

# Afterschool Advocate

A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance

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## **LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL! IS A HUGE SUCCESS**

On October 9, more than half a million Americans participated in *Lights On Afterschool!*, the largest rally for afterschool in our nation's history. Communities large and small throughout the United States spoke out for more afterschool programs at events in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as Puerto Rico, Guam, Japan and South Korea. Governors in 44 states issued proclamations in support of afterschool programs.

Actor, children's activist and California Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger kicked-off the events with a rally on Sunday, October 5 in Los Angeles. Schwarzenegger is National Chair of *Lights On Afterschool!* for the third consecutive year. Actress and longtime afterschool supporter Rhea Perlman also served as a spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool!* this year. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool!* included more than 6,000 rallies. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is National Presenting Sponsor.

A diverse group of more than 120 education, civic, arts, parents, government and other groups supported *Lights On Afterschool!* this year. Among them were Americans for the Arts, General Federation of Women's Clubs, National Council of La Raza and National Inventors Hall of Fame. Other organizations that coordinated hundreds of events included Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H, Junior Achievement and YMCA of the USA.

"It is inspiring to see so many people, all over the country, joining forces to tell

lawmakers to put kids first and provide afterschool programs for all," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson, who attended *Lights On Afterschool!* rallies in California, the District of Columbia, New Hampshire and Ohio. "With support like this, we are sure to meet our goal of 'afterschool for all' by the year 2010."

"*Lights On Afterschool!* is a celebration of afterschool and a reminder about how much afterschool programs matter to families and communities," said Ed Solczak, Vice President of the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. "Afterschool programs help children flourish while keeping them safe after the school day ends. JCPenney and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund are deeply committed to afterschool programs." Hundreds of JCPenney store managers and afterschool coaches joined *Lights On Afterschool!* events in their communities.

### **An Early Start on October 9**

*Lights On Afterschool!* started early in the morning in New York City. Albert Pollard from the TASC afterschool program at Jacob A. Riis Settlement, I.S. 126, was joined by more than 100 students at Rockefeller Plaza bright and early to talk with NBC *Today Show* weatherman Al Roker. Pollard formally kicked-off the day by announcing *Lights On Afterschool!* on national television and thanking JCPenney for its support. The cameras panned the crowd of kids in *Lights On Afterschool!* t-shirts, the Afterschool for All banner and several afterschool signs that children had made.

Meanwhile, at Trump Plaza, CBS's *The Early Show* anchor Hannah Storm announced that October 9 is *Lights On Afterschool!* day

with rallies all over the country for afterschool. Surrounded by local afterschool program students, Storm interviewed Yehudi Diaz from the Manhattan Police Athletic League, who discussed the importance of afterschool programs.

### Local Events

From the steps of City Hall in New York City to the state fair grounds in Lincoln, Nebraska to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Navy Hawaii in Honolulu, lawmakers, community and business leaders, creative artists and religious leaders voiced their support for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement. Events included:

- ◆ In **Alaska**, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District hosted a *Lights On Afterschool!* event at the Boys & Girls Club of the Tanana Valley. The rally highlighted all the local afterschool programs. The event began at the Boys & Girls Club and guests paraded through town to the Visitor Center at the Water Fountain. Students then walked back to the club for refreshments and speeches. Participating groups included the Boys & Girls Club, Love Social Services, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Literacy Council of Alaska, CampFire USA, Parks and Recreation, Fairbanks Arts Association and Resource Center for Parents and Children.

- ◆ In **Colorado**, the Mile High United Way and Denver Public Schools Foundation teamed up with the Denver Public Schools to host a large *Lights On Afterschool!* event at Bruce Randolph Middle School on October 15. Featured speakers included newly elected Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper. At the news conference, the Mile High United Way announced a new “Lights On Afterschool” campaign to raise \$10 million for afterschool in Denver in the next five years. As one of the first donations, a representative from Lockheed Martin presented a check for \$125,000 to the campaign. Following the news conference, guests were invited to tour

the school and see some of the many activities that take place at Denver’s afterschool programs each afternoon.

- ◆ In **Florida**, the Florida Children’s Forum hosted a “Books at Breakfast” event at the School of Arts and Science in Tallahassee. Parents, children, educators, and state leaders joined together to raise awareness and educate lawmakers about the important role that before- and afterschool programs play in the lives of children and families. In addition to speeches from local dignitaries, adults partnered with local students to read a book during the breakfast.

