Afterschool Advocate

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TAKE THE *CHALLENGE* FROM HOME THURSDAY

This year, instead of traveling to Washington D.C. to meet with lawmakers, the Afterschool Alliance is asking afterschool providers, allies and advocates to take action from home. Sign up to c**all and email your Members of Congress on *Afterschool for All Challenge* day this Thursday, Feb. 7!**

"We know that budgets are incredibly tight at afterschool programs around the country," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "However, **it remains as important as ever to let Congress know** about the need for more afterschool resources for our kids, families and communities. We hope afterschool providers, parents, business and community leaders and other supporters across the country will sign up to join the *Afterschool for All Challenge* from home this week, and share the powerful stories about the benefits and great successes of afterschool programs."

In Washington, D.C., the Afterschool Alliance is teaming up with the National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks to back up the at-home support with face-to-face meetings on Feb. 7 with Members of Congress and their staff.

The 2013 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is generously sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, United States Chess Federation, the NAMM Foundation, Cable in the Classroom and the National AfterSchool Association. Additional generous support is provided by Torani Syrups, the Noyce Foundation and the C.S. Mott Foundation.

NOTE FROM THE AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE

In 2013, the *Afterschool Advocate* will move to a quarterly schedule. But you won't miss the latest afterschool news, as we will move many of our regular features to the *Afterschool Snack* blog. We hope you find the new format helpful! As always, we value your input and ideas. Feel free to email us at info@AfterschoolAlliance.org.

The *Afterschool for All Challenge* Action Plan

On Feb. 7, take the *Afterschool for All Challenge* at home—all the tools to do so are in the Take Action Toolkit!

- **Meet with your congressional district offices or set up a site visit at your program.**
- **Call or email Congress and ask members to support funding for the afterschool programs working families rely on.**
- **Encourage your network of afterschool supporters to take action.**

After signing up to take action, you will receive personalized information and tips about your Members of Congress.

To learn more about the *Afterschool for All Challenge* and to register to take action from home, click here.

OUTREACH

STEM Talking Points

The Afterschool Alliance has a wealth of resources about afterschool and STEM on its website. You'll find information on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) policy and funding; listings of STEM curricula, assessment tools, and potential partners and allies; research on the impact of STEM programs on students; and more.

In those materials you'll find all kinds of evidence about why afterschool and STEM are such a good match. But here are a few brief talking points to help make the case:

- Evaluations of afterschool STEM programs point to several positive outcomes for students, including improved attitudes about STEM fields and careers, increased STEM capacities and skills, and increased likelihood of graduation and pursuit of a STEM career.

- Research shows that early engagement and increased access to STEM learning opportunities lead to greater STEM success in school and in life. This includes experiences outside of the classroom, where participants are given the opportunity to immerse themselves in a hands-on, inquiry-based environment.

- Afterschool programs are a cost-effective avenue to engage girls and minorities, since they participate in afterschool programs in higher numbers than other groups.

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

Disney Friends for Change Grants
Disney Friends for Change Grants offer young change-makers an opportunity to receive a $1,000 grant to help make a lasting, positive change in the world. Some Friend for Change grants have addressed protecting the planet, providing meals to those who need it, giving other kids the resources they need to star in their own plays or be athletes or artists. Youth ages 5-18 from all 50 states can apply. Youth who are younger than 13 must have someone older than 13 prepare and submit the application for them. Applications are due by midnight on February 10. More information is available here.

Captain Planet Foundation Grants
U.S.-based schools and organizations with annual operating budgets of less than $3 million are eligible to apply for grants from the Captain Planet Foundation. Grants are intended to serve as catalysts for environment-based education in schools and to inspire youth and communities to participate in community service through environmental stewardship activities. Preference is given to requests seeking seed funding of $500 or less and to applicants who have secured at least 50 percent matching or in-kind funding. For proposals for projects next fall and winter, apply by February 28. More information is online.

