



NEW STUDY: QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS BRING ACADEMIC GAINS

The new Study of Promising Afterschool Programs is making waves in the education community and getting attention from opinion leaders nationwide. Afterschool Advocate editors interviewed the study's lead author, Deborah Lowe Vandell, who chairs the education department at the University of California, Irvine, about the findings and what they mean.

Afterschool Advocate: Please describe your study's key findings in terms of the academic impact of afterschool programs.

Vandell: This study showed that, for disadvantaged elementary and middle school students, regular participation in high quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits. These gains help offset the negative impact of lack of supervision after school.

Elementary school students who regularly attended high quality programs over two years demonstrated gains of up to 20 percentiles in standardized math test scores, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during the afterschool hours. In addition, the students who attended afterschool programs posted gains in teacher reports of work habits and task persistence. They also showed gains in self-reported work habits. The improvements in work habits and task persistence may have provided important support that contributed to the gains in math achievement.

Study continued on page thirteen...

FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS

As the *Afterschool Advocate* goes to press, Congress is about to complete its Fiscal Year 2008 budget process and send an omnibus spending package to the President, which he is likely to sign. In November, the President vetoed the stand-alone education spending bill, sending Congress back to the drawing board to renegotiate a new bill.

On Monday, December 17, the House approved a new omnibus spending bill that includes the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill as well as 10 other spending bills, for Fiscal Year 2008. This new bill largely adheres to the President's bottom line funding level for domestic spending, and despite having to make cuts and very difficult spending decisions elsewhere, it includes an increase of \$100 million for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. The bill includes an overall increase of \$767 million above the President's request for the U.S. Department of Education.

The Senate passed the bill on December 18 and sent it back to the House today for another vote. The new House vote is needed because the Senate added additional money for the war in Iraq. The House is expected to vote again on the omnibus spending package today and send it to the President for his signature.

Fiscal Year 2008 began on October 1, but until a new budget is enacted, spending continues at last year's levels. "In these tough economic times, this year's budget has called for difficult decisions on funding. We are
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OUTREACH

Holiday Cheer for Afterschool

The holiday season can be a time to highlight community needs and promote community involvement. Some afterschool programs have relationships with businesses, faith-based agencies and other entities, and organize or benefit from toy and food drives, backpack and supply collections, and other in-kind or monetary contributions. Other programs use the holiday season to launch creative campaigns that educate new audiences and win new supporters. Still others use the season to launch service learning projects that teach students the importance of giving back while showcasing afterschool in the community.

Afterschool programs across the country will be spreading joy and spreading the word about the benefits of afterschool programs this holiday season. From toy drives and Ballet Folklorico recitals at the East Los Angeles Boys & Girls Club in California, to caroling to seniors with Project PASS in Camdenton, Missouri, afterschool programs are spending this month solidifying their roots in the community.

Reaching Out to Those in Need

Students at YMCA school-age child care centers in Cupertino and Sunnyvale, California, are collecting new and gently used jackets for children whose families cannot afford winter jackets.

Students at the Logan Elementary School afterschool program in Columbia, South Carolina adopted residents of the Wardlaw Senior Citizens Apartment Building as their holiday community service project this year. The students are bringing in “change,” which will be pooled to purchase items for goody bags for residents. The students are looking forward to visiting with the seniors when they deliver the gifts.

In St. Pawley’s Island, South Carolina, students with Teach My People partnered with local grocer Food Lion to collect donations, which will be distributed next week to needy families and senior citizens.

Raising Funds

In Monessen, Pennsylvania, afterschool programs at the Mon Valley YMCA and the Lemoyne Center will benefit from “Carol for a Cause,” a fundraising effort started years ago by local residents who sang Christmas carols to passer-bys at Salvation Army collection areas. The volunteers found that singing carols increased the amount of the donations. From that observation grew the now more structured “Carol for a Cause” fundraiser. Participants spend the week of December 17 caroling throughout the county to raise funds for afterschool programs and build awareness about the role these programs play.

After the caroling sessions, participants return to the YMCA and Lemoyne Center for hot chocolate and cookies. Organizers say the event engages families as well. “Caroling is a good way for families to be connected,” Joyce Ellis, program organizer told the *Valley Independent*. “You don’t have to know how to sing. You just have to have fun.”

