

**News Release**  
October 12, 2010

Contact: Gretchen Wright  
202/371-1999

**Study Reveals that, In Rural America,  
Only About One in Ten Children Attends an Afterschool Program**

*Afterschool Alliance Releases New Insights from National Report:  
“America After 3PM: From Big Cities to Small Towns”*

**Washington, D.C. (Oct. 12, 2010)** – A special report released today, *From Big Cities to Small Towns*, examines the differences in afterschool participation, satisfaction and demand across rural, urban and suburban communities. It is based on research from *America After 3PM*, the most comprehensive study to explore how America’s children spend their afternoons. Released by the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by JCPenney, this new research finds that one in 10 rural schoolchildren attend an afterschool program – a considerably smaller percentage than the national average of 15 percent.

According to the study, each community type has its own distinct barriers to access to afterschool services. While more than half of rural parents seeking programs struggle with availability of afterschool options, urban and suburban parents cite affordability as their major concern. However, parents in all communities stated that lack of transportation prevents their children from participating in afterschool programs. The various barriers to enrollment help provide an explanation for the study’s key finding that one in four students in America is left unsupervised every day after the school bell rings.

“This new data is alarming because it demonstrates that nearly 3 million rural children in this country are missing out on the educational, enriching activities that afterschool programs provide,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “While there are not enough afterschool programs to meet the growing needs of every community, the problem is particularly acute in rural America. We need more dedicated funding to ensure that rural communities are equipped with the resources to offer quality afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.”

Other findings from the study highlight the variances between each geographic community:

	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Suburban</i>	<b>National</b>
% of children attending programs	11%	18%	13%	<b>15%</b>
% of low-income youth in self care	23%	33%	25%	<b>28%</b>
% of parents needing access	39%	46%	33%	<b>38%</b>
<b>Cost for services per student (weekly)</b>	<b>\$47</b>	<b>\$69</b>	<b>\$67</b>	<b>\$67</b>

Source: America After 3PM

Released last year, *America After 3PM* found that the number of children left alone after the school day ends has risen to more than 15 million children – an increase of 800,000 children since the 2004 edition of the study. The special report, *From Big Cities to Small Towns*, is being released in advance of *Lights On Afterschool*, a national rally for afterschool that will be Oct. 21 this year. It is expected to include a million people at some 7,500 events across the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide this year.

“Since 1999, JCPenney has distributed more than \$100 million to help increase afterschool opportunities across the country by supporting innovative programming in more communities and making access grants available each year to families experiencing financial hardship,” said Michael Theilmann, group executive vice president for JCPenney and chairman of the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. “Data from the *America After 3 PM* study is powerful evidence that we’ve made progress on the afterschool issue but more resources are needed to help meet the rising demand for afterschool programs across the country.”

In conjunction with *Lights on Afterschool* events nationwide, JCPenney will host “Round-Up” in its stores from Oct. 13-26. During this time, JCPenney customers will be invited to round-up their purchases to the nearest whole dollar and donate the difference to afterschool programs in their local communities that provide life-enriching programs for children in need.

*From Big Cities to Small Towns* is available online at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org). Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on survey responses from approximately 30,000 parents and guardians on afterschool services during the 2008-2009 school year. RTi, a market research firm, conducted the survey and analyzed the data on behalf of the Afterschool Alliance. The entire survey was sponsored by JCPenney through its signature charity, JCPenney Afterschool.

###

**About the Afterschool Alliance:**

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

**About JCPenney’s Commitment to Afterschool:**

As a leading corporate advocate for the afterschool issue, JCPenney works with afterschool organizations to increase the accessibility and affordability of afterschool programs across the country. Through its legacy of supporting youth and charitable organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, The Y, National 4-H, United Way and FIRST, JCPenney formalized its commitment to the afterschool issue by establishing the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Since its inception, more than \$100 million has been distributed to afterschool programs across every JCPenney community thereby making it possible for more children to participate in life-enriching programs that inspire them to be smart, strong and socially responsible. For more information, visit [www.jcpennyafterschool.org](http://www.jcpennyafterschool.org).