

A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance

AFTERSCHOOL: LOOKING TO 2009

Many changes will be coming to our education system in 2009, with the Obama Administration and a new Congress taking office, and new governors, mayors and school superintendents taking the reins across the country.

On Tuesday, President-Elect Barack Obama named Chicago School System Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan to be the nation's next Secretary of Education. If he is confirmed, Duncan will preside over the agency during the period when the *No Child Left Behind Act* is restructured and reauthorized.

Duncan is known to afterschool supporters for his successful efforts to build flexibility into the supplemental education services system, and the *No Child Left Behind Act* overall. Known as a pragmatic reformer, in 2006 he called on Congress to double funding for *No Child Left Behind*. Duncan also is a strong proponent of early childhood education.

President-Elect Obama has pledged to double funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the nation's chief funding stream for afterschool. While in the Senate, Obama also introduced legislation to support summer learning programs.

"We are looking forward to working with the new Administration and Congress to help bring us closer to the goal of afterschool for all," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "These are indeed tough economic times, with difficult funding choices to be made. But with more families working harder than ever to make ends meet, Volume 9, Issue 14, December 16, 2008

we need to be sure that all kids have access to safe, enriching activities during the afternoon hours when they might otherwise be unsupervised. Quality afterschool programs are essential for families and communities. They also provide our children and youth with valuable academic, social and professional skills that will help them succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy."

The incoming Obama Administration has created a website, Change.gov, to inform the public about policy ideas and initiatives, and give citizens a virtual "seat at the table." *Afterschool is featured on the agenda at http://change.gov/open_government/entry/afte rschool_alliance_afterschool_for_all/*. Advocates and supporters can visit the site to view the Afterschool Alliance's recommendations, and are encouraged to post a comment reinforcing the importance of afterschool programs.

Similarly, a coalition of nonprofit organizations, including Change.org and MySpace.com, has launched a national advocacy campaign so the public can vote for their "Ideas for Change in America." The top ten ideas will be presented to the new Administration on Inauguration Day, January 20. The goal is that each winning idea will receive full consideration from the new Administration and Congress.

The Afterschool Alliance's *Afterschool* for All is one of "Ideas for Change in America's" featured ideas. Supporters can vote for afterschool at http://www.change.org/ideas/view/invest_in_ afterschool_programs. The first round of voting ends on December 31, with subsequent voting before finalists are selected.

"We are facing a critical time for *Afterschool continued on page nine*...

OUTREACH

With a new Congress and Administration poised to begin work on critical funding issues in January, now is a great time for afterschool supporters to spread the word about the value of afterschool programs. One of the best ways to reach a large audience is to place a letter-to-the-editor.

Afterschool Ambassador Debra Ballinger, Program Services Director of R'Club Child Care, Inc. (<u>http://www.rclub.net/</u>) in St. Petersburg, Florida, recently submitted a letter to the *St. Petersburg Times*. The paper printed it two days later. "At first it is intimidating when you think about contacting media, but you have to remember that this is an opportunity for you to share your story, to share your cause," Ballinger said.

She has placed several letters, and recommends that program providers fight the urge to be intimidated and remember that they are the experts on afterschool. "We are the ones who see the children and their families every day, and we can share their stories," she said. "With a letter-to-the-editor, we're the ones who can share the real story of what goes on after school."

Submitting a letter is easy, Ballinger added. While each newspaper has its own submission guidelines, most accept letters online. "It's as simple as clicking submit," Ballinger said, adding that she "absolutely, always" receives feedback from colleagues and parents after one of her letters is printed. Funders and board members also appreciate seeing the organization's work recognized. "Local funders have told me, 'Thank you for representing us so well," Ballinger said. "If our letter is published, we send out the link to our Board members and to our listserv. Our Board really enjoys seeing the good press."

Letters are just one of many tools available to help spread the word about afterschool. Advocacy is not a one-time activity, but rather an ongoing process. Advocates can publicize *Lights On Afterschool* events, share their newsletters, encourage parents and families to serve as spokespeople, lawmakers visits, and more to generate recognition for programs and the services they provide.