Raising Awareness about Overseas Missions

In Pocatello, Idaho, students in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program started early and reached out to a unique service group. Four programs partnered with the Pocatello Kennel Club to provide holiday goodies for Operation Military Care K-9, which supports dogs trained for special missions overseas. The children did “special” chores around their homes to collect allowance money which was used to purchase treats, chews, shampoos, brushes and other items. In all, the programs collected 11 goody bags that were delivered to the Kennel Club in November.

Students at the Georgetown County YMCA in Georgetown, South Carolina have been busy wishing military families 'happy holidays' by writing letters to military personnel overseas.

Highlighting the Benefits of Afterschool

In Missoula, Montana, the Flagship afterschool program is quickly becoming a key contributor to the city's annual New Year's Eve alcohol-free celebration, "First Night Missoula." Flagship works with First Night in the fall to run auditions through its high schools for young talent to participate in a "Missoula Idol" contest. The big finale is featured at First Night and a winner is selected. "This is Flagship's second year of participation in this event and First Night tells us, that since our involvement, they are seeing record numbers of young people at the event," said Afterschool Ambassador Rosalie Buzzas, who directs the program.

Middle school students in the Flagship program produced a video to tell their peers that it is 'cool' to be drug-free. The video will be featured as a part of the First Night activities, accompanied by a panel discussion with students.

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

"28 in 08," Sign-On Drive to Reach 28,000 Partner Milestone

Afterschool for All is launching a drive to reach 28,000 partners by fall of 2008. The sign-on drive, "28 in 08," will raise awareness of the 28 million children whose parents work outside the home. Many need quality afterschool care to keep their children safe and healthy after the school day ends. Advocates are making noise for afterschool by hosting *Afterschool for All* sign-on campaigns. Visit www.afterschool2010.org and click on the partner tools to download sample letters, petitions and response forms.

Afterschool for All partner Betty Jones of Shepherds Field Ministry Inc. in Savannah, Georgia is making *Afterschool for All* a city-wide initiative. "We believe that we must invest in our kids in order for them to reinvest in the community and in themselves," she says. "Quality afterschool programs that provide children with safe environments, surrounded by caring adults, and engaged in active learning can make the difference for all children in at-risk situations."

Jones is using *Afterschool for All* to inspire supporters including Savannah's mayor, school board members, educators, juvenile justice mentors, concerned citizens, and faith-based and youth organizations. Savannah's afterschool advocates aim to recruit 1,000 new *Afterschool for All* partners in 2008. Thanks to their outreach to local businesses such as Home Depot, Savannah will have the first *Afterschool for All* float in the Martin Luther King Jr. Parade in January. The float will feature afterschool cheerleaders as well as youth engaging in afterschool activities.

Afterschool for All totals 17,000 partners to date. Contact Marie Coichy, Project Manager, with questions or comments at mcoichy@afterschoolalliance.org or at 646/943-8662.



FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance has numerous resources on its website for afterschool providers, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities. To learn more, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding_main.cfm.

Accreditation Assistance from AT&T

Afterschool providers serving youth whose parents are AT&T employees may be eligible for up to \$500 in reimbursement from the company for attending professional development conferences. Through the AT&T Scholarship and Professional Accreditation Program, afterschool providers can use these funds to learn about the latest care issues, obtain new resources, network with professionals who share common goals, and strengthen services. AT&T created the program to improve the quality of child and elder care services available to employees. *For more information on the program, visit <http://www.youradvocate.com/AT&T/default.asp>.*

GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

Grants for Early College Preparation

The U.S. Department of Education is sponsoring Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grants for low-income students. GEAR UP grants support early college preparation and awareness activities. Afterschool programs are invited to apply. The deadline is December 20. *For more information, visit <http://www.ed.gov/programs/gearup/applicant.html>.*

Awards for Innovation in Education

Cable in the classroom is sponsoring Cable's Leaders in Learning Awards, which recognize outstanding educators, administrators and other community leaders who are using new ideas to educate and new technology to better prepare young students for the future. In addition to national and local recognition, winners receive a \$3,000 cash prize and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC in June of 2008 to visit with Members of Congress to talk about their award-winning programs. The deadline is January 16, 2008. *For more information and to apply, visit www.LeadersinLearningAwards.org.*

