



NEWS RELEASE
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Educators, Parents, Children, Afterschool Advocates Rally for Afterschool on Capitol Lawn, Call on Congress to Increase Funding for Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Hundreds of parents, children, educators and advocates from around the country rallied on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol today, calling on Congress to reject any proposed cuts to federal funding for afterschool programs. The rally was part of the Afterschool Alliance’s ninth annual *Afterschool for All Challenge* is being held this year in conjunction with the National AfterSchool Association’s annual convention, Be the Change. The star-studded rally featured Celebrity Chef Joey Altman, Host of “Bay Café,” longtime children’s advocate and TV personality Judge Glenda Hatchett, Charlotte (North Carolina) City Council Member and National League of Cities 1st Vice President James Mitchell, Jr. and performances by Mark Bryan, Lead Guitarist and Founder of Hootie and the Blowfish and afterschool youth.

Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Dale Kildee (D-MI), Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) were among the Members of Congress scheduled to speak at the rally.

During his remarks, Mitchell explained that all children need a safe place to go after school ends, fun activities to enjoy, a caring adult to relate to, opportunities to expand their horizons and experiences which will develop their skills. He also highlighted the need for local partnerships with businesses, schools and community-based organizations in order to ensure that all young people become successful and productive citizens.

During the rest of the day, afterschool supporters from around the country met with Members of Congress to discuss the benefits offered by afterschool programs and urge Congress to preserve and grow afterschool funding through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative (21st CCLC), and increase funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). 21st CCLC and CCDBG are the chief federal funding streams for afterschool.

“This year, federal support for afterschool programs is in serious peril,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The Obama Administration is proposing making non-afterschool programs eligible for the already limited federal dollars available through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative, which is the principal federal funding stream for afterschool. That is why advocates are speaking up and speaking out to ensure that every child who needs afterschool has access to the programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.”

Two extraordinary young people were selected by their communities to receive special scholarships from Bright House Networks to attend the *Challenge* and discuss what afterschool programs mean to them and their families at the rally. David Johnson is a high school sophomore who attends the Net Literacy afterschool program in Indianapolis, Indiana and Ebony Moore is a high school junior who attends the Tri Hi Y Club/YMCA Alabama Youth and Government afterschool program in Birmingham, Alabama.

The 2010 NAA Convention/*Afterschool for All Challenge* is sponsored by: JCPenney Afterschool Fund, United States Tennis Association, Bright House Networks, Quaker Chewy, Torani, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Open Society Institute, Peavey Electronics, NAMM, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, D.C. Children & Youth Investment Trust Corporation, and Cable in the Classroom, Council on Accreditation, and National Summer Learning Association.

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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.