



NEWS RELEASE  
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## **Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago's Science Club Receives National Award for Engaging Middle School Students in Science and Math**

### **Science Club is One of Only Two Programs Nationwide to Receive \$10,000 Award**

The Afterschool Alliance and the Noyce Foundation today recognized Northwestern University's Science Club program, developed in partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago, for its success in getting middle school students excited about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Science Club is one of only two programs nationwide to receive the Afterschool STEM Impact Award, which is being presented for the first time this year. More than 200 programs were nominated. The second Award winner will be announced on October 20.

"It's becoming increasingly important for our young people to develop an appreciation and mastery of science, technology, engineering and math skills in order to succeed in a technologically advanced world," said Ron Ottinger, executive director of the Noyce Foundation. "With a focus on hands-on learning and making learning fun, afterschool programs have been doing an exemplary job of getting students excited about and engaged in those disciplines. We're delighted to partner with the Afterschool Alliance to recognize and honor the programs that are leading the way."

The Afterschool STEM Impact Awards recognize outstanding afterschool STEM programs that target students in fourth through eighth grades, serve students from populations underrepresented in STEM fields and can demonstrate the impact of their programs on students who participate.

The Award, which includes a \$10,000 check, was presented at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago Pedersen-McCormick Club's *Lights On Afterschool* event, one of 8,000 events being held across the country this month as part of the nationwide rally for afterschool.

“The Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago is proud of our partnership with Northwestern University. We are delighted that our collaborative efforts are being recognized by the inaugural Afterschool STEM IMPACT Award,” said Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago President and CEO James Keane. “*Lights On Afterschool*, as well as all our Science Club partners, understand that creativity and innovation is needed to attract youth to STEM careers. Science Club is proof that science, technology, engineering and math can be fun and fulfilling, if presented to youth in ways that impact their lives.”

Science Club is a mentor-based afterschool program that integrates community expertise from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago, dedicated teachers from Chicago Public Schools and engaging scientist mentors from Northwestern University to form a powerful educational team. Mentors and youth work together in small groups on hands-on science experiments every week throughout the academic year. Science Club is made possible by a Science Education Partnership Award from the National Institutes of Health.

“It’s extremely gratifying to see kids and scientists working together each and every week,” said Michael Kennedy, Science Club creator and director of Northwestern’s Science in Society initiative, a science outreach and public engagement office. “Not only are kids’ eyes opened to the science and health career options before them, but they also learn the critical thinking and evidence-based reasoning skills important for future academic success.”

Sandra Ansong, a freshman in the nursing program at Northern Illinois University and 2013 finalist in the Boys & Girls Clubs Youth of the Year Awards, cited her participation in the Pedersen-McCormick Science Club as important preparation for her high school science courses. In her Youth of the Year essay, Ansong thanked Science Club mentors for their personal interest in her academic success, and providing exposure to real-life career experiences.

“There’s no substitute for learning by doing, and that’s part of what makes afterschool programs such great places to learn about science, technology, engineering and math,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “We’re very excited to work with the Noyce Foundation to present the new Afterschool STEM Impact Awards to recognize programs that are doing an outstanding job of teaching kids about the sciences and math.”

Pedersen-McCormick Science Club Open House: A *Lights On Afterschool* Event, included the opportunity to see Science Club and other Boys & Girls Clubs programs in action. Science Club takes place in a dedicated lab facility at the club, giving club members the opportunity to conduct experiments and learn STEM skills in an authentic research facility. Students in the program worked with their Northwestern scientist mentors on Science Fair projects during the open house.

The Afterschool Alliance organizes *Lights On Afterschool* to draw attention to the many ways afterschool programs support students by offering them opportunities to learn new things – such as robotics, Tae Kwon Do and art – and discover new skills. The events give youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs and to send the message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs. This year, more than a

million people nationwide are expected to participate in more than 8,000 events. For the seventh year in a row, the Empire State Building will be lit up on October 17 as part of the celebration.

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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).*

*The Noyce Foundation aims to help young people become curious, thoughtful, and engaged learners. The Foundation focuses on a few key areas: expanding opportunities for students to experience hands-on science in out-of-school settings; supporting human capital efforts to develop effective teachers and principal leaders; and investing in models and policy for improving the teaching of math, science, and literacy. The Noyce Foundation was created by the Noyce family in 1990 to honor the memory and legacy of Dr. Robert N. Noyce, co-founder of Intel and inventor of the integrated circuit which fueled the personal computer revolution and gave Silicon Valley its name.*