



NEWS RELEASE
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Camdenton, Missouri Youth Present National Award to *FIRST* Founder Dean Kamen at Annual Afterschool Event in Washington, DC

Two Missouri teens who attend the Camdenton High School *FIRST* © robotics afterschool program today presented a national “Afterschool for All” Champion Award to Dean Kamen, the founder of *FIRST*, at the Afterschool Alliance’s “Breakfast of Champions,” in Washington, DC. Kamen received the Award for his work advocating for improved teaching of science and technology and his efforts to help young people discover the excitement and rewards of science and technology through the *FIRST* programs. *FIRST* stands for “For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.”

Kyle Gulshen and Sierra Comer, who have both participated in the program for two years, were extremely excited to meet Kamen, whom the teens refer to as a “rock star.” The Noyce Foundation sponsored their trip to Washington, DC to make the presentation.

Gulshen, who is in tenth grade, attended Robotics camps before joining *FIRST* and said, “the atmosphere at *FIRST* reflects what I hope to see when I enter the professional world. At *FIRST*, everyone comes together to solve problems. There’s competition between teams, but there’s also cooperation because we’re working toward the same goals.”

Comer describes robotics as “more exciting than most sports.” “I love *FIRST* because all the time you invest in this program is worth the fun and the education you get out of it,” she said. “*FIRST* has helped a lot of students at my school improve their science and math grades. It’s one of the best extracurricular activities I’ve ever participated in.”

Founded in 1989, *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs that motivate young people to pursue education and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math, while building self-confidence, knowledge and life skills. *FIRST* targets children in kindergarten through twelfth grades, providing age-appropriate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) projects, including building motorized models and robots and participating in tournaments and competitions.

The “Breakfast of Champions” is part of the *Afterschool for All Challenge*, which brings together hundreds of parents, educators, children, program directors and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. Following the Breakfast,

the teens joined parents, educators and other afterschool advocates in fanning out across Capitol Hill to meet with Members of Congress and talk to them about the importance of afterschool programs and expanding opportunities for kids to engage in STEM activities in those programs. This year is The Year of Science in Afterschool.

The 2011 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, Peavey Electronics, NAMM, Open Society Foundations, Cable in the Classroom, National AfterSchool Association, Clever Crazes for Kids, and Arnold and Sandra Grant. Additional funding is provided by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Time Warner Cable, the Noyce Foundation and jcpenny.

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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.