NFL Youth Football Fund Grassroots Program
The NFL Youth Football Fund Grassroots Program, administered by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and funded by the National Football League (NFL), provides support for neighborhood-based organizations and middle or high schools to improve the quality, safety, and accessibility of local football fields. Grants are available to help finance the resurfacing of community, middle school, or high school football fields and for projects not associated with the actual field surface, such as the installation/refurbishment of bleachers, concession stands, lights, etc. Applicants must be located within NFL target markets and serve low- to moderate-income areas within those markets. A list of eligible communities is included in the Request for Proposals. Applications are due March 15.

PARENTS HELPING LEAD THE CHARGE ON AFTERSCHOOL STEM LEARNING

In Nevada, Lance Bowen teaches elementary and middle school afterschool students about biology and chemistry. In Vermont, Michelle McFadden helped create a robotics programs for afterschool students. And in Alabama, Michael Shelton is teaching afterschool children about ecosystems and nature. Parents all, the three volunteer their time and energies to help make sure afterschool students in their communities, including their own children, have ample opportunities to learn about science, technology, education and math (STEM).

Across the nation, afterschool programs are rising to the challenge of helping ignite students' interest and passion in the STEM fields that will play an outsized role in the job market that awaits them. Many programs' curricula are structured to complement the work students are doing during the regular school day, but afterschool programs are uniquely suited to STEM, because they specialize in the kinds of hands-on, sleeves-rolled-up learning that is so vital to students' understanding of STEM subjects. What's more, afterschool programs are particularly well equipped to tap community resources—colleges and universities, local businesses and community organizations, and others.

Bowen, McFadden and Shelton illustrate the reach of afterschool programs when it comes to STEM. An anatomy and physiology professor at Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno, Nevada, Bowen reached out to the local school system to ask if he could volunteer his time to "do a couple science experiments with the kids," as he put it. Now, several years later, he can rattle off a series of science lessons he's taught for the regular-day science classes (including his daughter's) and the local afterschool program.

"I do lots of dissections," he explains. "Kids go crazy when you bring in an animal brain, eyeball or a heart, or something like that. Half can't wait to get close to it, and the other half think it's gross, but can't stop looking!" He complements the dissections with lessons about how the body parts do their job, vocabulary lessons, diagrams and more.

Chemistry is also in his repertoire. "I do simple things with the kids," he says. "I tell them we're going to mix vinegar and baking soda, for example, and ask them to form a hypothesis about what will happen." Mixing the two household staples results in the release of carbon dioxide, and Bowen's experiment is designed so that the reaction inflates a balloon.

From Rockets to Robots

On the other side of the country, Michelle McFadden of Montpelier, Vermont, has been, in the words of local school board member Ginny Burley, "relentless" in her efforts to strengthen STEM instruction, working to add Advanced Placement science courses to the regular school day and to create a robotics program for afterschool students.

The story of McFadden's robotics program begins with a different STEM discipline: rocketry. McFadden's oldest son, Charlie Hoffert, was a rocketry fan in high school, she explains. But he had no outlet for his passion until a science teacher at the local high school, together with a retired professor in Montpelier, joined forces to create a rocketry team. The team entered the Team America Rocketry Challenge, an annual competition in which students are required to design, build and launch a rocket that can fly to a specific altitude and land within a particular time window, all without doing harm to its "passenger"—a raw egg.

Charlie's experience with the program led him to pursue a model rocket license. When he received it and put it to use launching a rocket from a nearby registered rocket-launching site, his story ended up on the front page of the local newspaper.

Charlie's brother, Michael, meanwhile, was interested in robotics. Finding no

program available, McFadden and her husband, Chuck Hoffert, created an afterschool robotics club for their son. It, too, relied on a national program, the First Robotics Competition, the brainchild of Dean Kamen, inventor of the Segway and a number of groundbreaking medical devices.

"I'm pretty practical in terms of sending my kids to college to get a job, not to go to wander around, examine their navels and find themselves," McFadden says. "Also, I don't want my kids to go into debt to get their college degrees and if you're not in a STEM field that limits you…. I'm lucky because my kids are inclined toward STEM anyway, but we have a lot of problems to fix on this planet, and I'd like them to be part of it, and that meant they needed exposure and experience in STEM in high school."

