

Afterschool Advocate

A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance

Volume 5, Issue 13, November 23, 2004

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS POPULAR WITH YOUTH, SURVEY FINDS

A new study finds that American youth overwhelmingly agree that structured afterschool activities play a “crucial and positive role in their lives.” Eighty-five percent of teens say that peers who participate in afterschool activities are better off than those who do not. Nine in ten (92 percent) say they made good friends at their afterschool or weekend activity, 86 percent say they learned a lot, and 85 percent say they usually have a lot of fun.

Yet, despite the popularity of afterschool activities, there is a shortage. While 57 percent of middle and high school students participate in some kind of non-school activity nearly each day, almost three in ten are home alone at least three days a week.

All Work and No Play: Listening to What Kids and Parents Really Want from Out-of-School Time also finds that low-income and minority families in particular have trouble finding quality afterschool programs. The study was commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, a national supporter of expanded learning and enrichment opportunities, to bolster the voices of parents and children in the national debate on afterschool and out-of-school time. It was conducted by the nonpartisan opinion research organization, Public Agenda.

“*All Work and No Play* confirms what the Afterschool Alliance found in its household survey, which was funded by the JCPenney
Continued on Page Three...”

AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE & RUNNING USA TEAM UP TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The Afterschool Alliance and Running USA recently launched a bold joint initiative aimed at combating the growing epidemic of childhood obesity by creating running and/or walking activities for children at thousands of afterschool programs across the nation. The unique collaboration, *Running Rocks: Fun and Fitness Afterschool*, begins this fall as a pilot effort in seven cities. It will expand to hundreds more sites next year, and is expected to grow to include thousands over the next few years.

“Afterschool programs play a vital role in the lives of our communities, inspiring learning, keeping kids safe and healthy, and helping working families” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “*Running Rocks* will help children create healthy habits at an early age, steering them away from obesity and all of its associated health problems. Too many schools have been forced to neglect physical fitness in the push for test-score gains, and afterschool programs are uniquely suited to fill the void. We’re thrilled to be working with Running USA to help get and keep kids healthy.”

“Running and walking are two of the very best forms of aerobic exercise – simple, inexpensive, and powerfully effective,” said Running USA Executive Director Basil Honikman. “We’re delighted to be able to connect Running USA events and members to afterschool programs around the nation to help every young American embrace running
Continued on Page Three...”

OUTREACH

This is a key moment when the Bush Administration is making decisions about funding priorities for fiscal year 2006. Advocates can personalize the following letter and send it to the White House to encourage the President to increase funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative next year. You can submit the letter at www.afterschoolalliance.org by entering your zip code and clicking on the Contact Congress button in the lower left. Then select the photo of President Bush and submit your letter.

[Date]

Dear President Bush:

As you prepare to begin your second term, I urge you to once again make youth a priority in your budget plans. Specifically, I am writing to request that you support funding in your fiscal year 2006 budget proposal for afterschool programs, including the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) so that more students will have the option of high-quality, safe, afterschool learning activities. Afterschool programs are critical to children's success in school, and strengthen our families.

I understand the difficult budget situation you face, but I must also emphasize that families need your help. Not every parent is able to be home to greet their children at the end of the school day, and they rely on schools and community programs to help keep their kids safe and successful in school and life. Families in [insert your city/state] are increasingly searching for additional afterschool programming. [Insert a personal story about your program and how additional funding will improve the program's ability to help children and families]

We know that afterschool programs are an effective way to help improve academic achievement, not only for students in grades K-5, but in middle and high school as well. The programs also keep kids off the streets in the after school hours, which prevents them from being both victims and perpetrators of violent crime, and results in safer communities for everyone. Furthermore, afterschool programs offer youth of all ages an opportunity to participate a wide variety of activities including community service, mentoring, physical activity, arts and music, and college and career exploration.

21st CCLC funding is a key investment in our children's future. After four years without an increase, please allow this valued and effective initiative to grow and serve more children and families. Level funding again in 2005 actually amounts to a loss of funding for afterschool. When you adjust for inflation and cost of living increases since fiscal year 2002, the total loss of funds is \$70 million or 6.2 percent. That equates to a loss of afterschool programs for 100,000 students.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. I urge you to help fulfill the pledge of *No Child Left Behind* by supporting increased funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program and to help our children be safe in the hours after school. The availability of quality afterschool programs moves us toward that goal.

Sincerely,

[Your name, program and contact information]

Survey, Continued from Page One...