- ◆ In **Louisiana**, the *New Orleans Lights On Afterschool!* Steering Committee organized a large rally in Lafayette Square in the central business district. New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin issued a proclamation. Students and parents gave testimonials about how and why afterschool programs are important. Local elected officials, foundation representatives, state senators and representatives from the mayor’s office, school superintendents and local law enforcement officials participated. Students performed dances and theatrical numbers. There also were banners and placards showing support for afterschool programs.

- ◆ In **Maryland**, The Door hosted an open house that featured activities from local afterschool programs in Baltimore. The Door is the first faith-based afterschool program to receive a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers grant in the state. Guest speakers included the Maryland State Superintendent of Schools and the Baltimore City Council president. Approximately 150 students performed and displayed artwork, videos and other activities that they participate in daily at their programs. During the weekend prior to *Lights On Afterschool!*, nine JCPenney stores in Maryland promoted local *Lights On Afterschool!* events by setting up afterschool information booths and encouraging shoppers to participate in the events and to volunteer at afterschool programs.

◆ In **Nebraska**, the Legacies program in Omaha hosted “A Night In Hollywood” fundraiser at the Westside Middle School. Prior to *Lights On Afterschool!*, students wrote their favorite movie stars and athletes, asking for items to be auctioned off. Celebrities, including John Travolta, sent signed pictures and other memorabilia. On October 9, current and former students dressed as their favorite stars and were given “red carpet treatment,” including a limousine ride around the school and hair styling and make-up inside. The silent auction raised \$3,000 for student scholarships. There were information booths and gift tables, a walk of fame with handprints from afterschool supporters and afterschool facts, magic shows, face painting, photo booths and more.

◆ In **Nevada**, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe’s Afterschool Learning Centers, the Washoe County School District, and the YMCA of the Sierra hosted a *Northern Nevada Lights On Afterschool!* celebration at Bartley Ranch Regional Park Amphitheater in Reno. Guests were entertained by music award winner JANA, performers from Circus Circus Hotel Casino, breakdancers, Native American Dance Groups, a magic act and more. There was also a corn maze, information booths from local agencies and the Air National Guard did a fly-over. The mayors of Sparks and Reno presented proclamations and Miss Rodeo Nevada discussed her involvement with an afterschool program that was forced to close due to lack of funding.

◆ In **Texas**, the Fort Worth Independent School District’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Programs hosted a rally outside the JCPenney store at the Ridgmar Mall. Junior Achievement, Boys & Girls Clubs, Fort Worth After School and the Parks and Recreation Department partnered for the event. The local YMCA presented a plaque to JCPenney for its generous financial support. Awards were also presented to several community members who are strong supporters of afterschool, including Lockheed

Martin. There were several student performances, a JCPenney fashion show, arts and craft displays and booths with hands-on activities.

◆ In **Washington**, the Beachwood School-Age Center hosted a march on Heroes Avenue in Fort Lewis with students from three local afterschool centers. Children dressed as their favorite heroes, sang songs, waved flags and carried banners. Two military officials led the march down the avenue. Close to 400 people, including government officials, managers from the afterschool centers, parents and the community, participated in the parade.

◆ In **Wyoming**, Lights On in Lander hosted a “Market Day” at its three local elementary school sites. Throughout September, afterschool program participants earned *Lights On!* stickers that they could trade in for *Lights On!* dollars. They were then able to spend their *Lights On!* money during Market Day at booths that included a hair and nail salon, face painting, bistro with pizza and nachos, and merchandise produced by the Lights On Craft Company. The students displayed several of the crafts featured in their upcoming holiday catalogue. Smokey the Bear and the Crash Test Dummies spoke to the students about safety.

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR *LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL!* EVENT

The amazing success of the Afterschool Alliance’s fourth annual *Lights On Afterschool!* could not have happened without the support of local programs. We would like to hear from the more than 6,000 programs that participated in this year’s event. The Afterschool Alliance web site includes a brief survey for you to complete, located at [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa\\_2003/tell\\_us.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa_2003/tell_us.cfm). We want to hear about your successes and challenges and how we might have been more helpful. Thank you for your support!

## JCPENNEY STORES HELP POWER *LIGHTS ON!*

Across the country on October 9, *Lights On Afterschool!* organizers turned to JCPenney stores for assistance in planning and conducting their events. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund – the retailing giant’s \$30 million charitable arm – was again the National Presenting Sponsor of *Lights On Afterschool!* And at the local level, JCPenney retailers played key roles in the planning and execution of rallies and other events.