The Science in Nature

In Fairhope, Alabama, Mike Shelton has two sons he says he's worked hard to expose to science, taking them on water-quality sampling trips and other such events related to his work with the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Now Shelton and the Reserve have expanded the scope of that effort to include afterschool students in the community. Shelton and a number of other volunteers are working with the local rotary youth club's afterschool program, to offer instruction about nature. In a recent lesson, he says, he took students on a nature walk and taught them about trees and leaf shapes. "We had the kids walking around the periphery of the building," he explains, "looking at all the trees, identifying the leaves, comparing the shapes, and talking about the exotic species that had invaded the area." Other recent lessons have focused on the water cycle, incorporating pollution prevention into the discussion.

"The school system's science curriculum is pretty regimented," Shelton says. "So the students probably wouldn't get enrichment activities on a regular basis beyond the course of study…. There are kids who really seem to eat this stuff up!"

Lessons Learned

McFadden and Bowen have each drawn specific lessons from their experiences working with afterschool students. Both of McFadden's children took advantage of local STEM clubs designed around national programs. "My basic advice is to look at the national organizations that are already in place," she says. "They have annual challenges with good rules and formats already designed. I think those kinds of competitions are an easy way to get kids into STEM fields, particularly in middle and high school."

Bowen directs his advice to afterschool programs. He came to be involved because his wife, Nevada Afterschool Network Director Danielle Bowen, connected him to the school system. "I think there's a huge parent resource out there," he says. "There are folks who would help. But unless the afterschool providers ask, parents won't know that they can volunteer to do these kinds of things." So his straightforward advice to program providers is a reminder to ask students' parents for help.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS' ROLE IN STEM EDUCATION DEFINED

In recent years, afterschool programs have staked out a major role in preparing students for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. But policymakers, afterschool leaders and others have sometimes held varying expectations about what these programs could accomplish in STEM areas.

A unique study of afterschool providers and leaders in the field from the Afterschool Alliance has identified a consensus within the

afterschool community on achievable STEM outcomes for afterschool programs and their participants: student interest, engagement, and valuing STEM goals.

The study, "Defining Youth Outcomes for STEM Learning in Afterschool," identifies the outcomes that afterschool program leaders and supporters believe the field can contribute to, the indicators of progress toward those outcomes, the types of evidence that can be collected by the afterschool field to measure success, and whether or not appropriate data-collection tools already exist.

"Education policymakers are rightly looking to afterschool programs as a key player in the effort to build our future workforce's STEM skills," said Anita Krishnamurthi, the Afterschool Alliance's director of STEM policy. "That conversation needs to reflect the best judgment of the afterschool community, and that's what we set out to capture. The bottom line from the study is that afterschool programs can contribute in important ways that help students achieve in the STEM fields, by drawing them into STEM and helping them learn the foundational skills they need to succeed. Moreover, afterschool can help expand the universe of students interested in STEM fields—a huge contribution to the effort to build a 21st century workforce."

The study used a Delphi methodology, taking an iterative approach to reaching consensus across disparate expert perspectives, surveying a panel of 55 experienced afterschool providers and a panel of 25 afterschool STEM supporters, including funders and national and state education policy leaders. The panels reached consensus on three major outcomes for youth participating in afterschool STEM programs. They concluded that afterschool STEM programs help youth to:

- Develop interest in STEM and STEM learning activities;
- Develop capacities to productively engage in STEM learning activities; and
- Come to value the goals of STEM and STEM learning activities.

The panelists also reached consensus on the indicators of progress toward these outcomes (such as awareness of STEM professions and the ability to exercise STEM-relevant life and career skills), as well as sub-indicators that represent measureable dimensions of the indicators (such as demonstrating an understanding the variety of STEM careers and demonstrating an ability to work in teams or demonstrate problem-solving abilities). However, they expressed varying degrees of confidence in afterschool's ability to demonstrate its impact.