Afterschool Fund,” said Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “The majority of students and parents want afterschool programs, which give students a healthy mix of learning and fun activities that support their development. There is a tremendous unmet need for these programs.”

In the new Public Agenda study, parents and youth said they want more than academic help from afterschool programs. Parents expressed a desire for activities that, rather than simply extending the school day, help youth develop values and cultivate extracurricular interests.

“The best afterschool programs incorporate learning and academics into activities that are fun for students, rather than just preparing them to take tests,” Samelson added. “We need to do better in terms of supporting the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. We must make afterschool available to all families by the year 2010.”

The study was based on two national random sample surveys conducted in June – one of middle and high school students, and the other of parents of school-age children.

All Work and No Play *is available online at www.publicagenda.org.*

**Running, Continued from Page One...**

and fitness as a lifetime habit.”

Running Rocks will provide fun, incentive-based running and walking activities for afterschool youth across the nation. Youth will participate in training programs, building toward personalized goals, and culminating in local race events where they will be recognized for their accomplishments. A web site will go live in the next few months to publicize the program, promote a national calendar, provide each participant with a personal web space and enable online registration and events. All

online technology will be powered by The Active Network.

The initial pilot effort includes seven sites: Flint, Michigan; New York City, New York; St. Louis, Missouri; Richmond, Virginia; Washington, DC and Fairfax County, Virginia; Decatur, Georgia; and Bowling Green, Ohio. After the first wave of events this fall, the Afterschool Alliance and Running USA will evaluate the results and fine-tune the program for a larger rollout beginning next spring.

**SECRETARY PAIGE RESIGNS**

United States Secretary of Education Rod Paige resigned on November 5, shortly after the election. “I am very proud of the many accomplishments achieved by the talented and committed men and women of the United States Department of Education,” Paige said in his resignation letter. He cited the *No Child Left Behind Act* and his work to close the achievement gap between minority students and their white peers as some of his proudest accomplishments.

Secretary Paige also joined California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in hosting a powerful “After School Summit” in June of 2003. It was designed to highlight what is working in afterschool programs across the nation and to help program providers deliver strong programs. The summit included representatives of afterschool programs, principals, administrators, parents, students, law enforcement officials, researchers and members of the Bush Administration. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation sponsored the event.

Secretary Paige’s resignation will take effect on January 20, although he has agreed to serve until Congress confirms his replacement, the current Assistant to the

President for Domestic Policy, Margaret Spellings.

SEEKING INFORMATION

The Afterschool Alliance is interested in gathering information on afterschool programs that have been - or may be - forced to close when their federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants are spent. If you know of such a program, please contact the Alliance's Field Development Outreach Coordinator, Rachel Sabella, at rsabella@afterschoolalliance.org with the name, city and state of the program, how many students it serves, and contact information for its director.

Thank you!



MEET DONALD T. FLOYD, JR., PRESIDENT & CEO OF THE NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL

The *Afterschool Advocate* recently sat down with Donald T. Floyd, Jr., to learn more about afterschool programs provided by the National 4-H Council.

Afterschool Advocate: We understand 4-H is celebrating its Centennial this year. Congratulations! How does the mission and history of 4-H relate to your afterschool work?

Donald T. Floyd: 4-H enjoys 102 years of service to young people in all of America's communities. In 1902, we served an America that was mostly rural and that had an agriculturally based economy. Our programs, and our country, have changed. As a non-formal youth development program, we have a long and strong record of out-of-school time

success. In the '70's when women began to enter the workforce in large numbers, the need for afterschool programs increased dramatically. As we have done for 102 years, we created and adopted programs to meet that need. Some of our early success was in the urban centers of Los Angeles and Chicago.

AA: Can you tell us about your afterschool activities for children and teens? What kinds of projects do afterschool participants engage in?

DF: 4-H Afterschool projects, like all of 4-H, provide state-of-the-art programs such as computer labs, hydroponics, healthy living, arts, community service, recreation, homework, food and nutrition. There are more than 1,200 program choices.

AA: How many children are served by afterschool activities nationally?

DF: 4-H provides programs for 4.2 million young people in the out-of-school time. In the last year, we reached about 150,000 new young people in afterschool programs.

AA: How has support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund affected your work?

DF: The JCPenney Afterschool Fund support has been critical to the success of our afterschool program. They have allowed us to compile best practice programs, provide stronger evaluators, train thousands of afterschool providers, establish a brand identity and marketing, encouraged us to be much more collaborative. In short, they have allowed us to bring our afterschool work to a higher scale and effectiveness.

AA: How has afterschool affected the other work of 4-H?