JCPenney stores’ participation in *Lights On!* is just one part of its overall commitment to afterschool. Each store offers a unique “Afterschool Zone,” where parents can get information on afterschool programs in their communities. Also, every store designates one employee – sometimes the store manager, sometimes a department manager or sales associate – to be an “afterschool coach,” who coordinates the store’s afterschool commitments.

In Greenville, South Carolina, store manager Bill Hudson and afterschool coach Eileen Durham of the Haywood Mall JCPenney gave a big boost to their local event, coordinated by a local 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program. The rally featured an appearance by the mayor, several state representatives and Miss South Carolina 2002. It focused on children’s health. Hudson and Durham provided JCPenney gift certificates to the winners of essay contests, and handled the printing of banners and posters to promote and decorate.

Hudson served on the planning committee for the event, and helped arrange for the facility – a nearby shopping mall. Durham explained that local afterschool programs provide critical services to the Greenville community. “From what I’ve seen with my own eyes,” she says, “a lot of the children in our community don’t have anything else afterschool. So the program is absolutely a necessity for them. It helps with their education and keeps them out of crime.”

Gibson points out that his store has been able to help support afterschool locally all year round, not just for *Lights On!* “We make a big push to support the YMCAs. We’ve got one Y in a really tough part of Greenville, and it has saved a lot of kids by keeping them safe and out of trouble. So we do a lot of luncheons for them here, where we donate money to them. So many programs have lost government funding recently, and the YMCAs have really helped pick up the slack.”

In Fort Worth, Texas, not far from JCPenney’s corporate headquarters in the suburbs of Dallas, John Salisbury, a department manager and afterschool coach at the Ridgmar Mall JCPenney, also helped arrange for a mall location for the *Lights On!* event.

“John was great to work with and extremely supportive,” says Sue Matkin, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers coordinator in Fort Worth and an Afterschool Ambassador. “He was always looking for ways to help make the event a success. It’s truly a commitment of the heart for him and for JCPenney.” The boisterous event included a fashion show featuring JCPenney clothing, performances from nearly a dozen student groups, and booths and displays on different facets of local afterschool programming. Several hundred children, parents and supporters turned out.

JCPenney associates wore *Lights On Afterschool!* stickers before and during the event, and the store inserted flyers into shoppers’ bags to promote turnout. Salisbury says the mall manager was persuaded to allow the event in the mall partly from a desire to support afterschool programs, and also because it made sound business sense. “We explained that the program would attract a number of people to the mall on a non-peak evening,” he recalls. “They were very interested to have an attraction that would bring in several hundred people and that didn’t cost them anything.”

“Afterschool’s important to us at JCPenney for a number of reasons,” he continues. “This community provides our business and our living, and supporting afterschool is a way for us to pay some of that back. And it’s also a way to help the community around us to be better customers – to be better educated and to take pride in their community. And, of course, some of our employees have kids in afterschool care, so it’s a way for us to support our people.”

Thurman Reynolds, manager of the JCPenney East Point Mall store in Baltimore, began attending *Lights On Afterschool!* planning meetings in mid-August, and he says his enthusiasm grew with each meeting. “When you see the need for afterschool programs and the lack of resources, you can’t help but get involved,” said Reynolds. “It is one thing to hear about the budget cuts on the news, but to meet the people that are affected by the closing of afterschool programs is another thing.”

Reynolds encouraged other JCPenney stores in his district to help support *Lights On Afterschool!* and nine local stores held in-store promotions on the Saturday before *Lights On!* Students and parents from afterschool programs staffed booths in the stores and encouraged customers to participate in area *Lights On!* events, to volunteer at programs and to sign letters of support for additional funding of afterschool programs.

With the decorating expertise and assistance of JCPenney District Visual Manager Jean Sulton Cooper, Reynolds and Erica Dorsey, afterschool coach at the East Point Mall JCPenney store, spent more than five hours setting up and decorating The Door, an afterschool program in Baltimore that hosted a *Lights On!* event. During the event, Reynolds presented Afterschool Alliance Afterschool Ambassador Kacy Conley with a donation for her afterschool program.

In Las Vegas, Nevada, Chuck Vogel of the JCPenney store at The Boulevard Mall,

arranged for a concerted promotion effort to JCPenney customers. For three weeks in advance of *Lights On!*, sales associates wore stickers and inserted promotional flyers into shoppers’ bags.

“I take our support for afterschool very personally,” says Vogel, who is both the store manager and afterschool coach. “I’ll bet 50 percent of my employees’ kids benefit in some way from an afterschool program. And a lot of our customers’ lives are touched by afterschool, as well. I’m a very strong believer in afterschool.”



