



Afterschool Alliance

MetLife Foundation

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Sacramento Afterschool Program Wins National Award from MetLife Foundation

Program is one of six nationwide recognized for innovation and excellence.

MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance today honored the Junior Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Program of greater Sacramento with an Afterschool Innovator Award, recognizing the program's success providing pathways to higher education and careers for middle school students. MetLife Managing Director Greg Odell presented the award at a special event that was part of *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. The Junior ACE Program also received \$5,000 to sustain its work.

"Middle school is a pivotal point in young people's development," said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "We are pleased to join the Afterschool Alliance in recognizing the Junior ACE Program, which is addressing the needs of middle school students and placing them on the path to success."

The Junior ACE Program is one of only six afterschool programs nationwide to be named a 2010 Afterschool Innovator. It will be highlighted in an Issue Brief on pathways to higher education and careers, part of a series developed by the Afterschool Alliance with funding from MetLife Foundation, examining critical issues facing youth, schools and communities, and the role that the programs play in addressing these issues. The briefs describe a variety of benefits that afterschool programs provide, including opportunities for community involvement; leadership development; pathways to higher education and careers; health and wellness; and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning.

The Junior ACE Program teaches middle school students about green design and introduces them to careers in the design and construction industry. Construction and environmental technology students from Consumnes River College and Sacramento City College lead the program, and local architects, construction managers, and engineers make presentations about career paths and opportunities in the green design and construction industry. The program curriculum includes four modules: What Does it Mean to be Green? Energy Today and Tomorrow; Green Plumbing Design and Scavenger Hunt; and Green Land Use Design.

"It's a great honor to be recognized by MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance for our work providing youth and pre-teens with pathways to higher education and careers in green building and design," said Stephanie Davi-Ercolini, Director of Regional Programs for Junior ACE. "Interests fostered in middle school can often set young people on a path to a lucrative and exciting career. By exposing our students to the educational and career possibilities that exist in architecture, construction and engineering, we are helping them develop skills and have experiences that can help them succeed in life."

The *Lights On Afterschool* event will feature a video about of the Junior ACE Program and a presentation from the director of Green Force Projects at Consumnes River College, which helps support the program.

Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. The Sacramento event is one of more than 7,500 being held across the country at which children, parents, community leaders, educators and others come together to urge leaders to increase support for the afterschool programs that children and families need. The events also give youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs and send the message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs.

“Afterschool programs pick up where the school day leaves off,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “They provide children with unique opportunities to broaden their horizons and receive the support, experiences, and exposure they need to achieve success. The Afterschool Innovator Awards honor programs that have developed and are using promising practices to help children and youth excel.”

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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.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. In youth development, MetLife Foundation funds initiatives that promote mentoring and provide safe places and constructive activities for young people, particularly during out-of-school time. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.