



NEWS RELEASE
May 20, 2004

CONTACT: Gretchen Wright
202/371-1999

**Afterschool Alliance Presents Nortel Networks
With Afterschool Champion Award at Congressional Ceremony**

***Nation's Leading Afterschool Advocacy Organization Honors
Innovative Communications Company for Supporting Afterschool***

WASHINGTON, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today presented its annual Afterschool Champion Award to Nortel Networks at a Congressional Breakfast in Washington, D.C. The award recognized the company for its support for Nortel Networks Kidz Online, an ongoing program that uses technology training to prepare kindergarten through 12th grade students, as well as teachers, to live and work in the information age.

“Nortel Networks Kidz Online provides an invaluable service to afterschool programs and the afterschool movement,” said Judy Y. Samelson, Executive Director of the Afterschool Alliance, in presenting the award. “In addition to providing webcasts of various national afterschool conferences, Nortel Networks Kidz Online works to educate our children and support schools and teachers with important technology training and resources. Nortel Networks is a true partner in the afterschool movement, and we’re proud to honor such an extraordinary company.”

“Nortel Networks is honored to receive this award, and to be associated with the hundreds of dedicated afterschool providers and advocates gathered in Washington, D.C. this week,” said Greg Farmer, Vice President, Government Relations for Nortel Networks. “I congratulate all of them for the work they do to provide a safe and educational environment for kids each weekday afternoon. And I thank them for helping to open new worlds for our kids by creating the means for them to take advantage of the innovative technologies that Nortel Networks Kidz Online provides.”

Through its support for Nortel Networks Kidz Online, Nortel Networks helps working families by giving youth in afterschool programs access to technology and training, and preparing youth for careers in the tech industry. Kidz Teaching Kidz Live is a key component of Nortel Networks Kidz Online. Talented teens produce live interactive webcasts, designed for in-school and after-school programs. The webcasts allow kids to share their expertise with a global audience of peers. Topics include website design, video production, and an "Introduction to Information Technology" curriculum that teaches tech skills in an "edu-taining" format.

more

Add One

For teachers, these videos demonstrate the potential for integrating technology skills into core academic subjects.

Another important component of Nortel Networks Kidz Online is Streaming Futures, which provides a free, interactive, Internet content program for teenagers searching for the right career path. It is designed to help teens make this important choice by allowing them to watch and interact with innovators and leaders from all different sectors.

The Afterschool Champion Award was presented during the Afterschool Alliance's annual *Breakfast of Champions*, part of its Afterschool for All Challenge on Capitol Hill. More than 300 afterschool providers and advocates participated in the *Breakfast*, joined by more than a dozen Members of Congress. In addition to Nortel Networks, the Afterschool Alliance honored: Time Warner; the 21st Century Afterschool Program at Geary County Schools in Junction City, Kansas; the Farrell and Sharon School Districts 21st Century Community Learning Centers C.O.O.L. (Children's Opportunities for Outside Learning) Program in Pennsylvania; and the Richland County School District One After School Programs in South Carolina.

After the *Breakfast of Champions*, participants fanned out across Capitol Hill to urge lawmakers to support full funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, the federal government's chief funding stream for afterschool programs across the nation. The President has proposed freezing afterschool funding at \$1 billion for the fourth consecutive year. If approved, the proposal would leave afterschool funding at just half the level promised in the landmark "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001." Full funding for afterschool at the authorized \$2 billion level would create afterschool opportunities for an addition 1.4 million children. Millions more children who need afterschool programs do not have access to them.

A new Afterschool Alliance household survey, funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund and released this week, found that more than 14 million K-12 youth are responsible for taking care of themselves after school, and these children spend an average of nearly seven afternoon hours per week unsupervised. Afterschool programs offer young people safe, enriching, fun and engaging places to go once the school day ends. Research shows that afterschool programs are a good investment. Youth who participate have been shown to perform better in school and to hold greater expectations for the future, while children who are unsupervised during the afternoons are at greater risk of becoming involved with crime, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy.

The event is sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. Information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org

#