## **AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS RECOGNIZED IN NATIONAL CONTEST ON SUSTAINABILITY**

In early October, the Afterschool Alliance honored two winners in its Home Run Contest, which recognizes afterschool programs that have developed creative and successful funding strategies. Elizabeth Albert, the founder and executive director of San Francisco’s After School Enrichment Program, was named the national winner and John Meredith, founding director of Houston’s Aspiring Youth After-School Program, was named the runner-up.

The contest was established this year by the Alliance to help identify afterschool programs whose approach to “sustainability” would serve as a model for struggling programs. To enter the Home Run Contest, Albert and Meredith submitted information via the Afterschool Alliance’s web site ([www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)). Albert was awarded tickets and a trip to the Major League Baseball World Series. Meredith received tickets and a trip to the National League Championship Series in recognition of the achievement.

The After School Enrichment Program (ASEP) is a licensed nonprofit child care center for school-age children, operating on

the campus of McKinley Elementary School in San Francisco. Its mission is to provide a safe, nurturing and enriching environment, and it provides daily homework help and small-group tutoring, as well as instruction in the natural sciences, reading, writing, arts, cooking and physical education. Now in its fifth year of operation, the program serves 100 children, in a school with a student enrollment of 170.

The Aspiring Youth After-School Programs in Houston serve almost 600 students at nine school-based afterschool sites in the Houston Independent School District (ISD) and North Forest ISD. Since Aspiring Youth was first conceived in 1992 – on the back of a banquet napkin – it has been implemented in more than 30 cities. In Houston, it relies on a series of creative fundraising approaches, keeping its programs thriving with support from foundations, local businesses, professional associations and individual donors. In addition, about a quarter of the organization’s budget comes from local school districts.



## **BLUES CONTEST – NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR AFTERSCHOOL WITH RAY CHARLES IN THE YEAR OF THE BLUES!**

The Sir Charles Blues Lab, a nonprofit organization that collaborates with schools and community centers across the country to provide afterschool music programs that teach the blues, is co-sponsoring a songwriting contest with the Afterschool Alliance. If your students are between 13 and 19 years old, they can enter their original blues lyrics to be one of five winners of a trip for two to Los Angeles. There the winning songs will be produced by Ray Charles and friends such as Slash and Bonnie Raitt!

The deadline to enter is December 15, 2003, and the winners will be announced in February 2004. More information about the contest and the Sir Charles Blues Lab can be found at [www.blueslab.org](http://www.blueslab.org).



## **IN THE NEWS...**

**National** – On October 9, Kinderstreet honored two programs in its National Community Day Contest - THINK Together of Orange County, California and TLC: Total Learning Community in Niles, Illinois. THINK (Teaching, Helping, Inspiring, Nurturing Kids) Together operates 12 afterschool learning centers in Orange County and provides academic support to 1,800 low-income students. THINK Together was selected as a winner for its instrumental role in transforming neighborhoods tormented by gangs, drug dealers, shootings and school dropouts. TLC: Total Learning Community of East Maine School District 63 provides a variety of learning and enrichment opportunities for young children, parents and senior citizens. TLC was selected as a winner for creatively employing partnerships to successfully address the specific needs of five communities in an area which has no public library and whose residents speak more than 40 languages. Kinderstreet is a Michigan-based provider of Internet applications for afterschool and early childhood programs, camps, schools and other programs for kids and youth.

**National** – “How much is \$87,000,000,000... \$87 B is double what we invest in homeland security... eight times what we invest in Pell grants for college students... 87 times our investment in afterschool programs. The White House budget slashes after-school programs from \$1 billion to \$600 million – eliminating them for 475,000 children,” notes a portion of the September 24 op-ed page advertisement in the *New York Times*.

TomPaine.com, a non-profit, nonpartisan Internet journal, paid for the ad that questioned President Bush's request for funding for the occupation and rebuilding of Iraq. For more information about TomPaine.com, visit [www.tompaine.com](http://www.tompaine.com).

**National** – The October issue of *Working Mother* magazine features the annual list of the “100 Best Companies for Working Mothers.” The magazine notes that one of the newest business trends is that companies are now offering afterschool programs for tweens and teens in day-care centers, as well as support groups and counseling for parents. “Just as they are reaching the peak of their careers, women are facing the biggest challenges in their family lives. Companies that offer tween and teen programs and support for other family members keep employees at work and on track” said *Working Mother* editor-in-chief Jill Kirschenbaum. For more information on *Working Mother* magazine and the complete listing of top 100 companies, visit [www.workingmother.com](http://www.workingmother.com).

