

Afterschool Advocate

A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance

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Note to Readers: President Bush is due to release his budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2005 on Monday, February 2. The Afterschool Advocate will publish an issue shortly afterward with the news about afterschool and other education program funding, as well as tips and sample materials to help readers respond.

WOMEN SENATORS URGE INCREASE IN AFTERSCHOOL FUNDING

In December, as the Administration prepared its Fiscal Year 2005 budget proposal, all 14 women in the United States Senate sent a joint letter to President Bush urging him to increase funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative next year.

Last year, the President proposed a 40 percent cut in afterschool funding. Congress rejected the cut, adopting instead a \$1 billion hold-the-line appropriation for afterschool. However, the *authorized* level for afterschool funding, as laid out in the President's signature No Child Left Behind Act, is \$1.75 billion in FY 2004 (the current fiscal year), and \$2 billion in FY 2005.

So even though Congress rejected the President's proposed cut last year, funding levels for afterschool fell further behind the No Child Left Behind authorized level. Instead of providing afterschool care for 2.5 million children, as called for in No Child Left Behind, the Fiscal Year 2004 appropriation provides for just 1.4 million children.

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NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES NEW AFTERSCHOOL CORPORATION

In his State of the State address on January 13, New Jersey Governor James E. McGreevey proposed a new state-sponsored afterschool corporation that will raise funds to enroll 20,000 kindergarten through eighth grade students in afterschool programs in the state by February of 2005. Governor McGreevey said he will model his new program, New Jersey After 3, after The After-School Corporation (TASC) in New York.

The following is an excerpt from Governor McGreevey's speech:

"Every afternoon, there are too many children on their own, too many sitting alone in front of the television, in front of a video game, in the mall, or on the street finding trouble. Let's keep our schools open from three to six so children can have more time for learning and less time for trouble. Let's give hard-pressed mothers and fathers the peace of mind that when they are at work, their children are in a safe and productive environment. Today, I am proposing a new partnership among the State, the private sector, and the many dedicated education and community providers. A partnership that will work together to fund and operate a system of afterschool programs across the state. New Jersey After 3 will be the first state-sponsored, non-profit corporation anywhere in America to take on the afterschool challenge. I will need this

Continued on Page Three...

Women Senators Continued...

The bipartisan Senators' letter urges President Bush to:

“[s]upport enough funding in your fiscal year 2005 budget proposal for the 21st [Century] Community Learning Centers so the program can continue to grow and more children will have the option of high-quality, safe, afterschool learning activities. These programs are critical to children's success in school and in life, as well as their parents' ability to work. If funding is provided for these programs at the level promised in No Child Left Behind, a total of 2.8 million children would be served through these Centers.... We hope you will join us in ensuring that every child has a genuine opportunity to succeed and that no child is left behind. The availability of quality afterschool programs moves us toward that goal.”

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) organized the historic letter, signed by all 14 women in the Senate: Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), Susan Collins (R-ME), Elizabeth Dole (R-NC), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Mary L. Landrieu (D-LA), Blanche L. Lincoln (D-AR), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Patty Murray (D-WA), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI).

“This letter is enormously significant,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “The women of the Senate know that afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families. Not only are these Senators poised to reject any cut in 21st CCLC funding, but they want to see that afterschool opportunities are provided to children and families who don't have them.”

House Members Call for Support

In the House, Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY) organized a letter urging President Bush to provide full funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program in FY 2005. Sixty Democratic members of the House signed the letter.

A PDF of the signed Senate letter is available on the Afterschool Alliance web site at www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Women_Senate_Letter.pdf. For a PDF of the signed House letter, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/House_Dem_Letter.pdf.

**Thank the Members of Congress
Who Wrote to President Bush
On Behalf of Afterschool**

If your Senator or Representative signed the letter to President Bush from women Senators or from House Democrats, please call the Member's office or send an email or letter to say thank you.

Contact information for Members is available on the Afterschool Alliance web site, www.afterschoolalliance.org. Enter your zip code in the “Contact Congress” box located on the left-hand side of the homepage.

Tell your Senator or Representative: “Thank you so much for signing a letter urging the President to grow the federal afterschool program in Fiscal Year 2005. Afterschool programs are critically important to families in my community because they keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working parents. I hope you will continue working with us to ensure more adequate federal funding for afterschool programs in Fiscal Year 2005.”



New Jersey After 3Continued...

Legislature’s help, but I am going to challenge us to have 20,000 children enrolled in afterschool activities in the next school year and that will build a better New Jersey.”

In the weeks leading up to the address, Governor McGreevey and his top policy staff members met with TASC President Lucy Friedman and other TASC leaders to learn more about TASC’s efforts in New York State over the past six years.

“Governor McGreevey recognizes what TASC and working families have long known, that afterschool programming is an essential service that needs to be a matter of public policy,” said Friedman. “TASC looks forward to assisting the Governor and his staff in making his vision a reality.”

TASC as a Model Program

When TASC began in 1998, the intermediary supported 25 programs in New York City. Today, through a combination of city, state, federal and private funding, TASC supports programs serving more than 50,000 students in more than 250 public schools throughout New York State. These programs are operated by more than 130 community-based organizations.