Grants for Youth Nutrition and Fitness

The General Mills Foundation, in partnership with the American Dietetic Association Foundation and the President's Council on Physical Fitness, is awarding grants to community-based groups to develop creative ways to help youth adopt a balanced diet and a physically healthy lifestyle. The program will award grants of up to \$10,000 each. Local organizations that work with youth are particularly encouraged to apply. The target audience must be youth between the ages of two and 18. A registered dietitian must be directly involved or serve as an advisor, and the program must have at least one nutrition objective and one physical activity objective. The deadline is January 18. *For more information, visit <http://www.generalmills.com/corporate/commitment/champions.aspx>*

Coming Up Taller Awards

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is inviting nominations for the 2008 *Coming Up Taller* Awards, which recognize the accomplishments of exceptional arts and humanities in afterschool and out-of-school programs. *Coming Up Taller* finalists receive \$10,000, an individualized plaque, and an invitation to attend the *Coming Up Taller* Leadership Enhancement Conference. *More information and an application are available on the Coming Up Taller website, www.cominguptaller.org.* The deadline for nominations is January 31.



TASC STUDY: MIDDLE SCHOOL AFTERSCHOOL STUDENTS SHOW HIGH SCHOOL GAINS

New York City students who attended middle school afterschool programs had better ninth-grade attendance and earned more credits than students who did not, according to an independent analysis of students in afterschool programs supported by The After-School Corporation (TASC). In ninth grade, students who regularly participated in TASC afterschool in grades six, seven and/or eight missed an average of almost seven fewer days than similar non-participants, researchers for Policy Studies Associates found. In tenth grade, they attended school for approximately six days more. They also earned more credits toward graduation in ninth grade.

“After-School Programs and High School Success: Analysis of Post-Program Educational Patterns of Former Middle-Grades TASC Participants,” funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation, compared students who attended TASC programs with students in the same middle schools who did not participate, and with students in similar middle schools that had no TASC afterschool programs.

The findings are consistent with other recent studies, including a major, long-term study of children enrolled in LA’s BEST, a citywide afterschool program in Los Angeles. It too found long-term gains for afterschool students.

The full text of the TASC study is available at
<http://www.tascorp.org/content/document/detail/1758>.



MANY MA STUDENTS NOT IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Concluding months of research, the Massachusetts Special Commission on

Afterschool and Out of School Time released a report in November that finds that quality programs play a key role in making sure that young people realize their full potential to become well-rounded adults and responsible citizens. However, an estimated 80 percent of the state’s children and youth are not participating in these programs because of cost, transportation and other barriers – and there is a significant gap in afterschool programs for older youth in the state.

Afterschool programs have proven to help students do better in school, live healthier, and gain and practice the critical skills that allow them to compete in the new economy, the new report says. They also contribute to positive relationships among young people, which are critical to child and youth development, including healthy brain development.

Our Common Wealth: Building a Future for Our Children and Youth finds that afterschool programs provide a unique opportunity where all the key domains of child and youth development are linked. “Learning takes place at every hour of the day and in all of the places where young people spend their time,” Special Commission Co-Chair and State Senator Thomas McGee said. “We need to recognize that and make sure all the places that our young people go are equipped to help them realize their full potential.”

Among the Commission’s recommendations: increasing public awareness; improving access; promoting quality programs and a quality workforce; fostering partnerships and collaboration; and new efforts to give the afterschool field resources, policies and partners that will provide a stable continuum of quality afterschool experiences for children and youth.

The report is available at
www.massafterschoolcomm.org.



FIVE NEW STATE NETWORKS FUNDED

Afterschool advocates in Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey and Wyoming will get a boost now that afterschool networks in their states have been funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, with matching funds from local organizations.

The Indiana Afterschool Network will work to: create a sustainable structure of statewide, regional, and local partnerships, particularly school-community partnerships, focused on supporting statewide policy development; support the development and growth of statewide policies that will secure the resources that are needed to sustain new and existing afterschool programs; and support statewide systems to ensure that programs are of high quality.

The Kentucky Statewide Afterschool Network aspires to create a sustainable statewide infrastructure for regional collaboration in order to support accessible and high quality afterschool programs to help more Kentucky Youth reach their full potential.

The Maryland Out of School Time Network is a statewide effort led by the Safe and Sound Campaign, with 14 other state and local agencies and organizations. It will serve as a means for joint planning, sharing of resources and best practices, building bridges to federal, state and local out of school initiatives, and forging partnerships necessary for comprehensive statewide out-of-school-time policies.

Through the establishment of the New Jersey Afterschool Network (NJAN), New Jersey intends to strengthen the existing network and linkages among policy makers, funders, practitioners and consumers to facilitate effective planning and efficient implementation of a highly coordinated system of services for all children in afterschool programs throughout the state.

