



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Afterschool Alliance Names Maryland Afterschool Advocate One of Just 19 ‘Afterschool Ambassadors’ from Across Nation

Kendra Wells Will Work in Maryland and Nationally to Expand Afterschool

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced the selection of Kendra Wells, Extension Specialist for the University of Maryland Extension, 4-H Youth Development, to serve as a 2009-2010 Afterschool Ambassador. She is one of just 19 local leaders from 15 states selected for the honor this year. Each Ambassador will continue directing or supporting a local afterschool program while also serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, and building support for afterschool programs.

“Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Americans strongly support afterschool programs but across the nation, we’re seeing programs cut back or closed in the face of recession-driven budget cuts. Kendra Wells brings energy and talent to the role of Afterschool Ambassador, and will spread the word about the urgent need to make afterschool programs available to all children and families that need them. I look forward to working with her to build even stronger support for afterschool among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers, and the media. We are proud to have Kendra on our team.”

“I’m delighted to have this wonderful opportunity to help secure the future of afterschool programs for kids and families in our community, and across the state and nation,” Wells said. “I’m proud of the contribution afterschool programs make to the community, and look forward to helping expand support for them.”

University of Maryland Extension’s 4-H Youth Development program serves more than 50,000 children, youth, and families in each of the state’s 23 counties and Baltimore City. UME 4-H Youth Development faculty and staff partner with afterschool programs to provide high quality curriculum, staff development and training, and support for the expansion of afterschool opportunities in local jurisdictions. Wells, a tenured faculty member at the University of Maryland, has 33 years experience in youth development and is a member of the Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) network steering committee.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's tenth annual nationwide series of rallies for afterschool, on October 22 this year. Last year, a million people rallied at 7,500 *Lights On* events. Despite overwhelming public support, and an agreement embodied in the *No Child Left Behind Act* to steadily increase federal funding, federal support for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative – the principal federal funding stream for afterschool programs – has lagged far behind the need. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for afterschool this year, but funding is at less than half that level. Congress has not yet completed work on the education budget for Fiscal Year 2010.

Ambassadors will also work to share the results of the Afterschool Alliance's *America After 3PM* report, a nationwide survey of nearly 30,000 households gauging their views on afterschool and gathering data on afterschool's impact. The report, released earlier this month, found that the percentage of Maryland children in afterschool programs increased to 17 percent in 2009, up from just 10 percent in 2004 – but 28 percent of the state's schoolchildren are responsible for taking care of themselves in the afternoons. The survey was sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. Complete results are available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The 2009-2010 Afterschool Ambassadors are from:

- **Vestavia Hills, Alabama:** Ronda Charping, Vestavia Hills City Schools Extended Day;
- **Ridgecrest, California:** Sandra Goldstein, Southern Sierra Boys & Girls Club;
- **Bakersfield, California:** Garrett Shipes, Greenfield Success After School Program, Greenfield Union School District;
- **New Haven, Connecticut:** Dr. Charles Warner, Gateway Center, New Haven Public Schools;
- **Fort Shafter, Hawaii:** Peter Tedtaotao, Ft. Shafter Youth Center SAS Program;
- **Wichita, Kansas:** Patricia Houston, Community Education, City of Wichita;
- **Paris, Kentucky:** Leslie Spears, Promise Program, Paris Independent Schools;
- **Catlettsburg, Kentucky:** Teresa Spurlock, Catlettsburg Elementary WOW Afterschool Program, Boyd County Public Schools;
- **Boston, Massachusetts:** Daniel Rosen, Citizen Schools;
- **College Park, Maryland:** Kendra Wells, 4-H Youth Development Extension, University of Maryland;
- **Detroit, Michigan:** Gazell Watkins-Mitchell, Before and After School Programs, Communities In Schools of Detroit;
- **Farmington, New Mexico:** Florencia (Flo) Trujillo, Farmington Public Library (returning Ambassador);
- **Haddonfield, New Jersey:** Denise Sellers, Haddonfield Child Care;
- **Las Vegas, Nevada:** Judy Schroeder, Safekey Program, City of Las Vegas, Department of Leisure Services;
- **New York, New York:** Liz Hopfan, Free Arts NYC;
- **Bronx, New York:** Danny Peralta, THE POINT CDC;
- **Dallas, Texas:** Tanya McDonald, Dallas AfterSchool Network;
- **Irving, Texas:** Gail Vessels, YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas; and

- **West Valley City, Utah:** Margaret Peterson, Community Education Partnership of West Valley City, Inc.

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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.