The results are intended to give voice to the afterschool community in policy discussions around the role of afterschool in STEM education. The report includes recommendations for policymakers, so they can develop a realistic vision of what afterschool programs can accomplish; afterschool program leaders, so they can set appropriate and measurable goals; and researchers and evaluators, so they can design appropriate assessment tools.

For example, the study shows that the field is less confident about affecting in-school STEM outcomes than it is about improving skills such as problem-solving and teamwork. However, in a recommendation to policymakers, the report emphasizes that these skills are as important as academic outcomes in terms of broadening access and participation and maintaining an interest in STEM fields and careers. Accordingly, it is vital for STEM education policies to reflect this understanding.

Because afterschool programs are highly distinct from one another, serving students of different ages, relying on different localized resources and pursuing different types of learning goals, the study notes that the outcomes and indicators do not represent

mandatory goals for all afterschool STEM programs. Rather, they are intended to help programs define their goals, describe their impact and establish their niche in STEM education.

"Defining Youth Outcomes for STEM Learning in Afterschool," was released at a STEM Salon hosted by Change the Equation on January 24. Watch the full STEM Salon online. It was funded by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation and the Noyce Foundation. Krishnamurthi led the study team which included Bronwyn Bevan, associate director of program, Exploratorium; Vicky Ragan Coulon, director, Evaluation & Research Associates; and Jen Rinehart, vice president for research and policy, Afterschool Alliance.

NEW STEM RESOURCES

The Afterschool Alliance has revamped the STEM section of its website—www.afterschoolalliance.org/STEM.cfm—and released two new resources to help afterschool programs further their work with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects.

A Guide to STEM Funding for Afterschool

The Afterschool Alliance has released a guide to help afterschool leaders identify, sort and take advantage of the many funding opportunities available for afterschool STEM. "Know Your Funders: A Guide to STEM Funding for Afterschool" walks through the two main types of funding—public and private—and further categorizes the funding opportunities available. Public dollars come from federal, state and local sources, and private dollars encompass both philanthropic foundations and corporations.

The funding guide lists a few major funding streams, but is not an exhaustive list of funding opportunities, since that list would quickly become dated. Instead, the guide focuses on describing where to go to find the most current information.

It also includes tips on how to match available funding streams to individual program needs and capabilities.

The new funding guide was written in partnership with the Finance Project and developed with generous support from the Noyce Foundation. Find the guide online here.

Advocacy Toolkit

Too many of our leaders think of afterschool programs as child care, unaware of all the incredible learning opportunities that programs provide for students. Many in this audience have no idea that innovative and engaging STEM learning occurs in afterschool programs across the country and how STEM learning inspires the next generation of scientists, engineers and mathematicians. This is why educating leaders and the public through advocacy is so important!

Developed by the Afterschool Alliance, "Making the Case for STEM Afterschool" is a step-by-step resource to help afterschool providers and advocates make the case for the need for STEM learning in afterschool programs. The toolkit helps tailor messaging, identify data and talking points in support of STEM learning in afterschool programs, learn about existing policy recommendations to help craft an "ask," and identify potential allies in advocacy efforts.

Check the STEM website for periodic updates. For information on developments in national legislation, initiatives and reports that affect STEM afterschool, visit the STEM Policy page.

AFTERSCHOOL STEM PROGRAMS IN THE NEWS

ARIZONA—The *Navajo Times* reports, "For decades, Navajo education officials have been trying to think of ways to get Navajo students interested in science," and now a new afterschool program for elementary students in Ganado may have the answer: Make science fun. Ganado Elementary School created the STEM Club and partnered with the Arizona Science Center to teach students the fundamentals of science. STEM Club students are "encouraged to look at ordinary objects from a scientific perspective, whether it is dissecting a potato to examine its various layers to trying to determine how much weight a bridge can hold and why bridges are arched instead of straight." The students also visited the Arizona Science Center in November.

CALIFORNIA—Sandy Birmingham, an Afterschool Ambassador and STEM Pipeline and Outreach Coordinator for Project ACCESO at California State University Channel Islands, was named a "Leading Woman in STEM" at the 2012 California STEM Summit. Birmingham was honored for her work creating high-quality, hands-on afterschool science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs.

