

Afterschool Advocate

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AMERICANS TELL CONGRESS: FUND AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

“The money can be found,” for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, Representative Dale Kildee (D-MI) told an enthusiastic crowd of afterschool supporters at the *Breakfast of Champions* on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, May 14. “This is a very, very important program.”

“We can make a difference as individuals and as policy makers,” added Senator John Ensign (R-NV), speaking to a packed room. More than 300 parents, children, educators and advocates from around the country traveled to Washington, D.C. for the event, and to urge lawmakers to more adequately support the federal government’s chief funding stream for afterschool. The *Breakfast* was part of the second annual Afterschool Challenge, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance.

Following the *Breakfast of Champions*, participants fanned out across Capitol Hill for more than 150 meetings with Members of Congress and their top aides, urging lawmakers to reject President Bush’s proposed 40 percent cut to the federal 21st CCLC program for Fiscal Year 2004.

Breakfast of Champions

At the kick off *Breakfast*, lawmakers motivated the already energetic crowd to continue to fight for full funding for afterschool. “This is a turning point in whether or not afterschool is going to be something that the federal government believes is a priority,” said Senator Barbara

Boxer (D-CA). “We are facing a devastating cut, one that we will never recover from if we don’t fight back. We have to fight for this.”

“We will do everything we can to fund afterschool programs as generously as we can, because we know how effective they are,” promised Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA). Senator Specter held a hearing on afterschool programs the day before the Challenge; actor and children’s advocate Arnold Schwarzenegger testified at the hearing, as well as at a House hearing that same day (see *Schwarzenegger Testifies On Capitol Hill* article on page five).

“Afterschool is about a better quality of life for our kids, for our families, for our communities,” said Senator Debbie A. Stabenow (D-MI). “It saves money and we want \$1.75 billion for afterschool programs.”

Numerous other Senators and Representatives echoed these sentiments at the *Breakfast*, including Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Judd Gregg (R-NH), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Patty Murray (D-WA), and Representatives Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Ralph Regula (R-OH). Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Denise Majette (D-GA) and Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) also attended the event to show their support for afterschool funding.

“The people who are here today are carrying messages from tens of thousands of others,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “These women and men know afterschool programs as educators, parents, program directors and volunteers. They know first-hand the great things afterschool programs do for children and their families. And they know that cutting spending on afterschool programs is shortsighted and counterproductive. Slashing

the afterschool budget, as the President proposes to do, would choke off the programs that keep children safe, help them with homework, and relieve working parents of child care worries.”

President Bush’s budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2004 calls for a cut from the current \$1 billion funding to just \$600 million. That cut would deny afterschool programs to more than half a million children. In the No Child Left Behind Act, Congress authorized \$1.75 billion for the 21st CCLC for Fiscal Year 2004.

New Haven Mayor John DeStefano Jr., President of the National League of Cities, also spoke about the needs of the whole child and the difference afterschool programs can make. Virginia Franklin, a grandmother who is caring for her eight-year-old grandson while his mother is serving in the National Guard in Kuwait, discussed how invaluable the YMCA afterschool program of Baltimore, Maryland, has been for her family.

Sixteen-year-old Warren Billings, a Youth Ambassador for PlusTime New Hampshire, shared the accomplishments made by students, parents and communities, thanks to strong afterschool programs. “I have seen entire communities rally around their kids to give them a chance to be successful in life,” said Billings.

Members of Congress joined the Afterschool Alliance in giving Afterschool Champion awards to seven outstanding afterschool advocates (see *Afterschool Champion Awards* article on page three).

Afterschool Is Key

The *Breakfast of Champions* marked the launch of the Afterschool Alliance’s “Afterschool Is Key” campaign, and the entire room was decorated with original afterschool student artwork built around the key theme. Most of the artwork carried the message: Don’t Lock Us Out of Afterschool Programs. The campaign features a variety of outreach efforts, including Internet-based organizing that has already produced thousands of

emails, fax messages and telephone calls to Congress coinciding with the Afterschool Challenge. (Information on how to participate is available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/new_campaign.cfm).

In recognition of their continued support, the Senators and Representatives in attendance received large keys that were decorated by afterschool students and carried the message: Afterschool is the Key to Success.

After the *Breakfast of Champions*, activists delivered paper light bulbs with messages about afterschool that were sent by children and parents from across the country. The messages urge lawmakers to support full funding for the 21st CCLC and were created last October at *Lights On Afterschool!* events. The Afterschool Alliance’s annual rally for afterschool is set for October 9 this year.



TALKING ABOUT AFTERSCHOOL...

