



NEWS RELEASE  
March 3, 2005

CONTACT: Gretchen Wright  
Christie Constantine  
202/371-1999

## **Riverside Students Produce Winning Public Service Announcement for National Contest**

### *Afterschool Alliance Names Youths' PSA Promoting Afterschool One of Six Best in Nation*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Students in Riverside, California, have been selected by a panel of celebrity judges as winners of the Afterschool Alliance's *Don't Be An American Idle* contest, which challenged kids aged 9 to 17 to devise public service announcements (PSAs) promoting afterschool in radio, television, and print formats. The PSA won the contest's radio category in the 9 to 12 age group, and is one of six winning entries nationwide.

"I salute all the Afterschool Youth PSA contestants. I appreciate their dedication. I'm impressed with the quality of production in each PSA," said television's Judge Glenda Hatchett, one of several judges. Other contest judges included actors Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman; Fox's American Idol Musical Director Michael Orland; Youth Speaks Executive Director James Kass; H2Ed Vice President Patricia Wang; and themusicedge.com's Laura Johnson, among others.

"All the entries we received were amazingly creative and clever," said Afterschool Alliance Interim Executive Director Jen Rinehart. "Afterschool programs help kids channel their energy and creativity and achieve remarkable things. Our contest winners are more evidence of the great benefits of afterschool."

"It's cool to stay afterschool!" cheer Valley View Elementary students Marissa Clark and Cynthia Gonzalez on their radio PSA describing the Alvord Unified Half-Time Program's afterschool activities. The spot highlights the program's success in helping students academically and the activities the girls like best, such as snacks, soccer clubs, and talent shows. "I go because it's fun, and it helps me get smarter," observed Clark, a third-grader. "You can get help with homework, and anything else you need help in," said fifth-grader Gonzalez. Most importantly, the girls say, is that when they are at the program, they are safe.

"Afterschool is very important to our students and their parents. The program provides kids with a safe place to be after school, rather than being home alone," said teacher Jessica Hutcheson. The

-more-

Add One

Alvord program operates 15 afterschool programs in the school district. The program at Valley View Elementary was established two years ago and currently serves some 100 students in grades one through five.

“As the name of the contest suggests, kids in afterschool programs engage in constructive, educational activities when the school day ends, as opposed to being idle, or engaged in a variety of inappropriate behaviors,” added Rinehart. “By keeping kids safe, afterschool programs provide peace of mind to millions of working parents who would otherwise worry about their children each afternoon.”

The other contest winners are from the YMCA of Greater Erie in Erie, Pennsylvania; the Bruce Royer Teen Advocates Animation Program in Fresno, California; the “Girls Taking Control” afterschool program at the YWCA of Manchester, New Hampshire; the LIFE After School program at John W. Price Elementary School in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and the Goff Community School in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. All winning programs received digital video cameras.

In November 2000, the Afterschool Alliance joined with the Advertising Council and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to launch a highly successful series of PSA campaigns promoting public support for afterschool programs. Print and broadcast PSAs from the third phase of the campaign began running in mid-2004 – humorous spots contrasting the mischief bored children can get into when unoccupied in the afternoons with the constructive and fun activities in afterschool programs.

Research conducted for the Afterschool Alliance has found that more than 14 million kindergarten through 12th-graders take care of themselves after the school day ends, including almost 4 million middle school students in grades six to eight. Studies show that this is precisely the time of day when juvenile crime, drug and alcohol abuse and other risky behaviors by youth increase.

As part of its ongoing youth engagement campaign, the Afterschool Alliance is also sponsoring a youth essay contest, in which students ages 9 to 17 write essays describing why afterschool programs have provided them with “Something Way Better to Do.” Top prizes of \$1,500 will be awarded to the winning essay for students in two age groups – grades 5-8 and grades 9-12. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

Winning PSAs can be viewed at [www.afterschoolscene.com](http://www.afterschoolscene.com).

# # # #

*The Afterschool Alliance is 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 the year 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*