INDIANA—Afterschool students on the robotics team at Sycamore Elementary School and Central Middle School have been challenged to come up with ideas to help senior citizens become more independent, engaged and connected. The students pitched their concept for portable stairs, to help seniors get in and out of large vehicles, at the F.I.R.S.T LEGO League qualifying tournament at Purdue University, the *Kokomo Tribune* reports. The robots the students build will also earn points by performing activities and tasks that a senior citizen might do, such as exercising, quilting, picking up a pill bottle, and more.

MARYLAND—Afterschool students built boats that had to stay afloat holding pennies, a balloon that could navigate an obstacle course, and a catapult to launch marshmallows—all in the first term of the STEM afterschool program at the Boys & Girls Club of Frederick County. Middle school students from four teams built catapults and competed against each other "to put their brain and building power to the test," the *Frederick News Post* reports. The Boys & Girls Club director said the new STEM component encourages more creative juices and teamwork.

MASSACHUSETTS—Middle school students at the Lowell Public Schools Science and Technology IDEA Labs afterschool program are learning "open-ended problem solving" by figuring out how to make a stuffed wolf's head howl automatically when someone walks by and getting a zombie head on a Halloween toy to pop up, the *Lowell Sun* reports. The ghoulish projects are part of the afterschool program's curriculum on electromagnetism. This is the first year for the IDEA Labs program, and the school system's STEM curriculum and instruction specialist hopes that the system can secure funding to expand the program to more middle schools.

NEW MEXICO—Thanks to a new federal grant, thousands of afterschool students in southern New Mexico will be able to participate in STEM-focused afterschool programs. "The STEM-focused 21st Century Community Learning Centers Afterschool Program is a continuation of the Southern New Mexico Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Aerospace Academy, a NASA program; and the Digital Media Academy, which focuses on cultivating critical thinking skills through the use of technology for 21st century learning," the *Las Cruces Sun-News* reports. The new grant will fund STEM afterschool programs at 20 elementary and middle schools in Gadsden and Las Cruces for four years.

NEW YORK—At the Women in Technology Workshop at Mildred E. Strang Middle School (MESMS), IBM women facilitators showed afterschool students how to make lip gloss, body wash, perfume, pocketbooks, shoes and more and then guided students through presentations to introduce their products, including what they used to make the products, marketing plans, etc. "This workshop is a great opportunity for girls to work closely with the women from IBM and to learn more about what is available to them in the field of technology," Megan Kalogris, a science teacher at MESMS, told the *Yorktown Daily Voice*.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS ON STEM

"More than ever, today's kids need a place to go after school where they can not only unwind but also recharge. They need activities that are enriching, constructive, and rejuvenating. At F.I.R.S.T.®, we believe our mix of robotics programs—for kids ages 6 to 18—is the answer…. Afterschool hours offer the perfect opportunity for young people to explore what it is like to collaborate, innovate, succeed, have fun, and even fail in these endeavors. All of these experiences will better prepare them for the real-world experiences they will face as working adults. F.I.R.S.T.® programs help guide the next generation to transform our world through innovation and technology. The need is critical, and the benefits are incredible."
—Jon W. Dudas, president of F.I.R.S.T. (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), a nonprofit organization that inspires an appreciation of science and technology in young people.

"Q: What's the most fulfilling part about volunteering with the afterschool program?

A: The last week, I came up with a fun activity and all the students who had previously been bored (obviously forced by a teacher or parent to participate in this club) were having a good time. I like to think that their enjoying only 5% of the activities could still lead to a career in science—if you can make them see how relevant, fascinating and omnipresent chemistry is, for example, not just something just for men in white coats under fluorescent lights."
—Charlotte Frei, graduate research assistant at Northwestern University, who leads middle school students in experimental design activities as part of the Materials Science Research Engineering Outreach afterschool program.

