



## **Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership**

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### **Afterschool Alliance Names 18 Afterschool Leaders to 2010-2011 Class of ‘Afterschool Ambassadors’**

#### ***Afterschool Providers and Advocates from 16 States Will Work to Expand Afterschool***

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced the selection of 18 afterschool providers and advocates from around the nation to serve as 2010-2011 Afterschool Ambassadors. The 18 local leaders hail from 16 states. Each Afterschool 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 many of the programs that working families rely on are being threatened because of budget cuts or efforts to divert afterschool funds to other programs. We need to spread the word about the urgent need to make afterschool programs available to all children who need them. Our new Afterschool Ambassadors will bring great energy and talent to that challenge. I look forward to working with them to build even stronger support for afterschool among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers and others. We are proud to have them on our team.”

This year’s class of Afterschool Ambassadors is the eleventh group selected for the honor. Past Ambassadors include a variety of state and local afterschool leaders – more than 150 in all who are still active in the field.

Each 2010-2011 Afterschool Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance’s 11<sup>th</sup> annual national rally for afterschool, to be held on October 21 this year. Last year, a million people participated in some 7,500 *Lights On Afterschool* events across the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide. Afterschool programs are under intense pressure this year, with the Senate preparing to consider legislation that would divert some of the already limited afterschool funds to other programs. At *Lights On Afterschool* rallies this year, participants will sign a [Petition to Save Afterschool Funds](#) that calls on Congress not to deny or divert afterschool funding.

The 2010-2011 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama, Birmingham:** Bretta Freeman, Northeast YMCA;
- **California, Richmond:** Tariq Norris, Director of Community Service Programs, West Contra Costa YMCA of the East Bay;
- **Colorado, Boulder:** Karen Brown, Director of Middle School, Teen, Summer Programs, YMCA of Boulder Valley;

- **Connecticut, Willimantic:** Bill Stover, Director of NCLB/SES, Windham Public School District;
- **Indiana, Carmel:** Don Kent, Chairman, Net Literacy;
- **Iowa, Cedar Rapids:** Lynelle Henriksen, Childcare Services Director, Cedar Rapids YMCA, Helen G. Nassif YMCA;
- **Louisiana, Baton Rouge:** Gaylyne Mack, Executive Director, Big Buddy Program;
- **Maine, Waterville:** Laura Brock, 21st Century Grant Director, Greater Waterville Communities for Children;
- **Massachusetts, Malden:** Karen Steele, Partnership for Community Schools in Malden;
- **Minnesota, Faribault:** Lisa Wetzel, Kids World School Age Child Care;
- **New York, Bronx:** Alberto Cruz, Co-President, Afterschool Works! New York/Managing Director, PS87 Afterschool Program;
- **New York, Elmhurst:** Neha Gautam, Afterschool Program Coordinator, Richmond High School, South Asian Youth Action;
- **New York, White Plains:** Byron Smalls, After School Connection, White Plains Youth Bureau;
- **Oklahoma, Stratford:** Laticia Wade, Stratford SAFE Bulldog Academy;
- **Oregon, Salem:** Krina Lemons, Executive Director, Salem-Keizer Education Foundation;
- **Pennsylvania, Philadelphia:** Lola Rooney, YMCA of Philadelphia & Vicinity;
- **South Dakota, Rapid City:** Carla Allard, Program Coordinator, The Learning Zone; and
- **Tennessee, Memphis:** Sonja Currie, Director of Grants and Initiatives, Memphis Leadership Foundation.

The Robert Bowne Foundation has sponsored the Ambassadorships of Alberto Cruz and Neha Gautam of New York, and Bright House Networks has sponsored the Ambassadorships of Bretta Freeman of Alabama and Don Kent of Indiana.

More information on *Lights On Afterschool* events and the new Afterschool Ambassadors is available at [www.AfterschoolAlliance.org](http://www.AfterschoolAlliance.org).

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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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*