Below is a sample letter-to-the-editor that argues for more afterschool funding. It can be tailored to address local issues. Most newspapers have information on their websites about how and where to send submissions, and welcome letters from their readers.

To the Editor:

Change is coming to our country in January when a new federal government takes office. And voters are saying the time is right to invest in the afterschool programs that support kids and families.

That's the conclusion from a new poll taken on Election eve and Election night for the Afterschool Alliance. It found that 76 percent of voters say they want the new Congress and their newly elected state and local officials to increase funding for afterschool programs. That support carries across all demographic, regional, ideological and party lines.

Unfortunately, funding from the federal government has lagged far behind the levels authorized by the *No Child Left Behind Act*, and the result is that many afterschool programs have closed and

others have been forced to cut back – leaving children unsupervised and at risk. [Add a local example if you have it.]

Afterschool programs like the one I'm proud to [lead or be associated with] at [insert your **program name**] keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families. But too many kids and families don't have access to afterschool. We can change that by increasing funding for afterschool programs next year.

Sincerely,

[name] [title] [affiliation/program] [address] [work phone (not for publication)] [home phone (not for publication)]

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

Happy Holidays on behalf of the *Afterschool for All* sign-on campaign. It has been quite an extraordinary year for the project! Thanks to the dedicated outreach of advocates, the campaign proudly added a record number of new *Afterschool for All* partners in 2008 – close to 5,000 – bringing the *Afterschool for All* tally to nearly 22,000 partners.

Thousands of Americans pledged their support for the goal of *Afterschool for All*. The diverse supporters include: concerned parents; youth; teachers; community leaders; national organizations such as the Asian American Coalition for Education and the Boy Scouts of America; and esteemed public officials from both sides of aisle. Among the newest lawmakers to join this campaign are Alaska Governor Sarah Palin and Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry.

We look forward to working with all of our partners in the new year to help grow and strengthen public support for the *Afterschool for All* effort. Together we can make afterschool for all a reality. *Contact Marie Coichy at mcoichy@afterschoolalliance.org or 646/943-8662 for more information on the campaign.*



FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance's website has resources for afterschool providers, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities. *To learn more, visit http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding.cfm.*

GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

Grants for Tobacco Prevention

The American Legacy Foundation is sponsoring Legacy Innovative Grants to support projects that advance creative solutions to the challenges caused by tobacco use in America. In 2009, priority will be given to projects located in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wyoming, as well as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Grants are available for up to \$100,000 for the first year of funding, with the possibility of additional second-year funding. The deadline for letters of intent is January 16, 2009. *For more information, visit http://www.americanlegacy.org/1710.aspx.*

Grants for Music Education

The Muzak Heart & Soul Foundation is sponsoring the Music Matters Grant Program in support of music programs throughout the United States. The focus of the grant program is on educational reform in school music programs and independent music programs. Public school programs as well as nonprofit organizations with music education programs that serve students regardless of their ability to pay are eligible to apply. The application deadline is February 4, 2009. *For more information, visit http://heart.muzak.com/what/grants.aspx.*

Grants for Youth Services and Education

The Regal Foundation, the nonprofit charitable organization affiliated with Regal Entertainment Group, is offering grants to local charities based in the communities the company theaters serve, and to national projects that have a multiplier effect by benefiting local groups across the country. Grants are awarded to organizations that benefit persons suffering economic, physical, social or educational hardship or disadvantage, with a particular focus on youth services and education. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and are reviewed three times a year. *For more information, visit http://www.regmovies.com/corporate/communityaffairs/.*



AFTERSCHOOL ON MAYORS' AGENDA FOR '09

As part of the Mayors' Action Challenge for Children and Families, mayors across the country are being urged to set ambitious goals for improving health, safety and education in their cities, and one of the ways that they are being encouraged to do that is by supporting quality afterschool programs. The new initiative was unveiled at the National League of Cities (NLC) annual convention in Orlando, Florida, on November 15. To date, 87 mayors have committed to at least one of these goals for their cities.

Despite funding shortages, some city leaders have already begun to make their goals a reality other ways. Mayor Christopher Coleman of St. Paul, Minnesota has launched the Second Shift Initiative to bring nonprofits together with other community groups to provide quality afterschool programs. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Mayor Michael Nutter has pledged to cut the city's dropout rate of 45 percent in half in five to seven years.