The Wyoming Afterschool Alliance is the vehicle created to support and promote quality school-based and school-linked afterschool environments and programs focused upon improving positive youth outcomes for youth and families. It is developing a continuum of services and resources for youth, aged birth to young adult, by creating a system of strategies and key partnerships based on like-minded goals.

For more information on these and other state networks, visit

<http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/>



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

“As a matter of public policy, we are building more prisons; we have more cells than we have schoolrooms. What are we telling our young generations to come? We can’t give you an afterschool program, we can’t give you this, we can’t give you that, but we can give you 25 to life.”

--Singer, actor Harry Belafonte, *Washington Post*, November 3, 2007



IN THE NEWS...

Arizona – Chickens, ducks and pot-bellied pigs have been among the guests at Catalina Foothills area afterschool programs, reports the *Arizona Daily Star*. The visits are sponsored by the Therapeutic Ranch for Animals and Kids afterschool program which strives to educate children about therapy animals so they can eventually accompany the animals to hospitals, homeless shelters and other sites. In a recent class, children fed and milked two pygmy goats while learning about the uses of goat wool and tasting goat milk and cheese. “My favorite part is when we learn stuff about the animals and you actually pet the animal and see it live,” said one third-

grader. For more information, visit www.traktucson.org.

California – Students at Sacramento’s Jesuit High School physics afterschool program beat students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Texas A&M University for top honors in an international competition involving remotely operated vehicles and underwater engineering. The afterschool students’ robots were designed for use in underwater missions that focus on scientific research and offshore industry operations in the polar seas, reports the *Sacramento Bee*. The competition was sponsored by the Marine Advanced Technology Education Center, National Science Foundation and Marine Technology Society to inspire students to enter the field of underwater engineering.

Massachusetts – A new public health and safety initiative, the Violence Intervention and Prevention program, includes afterschool as a key concept. The initiative encourages city employees to leave their offices and venture to neighborhoods, knocking on residents’ doors to inform them of city services. One program priority is “expanding participation, especially among middle school students, in well-supervised, high quality, afterschool programs by offering free transportation from community centers to children and youths.” According to the *Boston Globe*, Mayor Thomas Menino said the program is “another step on the road map to reducing violence and destruction in the neighborhoods of Boston.” For more information, visit <http://www.cityofboston.gov/vip/>.

Michigan – Bountiful fall leaves were no match for the youngsters at the Partnership Park After-School Program in Jackson. Although jumping in leaf piles was part of the fun, the main activity for students was their volunteer work to help older residents by raking and cleaning a Jackson neighborhood. “We just thought it was a good fall activity to

do,” Abbey Peterson of Catholic Charities of Jackson told the *Jackson Citizen Patriot*. “They are having a great time and working hard to get yards clean.”

New Hampshire – According to the *Union Leader*, traveling the world is budget-friendly and involves no jet lag when it’s done through the Passport to the World afterschool program at Epping Elementary school in Manchester. Students are given “cultural samplers” where they learn arts, language, crafts and games of diverse countries including China, Mexico and Saudi Arabia. Cherly Macleay, the program administrator, said the key to keeping her students interested is making sure the programs offer “hands on” activities.

Oregon – Youngsters in the Reynolds School District’s Pumped on PE afterschool program get active and learn new exercises while keeping track of which muscles they are using and how activities affect their blood cells. The *Oregonian* reports that the program fills a great need, since most of the children live in areas where there is not much space for outdoor exercise. Organizers say it is a tremendous success, in part because of a grant that allows for coordination between schools and afterschool. “It’s probably the first time I’ve seen daytime and afterschool linked like they are,” said program coordinator Ami Lewis. “Afterschool staff meet with daytime PE teachers. They have lesson plans tied to Oregon state education standards. It isn’t just more activity after school. It sends a consistent message to the kids.”

Pennsylvania – Puppets are coming to life through the creativity and inspiration of Allentown’s youth, reports the *Morning Call*. Children in the Welcome to Our Family afterschool program at Fountain Hill Elementary are taking part in a puppeteering project designed to prevent child abuse by promoting strong families. In collaboration with Mock-Turtle Marionette Theater and the Lehigh County Office of Youth and Children,

students learn puppet-making skills as well as positive family values. At the end of the program, students will present a play they have written and acted out with their puppets.