DF: Our afterschool program — one of four major delivery modes for 4-H — has helped us rethink our view of best practices, marketing and national program initiatives. It has been very successful and has provided new energy to 4-H. It has also allowed us to realize we are a major player in the 21st

Century Learning Center process.

AA: Tell us about the resources for youth and families on your web site.

DF: I suggest three web sites as resources for youth and families. They include: www.4hafterschool.org, www.national4hheadquarters.org and www.cyfernet.org.

AA: Speaking of the web, some people may think of 4-H as strictly agricultural. Can you tell us more about 4-H's other work, including how the organization has integrated technology into its programs for children and youth to address the Digital Divide?

DF: Much of 4-H work today is about helping young people reach their full potential. We focus on leadership, citizenship and life skills. Our programs have a heavy science, engineering and technology base. Our hottest new programs are in GPS and GIS interactive programs. A group of 15 youth completely redesigned our web presence. We have youth tech teams throughout the country and we run cyber senior programs where youth teach seniors how to use the Internet.

AA: This year the Afterschool Alliance invited a 4-H representative (Manola Erby, of the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program in Raymond, Mississippi) to participate in the Afterschool Ambassador program, which is funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. What is your reaction to this collaboration?

DF: We are thrilled to have so many 4-H educators and volunteers work with Alliance members in state and community collaborations. Sharing resources and programs is what communities want. Therefore, 4-H folks, serving as Alliance Ambassadors, strengthen our reach in communities.

AA: Is there a particular success story involving a participant(s) in an afterschool program(s) that you'd like to share?

DF: 4-H club members are making incredible strides in all directions. Here are two examples of what they are accomplishing:

Cerenity Miller is a member of the 4-H Adventure Central Youth Board, a 4-H afterschool club located in Dayton, Ohio. These young people are charged with distributing grant money to community youth organizations. At age eleven, Cerenity may be one of the youngest of 15 board members. "I want to make sure that someone will use the money responsibly," she says of the \$500 in grant money, which the group is responsible for awarding. Advised by the Center's director, Cerenity and her fellow 4-H members meet weekly to discuss grant proposals. Then, the board decides who gets the funding. "I feel like I am doing something very important, and people look up to me," Cerenity says proudly.

In another example, two Reno, Nevada, brothers get better grades and have improved their behavior since they've joined the 4-H Afterschool Club (4-H ASC) at the Reno Housing Authority's Essex Manor Community Center. Now, Danny and Milo Guerrero do homework first, then participate in activities just like they learned at their 4-H Afterschool Club. Danny, 14, attended the program for four years. He used to struggle with school assignments and homework and was rebellious. Now, he is a 4-H junior leader who knows how to share with other youth and dreams of a college football scholarship so he can become an engineer. Tutoring from 4-H ASC teachers has helped Milo, ten, dramatically improve his reading and math skills, and he has acted in several plays. "The program really did help me with my school work but, most of all, it taught me manners — how to eat properly, wash my hands and clean up. Now I do this at home," Danny said. The boys' mother, Maria Teresa Cortez, is very proud of the improvements her sons have made in their schoolwork and behavior. She appreciates 4-H ASC because

it keeps her children safe while she is at work and provides them with the homework help she cannot give because she does not read or speak English.

AA: How can people learn more about 4-H programs in their own communities?

DF: To find 4-H, you can go to 4-HUSA.org and click through your state to find your local 4-H office.



DON'T BE AN AMERICAN IDLE!

Afterschool students and programs can win a new digital camcorder or other prizes through the Afterschool Alliance's contest, *Don't Be An American Idle*. To enter the contest, youth must create public service announcements (PSAs) – advertisements that encourage their peers to check out afterschool programs. Students can create print, radio, television or web PSAs touting the fun and educational activities offered by afterschool programs.

Judges for the contest include actors Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman; television's Judge Glenda Hatchett; Youth Speaks Executive Director James Kass; H2Ed Vice President Patricia Wang; themusicedge.com's Laura Johnson; and others.

Students age nine to 17 can submit entries, which must be postmarked by November 30. Awards will be given in each category (print, radio, television, web) to students in two age groups: nine to 12; and 13 to 17. For more information, the specifications for entries, submission information, and the contest's official rules, go to www.afterschoolscene.com.