**Arizona** – Through technical support and equipment from Intel, the Yaqui clubhouse in Tucson is helping afterschool students to preserve the Yaqui language and traditions, reports the *Associated Press*. Through the use of computers, video equipment, digital cameras and music software, students at the clubhouse are creating documentaries about their tribal heritage and learning to speak their tribe's traditional language.

**Minnesota** – Thanks to the efforts of Laurie O'Neill and Parks and Recreation Director Carl Seehus, several afterschool programs that closed last year due to state budget cuts will reopen this fall, reports the *Duluth News-Tribune*. O'Neill created “600 for Kids Fund,” a grassroots campaign encouraging 600 people to donate \$100 to afterschool programs. As of September, the campaign has raised \$21,000.

**New York** – In late September, 43 afterschool programs throughout New York received notification that Advantage After-School funding for their sites would terminate on September 30, and most of the 117 remaining sites that did receive renewal contracts suffered substantial cuts, some as much as 50 percent. “The 50 percent cut - \$10 million - in overall Advantage After-School funding from last year's budget level will negatively impact over 80 school districts across the state,” said Davia Gaddy-Collington, Statewide Director for the Coalition for After School Funding, an advocacy group made up of parents, youth and providers. “We call on the state legislature and governor to restore these cuts and save this essential service for working parents throughout the state.”

**Rhode Island** – The AS220 Broad Street Studio in Providence, the Providence Children's Museum and the East Providence Community Center received a total of \$28,000 in grants for afterschool programming from Cox Charities of New England, reports the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*. Each year Cox Charities, the charitable arm of Cox Communications, donates funds to organizations dedicated to the education and development of youth. This year's focus is on afterschool programs. For more information about Cox Charities of New England, visit [www.cox.com/NewEngland/cox\\_charities.asp](http://www.cox.com/NewEngland/cox_charities.asp)

**Texas** – Two hundred students from Avance and the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department's After School Challenge Program were the first to receive a free book from the First Book program, reports the *San Antonio Express-News*. The First Book program is a national initiative that gives children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. In coming weeks, more than 7,000 student from low-income areas in San Antonio will receive a copy of the Spanish-

and-English version of *The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water*. For more information on First Book, visit [www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org).

**Washington** – In September, the Governor’s Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee attributed the recent decrease in juvenile arrest rates to afterschool programs, parental involvement and lower poverty, reports the *Spokesman Review*. Juvenile arrest rates in Washington State are the lowest they have been in the past 20 years; the greatest decreases were seen in arrests for violent crimes, property crimes and sex offenses. Arrest for drug and alcohol offenses also declined but not as dramatically as other categories.



 **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU** 

Is there an interesting program in your area? Has a corporation or business in your community become involved in funding or establishing an afterschool program? Please share with us, and other readers, your success stories, comments and suggestions. Contact *Afterschool Advocate* editor Ridgely Benjamin with story ideas or information via email: [afterschooladvocate@prsolutionsdc.com](mailto:afterschooladvocate@prsolutionsdc.com); phone: 202/371-1999; or fax: 202/371-9142.



**TALKING ABOUT AFTERSCHOOL**

“Much of the discussion regarding the No Child Left Behind Act at both the state and federal levels has involved the practicality of implementing the sweeping requirements and the philosophies behind those mandates. But another facet of the dialogue, the direct

financial effect in the coming fiscal year, is currently being assessed. Preliminary figures provided by the state Department of Education show that West Virginia is receiving about \$71 million per year less in federal funding to implement the law than was promised. That total is simply the difference between the funding levels specified in the law and the amounts actually appropriated. The potential cost of full implementation could be higher still. That’s a staggering amount of money even in the best of economic times, much less in the midst of the current national recession... The No Child Left Behind Act authorizes \$1.75 billion nationally for afterschool programs, but the funding bill provides only \$1 billion, meaning a \$5.8 million loss for West Virginia... As I have said previously, Democratic lawmakers and educators agree wholeheartedly in the concept at the root of No Child Left Behind. But the act expects massive improvement in the most difficult segment of the student population in a relatively short time period. The act calls for states to achieve universal proficiency in all schools within 12 years, one generation of students, in exchange for federal education funds. It is an admirable goal - one this state has rapidly been moving toward in recent years with the adoption of our own aggressive measurement and accountability system. But without sufficient resources to put in place the measures the federal act requires, this state will be forced to abandon what is already proving to be a very effective strategy and replace it with one that may be unrealistic, and will certainly be costly.”

