

Afterschool Advocate

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MESSAGE TO CONGRESS: INCREASE AFTERSCHOOL FUNDING

More than 500 advocates – including parents, children and program directors – from around the country traveled to Capitol Hill last Wednesday to meet with more than 200 congressional leaders about afterschool funding. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, the “Afterschool for All Challenge” kicked off with a *Breakfast of Champions* Wednesday morning, at which Senators John Ensign (R-NV) and James Jeffords (I-VT) discussed the importance of afterschool programs. New Afterschool Alliance spokesperson Kevin Sorbo – star of TV’s “Andromeda” and “Hercules, The Legendary Journeys” – also encouraged lawmakers to provide an afterschool program for every child.

“So, it’s come to this. You need Hercules to kick some butt!” Sorbo said at the event. “Every young person deserves a safe place to go after school, where they have opportunities to learn, be engaged with positive role models and become more physically active. For many, that place is an afterschool program. Unfortunately, too many kids are missing out. We must make afterschool programs accessible to all children. I’m excited to join the efforts of the Afterschool Alliance and today call on lawmakers to support afterschool programs.”

“The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program has celebrated its 10th birthday, and has grown from a \$20 million demonstration program to almost a billion dollar initiative that supports 1,400 afterschool programs,” said Senator Jeffords

(I-VT). “I want to thank all of you for your help in making the program a success.”

“Today’s world is so much more dangerous,” emphasized Senator Ensign, Co-Chair of the Senate Afterschool Caucus. “As a community, as a nation, we have to understand the reality of the situation and we have to look to our children and do what’s best for them. Kids really are the future.”

“Every day, 14.3 million children leave school without a safe place to go,” said Afterschool Alliance Interim Executive Director Jen Rinehart. “We are here to ask lawmakers to honor the commitment they made in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, which established a Fiscal Year 2006 funding level for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool initiative of \$2.25 billion. The President has proposed just \$991 million – much less than what was promised in *No Child Left Behind*, and less than he proposed last year. That afterschool funding gap would leave 1.75 million children without the afterschool programs they need. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families.”

The Afterschool Alliance presented Afterschool Champion Awards to three exemplary afterschool programs: Lilburn Elementary School, Lilburn, Georgia; Douglas Cherokee Economic Authority, Morristown, Tennessee; and Shoshoni Lights On! afterschool program, Shoshoni, Wyoming.

After the *Breakfast of Champions*, students, parents and afterschool leaders met with their senators and representatives to discuss the benefits offered by afterschool programs and to urge them to fully fund the 21st CCLC initiative, the chief federal funding stream for afterschool.

Youth Advocates Speak Out

This year, more than 100 young people attended the Challenge to speak out in support of their afterschool programs. Students attended workshops on advocacy, and were able to spend time at a “youth lounge” where they socialized with fellow youth advocates from across the country and prepared for the next day’s meetings with Members of Congress and staff.

“I thought today was excellent,” beamed Amber Harden, 13, of the Loch Raven Academy YMCA afterschool program in Towson, Maryland. “It was interesting to actually sit down with the people and tell that them how much we need our afterschool programs . . . so that our kids won’t be out on the street and getting in trouble.”

“It’s great experience to get to talk about how important afterschool is,” added Marcus Michaud, 16, of the Danbury Community Center in New Hampshire. “It helps kids get involved in their communities, socialize and their communication levels increase.”

“I thought it was awesome . . . talking to Congress and the Senators and being in Washington for the first time,” added Ann Hutchison, 13, an afterschool student from Chanute, Kansas. “It was just a really amazing opportunity.”

Afterschool Rocks the House

The day’s events concluded with *Afterschool Rocks the House*, which showcased afterschool programs from several states. Sorbo emceed the afternoon event, which featured Representatives Dale Kildee (D-MI), Nita M. Lowey (D-NY), co-chair of the House Afterschool Caucus, and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD). It also included spoken word, dance and musical performances by Rhode Island afterschool students by the Rhode Show, an afterschool program at AS220 Broad Street Studio in Rhode Island.

Congresswoman Lowey welcomed Sorbo as the Alliance’s new spokesperson,

commending him for his efforts to secure increased afterschool funding.

“We need really high-quality afterschool programs,” said Congressman Kildee. “They provide a safe environment for our kids and they definitely improve academic achievement. . . . In my district, I know that those afterschool programs today have really increased opportunities. Tell every Member of Congress, ‘if you voted for *No Child Left Behind*, you promised \$2.25 billion and give it, because it is an investment, an investment in our future,’” he urged the crowd.