...At the *Breakfast of Champions* on May 14, 2003

“It is more important to take care of every kid afterschool than it is to give a tax break to people that earn a million dollars... You are not asking for anything more than what this President signed into law and this Congress voted into law. You are asking for it to be fully funded.”

-- U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA)

“I can’t tell you how disappointed I was to hear that the Administration is going to cut \$400 million from the afterschool programs... if you care about kids, put the resources in afterschool programs.”

-- U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT)

“The need for afterschool funding is absolutely critical.”

-- U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH)

“Wouldn’t it be a great day when our nation spends one tenth of what we spend on homeland security on the security of our children before our parents come home... Keep the economy going by keeping parents working until 5 and 6 PM.”

-- U.S. Representative Jay Inslee (D-WA)

“Everybody needs a place where they can go and where they feel safe and secure and there are things for them to do with a positive group to work with them.”

-- U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)

“The Department of Education has come in with a preliminary, half-baked analysis that the [21st CCLC] program is not successful... How can you make a cut before the study is complete?”

-- U.S. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA)



AFTERSCHOOL CHAMPION AWARDS

At the *Breakfast of Champions*, seven afterschool supporters were recognized for their outstanding commitment to afterschool programs. Members of Congress and leading advocates presented the awards to the following individuals and organizations:

★ **Abbott Laboratories of Abbott Park, Illinois**, for the company’s longtime support for working families and its ongoing efforts to expand and improve community afterschool and child care programs. Ryan Knapp, divisional vice president, Lake County Human Resources, Abbott Laboratories accepted

the award on behalf of the company. The company’s leaders have long recognized the importance of quality care for the children of working parents. In October of 2000, Abbott committed \$150,000 in before- and afterschool development grants to help expand and improve community school age child care alternatives, and extended an invitation to work collaboratively with others. Abbott also served on the 2002 Illinois State Task Force on strengthening out-of-school time alternatives.

★ **Betsy Bradley, Executive Director of the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson**, for her advocacy in support of innovative afterschool art programs. Bradley has been a leading advocate for innovative, top-quality arts programming for schools and communities for nearly two decades. Under Bradley’s leadership, the Mississippi Museum of Art has successfully partnered with the Jackson Public Schools 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs to incorporate visual arts classes into its afterschool programs. A model for other communities around the country, the museum is now launching a pilot project that will bring together the Jackson Zoo and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science to provide even more innovative afterschool programming.

★ **The Danville/Boyle County Chamber of Commerce of Kentucky**, for its innovative mentoring program, to be launched in the coming school year at Bate and Boyle County Middle Schools. Chamber Executive Director Don Vizi accepted the award on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber’s Business Mentoring Program will match businessmen and women from the community with students at the Bate and Boyle Middle Schools afterschool programs. Students will meet in pairs

with business mentors for a nine-week period, and participate in a range of other activities designed to introduce them to the world of business. Students will also take part in service-learning activities, with the help of their mentors.

- ★ **Dover, New Hampshire Police Chief William Fenniman, Jr.**, for his leadership in providing unique, engaging afterschool programs for at-risk students. The Dover Police Department provides leadership and guidance to more than 250 members of the Dover Youth to Youth Group, a nationally recognized program designed to promote positive peer support for anti-drug and alcohol activities. The Police Department also partners with the Dover Housing Authority to provide a homework lab to more than one hundred teens a day and provides sports and recreation opportunities during the afterschool hours. In addition, the Department has committed a full-time police officer to act as a mentor at the new Dover 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. The Department was nominated for the award by PlusTime New Hampshire, an organization that impacted more than 20,000 New Hampshire youth last year by providing essential leadership, support and guidance to afterschool programs.
- ★ **Mary Marks of the Anchorage, Alaska, school board**, for her efforts to expand afterschool programming and to involve parents and community members in supporting afterschool. In 2002, Marks was elected to represent the Anchorage school board's largest district, making her the first native Alaskan woman to serve on the board. Before that, she served as the chairman of the parent advisory committee of the Williwaw 21st Century Community Learning Center in Anchorage, and on the Native Education Advisory Committee/Cook Inlet Tribal

Council. A Tlingit Indian born in Juneau, she is a graduate of West Anchorage High School. She, her husband and four children live in Anchorage.

