschool Alliance will sponsor the 12th annual [Lights On Afterschool](#), raising awareness about the benefits that afterschool programs offer to families and communities across the country. *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool programs, and in recent years it has included more than 7,500 events throughout the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide. For more information, to plan an event or share your plans, and to sign up for free materials, click [here](#).

October 31 – November 4, 2011

The California Afterschool Network and the San Diego County Office of Education will host 2011 STEP UP High School and AMP UP Middle School conferences in San Diego, California. The conferences will feature keynote speakers Stedman Graham, M.Ed. of S. Graham & Associates, and Nicole Yohalem, M.Ed. of the Forum for Youth Investment. More than 100 workshops will be offered, with topics such as youth development, STEM, physical activity, prevention, program sustainability, academic rigor and enrichment.

Both conferences convene statewide and national afterschool practitioners, including administrators, district managers/coordinators, site directors and frontline staff. STEP UP will be held October 31 to November 2, and AMP UP will be November 2 to November 4. For more information about STEP UP, click [here](#). For more information about AMP UP, click [here](#).

November 15 – 16, 2011

The National Summer Learning Association will host the Summer Changes Everything 2011 National Summer Learning Conference in San Francisco. Participants will attend workshops and hear from speakers on topics including policy, funding and innovative instructional approaches. A pre-conference session begins November 14. For more information, click [here](#).

December 7 – 9, 2011

The Best Out-of-School Time Collaborative will host the Healthy Behaviors Conference: Changing Lives, Saving Lives in San Diego. The conference for K – 12 out-of-school-time educators will explore strategies to encourage and promote healthy lifestyles for today’s youth. Workshop topics will address physical activity, childhood obesity prevention, gardening, family advocacy, best practices and more. For further information, click [here](#).

February 15 – 18, 2012

Foundations, Inc. will hold its 15th annual Beyond School Hours conference in Burlingame, California. Thousands of afterschool advocates will gather for professional development, and will hear from Geoffrey Canada, author and president/CEO of Harlem Children’s Zone in New York City, and other experts. For more information, click [here](#).



The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The Alliance is proud to count among its founding partners the Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, jcpenny afterschool, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation.