- Editorial by Delegate Bob Kiss, D-Raleigh, Speaker of the West Virginia House of Delegates, *Charleston (WV) Gazette*, October 6, 2003

“The number of gang-related crimes in Salt Lake County dropped dramatically between 1998 and 2001, from 1,292 reported crimes to only 832. But that number is coming up again, quickly. Drive-by shootings have increased. So have aggravated assaults.



Today, some gangs are less visible, preferring to use computers to steal identities, or to forge checks and sell weapons, than to do traditional gang stuff. It's always been mostly about making money, and now new avenues are opening up. But the stereotype, the gang-banger with tattoos who is ready to 'throw down' gang signs at the first provocation, hasn't gone away, either... The most important defenses are parents who don't give up on troubled kids and who create a family atmosphere that fosters better behavior. Then, cities and counties should do more to increase afterschool programs and other activities that fill the needs of youth with worthwhile endeavors. People in the mainstream should be more willing to reach out to recent immigrants whose children may seem lost and unaccepted. The focus must be on prevention, rather than cleaning up after tragedy has struck."

- Editorial, *Salt Lake City Deseret News*,  
October 14, 2003

"While it is true that transportation budget cuts strain the resources of parents and nonprofit organizations, the children are truly the ones who bear the brunt of cutbacks. New busing restrictions force parents to make the difficult choice between giving up jobs and relying on public support, or letting their children make a dangerous walk home to an empty house instead of being escorted or bused to an afterschool program. Parents often choose to keep their jobs, which endangers children in several ways... It is understandable that costs must be cut, but sometimes we have to ask: at what expense? At what point does the money the city saves justify what is taken away from our children? And further, how much money does the city really save by refusing children without passes rides when there are empty seats on buses already traveling to community centers?"

- Letter to the Editor by Shelley Mika,  
*Providence (RI) Journal-Bulletin*, October  
3, 2003



## **CHESS: THE RIGHT MOVE FOR YOUR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM**

**Guest article by Leslie B. Lipschultz, Food for Thought Software, Inc.**

**[www.schoolchess.com](http://www.schoolchess.com)**

A formidable challenge facing afterschool providers is to be able to offer high quality activities that also engage kids. One of the biggest afterschool success stories is chess. Stimulating critical thinking and other valuable skills, while also proving highly engaging to students, chess offers great potential as an educational vehicle.

Recent estimates put the scholastic chess-playing population in the U.S. at more than a million. The numbers are growing rapidly, and this success has fueled a community demand for chess as an afterschool activity. An extensive nationwide network of scholastic chess competitions at the local, state and national levels has even created the infrastructure to make chess more a sport than an activity. National tournaments have attracted as many as 4,700 students, with thousands of parents, coaches, teachers and others adding to the mix of individuals supporting chess.

### **Chess Learning Linked to Improved Academic Performance**

Studies linking chess to enhanced critical thinking skills, concentration, discipline, self-esteem – even standardized test scores – make learning the game a significant plus, and its introduction as an inexpensive, afterschool program a logical choice. Chess has marked benefits for students across all socioeconomic groups and is one of the few activities that allow girls to compete with boys on an equal footing and without reservation. And for at-risk kids, the results can be especially dramatic.

The spillover into academic life and beyond of learning to play chess is beginning to be well-documented. Spend even a few minutes watching kids play and you'll observe them concentrating so deeply on their next move that some of the benefits become immediately obvious.

Historically, chess has been introduced by individual schools – with thousands offering programs across the nation. The dramatic success of local programs has now caught the attention of district administrators, who are now promoting chess district-wide. The Miami-Dade School District, for example, has begun to introduce chess into many of its schools, and eventually hopes to have a structured program in every school in the district.

### **How to create a strong chess program**

Implementing a high quality scholastic chess program that can elevate thinking to the level of a varsity sport takes some planning and the right approach. Contrary to popular belief, you don't need a professional chess coach to run a successful program, but it is helpful to have someone who can keep the kids on track and excited about their learning. You also need a relatively standardized curriculum that will move students through a learning process that stimulates their understanding of the game and their ability to think and plan ahead. In addition, a motivation system that tracks and rewards student progress in learning as well as playing chess will help build their commitment and excitement. Finally, a way to organize and administer the program so that your limited time with students can be spent most effectively and efficiently to keep students engaged and excited is very helpful.