Virginia – This Thanksgiving, residents of 15 1/2 Street community in Norfolk were able to enjoy extra cheer, thanks to students at Seatack Recreation Center’s afterschool program. The students organized a canned food drive to help their neighbors. The nine- and ten-year-olds sorted collected items according to type, separating corn, green beans and boxes of stuffing into brown paper bags. Younger students added Thanksgiving cards to the bags. “They made their own plan,” activity center leader Jessica Guiton told the *Virginia-Pilot*. “When they start giving to their community, they see how much it makes a difference to people around them.”

Washington – Coeur d’Alene Police Chief Wayne Longo was recently dodging to keep safe from dozens of youth, but in a good way. The Chief and other officers joined in a friendly game of dodge ball with the Kootenai County Boys & Girls Club afterschool program. “They’re not here to search you; they’re not here to bother you. They’re here to be your friend and help you succeed,” Executive Director Ryan Davis explained to the children. The police visit is one way the program is helping youth view officers in non-confrontational settings. Davis said students join gangs for the same reasons they join his program – seeking companionship and a sense of belonging. “The Boys & Girls Club is a proven program that helps reduce juvenile crime,” Longo told the *Spokesman-Review*.



LIGHTS – CAMERA - ACTION AFTERSCHOOL!

Afterschool students can now use hands-on technology to create online media products. Kids Talk Radio and Personal News Network (PNN) are offering free recording software to afterschool programs that launch PNN sites to share stories about their program’s activities. Programs that do so will be registered to receive free Mixcraft multi-track recording studio software and creative project lessons that can be implemented in classrooms.

In addition, Kids Talk Radio and PNN will select ten of the best stories and feature them on the home page, and give those programs free school site licenses of Lesson Plan Designer.

Participants will have the opportunity to create their own websites using new Mixcraft multi-track recording studio software, which facilitates easy podcasting. This content can easily be posted regularly on Kids Talk Radio and PNN.

PNN and Kids Talk Radio are online entities that facilitate simple online story sharing. *To view the Lights On Afterschool page and apply, visit <http://lightson.pnn.com/3181-home>. For more information on PNN and Kids Talk Radio, visit <http://pnn.com> and <http://kidstalkradioshow.pnn.com/2828-home-page>.*



METLIFE BRIEF: CONNECTING SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

Education reform efforts are placing a strong emphasis on strengthening schools to improve student academic achievement. But schools are not the only place where students learn and grow. A new MetLife-Afterschool Alliance issue brief, “Afterschool: The Bridge Connecting Schools and Communities,”

analyzes the role of afterschool in linking a student's academic day to relevant enrichment activities during afterschool hours. The brief also examines the role of afterschool in fostering greater family and community involvement, especially for children from low-income communities.

The brief finds that afterschool is key to reestablishing relationships between schools and communities that ultimately give children greater opportunities for success. It says, "Children and youth benefit when schools and families value community partners and engage them as resources. Further, youth learn about the importance of contributing to their communities, and are in turn appreciated by those communities."

The brief provides examples of communities that have successfully utilized afterschool as a mechanism to strengthen school and community bonds. *To view it, visit*

http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_bridge.doc.



T-MOBILE VOLUNTEERS TRANSFORM AFTERSCHOOL SPACES

Afterschool spaces nationwide went from dull to dynamic thanks to the time, talent and passion of nearly 2,200 T-Mobile employees who took part in *T-Mobile Huddle Up*, a national community service program connecting kids primarily from high-need, urban communities to positive places, people and programs. Through a series of one-day events, employees logged 17,600 volunteer hours building bookcases and picnic tables, painting park benches and colorful educational murals, and landscaping outdoor areas. Ultimately, T-Mobile volunteers revitalized afterschool facilities in 12 locations.

"They did more work in a single day than any other group has done in the last five years," said Brandy Fultz, Branch Executive Director of the Redmond, Oregon Boys & Girls Club, after T-Mobile employees painted a 36-foot world map and murals outside the facility, among other activities.

Before each project, T-Mobile employees met with kids from afterschool programs, asking for input on interior and exterior designs that would generate pride and stimulate a positive atmosphere. A signature component to each afterschool "extreme makeover" is the ***T-Mobile Huddle Up Zone***, a dedicated space offering an atmosphere for studying, socializing, learning and fun targeted at middle school students.

At these events, power players from the National Basketball Association rallied support for afterschool programs alongside T-Mobile employees. Marcus Camby of the Denver Nuggets and Ben Gordon of the Chicago Bulls were among those who participated.