"Across our nation, we must agree together on the way – both in public and private sectors – to create cities that are successful in educating all of our children and supporting all of our families," Mayor Nutter said.

Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant said the support for afterschool programs in the Mayors' Action Challenge "is very important news. Families are really struggling, and we need afterschool more than ever, not only because of the economy but to build the workforce of the future."

To help cities achieve the goals that their mayors have set, the NLC hopes that more opportunities for collaboration between local and federal governments will be possible under the Obama Administration. The Challenge Statement of Principles identifies full funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers as one federal action that can bolster local efforts to improve education. During the campaign, President-Elect Barack Obama vowed to double federal funding for afterschool programs and to create a new funding stream that will allow one million additional students to attend summer programs.

To learn more about the Mayors' Action Challenge for Children and Families, please visit http://www.mayorsforkids.org/.



NOMINATE AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM TODAY!

The Afterschool Alliance and the MetLife Foundation are partnering to develop and disseminate a series of Issue Briefs that address topics related to middle school and high school age youth and afterschool programs. Programs eligible for nomination must do the following:

- Prepare youth to be members of the workforce;
- Prevent dropouts;
- Effectively recruit and retain older youth; and
- Foster strong mentor relationships.

If selected, programs may be highlighted in Issue Briefs and they may also be chosen to receive a *MetLife Afterschool Innovator Award.* The award will go to afterschool programs that exemplify promising practices in each of the four areas listed above.

Each awardee, as well as several other nominees, will be recognized in the related Issue Brief and in the final compendium of briefs. Awards will be given out by the Afterschool Alliance in conjunction with the 2009 *Lights On Afterschool*. Each recipient will receive an award of \$5,000 to be used to continue or improve upon their highlighted program.

The Afterschool Alliance would like to identify potentially lesser known, yet highly

effective, programs and the individuals running them. Please take a moment to either make a nomination or to inform likely candidates about this opportunity.

Nominations must be submitted by Wednesday, December 31, 2008. For more information, and to view the nomination form, visit

http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/metLife.cfm.



IN THE NEWS...

National – The U.S. Dream Academy, a nationally recognized afterschool program, announced that it will more than double its size by adding 15 new centers over the next five years. The U.S. Dream Academy will also establish an ongoing quality assurance system to ensure that the curriculum is consistent throughout its learning centers. Funding for the expansion is made possible by a \$2 million grant from The Atlantic Philanthropies, as well as gifts from Oprah Winfrey.

California – Despite tough economic times, the Children's Nature Institute is teaching 12,000 low-income students from underperforming schools that they don't have to be wealthy to appreciate nature. Recently, the Institute brought 60 students to see the Pacific Ocean and the Malibu Lagoon, which they had never seen despite living just 30 minutes away, reports the *Los Angeles Times*. The program serves underprivileged, at-risk and special-needs students, many of who are autistic, homeless, or in foster care.

Florida – A new program called the New Town Success Zone is designed to help innercity students in Jacksonville learn the basic skills they need to lead successful lives by using a "conveyor belt" system of programs. According to the *Florida Times*-Union, the New Town Success Zone was inspired by a similar program in Harlem, New York. The Jacksonville program will include afterschool sessions focusing on help with schoolwork, job skills training, college preparation, and a new family support center.

Florida – Kirby Jacobs, a Boca Raton high school student, started Cinderella's Closet last September. The organization gives away previously worn prom style dresses to girls who can't afford them. The *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* reports that the project grew when Kerri Kovler, regional manager of three Teen Angel stores in Florida, became involved, donating several boxes of new clothes from her store that were never picked up. The clothes went to adolescent girls living in foster care as well as younger girls participating in afterschool programs at the local Youth Activity Center.

Missouri – Bob Coulter, director of the Missouri Botanical Gardens Litzsinger Road Ecology Center in St. Louis, has introduced a new afterschool program designed to get children to explore their community and environment. Students in the program play interactive "Whodunit" games, in which children use hand-held GPS systems to navigate and solve environmental mysteries set in their own neighborhoods. Coulter hopes to open students' eyes to the possibility of a career in science. According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, students most recently explored water pollution near a local dog park.