"I wanted to be part of the Explorers Club because it sounded like fun. Mr. Lague and Mr. O'Donoghue taught us about plants and animals, and showed us the effects that people have on the environment. Each week, our teachers created a game to help us understand what we were learning in the afterschool program. My favorite lesson was on the effects of pesticides on the food chain…. Some of the things we learned in the Explorers Club were similar to what we learned in class, but it was always a surprise…. Because of the Explorers Club afterschool program, I know more about our environment and animals. Now, I am much more curious about everything—even my own backyard."
—Charlotte Gridley, a third-grade student from Rutland, Mass.

AFTERSCHOOL, A TOOL FOR ENGAGING PARENTS

Countless studies have shown a strong correlation between parental engagement and a student's academic success, but many schools continue to struggle to engage

parents. The latest Issue Brief from the Afterschool Alliance and the MetLife Foundation discusses how afterschool programs can break down cultural, socioeconomic and language barriers schools may face when working to increase parent engagement by providing additional opportunities for parents to become involved.

Having a caring adult involved in a child's education improves students' academic performance, attendance and graduation rates; reduces dropout rates and at-risk behaviors; and positively impacts students' attitudes, behaviors and overall well-being regardless of household income, race or ethnicity.

"Afterschool: A Key to Successful Parent Engagement" explains that community-based afterschool programs—often staffed by members of the community—may be viewed as more approachable by parents and may be able to offer guidance and assistance to parents who may be overwhelmed by their school system. The Issue Brief says, "For example, afterschool programs are able to keep their doors open into the evening hours and on weekends to facilitate parent involvement; draw parents and families in by providing counseling and other wraparound services; offer English classes and translation assistance for families who are not fluent in English; and provide incentives for participation, such as food and meals."

The Issue Brief highlights examples of successful afterschool programs that engage parents by:

- Helping open the channels of communication and understanding between parents and children by offering counseling and family support services that encourage student success;
- Building trust with families who may feel disengaged and disconnected from the school system and providing resources to help parents become active stewards in their children's education;
- Leveraging program resources to incentivize parent participation; and
- Soliciting and incorporating parent feedback and suggestions into program structure to gain buy-in and engender participation.

The brief concludes that, together with schools, afterschool programs are strengthening parent engagement efforts and helping provide the foundation necessary to make sure that children are on the path to educational success.

"Afterschool: A Key to Successful Parent Engagement" was released at the National Summer Learning Association's national conference. It is the third in a series of four Issue Briefs examining the critical issues facing middle school youth and how afterschool programs can address those issues. The first two briefs in the series, "Afterschool: An Ally in Promoting Middle School Improvement" and "Arts Enrichment in Afterschool," were released earlier this year. The fourth Issue Brief will address digital learning opportunities.

The MetLife Foundation provides generous support for the series. Read the new Issue Brief on parent engagement here.

BOARD MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS NOT JUST MONETARY

As all afterschool providers know, one key to long-term sustainability is developing strong community support—reaching out to parents, local businesses, community organizations, political leaders and others, and finding ways to invest them in the health and success of afterschool programs.

Such relationships require maintenance, of course, and many afterschool programs have found that their strongest supporters in the community make valuable members of

programs' boards of directors or advisory boards—and not just for the dollar contributions they make.

In Chattanooga, Tennessee, for example, James McKissic, Chief Operating Officer of the local Urban League, points to two advisory board members who have made important contributions to the League's afterschool programming. One board member, Marie Webb, Vice President for Human Resources of the Electric Power Board, arranged for a number of students in the League's STEM Academy to shadow STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) professionals for two weeks during the summer. In addition to the invaluable exposure to a glimpse of what a STEM career might look like, the utility provided students with a $500 stipend, and a $1,000 college scholarship upon completion of the program.

Another member of McKissic's advisory board, Dr. Vince Betro, the Director of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's STEM education program, helped create evaluation tools for the afterschool program. The tools allowed staff to gauge students' interest and knowledge of STEM topics, and assess their progress with health and fitness components of the program.

