

Afterschool Advocate

A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance

Volume 4, Issue 5, May 6, 2003

AFTERSCHOOL CHALLENGE 2003

The Afterschool Alliance will host its annual Capitol Hill Afterschool Challenge on Wednesday, May 14. The central event of the day will be a “Breakfast of Champions” honoring afterschool program providers from around the nation. Following the breakfast, providers and advocates will fan out across Capitol Hill for a series of meetings with their elected representatives. The Afterschool Alliance’s new action campaign, *Afterschool is Key*, will use the message: Don’t Lock Us Out of Afterschool Programs.

Participate From Home

Advocate readers unable to travel to D.C. can support the *Afterschool is Key* campaign by asking school leaders, parents, community members, mayors, police chiefs – everyone who has an interest in keeping afterschool programs open – to send a message to Congress on May 14 about the importance of afterschool programs. At the Afterschool Alliance web site, activists can email messages to their Senators and Representative (http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/new_campaign.cfm). The site also has a sample fax template and telephone script that concerned citizens can use on May 14 to urge their Members of Congress to support full funding of afterschool programs.

As *Advocate* readers know well, the President’s fiscal year 2004 budget request for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (21st CCLC) calls for a 40 percent cut from the previous year’s levels – from nearly \$1 billion to just \$600 million.

Barely a year ago, the President signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act, which established a multi-year roadmap for 21st CCLC funding. It called for \$1.75 billion in funding for 2004, a figure the President’s proposal would miss by a wide margin. The difference between the “authorized” 2004 level from the No Child Left Behind Act, and the President’s budget proposal is enough to provide afterschool care for 1.6 million children.

Last year’s “Breakfast of Champions” attracted more than 200 activists and ten Members of Congress. The Alliance is aiming for an even bigger turnout this year.

***Afterschool is Key* Campaign**

The Afterschool Alliance is launching a multi-faceted new action campaign centering on the “key” theme. The campaign was created in response to the budget cuts that many afterschool programs are facing at the local, state and federal levels. Too many programs are in jeopardy of closing – even while the demand for afterschool programs continues to grow.

The Afterschool Alliance web site (www.afterschoolalliance.org) provides ideas, artwork and sample materials to use throughout the year.

Remember, afterschool programs are “key” to:

- ★ improving academic achievement
- ★ keeping kids safe
- ★ helping working families

Further information on how to contact Congress on May 14 is available on pages six and seven of this newsletter.



IN THE NEWS...

Illinois – Bank One donated \$50,000 to four Chicago public schools to establish afterschool programs for students and their families, reports the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The Chicago Public School system will provide \$50,000 matching grants to each school to establish “community schools” that stay open after the school bell rings. Students will be able to participate in art, theater, reading and science programs. The schools also will offer educational classes to parents.

Michigan – Michigan could provide dinner to 10,000 low-income students in afterschool programs but currently is only feeding 150 students, reports the Food Research and Action Center. Michigan is one of seven states participating in a federal program offering subsidized meals to students 18 and younger, reports the *Associated Press*. “It’s far less than we should be serving given the need in our state and the importance of nutrition,” said Roberta Stanley, director of federal relations for the Michigan Department of Education. “We’re going to try to take advantage of [the program].”

Ohio – Sixty-five percent of Ohio residents support school building taxes if new schools include multipurpose facilities open year-round and during the afterschool hours, finds the “Ohio’s Education Matters” poll, reports *Education Week*. The third annual poll was conducted by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

South Carolina – In March, the state Department of Social Services announced that it is cutting its \$10.5 million contract with South Carolina Communities in Schools program, reports the *Associated Press*. Communities in Schools’ afterschool program provides tutoring, mentoring, life skills and pregnancy prevention classes to low-income students. The program hopes to save several afterschool sites by laying off certified

teachers, eliminating free transportation and reducing hours.

Texas – Throughout the month of April, the Hopes and Dreams afterschool program in Fort Worth incorporated lessons in assertiveness for third graders as part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, reports the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*. The afterschool program teamed up with the Alliance for Children of Tarrant County for the second year to help students recognize signs of abuse and build personal safety skills.

Washington - On April 23, the Rock Bottom Reminders performed a benefit concert in Seattle for America Scores, a national afterschool program, reports the *Tacoma News Tribune*. The musical group is comprised of *Joy Luck Club* author Amy Tan, humor columnist Dave Barry, thriller writer Ridley Pearson, novelists Scott Turow, Greg Iles and Kathi Kamen Goldmark, sports columnist Mitch Albom and the Byrds founding member Roger McGuinn (the only professional musician in the group). The Rock Bottom Reminders also preformed benefit concerts in San Francisco and Los Angeles. America Scores is a national afterschool creative writing program for inner city children that combines physical, cognitive, psychological and social learning through creative writing and soccer.