T-Mobile Huddle Up events will culminate with the second annual T-Mobile Invitational, a gala basketball tournament for eight top high school teams, with 150 employee volunteers working side by side with 150 student athletes and coaches.

T-Mobile Huddle Up addresses the need for kids to have access to safe, quality and affordable afterschool programs – a critical issue when parents are at work. The program engages employees in hands-on projects that enrich the lives of T-Mobile customers and the communities in which employees live and work.

To help kids reach their potential and improve communities nationwide, T-Mobile established long-term partnerships with two leading, national nonprofit organizations – City Year and the Afterschool Alliance, and launched *T-Mobile Huddle Up* just over a year ago. Earlier this year, T-Mobile and the Afterschool Alliance launched the first-ever ***T-Mobile Huddle Up Afterschool Survey***,

which showed the high level of importance parents place on afterschool programs.



FREE TIVO BOX FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Afterschool Alliance supporters can get a free 80-hour TiVo Series2™ Dual Tuner DVR Box (a \$249 value) when they sign up for a TiVO service plan through the Afterschool Alliance's website. This special, limited time offer continues through December 31.

While there, sign up to receive Smart News, a bi-weekly newsletter of the Smart Television Alliance – a new campaign to improve quality children's television that is supported by the Afterschool Alliance, National Education Association, National PTA and others. The newsletter provides "top picks" and recommendations on how to make television an educational experience for your family.

Go to www.afterschoolalliance.org and click on the TiVo/KidZone box on the right side of the page for more information.



CALIFORNIA UPDATE

The Finance Project recently released a new in-depth guide to help After School Education and Safety (ASES) grantees match their ASES funds. Grantees are required to match not less than one third of their grants. "Making the Match: Finding Funding for After School Education and Safety Programs" is a tool to help providers identify and attain adequate funding. It offers strategies for creating partnerships with the public and private sectors and examples of programs that have been successful in securing matching funds. "Making the Match" is available at

<http://www.financeproject.org/publications/MakingTheMatch.pdf>.

The Finance Project also has available a new guide to help providers successfully apply for ASES grants. "Getting the Grant: A Guide to Securing Additional Funds for After School Education and Safety Programs" demonstrates how to identify promising funding opportunities and provides detailed information on how to craft a winning grant proposal. It also provides advice on grant writing "pitfalls" to avoid. "Getting the Grant" is available at

http://www.financeproject.org/publications/FINA_GrantwritingGuide.pdf.

NAA CONFERENCE

The National AfterSchool Association (NAA) will host the 2008 20th Anniversary Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida from March 12 to 14. The NAA conference is the preeminent professional development experience for afterschool professionals. For 20 years, this conference has been the place to connect with colleagues and learn the latest about that afterschool professionals need to know to be able to serve children in high quality afterschool and summer programs. In honor of 20 years of success, this year's NAA conference will celebrate the commitment of afterschool professionals to the field. This year's keynote speaker will be CNN anchor and special correspondent Soledad O'Brien. Early registration ends December 31. *For more information, visit* <http://www.naaconference.org/>.

RESOURCES

Afterschool in the Rural Context

The Afterschool Alliance recently updated the issue brief “Afterschool Programs: Helping Kids Succeed in Rural America.” The updated issue brief provides more recent information on the current challenges and opportunities facing rural programs, in addition to examples of programs that are successfully addressing the challenges of transportation, poverty, teen suicide, alcoholism and more. *The updated brief is available at*
http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_rural_4.pdf.

Strategies for Afterschool Programs

Foundations Inc. has released a new guide for starting or expanding multidisciplinary afterschool programs, particularly for at-risk youth. The guide was co-authored by 16 leaders in various disciplines, and includes chapters on science, arts, technology, afterschool in the global context, and afterschool as a path to college. “Afterschool Advantage: Powerful New Learning Opportunities” was funded by the C. S. Mott Foundation, the University of South Carolina Foundation, the College of Charleston, and Foundations, Inc., and includes a foreword by Richard W. Riley, former U.S. Secretary of Education. *“Afterschool Advantage” is available for download at*
<http://www.foundationsinc.org/about/news-detail.asp?recid=49>.

New State Profiles and Federal Resource Database

The Afterschool Investments Project has updated its state profiles to provide snapshots of the “state of afterschool” in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. These fact sheets are designed for providers and policy makers alike. The Afterschool Investments project has also compiled a resource database on federal afterschool information, including tips on starting and operating programs,

funding and curriculum. *The state profiles are available at*
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/statep.html>. *The federal resource database is available at*
http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/fed_resources.pdf.