There are many good products on the market to help manage, motivate and educate young chess enthusiasts in an afterschool setting. The United States Chess Federation (USCF) is a good resource for teachers or parents interested in starting or enhancing a scholastic chess program, and USCF

membership brings added value to your program. While USCF-sponsored tournaments provide a built-in infrastructure, chess play can also be done more informally with intra-club games, school-to-school events, and online play using a variety of Web portals. For more information about USCF, visit [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org).

### **Thinkers as our role models**

With the majority of our cultural icons being athletes and entertainers, there is yet another significant advantage to introducing chess in your afterschool program: While traditional sports programs will continue to inspire the dreams of both boys and girls who imagine themselves the next Michael Jordan or Serena Williams, chess can help create a new, and more realistic, paradigm – one that stresses that the key to success in life – just as in chess – is thinking rather than physical prowess. And what better lesson can we teach our kids as they make their way in the world.



## **MODEL PROGRAMS THAT INCLUDE NUTRITIONAL ENRICHMENT**

Do you know of a successful afterschool program in your area that provides nutritious snacks and meals to participants by using Child Care and Adult Food Program (CACFP) funding? Or a Summer Food Service Program integrated with other children's programs such as recreation, cultural enrichment activities and tutoring? Is there an exemplary School Lunch or School Breakfast initiative in your area?

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) will honor 12 model programs for their outstanding use of federal child nutrition programs. The model programs will be highlighted in a Mother's Day Dozen release featuring Child and Adult Care Food

Programs, and in the upcoming School Breakfast and Summer Food Scorecards.

FRAC wants to share your stories with others in order to demonstrate the successful child development efforts that result when learning is combined with nutritional enrichment. Contact Michele Tingling Clemmons at [mtc@frac.org](mailto:mtc@frac.org) or (202) 986-2200 ext. 3014. Let FRAC know about the nature of the program, who is involved, how the program was started and the impact the program has had on the participants.

Visit the FRAC web site, [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org), for additional information. Click on FRAC's Building Blocks Projects, which includes model programs for the Child and Adult Care Food Programs/Afterschool or Outside School Hours Care, the Summer Food Service Program and the School Breakfast Program.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### **October 27 – November 21**

Starting October 27, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will promote *Extra Hour for Extra Action*, the latest effort in its **VERB. It's what you do** campaign. **VERB** is an innovative, integrated marketing campaign coordinated by the CDC to motivate tweens to be active and have fun trying new activities that get their bodies moving, developing new skills, and enjoying physical activity with their friends and peers. *Extra Hour for Extra Action* is a multi-week VERB initiative to help get kids moving. Promotional materials will be posted on the VERB web site, [www.cdc.gov/verb](http://www.cdc.gov/verb). Participating programs will be eligible to win one of 20 \$500 grants for physical activity equipment.

### **November 3 – 6, 2003**

The National Center for Community Education will host its Community Education Orientation Workshops from November 3 to 6

in Flint, Michigan. The four-day workshops provide a comprehensive overview of community education from conceptual and practical perspectives. Workshops include site visits to exemplary community education programs and resource sessions on Community Involvement, Facilitative Leadership, Maximum Use of Resources, Integration with the K-12 Day, Youth Development, Collaborative Partnerships and Adult and Family Services. For more information, please visit

[www.nccenet.org/the\\_center/workshopschedule.htm](http://www.nccenet.org/the_center/workshopschedule.htm).

### **November 6 – 8, 2003**

The California School-Age Consortium will host its National Middle School Conference in San Diego, California, from November 6 to 8. *The Ultimate Reality Show: Middle School from A New Perspective* conference is designed for professionals working with middle school youth in afterschool programs. For more information, contact [pchase@calsac.org](mailto:pchase@calsac.org) or visit [www.calsac.org](http://www.calsac.org).

### **November 6 - 8**

The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) will host "Building on the Strengths of America's Youth: Second National Youth Summit" from November 6 to 8 in Washington DC. The summit will bring together young people who are active in their communities; national, state and local policy makers and community leaders; youth service providers from faith- and community-based organizations; and nationally acclaimed experts in the field of Positive Youth Development. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in discussions on effective practices in youth development; hear from youth about contributions they have made to their communities; and build and strengthen relationships with young people and colleagues from around the country. For additional information, visit [www.ncfy.com](http://www.ncfy.com) or contact FYSB's National Clearinghouse on

Families & Youth by phone (301-608-8098) or e-mail (summit@ncfy.com).