New Hampshire – The 4-H Wild Explorers Program sponsors an afterschool club in Epping where students learn about science through hands-on activities and experiments. The students are learning about trees and forests, and ponds and the creatures that live in them, reports the *Union Leader*. Recent activities include investigating rotting leaves, studying creatures in the aquarium that the students helped install, and examining the characteristics of pine combs.

New Jersey – The New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition has created a new campaign called "Celebrate Afterschool! Outdoors in the Garden State" to increase networking among afterschool programs in the state and promote nature-based learning. According to the Times of Trenton, the campaign was designed to improve the quality of afterschool programs by utilizing New Jersey's many nature centers and environmental groups. "We could use a few more scientists and we are going to get them through this program, and we will also have a lot of healthy kids, and lots of kids who are doing a lot of wonderful things at school. When kids come home with their overalls caked in mud, that's when they become creative," said Secretary of State Nina Mitchell Wells.

New York – Governor David Paterson and first lady Michelle Paige Paterson are launching a statewide program to target childhood obesity through afterschool programs. Afterschool programs will receive toolkits from the state to help guide them in serving children healthy snacks and encourage physical activities that get them away from televisions and computers. Paige Paterson told the *Post-Standard* that the program was started because she believes that, "Students who eat well and exercise will learn and live well, too."

Utah – Students from the University of Utah's law school have organized weekly afterschool lessons to teach middle school students about the U.S. legal system. According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, part of the purpose of the afterschool program is to encourage more ethnic minorities to consider careers in law. Program coordinator Gabriella Archuleta believes that by working with people who look like them, the grade students see a law career as more of a possibility.

Washington D.C. – The Congressional Chorus, a 40-member chorale group of current and former Congressional staff members, created an afterschool youth chorus for students ages eight to 14. The youth chorus began this summer, to provide students with an outlet at a time when funds for many music departments have been cut, reports the *Washington Post*.



RESOURCES

New Publication Series Addresses Strengthening Out-of-School-Time Programs

With tight and often declining funding in the face of growing need, afterschool and other out-of-school-time programs are facing an ever growing challenge to provide quality services. Earlier this year, the Wallace Foundation recruited experts in the out-of-school-time (OST) field to author a series of white papers discussing key organizational, administrative and management challenges confronting providers. *All three are now available for free download from the Wallace Foundation at*

http://www.wallacefoundation.org/Knowledge Center/KnowledgeTopics/CurrentAreasofFoc us/Out-Of-

SchoolLearning/Pages/strengthening-out-ofschool-time-organizations.aspx:

 In <u>Strengthening Out-of-School Time</u> <u>Nonprofits: The Role of Foundations in</u> <u>Building Organizational Capacity</u>,
Heather B. Weiss and Priscilla D. Little of the Harvard Family Research Project suggest seven possible approaches to strengthening OST organizations, including methods to ensure that OST providers become stronger partners with other groups and more adept advocates for their field.

- A New Day for Youth: Creating Sustainable Quality in Out of School <u>Time</u>, by Harvard researcher Gil G. Noam, asserts that the ability of OST providers to offer high-quality OST programming rests on strong leadership, staffing and their activities for children. Noam therefore advocates more leadership and management training for OST executive leaders; training for OST staffers in establishing strong relationships with young people; and assistance in establishing clear learning goals for students.
- In A View from the Field: Helping Community Organizations Meet Capacity Challenges, Lucy N. Friedman, president of The After-School Corporation, a New York City-based nonprofit nationally recognized for promoting high quality OST programming, writes that investments in four areas in particular could strengthen OST providers: training for staffers and executives; educating principals and other education leaders about the role of OST; improving the content of programming; and strengthening the financial management and governance of OST provider groups.

LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL DESIGN CONTEST!