New Program Evaluation Issue Briefs from Child Trends

In October, Child Trends, an independent research center focused on children’s issues, released two new research briefs of interest to afterschool programs considering formal evaluations. “Why Conduct a Program Evaluation? Five Reasons Why Evaluation Can Help an Out-of-School Time Program,” by Alison Metz, offers compelling reasons to conduct program evaluations despite the cost and burden on staff. In addition, “Five Steps for Selecting an Evaluator: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Practitioners,” by Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew, Krystle Joyner and Tiffany Allen maps out the choices afterschool programs face in selecting evaluators. The two publications are the first in Child Trends’ new Series on Practical Evaluation Methods. *Both are available online at*
http://www.childtrends.org/_portalcat.cfm?LID=C6CEDAFE-34FF-4DFD-9CD745899CE5D128&CFID=832960&CFTOKEN=80790013.

Showcase of Promising Practices

New Jersey After 3 issued a new edition of its Promising Practices compilation. “Promising Afterschool Practices: A Showcase of Innovative, Creative and Successful Afterschool Programs” highlights nine promising practices employed by different programs across the state. From multi-site basketball and cheerleading leagues to street art sticker projects to student walking clubs and more, the report offers descriptions of practices that can be adopted by other programs as well as contact information for featured programs. *The report is available at*

http://www.njafter3.org/old_site/NJA3PromisingPractices2007.pdf.

Free Toolkit to Engage Teens in STEM

The Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History has developed a free implementation toolkit based on its EVOLUTIONS (EVoking Learning & Understanding Through Investigations Of the Natural Sciences) afterschool program. EVOLUTIONS engages inner-city teens in a program focused around science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) literacy, college preparation, career awareness and skills development. The toolkit was developed to disseminate knowledge but also to engage the out-of-school-time science education community in discussions related to best practices. *Please visit*

<http://www.peabody.yale.edu/education/afterschool.html> to learn more.



LEARNING NETWORK

The Afterschool and Community Learning Network is helping mayors, policy makers and local, state and national organizations across the country develop partnerships and policies that promote quality afterschool programs and community learning centers for children and families. Once housed at the University of South Carolina, the Network is now located in the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina.

“Providing more after school and community learning center opportunities to struggling students is critical to help them catch up, keep up and get ahead,” Dr. Terry Peterson, Director of the Network told *Carolina Newswire*.

The College received a \$450,000 four-year grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to support the Network. *For more information, visit*

<http://www.afterschoolcommunitylearning.org/>.



CERTIFICATE IN OST LEARNING

The Johns Hopkins University School of Education and the Center for Summer Learning are offering a certificate in out-of-school-time (OST) learning. The program features 15 credits that will prepare program directors and managers at schools and community-based organizations to meet the unique challenges of leading and managing high quality afterschool and summer programs. *For more information, visit* www.summerlearning.org.



TESTERS NEEDED

The Lawrence Hall of Science is looking for instructors who work with middle school girls in afterschool settings to participate in a national field test trial of materials on the science of hair and skin. Instructors will administer surveys, present 45-minute sessions using the provided instructor's guide and materials, and provide feedback to designers. Instructors will receive a \$100 honorarium upon receipt of all completed paperwork. Field testing will run from January 15 to February 15. *Contact Jason Freeman at* ScienceAfterSchool@gmail.com *if you are interested.*



DISCOUNT ON SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The Afterschool Alliance partnership with Discount School Supply gives 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.

Study continued from page one...

Middle school students who regularly attended high quality programs over two years demonstrated gains of 12 percentiles in standardized math test scores, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during afterschool hours. In addition, middle school students who attended afterschool programs had significant gains in self-reported work habits.

Did you find behavioral improvements among students in afterschool programs as well?

Definitely. We found that regular participation in high quality afterschool programs significantly improved behavior, and reduced behavior problems for the students we studied. Compared with students who were unsupervised after school, elementary school students who participated regularly in afterschool programs posted significant gains in teachers' reports of peer-to-peer social skills and pro-social behavior, as well as significant reductions in aggressive behaviors and misconduct such as skipping school.

Middle school students showed similar results. There were reductions in misconduct over the two years, relative to students who were unsupervised after school. Middle

school students who regularly participated in high quality afterschool programs also reported less use of drugs and alcohol. These results are *four to six times larger* than those reported in a recent meta-analysis of school-based substance abuse prevention programs aimed at middle school students.