**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; phone: 202/371-1999; or fax: 202/371-9142.

TALKING ABOUT AFTERSCHOOL

“Keeping children safe, happy and learning after school is vital for any community that values its young people and the hope they bring for a better future. Unfortunately for afterschool programs in our area, the future is bleak. Virtually every afterschool program in Baltimore is in jeopardy because of proposed budget cuts at the federal, state and local levels. What looms is a crisis of catastrophic proportions for working parents, families and the community... The threat to afterschool programs is all the more tragic because these programs work. Studies show they keep children safe, reduce substance abuse and early sexual activity and improve school performance. For every public dollar spent on such programs, taxpayers save more than \$3 in the long term. That’s because afterschool programs divert youngsters from crime and reduce costs for child care, remedial education and welfare... Cuts in these programs would have grave consequences.”

- Editorial by M. Jane Sundius,
Program Officer for the Open Society
Institute-Baltimore, *Baltimore Sun*,
April 1, 2003

“It has become clear that state lawmakers’ budget cuts will target the state’s most vulnerable residents. It is likely also that the state will pay dearly for these cuts in the future - in terms of social costs, blighted lives and lost human productivity and potential. One recent casualty of cuts has been an afterschool program for 8,000 at-risk children. The state Department of Social Services is cutting its \$10.5 million contract with the South Carolina Communities in Schools program, which provides homework help, mentoring and classes on life skills and pregnancy prevention to students from low-income families... A sad reality is that teens who drop out of school sometimes wind up

costing the state more in the future - due to poor work skills, teen pregnancy and, sometimes, criminal conduct. With these afterschool programs, a good adage is that the state can pay now or pay later. This Legislature has chosen to pay later.”

- Editorial, *Greenville (SC) News*,
April 7, 2003



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 7

Join thousands of teens nationwide who are expected to participate in the second annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy on May 7. Sponsored by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and National Day founding partners *Teen People* magazine and Teen People online, the National Day is designed to focus the attention of teens on the importance of avoiding teen pregnancy and other consequences of sex – to get them to stop, think and take action. For more information on the National Day, visit www.teenpregnancy.org. Sample postcards and brochures are available on the web site in both English and Spanish as well as event ideas and sample press materials.

May 13 - 14

The Afterschool Alliance will host its annual May Challenge - a two-day Capitol Hill event in Washington, DC. Hundreds of afterschool supporters will visit their U.S. Members of Congress, urging them to pledge their support for afterschool programs. Go to www.afterschoolalliance.org for information and updates.

June 12 - 13

The Research Network on Successful Pathways through Middle Childhood will host its national 2003 Middle Childhood

Conference in Washington, DC, on June 12 and 13. This national conference will bring together researchers, practitioners and policy makers from across the country to discuss factors that promote successful development during the middle childhood years. Topics include: Supports and opportunities for positive development; Contexts and diversity as resources for children's pathways; Promising Practices to achieve successful pathways through middle childhood; and Children's out-of-school time, implications for policies and programs. To find out more, visit the conference web site at www.middlechildhood.org/conference/index.html.



June 12 –15

Creative Communities will host its semi-annual Creative Communities Training Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico, from June 12 through 15. Community arts educators and community builders are encouraged to attend the training and learn more about the Creative Communities model of partnering community schools of the arts and public housing communities. The result of a partnership between the National Guild, the National Endowment of the Arts and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Creative Communities is an innovative arts education, youth development and community building strategy. For more Information and to register, visit http://www.creativecommunitiesonline.org/vessel_h.html



PROFILE: AFTERSCHOOL ADVOCATE PATRICIA DIAZ

Six years ago, when Patricia Diaz took over as Principal of Detroit's Harms Elementary, the school – like many others in the nation – had no afterschool program. Her

experience with afterschool at her previous elementary school assignment persuaded her of its benefits – for children, parents, community and the school itself. So she set to work to create what is now a vibrant program serving approximately half of the school's 560 students on a daily basis.

In its early days the program was chiefly an extended tutoring session, with teachers from the regular school day staying in the building to work with students. Over the years, however, Diaz began to involve the broader community, and today the program includes a number of students from the nearby campus of the University of Michigan. Students from the University's School of Art and Design, for example, work with Harms students one day a week, as do students from the University's Schools of Psychology, Information, and Education. Harms' related summer program has become popular with the student-athletes of the University's football program, and so it is not uncommon to find 250-pound 20-year olds spending the summer in the company of 50-pound elementary students. So integral to the program are the college students that Diaz arranged for a grant-funded van to transport them from campus to Harms.

The program's offerings have expanded with the participation of various community members. Students begin their afternoons with a snack. (Nine in ten students at the school are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.) From there they move to a variety of academic enrichment, recreational, arts and cultural activities. These include a "green thumb" club where students learn about plants, and sessions on cooking, animals, and arts and crafts. At 4:30, many of the students are released to go home, while some remain until as late as 6:00.