“It’s critically important that we provide everybody with an opportunity to have a productive afterschool experience,” added Congressman Van Hollen. “I think we all understand that when school lets out, there are many hours in the day that we need to make sure that our students are engaged in productive activities. Learning doesn’t stop just when the bell rings and everyone is out of school.”

Afterschool student Taylor Bankson, 12, of the Lackawanna Trail Elementary School in Factoryville, Pennsylvania, was recognized for walking the farthest in support of afterschool as part of the Alliance’s Pedometer Contest. Pedometers were given to all participants to record their steps as they spent the day visiting Members of Congress. Bankson, who logged 31,133 steps, received an autographed, life-sized cardboard likeness of Kevin Sorbo as Hercules, and DVDs of the first seasons of Sorbo’s hit television shows.

Afterschool programs participating in *Afterschool Rocks the House* included: Northwest Buffalo Community Center, Buffalo, New York; Kenmore West High School Challenge Club, Buffalo, New York; YWCA Niagara District, Lockport, New York; Boys and Girls Clubs of Rochester, New York; Exceptional Family Resources, Syracuse, New York; Lackawanna Trail Elementary School, Factoryville, Pennsylvania; and AS220 Broad Street Studio, Providence, Rhode Island.

“I think it was a good learning experience,” remarked Taimonaya Pinkney, 15, of the Patterson High School YMCA in Baltimore, Maryland, in summarizing the day’s events. “And I think we will get the money for sponsoring the afterschool programs.”



TV STAR TO BE SPOKESPERSON FOR AFTERSCHOOL

Noted television actor Kevin Sorbo made his debut as a spokesperson for the Afterschool Alliance in May at the “Afterschool for All Challenge,” in the first of what will be many appearances to promote afterschool. The star of the science-fiction/action hour sensation, “Gene Roddenberry’s Andromeda,” is also well known for playing the title role in the hit television series, “Hercules: The Legendary Journeys.”

“I am proud to serve as a spokesperson for the Afterschool Alliance, and to do whatever I can to promote the afterschool programs that children and families need,” Sorbo said. In October, he will participate in *Lights On Afterschool*, the nation’s largest rally for afterschool programs.

“We are delighted that Kevin Sorbo is joining the effort to increase access to high quality afterschool programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Interim Executive Director Jen Rinehart. “Kevin’s longtime dedication to keeping kids safe, healthy and physically fit make him a fantastic spokesperson for afterschool. We look forward to working with him in the months and years to come.”

Sorbo is also the spokesperson for “A World Fit for Kids,” a non-profit organization that offers gang, drug and dropout prevention programming to kids at risk by providing mentoring training for teens and using them

as positive role models for youngsters. *For more information on A World Fit for Kids, go to www.worldfitforkids.org.*



ESSAY CONTEST

The Afterschool Alliance and The Advertising Council are sponsoring an essay contest for kids who have discovered a new passion in life through an afterschool program. The *Something Way Better to Do: Finding Inspiration Afterschool* essay contest will award top prizes of \$1,500 in several categories. To enter, students in grades five through 12 should submit an essay of 500 words or less that answers one of the following questions:

- Has an afterschool activity changed your life, and what you want to do when you grow up?
- Has a person you met through an afterschool program made a big difference in your life?
- Do you think your experiences in afterschool programs make you better off?
- What if you had never been in an afterschool program?

Official rules and entry forms are available at www.afterschoolscene.com and www.afterschoolalliance.org. Entries are due June 30, 2005, and can be submitted on either web site.

IN THE NEWS

National – The first-ever Latino Leadership Summit on Afterschool, held this Spring in Washington, D.C under the auspices of the Afterschool Alliance and the Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans, produced a wide-ranging discussion of afterschool’s role in addressing unique challenges facing the Latino community, and a commitment from leaders to continue to work for increased afterschool opportunities and stronger afterschool programs. The Summit was made possible by a grant from the William T. Grant Foundation.

California – Pasadena high school students are boosting the reading skills of at-risk elementary school students in their community as part of the Reading Leaders afterschool program, according to the *Pasadena Star-News*. Students from La Salle and Pasadena High Schools visit an elementary school once a week to read to children, play games, and conduct activities linked to books. Their goal is to help the students learn to read by the third grade.