PROFILE: BOSTON SCHOOL EXPORTS ITS AFTERSCHOOL SUCCESS

The South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School (SBHA) has many reasons to be proud. This June, students in its first graduating class, all of whom were admitted to college, received \$500,000 in scholarships and financial aid. On any given day, 90 percent of its students complete their homework. For the last two years, 100 percent of the school's seventh graders have passed the English portion of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System exam, and last year all of its tenth graders passed both English and math. Such results are part of a record of success that has earned SBHA, founded in 1998, statewide recognition including designation as a Vanguard School, a statewide award for excellence.

Faculty attribute much of this remarkable success to the school's afterschool program which provides students, 40 percent of whom qualify for free lunch, with a comprehensive "safety net" as they work to achieve high academic goals. "Our school is founded on three main pillars," explained Tobey Jackson, Principal of SBHA's middle school. "First, we have great teachers. Second, we provide a very structured environment with high expectations of students, both in terms of behavior and academic achievement. Finally, we provide a tremendous amount of assistance so that students can meet those expectations. Afterschool is a critical component of that support."

Now SBHA's recipe for success has been documented in a new book, *Learning After School: A Step-by-Step Guide to Providing an Academic Safety Net and Promoting Student Initiative*. "One of the objectives of charter schools is to identify best practices and share them with others," Jackson said. "Our afterschool program has had a big impact on our students. It provides significant academic support and individual attention from

teachers, and our extracurricular activities give kids opportunities that they might not have otherwise.”

Published last year, the guide was authored by a team of SBHA teachers, including Jackson, in collaboration with the Project for School Innovation (PSI), a nonprofit education organization based in the Boston area. *Learning After School* is the tenth title in PSI’s *By Teachers for Teachers* series. The guide includes step-by-step instructions, tips and ideas educators can use to replicate SBHA’s program in their schools. In development is a companion piece – a 15-minute instructional DVD.

Jackson reports that the book has been well received in the afterschool community. He has already consulted with a number of other schools, in person and by phone. “Our afterschool program creates a rigorous and supportive atmosphere that leads to remarkable student achievement. We feel we have something special, and want to share our model with others.”

To preview or order a copy of Learning After School, visit
www.psinnovation.org/PSI/BTFT10.html.



IN THE NEWS...

National – A new study released by Action for Healthy Kids, a nationwide initiative dedicated to improving children’s health and school performance, finds that poor diet and exercise habits are sapping school finances and preventing schools from meeting performance goals. The report examines, among other issues, the potential financial consequences to school districts of absenteeism caused by poor nutrition and physical inactivity; increased staff attention to kids whose low performance or behavioral problems are linked to poor diet; and rising

health care costs and low morale among overweight staff. The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools is available online at www.actionforhealthykids.org/AFHK/special-reports/index.php.

California – Stone Soup Child Care Programs, an Encino-based group that coordinates the resources of parents, school districts, governmental agencies and businesses to provide quality afterschool to low and moderate income communities, reports that it has made impressive strides in meeting the goals of its Nutrition and Fitness Program. The program currently helps 700 children in 22 California schools address problems with obesity and physical inactivity. The program’s latest evaluation determined that more than half of participating children have begun eating more healthfully and more than a third are more physically active. For more information, visit www.stonesoupchildcare.org.

California – Two young California boys have made aviation history after completing a three-day flight from Compton to Canada, reports *Jet* magazine. At eleven years old, Jimmy Haywood is the youngest Black pilot to make an international round-trip flight, and 14-year-old Kenny Roy is the world’s youngest licensed Black pilot. The boys received training in the youth aviation afterschool program at the Compton-based Tomorrow’s Aeronautical Museum. The program requires students to sign a contract agreeing not to cut class, use drugs, or become involved with gangs.

Kansas – A new report released by Kansas children’s advocates finds that 35 percent of Kansas children must take care of themselves after school, while only nine percent are in afterschool programs. With the support of community leaders and local law enforcement, the Kansas Children’s

Campaign and the Kansas Enrichment Network are asking lawmakers for increased funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative.

Maryland – An innovative afterschool program is exposing youth from impoverished Baltimore neighborhoods to the joys and challenges of sailing, according to the *Baltimore Sun*. Destination Bright Future, a nonprofit formed this year, capped off its first five-week course in October with the entry of its most talented graduates in the Baltimore Leukemia Cup Regatta, where the youths raced against seasoned adults. Students spend one afternoon a week on the water, and the rest of the time learning about Chesapeake Bay marine life, the math behind plotting courses, and the physics of sailboat propulsion. The program, open to children ages seven to 16, aims to teach self-reliance and boost students' self-confidence.