Advocacy for Afterschool

In New York City, Mark Haken, a retired school teacher and longtime advocate for youth programs, has served on a series of advisory boards for Beacon programs in the city. Haken was part of the team that designed the city's original Beacon program, under then-Mayor David Dinkens. Since then, and particularly during the city's protracted battle this spring over afterschool funding, Haken has worked to protect Beacon and other afterschool programs from citywide cutbacks.

Deepmalya Ghosh, Director of Youth Development Programs for the Child Center of New York, a Beacon program, says Haken, "has used his contacts and vast network over the past 14 years to advocate on behalf of Beacon participants and has served as an elder mentor to hundreds of kids who've attended…. [His] contributions are too many to list, but cover a broad range, from cooking at barbecues to providing students with presents during holiday parties, to joining on trips to Albany to fight for summer jobs, to vocally reprimanding government officials when threats to program funding become apparent."

Volunteer Power

In Spartanburg, South Carolina, Greg Tolbert, President of the Boys & Girls Club of the Upstate, points to the work of the Vice-Chair of his board of directors, Chet Arthur, Director of Customer Service for the Adidas Group. Since establishing a distribution center in Spartanburg, Adidas has focused its cash and in-kind giving on the Boys & Girls Club, contributing athletic equipment and uniforms, as well as book bags, and even Thanksgiving dinners. Tolbert says all are deeply appreciated, but he says that the hands-on contributions of the company's employees have been equally valuable. Adidas gives its employees time off from work to volunteer for afterschool activities, and they take good advantage of the opportunity. Adidas volunteers chaperone dance events, serve as assistant coaches, host tailgate parties before games, organize and staff tournaments, and raise money for the Club from their colleagues and others.

Other communities have similar standout board members. In Baldwin County, Alabama, Cherry Penn, supervisor of 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs, has an advisory committee member who contributed his time to build a shed to house afterschool program materials. He's now working on relocating a donated greenhouse to the program's site, so that afterschool students will be able to grow vegetables. Similarly, in West Valley, Utah, an officer of First Utah Bank who serves as a member of the Community Education Partnership's board of directors, has

organized a program through which bank employees volunteer once a week to read to elementary-age students. Another board member, an outreach coordinator for Salt Lake Community College, organizes a student ambassador program, and serves as an advisory to the chess club.

"A lot of nonprofit organizations, including afterschool programs, use seats on their boards to solidify relationships with their major donors," says Afterschool Alliance Executive Jodi Grant. "That makes a lot of sense, but the contributions board members make can go way beyond the monetary. We see it on our own board. For example, Gilbert Moreno of JP Morgan Chase has been an invaluable member of our board, helping guide our investment decisions, and helping us navigate a number of tax issues. And he has been a second set of well-informed eyes when it comes to accounting and budgeting. That kind of expertise on a board is incredibly helpful, and it's an example of why you want your board to bring a range of talents and skills to the organization."

NH PROGRAM BRINGS NURSING CAREER EXPLORATION INTO THE MIX

Job readiness components of afterschool programs can take many different forms. For one program in Manchester, N.H., the opportunity to team up with a prominent health foundation led to a focus on nursing that's opening new doors for high school students and positioning them to help diversify the state's nursing workforce.

B.R.I.N.G. I.T.!!! (Bringing Refugees, Immigrants and Neighbors Gently Into Tomorrow) is an afterschool program serving low-income at-risk adolescents in grades 4 through 12 in Manchester. The program provides recreational, social and educational experiences to Manchester youth, many of whom are newly arrived refugees and immigrants who face major educational and socioeconomic barriers to success. The program is a close collaboration between Southern New Hampshire Services (the Community Action Agency for Hillsborough County) and the Manchester School District.

Now in its sixth full school year, B.R.I.N.G. I.T.!!! has grown to encompass homework help, soccer, dance, art and nursing, which was launched three years ago in conjunction with the Concord, N.H.-based Endowment for Health as part of the New Hampshire Nursing Diversity Pipeline Project, an initiative supported by Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN), a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation.