The Afterschool Alliance is launching an artwork competition for students in afterschool programs to design the 2009 *Lights On Afterschool* poster. The winning image will be printed on 50,000 posters sent to afterschool programs from coast to coast to use at their *Lights On Afterschool* celebrations. The image will also be featured on the Alliance's *Lights On Afterschool* website. The artwork or design should generally promote or convey afterschool or *Lights On Afterschool*. Abstract or realistic drawings are welcome. *To view the 2008 student-designed poster, visit http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/document s/lights%20on%20afterschool/loa_poster_20 08%20(2).pdf.*

The 10th annual *Lights On Afterschool* will be October 22, 2009. The deadline for artwork submission for the poster for this event is March 31, 2009. *Rules and guidelines are available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/document s/lights%20on%20afterschool/2009%20Light s%20On%20Afterschool%20Poster%20Rules .pdf.*

IN HER OWN WORDS...

"There's a lot of education that can happen outside of school, whether it's summer camp or after-school programs. It's important for kids to develop a healthy sense of themselves and feel like a person, whether or not they're doing well in school. I went to Hockaday [an elite college preparatory school], and I went to college and did very well in school, but I think a lot of my development happened outside of school too."

-- Grammy nominated singer-songwriter Lisa Loeb, *Dallas Observer*, December 11, 2008

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COMING UP TALLER AWARDS

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is inviting nominations for the 2009 Coming Up Taller Awards. In partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), PCAH is embarking on the 12th year

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of these awards, which recognize the accomplishments of exceptional arts and humanities 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. Programs initiated by museums, libraries, performing arts organizations, universities, colleges, arts centers, community service organizations, schools, businesses, and eligible government entities are encouraged to apply. *For more information, visit http://www.pcah.gov/pdf/2009CUTNominatio nForm.pdf*.



Afterschool continued from page one...

afterschool," Grant added. "Now is the time to be sure our voices are heard and this issue becomes part of the national conversation. School and program administrators, business leaders, parents and youth should speak out and let others know that we cannot afford to continue underfunding the afterschool programs that children and families urgently need."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

February 11 - 14, 2009

Foundations Inc. will host Beyond School Hours XII National Conference: The Winter Institute, in Burlingame, California. *For more information, visit www.foundationsinc.org/events.*

March 12 - 13, 2009

The Cooperative for After-School Enrichment will sponsor Out-of-School Time for High School: Focus on Practice, in Houston, Texas at the Harris County Department of Education Conference Center. The conference will include sessions led by high school youth. For more information, visit http://www.osths.org/.

April 2 - 4, 2009

The National AfterSchool Association will sponsor the 2009 National AfterSchool Association Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana at the Morial Convention Center. *For more information, visit http://www.naaconvention.org/.*

April 16 - 17, 2009

The National Center for Summer Learning will sponsor the 2009 Summer Changes Everything National Conference in Chicago, Illinois at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. *For more information, visit http://www.summerlearning.org/.*

N April 22 - 25, 2009

BOOST will sponsor the 2009 Best Out-of-School Time Conference in Palm Springs, California at the Palm Springs Convention Center. *For more information, visit http://www.boostconference.org/.*

April 27 – April 28, 2009

The Afterschool Alliance will host the *Afterschool for All Challenge* in Washington, D.C. The event will include two days of workshops, speakers, advocacy opportunities and fun for hundreds of afterschool providers and leaders from around the country and some of the parents and children they serve. *For more information, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org.*

April 29 – May 1, 2009

NC CAP in North Carolina will sponsor the fifth annual SYNERGY conference, designed to bring together a broad spectrum of community and school-based afterschool providers for training, networking and sharing effective practices. NC CAP is currently inviting requests for proposals from interested presenters. The deadline for RFPs is December 1. For more information, visit www.nccap.net.

May 26 – May 29, 2009

Nova Southeastern University, Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations (CCCYCA), and the Association for the Child & Youth Care Practice Inc. are presenting the Ninth Triennial International Child and Youth Care Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Dr. Andrew Munoz, Ph.D., Vice President and Center Director of the Academy for Educational Development's Center for Youth Development, will be the keynote speaker. More than 1,500 youth workers will convene from more than 100 nations. The theme is "Global Warning," and Dr. Munoz will discuss innovative afterschool initiatives around the world that meet youth challenges. There will be more than 150 sessions on trends, advocacy, program design, and ways to engage families and communities in youth development. For more information, visit www.icvcc2009.com.

*** And mark your calendars now for Lights On Afterschool 2009 on October 22, 2009! ***

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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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.