Massachusetts – In an effort to increase the number of people who can enjoy Worcester's Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center and Wildlife Sanctuary, students at the YMCA Citizen Schools afterschool program have partnered with the Massachusetts Audubon Society to create new multilingual trail signs and brochures, reports the *Telegram & Gazette*. Students conducted research to determine what languages should be used and what symbols are universally recognized. They also translated brochures about the Sanctuary into Portuguese, Polish, Spanish and Vietnamese and distributed them to neighborhood and cultural centers. The program was made possible by a grant from South High Community School.

Michigan – A new afterschool program at Alcott Elementary in Pontiac gives high school students the opportunity to improve their Spanish-speaking skills while they help acclimate Hispanic elementary school kids to a new culture and language, reports the *Detroit News*. Established by a Lahser High School student, the program matches high school tutors with about 40 Spanish-speaking elementary school students who grapple with language issues in school and struggle with homework because their parents do not speak English. Organizers say that the high-schoolers' interest in Spanish and the Hispanic students' home countries has increased both grades and self-esteem.

New York – First-graders at the Five Block Day Care Center afterschool program in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, succeeded in getting a tree planted this Arbor Day in honor of a World War I soldier, reports the *Daily News*. Although most other neighborhood sidewalk plaques honoring World War I heroes are placed beneath trees, Pvt. Clifford B. King's plaque was not. When the students learned that King's plaque was missing a tree, they began a campaign that included writing letters to the Parks Commission and local Community Board, and staging a march in front of the plaque to garner publicity.

Pennsylvania – Students in the basketball league at Lancaster's Life After School Program were rewarded for completed homework assignments and good grades last month with a trip to a Philadelphia 76ers game against the Cleveland Cavaliers, reports the *Intelligencer Journal*. In addition, three representatives were chosen from each of the seven elementary schools in the school district to sit on the Sixers' bench while they warmed up before the game.



USE A4A FOR DISCOUNT ON SCHOOL SUPPLIES


The Afterschool Alliance is happy to announce a new partnership with Discount School Supply to give friends of afterschool a ten-percent discount on all school supply orders. To receive the discount, put the code A4A (it stands for Afterschool 4 All) in the pink promotional box when ordering supplies at www.discountschoolsupply.com. Or mention it when you call 1-800-627-2829 to place an order.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

 **July 11 – 14, 2005**

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) will host a series of seminars for

afterschool providers in Boston at the John Hancock Conference Center. The first session (July 11 – 12) features seminars on project-based learning and becoming a quality advisor. The second (July 13 – 14) features training on evaluation and program improvement. Tuition is \$525 per two-day session and includes a course notebook, continental breakfast, lunch and snacks. *For more information, visit*
www.niost.org/training/sumsem05.html.

 **July 14, 2005**

The Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore is asking communities to host a “Summer Learning Day” event on July 14, to showcase summer programs and raise awareness about how summer programs send young people back to school ready to learn, support working families, and keep children safe and healthy. *For more information, visit*
www.summerlearning.org/summerlearningday/plan.html.

 **July 14 – 15, 2005**

The U.S. Department of Education and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, in conjunction with the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning at SEDL, are pleased to announce that the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) 2005 Summer Institute will be held in Chicago. This year’s focus will be on ensuring that afterschool programs engage participants – and their communities – in activities that effectively support both learning and youth development. *For more*

information, visit
www.synergyentinc.com/21stcentury/.

PROJECT 2010 CONTINUES TO GAIN SUPPORT

The Afterschool Alliance’s *Afterschool for All: Project 2010*, a sign-on campaign designed to demonstrate the diverse support for afterschool, continues to gain support. In particular, mayors around the country have come out in support of afterschool, including:

Mayor Joseph S. Frank, Newport News, VA
 Mayor Thomas McMahon, Reading, PA
 Mayor Connie Marshall, Bellevue, WA
 Mayor Jane Bender, Santa Rosa, CA
 Mayor Stephen J. Luecke, South Bend, IN
 Mayor Phillip Curtis West, Natchez, MS
 Mayor Thomas Weisner, Aurora, IL
 Mayor Jack Ford, Toledo, OH
 Mayor Stephen R. Speed, Dover, DE
 Mayor Nancy Tyra-Lukens, Eden Prairie, MN
 Mayor William White, Houston, TX
 Mayor Norm Archibald, Abilene, TX
 Mayor Jerry Brown, Oakland, CA
 Mayor Ronaldo O. Loveridge, Riverside, CA
 Mayor Daniel Jones, Charleston, WV
 Mayor Michael Kadas, Missoula, MT

To become a *Project 2010* Partner, contact Jonathan Rhoads at jrhoads@afterschoolalliance.org. To view a complete partner list and other partner news, click on *Afterschool for All: Project 2010* at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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.

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