



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Afterschool Alliance Names Wichita's Patricia Houston One of Just 19 'Afterschool Ambassadors' from Across Nation

Houston Will Work in Kansas and Nationally to Expand Afterschool

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced the selection of Patricia Houston, Program Specialist of City of Wichita's Community Education 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. Patricia Houston 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 Patricia 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,” said Houston. “I’m proud of the contribution afterschool programs make to the community, and look forward to helping expand support for them.”

In working for the City of Wichita for the past five years as a Program Specialist in Community Education, Patricia Houston has created numerous afterschool and out of school time activities for children and youth. The most noted are the Northeast Activity Camp for Kids, which is a half day summer program for low to moderate income families with elementary and middle school age children that services 160 kids and the Homework Huddle which provides homework help for neighborhood kids in a community center setting twice a week. In the year 2009 her program served approximately 800 children and youth through workshops, events and classes.

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 upcoming 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 results will be released in early October. In 2004, Afterschool Alliance research revealed that 14.3 million children across the nation had no adult supervision in the afternoons. The new survey is sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund.

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.