How extensive was the study and what was your methodology?

Our study followed almost 3,000 low-income, ethnically diverse elementary and middle school students from eight states in six major metropolitan centers and six smaller urban and rural locations over two years. About half the students attended high-quality afterschool programs at their schools or in their communities. The programs we looked at did not specifically aim to improve students' academic skills.

How readily can these findings be generalized to the overall population of students participating in afterschool?

It's important to note that the programs we studied are high quality programs, and that they did not have extraordinary funding. They were school-based or school-linked, but the critical factor is that they were high quality and had been sustained over a period of time. It's also important to note that, while they were not heavily academic programs, they offered opportunities for skill-building. Some of the skills were academic, some were in the areas of music, art, sports literature. They offered lots of hands-on activities. We observed the programs over a period of time and they were all characterized by supportive, positive relationships between staff and the students, as well as among the students themselves. And, of course, students were attending regularly.

Do you think your new study is consistent with the overall body of research on the impact of afterschool programs?

Yes. In a range of studies we've looked at programs of varying quality and, generally,

we've found more positive social and academic outcomes in higher quality programs. New programs often have a shake-out period while they're getting their sea legs. The Mathematica study, for example, looked at new programs that had recently received 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding, and it's just hard for new programs to start out being high quality. That's not to say there aren't any of them there.

What would you recommend providers learn from this?

One important thing we found was that some of the students attending afterschool on a regular basis were also involved with other programs in their communities. We called that the "program-plus group" and the middle school students in that group had particularly good outcomes. We found that problems arose when young people were spending a substantial amount of time unsupervised or hanging out with peers. So part of the lesson is that we need to be thinking about how programs and other activities can cooperate with one another, and help facilitate some of these activities and cross-program involvement. So we don't want to be saying, 'We're putting our program in competition with some other program.' It may well be that positive outcomes are partly the result of cooperation with other programs.

What should afterschool advocates be telling lawmakers about the study's results?

I see two important points. One is that the programs obtaining academic gains were not simple extensions of the school day. They were not just doing homework, not programs where there was a lot of drilling. They were doing learning in a different way. The reason we get these gains, I think, is that they were offering children a chance to learn in a different way. That's consistent with other research, too. So a lesson for lawmakers may be that a way to achieve gains afterschool is to use these alternative ways of learning.

The second point is that the programs where we had these positive effects were mature programs. They had been in operation for a minimum of three years when we started, and the study went for three years, so these programs were sustained for a minimum of six years.

Do you plan any additional or follow-up research?

Yes. We have a follow-up study in the field now looking at some of the children in the original study, to see what's happening two years later.

The Study of Promising Afterschool Programs is co-authored by Elizabeth R. Reisner of Policy Studies Associates, Inc. and Kim M. Pierce of the University of California, Irvine. It was produced by the University of California, Irvine; University of Wisconsin - Madison, and Policy Studies Associates, Inc., and funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. It is available online at <http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Promising%20Programs%20FINAL.pdf>.



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thankful that Congress recognized the needs of our nation's children and families and has increased funding for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant.

For the latest news on federal funding developments, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

February 14 - 17, 2008

Foundations Inc. will host the “Beyond School Hours XI: Bringing Learning to Life” national conference in Jacksonville, Florida. The keynote speaker is distinguished author and world renowned poet Dr. Maya Angelou. The conference will touch on a wide variety of issues affecting afterschool, including: technology; staff support; summer learning; rural resources; engaging parents, communities and stakeholders; program quality; funding; and more. *For more information, visit*
<http://www.foundationsinc.org/events/conference/beyond11/default.asp>.

April 30 – May 3, 2008

The Best Out-of-School-Time (BOOST) conference will be held at the Palm Springs Convention Center and Wyndham Palm Springs Hotel in Palm Springs, California. One of the nation’s largest afterschool conferences, BOOST offers networking and teambuilding opportunities, numerous workshops, and information on the latest trends and research in out-of-school time programming for elementary, middle and high school-age programs. *For more information, visit*
<http://www.boostconference.org/index.php>.

**** And mark your calendars now for the 2008 “Afterschool for All Challenge,” May 13th and 14th in Washington, D.C.!**

More information on upcoming conferences and events is available at
www.afterschoolalliance.org/states/calendar_main.cfm

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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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