 **December 3 – 6**

The National Community Education Association (NCEA) will host its 38th Annual Conference, “Creating Communities of Learning ... No One Left Behind” from December 3 to 6 in New Orleans. NCEA hosts the largest national gathering of community educators in a forum designed to help you create comprehensive community programs, including community schools. Participants will learn about community education management and professional development, community education programming and afterschool programs. The pre-conference workshop will focus on grant writing. For more information, visit [www.ncea.com/conferences](http://www.ncea.com/conferences) or call 703-359-8973.

 **February 15 – 18, 2004**

FOUNDATIONS, Inc. will host its Beyond School Hours VII conference in San Diego, California from February 15 to 18. Through speakers, institutes, sessions and exhibitors, participants will find out about successful, content-rich, extended-day program models; network with community, school, university and government leaders; make connections with faith-based organizations; discuss No Child Left Behind and other current policies and practices that impact programming; and more. For more information, call 888-977-KIDS (5437) or visit [www.foundationsinc.org](http://www.foundationsinc.org).

 **February 26 – 28, 2004**

The National School-Age Care Alliance will host its 16th Annual Conference in Tampa, Florida from February 26 to 28. More than 3,000 afterschool professionals will participate in a broad array of programs, sessions and events. For more information, go to [www.nsacaconference.com](http://www.nsacaconference.com).

 **March 18 - 19, 2004**

The Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University will host its 2004 National Conference on March 18-19, 2004 at the Inner Harbor of Baltimore, MD. The theme of the conference is “Summer Learning for All: Programs, Policy, and Research.” Participants will include summer program providers, researchers, teachers, informal educators, youth development professionals and policy-makers interested in improving the quality and quantity of summer learning opportunities for all young people. Conference registration materials are available online at [www.summerlearning.org/about/conference.html](http://www.summerlearning.org/about/conference.html).



## **POSITIVE GAINS FOR STUDENTS AT FOUNDATIONS’ AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

A new comprehensive study concludes that elementary school students participating in FOUNDATIONS Inc.’s After-School Enrichment Program during the 2002-2003 school year “made substantial gains in math, reading, and language arts scores.” Study participants included students in grades one to five from 35 schools located in Philadelphia, Delaware and Franklin Counties in Pennsylvania and Cumberland and Mercer Counties in New Jersey. Stephen P. Klein, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist at the RAND Corporation and Managing Partner of GANSK & Associates, conducted the study.

In the fall of 2002 and spring of 2003, the FOUNDATIONS students at 35 schools completed mathematics computation, reading and language arts sections of the Terra Nova test series published by CTB/McGraw-Hill. At every grade level and in every subject, the FOUNDATIONS students showed statistically significant improvement in scores. In this short period of time, their

gains in scores also generally exceeded the progress of students in CTB/McGraw-Hill’s national norm sample. To determine how well FOUNDATIONS participants fared against their local peers, study administrators also tested a large sample of students, from six of the 35 schools, who did not participate in the FOUNDATIONS afterschool program. Although both sets of students started with similar scores in the fall, the FOUNDATIONS participants had about a five-point higher spring test score than did their non-FOUNDATIONS counterparts – an impressive and statistically significant difference.

Previous evaluations of FOUNDATIONS’ After-School Enrichment Program have revealed similar gains in test scores. “This is the fourth year in a row that students in the FOUNDATIONS extended day program performed better than their peers in reading and math,” said FOUNDATIONS Chief Executive Office Rhonda H. Lauer, noting that most students in the program come from lower income communities and attend schools with substantial academic challenges. “These results just go another step in furthering the whole premise that additional instruction and quality programs for children result in improved academic achievement,” she said.

Since 1992, FOUNDATIONS, Inc. has operated extended-day enrichment programs and provided technical assistance to schools, school districts and other education and

community organizations. Working primarily with children from low-income communities and those who serve them, FOUNDATIONS seeks to improve program performance and enhance student achievement in school and during non-school hours. It has also worked extensively in the national movement to create new public schools and to assist schools and districts as they redesign their educational programs to benefit children, families and communities.

For a copy of the complete report, please email FOUNDATIONS at [info@foundationsinc.org](mailto:info@foundationsinc.org).



**Receiving the *Afterschool Advocate* via email**

We would prefer to send you the *Afterschool Advocate* via email so that you can receive it in a more timely manner. If you would like to receive the newsletter by email, please contact editor Ridgely Benjamin via email ([afterschooladvocate@prsolutionsdc.com](mailto:afterschooladvocate@prsolutionsdc.com)) or fax (202/371-9142). She will need your name, organization, phone and fax number, and email address. Thank you!



The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities dedicated to ensuring that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. 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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