"Career exploration isn't something we'd thought about in a formal capacity," says B.R.I.N.G. I.T.!!! Program Coordinator Jodi Harper. "We were doing a lot of one-on-one work with students, and referrals for college and jobs. But it wasn't until we had the opportunity to become part of this PIN program that we decided to look at it in a programmatic way. The Endowment for Health was working on the proposal, and they wanted to have a piece for kids, and they knew that were working with kids citywide from a lot of different cultures, so they asked us if we wanted to partner with them."

B.R.I.N.G. I.T.!!! currently serves 360 students in a drop-in program two days per week, including 25 students in grades 9 through 12 who apply for an introductory nursing class that has around a dozen weekly sessions. There is also an advanced class available for juniors and seniors, as well as assistance with their college applications and financial aid forms. The classes are considered an extended learning opportunity for which students receive school credit.

"The idea with the New Hampshire Nursing Diversity Pipeline Project is to increase the bicultural, bilingual nursing workforce for New Hampshire," Harper says.

"There are more than 70 languages spoken in our school system, because Manchester is a federally designated refugee resettlement location. The face of the state is changing, so the face of the health care workforce needs to change as well."

"I was confident that the program would be successful," she adds. "I just didn't anticipate how quickly the students and the community would become invested in it." The nursing program has served 75 students so far, several of whom are in college in a pre-nursing track. "We're looking at funding that would allow us to go into other career fields, such as human resources, social services and criminal justice," says Harper.

Students in the nursing program have visited a variety of sites, including a simulation lab, an outpatient surgical center and a midwifery center. Even if they ultimately don't pursue nursing, Harper says, there are important benefits for the participants:

> "They all get CPR training, and a lot of them have younger siblings and grandparents at home, so they're better able to help their families. And they believe in themselves. They have a higher sense of achievement, having gone through the program, and they realize there is a lot more opportunity out there for them, instead of thinking that they could only take certain career paths that their cultures lay out for them."

To learn more about B.R.I.N.G. I.T.!!!, contact Jodi Harper, visit the Southern New Hampshire Services website, or check out the program on Facebook.

WV VOTERS: TO KEEP AFTERSCHOOL, WE'LL PAY MORE

Afterschool programs in Roane County, West Virginia, got a shot in the arm on Election Day when voters approved a $214,000 property tax levy to fund the Patch afterschool program.

Created in 1996, Patch serves about 2,800 students in three counties in West Virginia, accounting for about one-fourth of the total afterschool population of the state. Recent budget cuts in Jackson and Mason Counties forced the program to cut back its offerings, but in Roane County, Patch Director David McCutcheon, an Afterschool Ambassador, persuaded the county commission to place the levy on the ballot, letting voters decide whether to pay a little more to save afterschool services for their kids.

On Election Day, voters put their money where their kids were, with 62 percent supporting the levy, clearing the 60 percent threshold required for passage. McCutcheon says the new revenue will allow the program to have afterschool programs in the coming school year at three sites that were not eligible for 21st Century Community Learning Centers support.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS…

February 20-23, 2013

Beyond School Hours XVI will be held February 20-23 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront in Florida. Conference participants will learn how to successfully engage older youth, see best practices in action and connect with education leaders. Ron Clark, the 2000 Disney American Teacher of the Year and two-time *New York Times* bestselling author, will be the keynote speaker. More information is available online.

March 13-16, 2013

The National Youth Leadership Council, in partnership with Earth Force, will host its 24th Annual National Service-Learning Conference, *Without Limits,* in Denver. The National Service-Learning Conference is the largest gathering of youth and practitioners involved in service-learning. The conference's format offers a self-directed, facilitated learning environment with education sessions, discussion groups and interactive workshops designed specifically for all levels of attendees. Visit http://servicelearningconference.org/2013/ for more information.

May 1-4, 2013

The Best of Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Conference is one of the largest and most comprehensive professional development opportunities in the country for those who serve youth in the out-of-school-time hours. More than 2,000 professionals will attend the conference in Palm Springs, Calif. The all-inclusive event supports California's After School Education & Safety Program, 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs, and High School ASSETS programs. For more information, visit www.boostconference.org.

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, jcpenney Afterschool Fund, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation.

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