



Afterschool Alliance

MetLife Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

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Colorado MESA Receives MetLife Foundation National Afterschool Innovator Award at *Lights On Afterschool* Event on Colorado State University Campus

MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance today honored Colorado MESA with an Afterschool Innovator Award in recognition of the program's success providing at-risk high school students with a background in and understanding of math and the sciences and helping them prepare for college. MetLife Managing Director Robyn Lewis-Oglesby presented the Award at a luncheon during the annual Fall Fling at Colorado State University. The event was part of *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs, organized by the Afterschool Alliance.

"Despite the many benefits of afterschool programs, far too youth in middle and high school do not have access to high quality programs during these critical hours," said Dennis White, president of MetLife Foundation. "We are pleased to join the Afterschool Alliance in recognizing and sharing Colorado MESA's exemplary model of addressing the needs and interests of older youth and helping to put them on the path to success."

Colorado MESA is one of only six afterschool programs nationwide to be named an Afterschool Innovator. It was highlighted in an [Issue Brief](#) on afterschool that is part of a series developed by Afterschool Alliance with funding from the MetLife Foundation that examines critical issues facing older youth, schools and communities, and the role that afterschool programs play in addressing these issues. The briefs address: opening doors to work and careers, recruiting and retaining older youth; high school dropout prevention; and mentoring. Colorado MESA, highlighted in the brief about dropout prevention, was selected to receive the MetLife Foundation Afterschool Innovator Award and \$5,000 to sustain its work.

"We're very proud to be honored with this Innovator Award," said Colorado MESA Executive Director Gloria Nelson. "But we are even more proud of the young people in our program. In the last 19 years, nine in ten of our MESA graduates have matriculated to the college or university of their choice. The students in the MESA program work extremely hard and every day they teach us all something new about what people can accomplish if they're just given the opportunity and the support they need to reach their goals."

At the event, students who participate in MESA had the opportunity to participate in CSU's Information Science and Technology Center and engaged in robotics programming, a GPS treasure hunt, video production and web page design. Students also toured campus labs and spoke with CSU students and faculty in the Vet Lab. The CSU event is one of more than 7,500

Lights On Afterschool events being held across the country at which children, parents, community leaders, educators and others are coming together to urge leaders to increase support for the afterschool programs that children and families need. 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.

“Afterschool programs provide children with unique opportunities to get the exposure, experiences and support they need to achieve success,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The MetLife 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 about the Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.