TASC started with a challenge grant from philanthropist George Soros’ Open Society Institute (OSI) which pledged up to \$125 million over seven years, provided that TASC raise three dollars from the public sector and private donors to match every dollar donated by OSI. To date, TASC has used \$80 million of its original grant from OSI to leverage \$236 million in public and private funds to support TASC programs.

For more information about Governor James E. McGreevey, visit

www.state.nj.us/governor/. Additional information about TASC is available on its web site, www.tascorp.org.

**IN THE NEWS...**

California - While afterschool programs cut juvenile crime, drug use and other risky teen behaviors, and improve academic achievement, only three percent of California high schools receive federal afterschool support, finds a new Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California study. In the report, *California’s Next After-School Challenge*, law enforcement leaders and crime survivors call on public officials to continue expanding access to afterschool programs for teenagers. The report also recommends increasing federal afterschool support and, in time, establishing the first state-level source of funding for afterschool programs for teens. For a copy of the report or more information about Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California, visit www.fightcrime.org/ca.

Florida – Twenty-four doors hand-painted by 550 afterschool children will be on exhibit at the Lake County Administration Building’s Round Courthouse in Tavares from late January through March, reports the *Orlando Sentinel*. The children selected a theme for each door, including handprints of kindergartners, a map of Florida, and a patriotic flag. The doors were the culmination of a two-and-a-half month project at five local Achievement Through the Arts programs, funded through a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant.

New York - On February 10, more than 1,200 children, parents and afterschool advocates will travel to New York State’s capitol to urge state legislators to increase funding for afterschool programs, reports Kathleen Carlson of The After-School Corporation (TASC). The event is organized by the Coalition for After-School Funding (CASF) and TASC. Young people will be treated to a morning of performances and fun, a great lunch and then a march to the legislative office building where they will meet with key

elected officials to explain why afterschool is so important.

Tennessee – Thanks to a donation from a local Lincoln Mercury dealer in Memphis, the Stax Music Academy’s afterschool program hopes to be able to double its enrollment, reports the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. The car dealer donated two vans painted in the school’s colors to help pick up students after school, as well as \$5,000 for scholarships.

Virginia – As part of the launch of the Virginia “After School Advantage” program, the Bethel Community Service afterschool program received ten computers loaded with educational software and high-speed Internet access, reports the *Richmond Times Dispatch*. The “After School Advantage” program is managed nationally by GTECH Corp and supported locally by the Virginia Lottery. “This truly is an investment we are making in these young people, who will run this state, the school division, the faith-based communities and corporations some day,” said state Secretary of Education Belle S. Wheelan at the launch ceremony.



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.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

“The president’s supporters are quick to claim that education spending has increased because of the Bush administration. But they compare apples to oranges by lumping unrelated programs together. And the White House wants Americans to ignore the president’s requests to cut \$300 million in vocational training and \$400 million for afterschool programs, and to eliminate funds for dropout prevention, rural education efforts and school principal training programs... If the president were serious about education, he would provide the funds for schools to improve their programs so that all students in America would have the opportunity to receive a first-class education. Instead, the president seems content to provide enough funding to test students, determine that they are falling behind, and then leave it up to the states to find the dollars to pay to improve. The ones who will ultimately pay the price are America’s children. We voted for the No Child Left Behind Act. We support the reforms in that law. But schools need more funding if America is truly going to leave no child behind.”

- Guest Editorial by U.S. Senators Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller, *Charleston (WV) Gazette*, January 17, 2004

“Families are the hub of our neighborhoods, and protecting and nurturing our children is a moral imperative we do not intend to neglect. We have built a solid record: afterschool programs, a children’s fund from the construction of new stadiums, public education reform, better childcare facilities and a new last dollar scholarship program that will inspire and facilitate higher education for our children. But we need to do more. In fact, it is our goal to work with children’s advocates, Paul Vallas and the School Reform Commission to have afterschool slots available for every elementary school student

in the city by the end of this term and to build new public schools that strengthen neighborhoods and provide a first class environment for teaching and learning.”

- Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street’s
2004 Inaugural Address, January 5, 2004

“Community leaders across the state agree that one of the most effective ways to combat drug abuse and underage drinking is providing healthy afterschool activities during a child’s adolescent years. That is why we are implementing new afterschool programs now targeted at middle school students. These programs would be paid for with up to \$5 million in already available federal funds to provide healthy activities for children in the most vulnerable age group. These programs will enrich our children and provide peace of mind for their parents.”

- Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle’s State of the State Address, January 26, 2004

“With regard to the governor eyeing changes in parole and prison policies to trim inmate populations: It’s important that California always look for new and innovative ways to reduce the costs associated with crime. While revising sentencing guidelines and implementing other prison reforms are important steps, nothing works better at trimming crime’s cost than preventing crime in the first place. The 264 police chiefs, sheriffs and prosecutors who make up the statewide anti-crime organization, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California, know that our government must greatly expand the programs proven to nip crime in the bud, such as quality pre-kindergarten, child-care and after-school programs. For every child kept from adopting a life of crime, taxpayers save \$1.7 million. What’s more, we never have to endure the damage crime leaves in its wake. Paired with necessary reforms to our system of justice, greater investments in kids can provide the one-two punch needed to win the

fight against crime and reduce all its terrible costs.”