- ★ **Stark Community Foundation**, for its leadership in improving the quality and accessibility of afterschool programs in Stark County, Ohio. James A. Bower, President of Stark Community Foundation and Cynthia Lazor, Vice President for Program of Stark Community Foundation, accepted the award. Last year, Stark Community Foundation, in collaboration with Stark Education Partnership, completed a study of quality afterschool elements that resulted in the first-ever-countywide conference on afterschool. In addition, the Foundation has convened meetings with other local foundations, afterschool providers and businesses to create regional afterschool councils throughout Stark County and has launched a public awareness initiative about the importance of afterschool programs.
- ★ **Elaine Wynn, Co-Chair of Greater Las Vegas Inner City Games in Nevada**, for her contributions to afterschool programming. Greater Las Vegas Inner-City Games Executive Director Jackie Locks accepted the award on Wynn's behalf. Since 1996, the Greater Las Vegas Inner-City Games has partnered with the Clark County, Nevada schools, local Boys & Girls Clubs and the YMCA to provide afterschool services, serving more than 100,000 children in that time – 15,000 children in 2002 alone. Inner-City Games services are offered free of charge to all children in Clark County between the ages of seven and 17. Wynn is a successful businesswoman in Las Vegas, Director of Wynn Resorts, and past Director of Mirage Resorts, Inc. She has given generously of her time and support to a variety of causes over the years, having served as co-chair of the United

Way Campaign, chair of the University of Nevada – Las Vegas Foundation, and as a governor’s appointee to the Committee to Study Funding of Higher Education. Much of her work has been in the area of education, serving on the national boards of Communities in Schools, the Inner-City Games Foundation (national), the Council to Establish Academic Standards in Nevada, and as part of the Strategic Planning Team for Clark County School District.



SCHWARZENEGGER TESTIFIES AGAINST BUSH BUDGET CUT

On May 13, actor, children’s advocate and Afterschool Alliance Honorary Chair Arnold Schwarzenegger testified before Senate and House Committees about the benefits of afterschool, urging Congress not to cut funding for the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program.

At a morning hearing held by the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, Schwarzenegger was joined by nine-year-old Madison White of Massillon, Ohio, and Philadelphia high school senior Steve Kinlock, as well as Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), New Haven Mayor John DeStefano, Jr., and Harvey Sprafka, Chief of Police in Knoxville, Iowa. All spoke passionately about the benefits afterschool programs provide to children, families and communities by keeping kids safe, helping working families and improving students’ academic success.

“Millions of children are left unsupervised when the bell rings ending the school day. This takes its toll on our children, our neighborhoods and on the moral fabric of our country,” Schwarzenegger said. “If our children are our future, our future is in jeopardy every afternoon between 3 and 6 PM

when unsupervised children roam the streets. But it doesn’t have to be this way.

Afterschool programs can reduce crime, make our streets safer and improve the lives of our most vulnerable children. I have seen it work all over this country.”

“I have talked with students, parents and instructors to understand how to give every child the best quality experiences after the school bell rings,” Senator Boxer said. “When doing so, it is obvious how important afterschool programs are to keeping our children safe, keeping them out of gangs and keeping them off drugs. As the Senate begins working on this year’s appropriations bills, I hope that you will get us back on track to fully funding afterschool programs.”

William B. Hansen, Deputy Secretary of Education, also testified. Hansen addressed the Administration’s recommendation that Congress cut the 21st CCLC program, pointing for justification primarily to the controversial study by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. In his testimony, Hansen said, “While no single study can ever provide a final or complete picture of the effectiveness of a program, good budgeting in times of scarce resources demands that decisions be made on the best available evidence. This study, which is the strongest to date in the afterschool literature, points out very basic shortcomings in the current federal program.”

Senator Specter questioned Hansen, as well as Russ Whitehurst from the U.S. Department of Education, about how they could recommend such drastic cuts based on preliminary findings of a single study, and asked for their thoughts on the important positives results from the study. Specter also provided an extensive list of studies, which all found significant positive results from afterschool programs, not only for students participating in the programs but for communities as well.

Schwarzenegger also addressed the Mathematica study in his testimony: “The study found that some afterschool programs need improvement. I, and others in the

afterschool community, would agree with some of those findings. But it would be a mistake to use that study as justification to reduce current funding levels for afterschool programs. Instead of cutting back the funding for afterschool programs, we should begin to work together to focus on finding ways to improve them.”

For a complete copy of Arnold Schwarzenegger’s testimony, visit the Afterschool Alliance web site, www.afterschoolalliance.org.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

June 23 - 25

The National Peer Helpers Association (NPHA) will host its 17th Annual NPHA International Conference for Peer Helping Professionals in Atlanta, Georgia, from June 23 through 25. Prior to the conference, from June 20 to 22, NPHA trainers will offer a wide variety of state-of-the-art training opportunities for new and experienced peer helping professionals. The conference will offer workshops, keynotes, panels and networking opportunities to participants. For more information, visit the NPHA web site, www.peerhelping.org.



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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