New York – Daemen College in Buffalo recently dedicated a new Center for Special Education and After School Programs, reports the *Buffalo News*. The Center, to be named for U.S. Representative Thomas M. Reynolds, who obtained \$1.9 million for the project, will instruct education majors and teachers from school districts across the state in how to lead and develop special education-focused afterschool programs that enhance the quality of life for students with developmental disabilities.

Virginia – In response to growing concerns about gangs, drug and alcohol abuse, and obesity, Fairfax County education officials have launched initiatives to expand afterschool programs for middle and elementary school students, reports the *Washington Post*. The County School Board has earmarked nearly \$1 million to expand afterschool programs and has assigned an assistant superintendent to oversee the creation of new programs. The initiative seeks to address the shortage of afterschool

programs in the county's 25 middle schools — most provide only brief activities that last until mid-afternoon two or three days a week.



IN HIS OWN WORDS...

“Protecting our children from obesity will take effort and may require alterations in routine or rules; however, the rewards will allow our children to live fuller and longer lives. ...One approach, which may take some of the burden off of parents, is enrolling children in afterschool programs or sports teams. These activities will keep children engaged, active, and social through the afternoon hours that they might otherwise spend watching television.”

-Dr. Steven Gortmaker, Harvard School of Public Health Professor, *Boston Globe* Op-Ed, October 19, 2004



RESOURCES

New Afterschool Investments Resources

The Afterschool Investments Project, of the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care Bureau, provides online afterschool resources to both providers and policy makers. The project recently published two new resources:

- “CCDF and 21CCLC: State Efforts to Facilitate Coordination for Afterschool Programs” advocates for increased integration of funding from the Child Care and Development Fund and 21st Century Community Learning Centers, discusses challenges involved, and highlights emerging strategies for effective integration. To view the report, visit

www.nccic.org/afterschool/CCDF21CCLC.pdf.

- “Estimating Supply and Demand for Afterschool Programs: A Tool for State and Local Policy Makers” provides a framework for estimating supply and demand, including examples of how various communities have made estimates and lessons learned from the field. To view the report, visit www.nccic.org/afterschool/SupplyDemand.pdf.

New Web Site by Parents’ Action for Children

Parents’ Action for Children, formerly the I Am Your Child Foundation, is a national non-profit dedicated to advancing the interests of families and young children. Parents’ Action develops parent education materials, connects parents with one another, and fights for issues such as early education, health care, and high quality and affordable child care. Its new web site features a host of useful resources for parents including regularly updated articles on child development, discipline, and health; parent-to-parent forums; advocacy opportunities; and more. For more information, visit www.parentsaction.org.

New Report: Best Practices in Urban Education

The American Cities Foundation recently released a report entitled “Best Practices in Urban Education Project: Narrowing the Achievement Gap for African American and Latino Students.” The report, which identifies the best practices implemented by high performing urban schools, can be viewed at www.amcities.org/bestpractices.asp.




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 Christie Constantine via email (advocate@afterschoolalliance.org) or fax (202/371-9142). She will need your name, organization, phone and fax number, and email address. Thank you!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

 **February 16 – 19, 2005**

FOUNDATIONS, Inc. will host its 2005 *Beyond School Hours VIII*[®] national conference in Atlanta, Georgia. *The Power of Partnership* conference will include successful, content-rich, afterschool program models, as well as network opportunities with community, school, university and government leaders. There will be discussions on current policies and practices that impact programming and school systems and on methods to maximize resources and funding strategies for schools and afterschool programs. The conference is hosted in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program and is sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Annenberg Foundation. For more information or to register online, visit: www.foundationinc.org.

February 24 – 26, 2005

The National AfterSchool Association (formerly NSACA) will host its 2005 conference from February 24-26 in San Antonio, Texas. The conference will bring

together 2,500 afterschool professionals – the largest conference of the profession – for practical, thought-provoking programs, sessions, and events. For more information, visit www.naaconference.org or call 800/606-0061.

April 15 – 17, 2005

Youth Service America will sponsor its 17th annual National Youth Service Day, a public awareness and education campaign that highlights the contributions young people make to their communities throughout the year, and mobilizes millions of young people to address the needs of their communities. To learn more, visit the organization’s web site at

www.ysa.org/nysd/lead_agencies/la_faq_parent.cfm.



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 Christie Constantine with story ideas or information via email: advocate@afterschoolalliance.org; phone: 202/371-1999; or fax: 202/371-9142.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure 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.

The *Afterschool Advocate* is produced for the Afterschool Alliance by PR Solutions, Inc., Washington, DC; Phone: 202/371-1999; Fax: 202/371-9142; E-mail: advocate@afterschoolalliance.org.