- Barrie Becker, Director Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California Oakland, Letters to the Editor, *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 4, 2004



RESOURCES

White House Task Force Report on Youth Programs

The White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth’s final report is available at www.ncfy.com/whreport.htm. The report identifies four aspirations for America’s children: healthy and safe; ready for work, college and military service; ready for marriage, family and parenting; and ready for civic engagement and service. In order to help children achieve these outcomes, the Task Force identifies four goals for the federal government: better management; better accountability; better connections; and priority to the neediest youth.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 15 – 18

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.

 **February 26 – 28**

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.

 **March 11 – 12**

The Kansas Community Education Association (KSCEA) will host its 3rd Annual Conference, “Making Life Easier- Connecting Youth With Your Community Through Youth Development” on March 11 and 12 in Wichita, Kansas. Featured speakers will be Alexa Pochowski, Assistant Commissioner of Education in Kansas, and Alicia Wilson-Ahlstrom, Program Associate for the Forum on Youth Development in Washington, DC. Other speakers will present on various topics in youth development such as management and professional development, programming, health and wellness, policy and advocacy, and communities and families. For more information about the conference, please contact President Elect Tonya Phillips at 785/986-6286 or visit the KSCEA web site at www.kscea.org.

 **March 18 - 19**

The Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University will host its 2004 National Conference from March 18 to 19 at the Inner Harbor of Baltimore, Maryland. 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.

 **May 18 - 19**

The Afterschool Alliance will convene its third annual **Afterschool Challenge** event in Washington, DC from May 18 to 19. Advocates, parents, youth, educators and program leaders and staff are encouraged to participate in this day-long event, which will include 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. For more information and the latest details, visit www.afterschoolalliance.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) or fax (202/371-9142). She will need your name, organization, phone and fax number, and email address. Thank you!

MEDIA OUTREACH

Many mayors and governors are delivering their inaugural and State of the State addresses in January and February, and are discussing funding for afterschool programs. Local talk radio programs are an excellent way to reach a large audience with messages about the importance of afterschool programs and the effects that budget cuts or increases will have on the community.

Placing a Guest on a Radio Program

First, identify locally produced talk programs – by listening to them, searching web sites, or from a media guide. Then find out the name of the producer or “booker” for the shows, by calling the station and asking. Get contact information as well. Then send a “pitch” letter, in which you propose that the producer invite an afterschool program director and perhaps a parent to be guests to talk about afterschool issues.

Some tips about pitch letters:

- Address your letter to the producer you hope to interest. Producers are looking for interesting guests to talk about interesting subjects. Communicate that what you are proposing will make for a strong, lively broadcast.
- Don’t speak in moral imperatives. Never tell them they “must” or “should” book a particular guest. Tell them instead about an opportunity to book a guest who can talk about afterschool – an issue of considerable interest to community members.
- Radio talk show producers and bookers closely follow the headlines – both local and national. The ideal time for a pitch letter to arrive is the day that the local newspaper has a major story on a given subject, or the day *USA Today* or the *New York Times* carries such a story. If an opportunity presents itself in the form of a story in the newspaper, fax in a pitch letter that day! Another opportune time to pitch your afterschool story is when local media are covering education news anyway. You may try sending a pitch letter offering your afterschool program as a unique twist on back-to-school stories (in late August or early September) or as a local illustration of a national news-making event (for example, as Congress gets ready to vote on a major afterschool bill).

A sample pitch letter follows:

February 2, 2004

Ms. Rickie Bird
WEBN-FM
1111 St. Gregory Street
Rivertowne, OH 45202

Dear Ms. Bird,

As you may know, Mayor Davidson delivered his second inaugural address on Thursday and he announced plans to reduce the city's deficit by cutting funding for several key programs, including afterschool programs. Many of the city's afterschool programs depend on government dollars to be able to offer safe, enriching programs to children every day afterschool. These reductions will have a severe impact on the future of afterschool programs in Rivertowne.

The parents of the Rivertowne Open Door Afterschool program see every day the important role that afterschool programs play in our children's lives. They provide a safe, adult-supervised place to enjoy creative learning opportunities. Begun just three years ago, Rivertowne's afterschool program has already proven to be an asset to the community. Nearly 400 students are enrolled, and teachers and parents report that the programs are helping our children succeed in school.

Afterschool programs throughout the city are producing similar results, and that's why the proposed budget cut is such a bad idea. I am writing to ask that you consider having the director of Open Door Afterschool, Ms. Jennifer Greene, as a guest on your program to talk about the afterschool issue. She can also bring a parent of one of the students in her program. I know that afterschool is a major concern for parents across the community, and that Ms. Greene would be a lively and interesting guest. Please call me if you would like additional information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jill Smith
513/555-1234



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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