Diaz reports that the program has had an important impact on the regular school day. "Our parental involvement has improved, I think as a result of the afterschool program," she says. "And our student attendance is better, as well. I think the interesting things

kids are doing afterschool help get them here in the morning.”

Diaz has been active in identifying outside funding to start and sustain the program. Current support includes significant grants from the United Auto Workers Alliance for Working Families, a University of Pennsylvania program focused on service-learning, and the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

Another important ally in the program is the local chapter of Communities in Schools. “They’re wonderful,” Diaz says of the national organization that works to connect community resources, particularly parents, with local schools. “They’ve really been great in helping us identify and secure grant funding for the program.”

Such outside funding has become particularly important to the program in the 2002-03 school year, as tighter budgets in the Detroit schools are forcing a number of school-based programs to close their doors, Diaz says. “It’s very sad to see these programs closing down,” she says. “Some of the students will end up in other programs, but I’m sure some of them won’t. And it’s especially hard to swallow because it’s happening at a time that the public and policymakers have really come to understand the importance of afterschool.”



4-H AFTERSCHOOL IN A BOX

In late April, 4-H Afterschool unveiled its comprehensive toolkit, 4-H Afterschool In A Box, which contains instructional and promotional materials designed by 4-H youth development experts for use in improving existing afterschool programs or creating new ones.

4-H Afterschool In A Box contains manuals to help organizations establish 4-H clubs within their afterschool programs and train adult staff and volunteers. In addition, it furnishes organizers with brochures, banners, T-shirts and other items to promote their programs in their communities. The distinctive, hands-on, research-based curricula of 4-H Afterschool are developed with expertise from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative Extension System and America’s land-grant universities. 4-H Afterschool also receives support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, which donates resources for numerous elements of the initiative.

The 4-H Afterschool In A Box materials can be ordered through the 4-H Afterschool Web site (www.4hafterschool.org), which also offers additional tools, information and links.



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) or fax (202/371-9142). She will need your name, organization, phone and fax number, and email address. Thank you!

OUTREACH: JOIN THE AFTERSCHOOL IS KEY CAMPAIGN

*On **May 14**, join advocates from across the country who are calling for Congressional support for afterschool programs. Hundreds of afterschool providers, teachers and community members will visit their U. S. Members of Congress in Washington, DC, and urge them to continue the vital funding of afterschool programs. Help strengthen the message - Don't Lock Us Out of Afterschool Programs! – by contacting your Members of Congress by either phone or fax on May 14 and telling them about the importance of afterschool programs.*

Tools for You to Use

To find the name and contact information for your Members of Congress, visit the Afterschool Alliance web site - www.afterschoolalliance.org - and enter your zip code in the Contact Congress box on the left hand side.

Telephone Script: A phone call is the most effective way to voice your concerns to Congress and put a personal touch on your request. When you call your Members of Congress, it is important to be clear, concise and direct. Dial 202/224-3121 to reach the Capitol Switchboard, which can connect you to your Senators' and Representative's offices.

When you call:

- Ask to speak with the legislative aide who deals with education, specifically afterschool. This person is your representative's expert in the area and will be far more likely to respond positively to your message.
- Introduce yourself. The aide will probably ask for a mailing address or zip code to verify that you are a constituent. It may be helpful to also give your phone number so the representative or their staff can follow up with you.
- Let him/her know why you are calling. Below is a sample script to express concern over the President's proposed cut to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program. Draw from this script, but be sure to add personalized accounts of a program in your community.

Sample Script

"I am calling about the 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool program. The 21st CCLC program provides more than one million kids in America with a safe place to go afterschool. Here in _____, our program, _____, serves _____ kids and families.

"We depend on funds from the 21st CCLC program to keep our kids safe and challenged after school.

“Please vote to fund the 21st CCLC program at \$1.75 billion for Fiscal Year 2004, the amount authorized by Congress in No Child Left Behind. The President has recommended cutting the program by 40 percent, to \$600 million. This cut would deny more than 1.6 million youth access to afterschool programs.

“Afterschool programs are key to keeping kids safe, helping working families and improving academic achievement. Please don’t lock our kids out of afterschool.”

REMEMBER:

You are the boss. You should be courteous but not intimidated. Elected officials and their staff work for you.

Follow up. The elected official should be held accountable for any statements made to you. Follow up to see how your elected officials support afterschool funding.

Fax Artwork: The Afterschool Alliance web site provides a fax template to involve kids and adults in your effort. Download the PDF file, print and copy. Ask parents, students, staff and other community leaders to write a personal message about the benefits of afterschool and your program. Fax to Congressional offices in the evening, when phone lines are less busy.

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

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The *Afterschool Advocate* is produced for the Afterschool Alliance by PR Solutions, Inc., Washington, DC;
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