



NEWS RELEASE
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Northwestern University's Science Club and Santa Fe-Based Computer Science Afterschool Program Receive National Awards for Engaging Middle School Students in Science and Math

Winners Announced During Nationwide Rally for Afterschool, Each Awarded \$10,000

Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills have become increasingly important for students to achieve success, and afterschool programs are playing an important role in helping students gain those skills. In recognition of this, the Afterschool Alliance and the Noyce Foundation today announced the winners of the first-ever Afterschool STEM Impact Awards. Northwestern University's Science Club program, developed in partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago and the Santa Fe Institute's Project GUTS (Growing Up Thinking Scientifically) each received checks for \$10,000, presented by the Afterschool Alliance at events that are part of the 14th annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Nearly 200 programs from across the country applied for these awards.

"It's becoming increasingly important for our young people to develop an appreciation and mastery of science, technology, engineering and math skills in order to succeed in a technologically advanced world," said Ron Ottinger, executive director of the Noyce Foundation. "With a focus on hands-on learning and making learning fun, afterschool programs have been doing an exemplary job of getting students excited about and engaged in those disciplines. We're delighted to partner with the Afterschool Alliance to recognize and honor the programs that are leading the way."

The Afterschool STEM Impact Awards recognized outstanding afterschool STEM programs that target students in fourth through eighth grades, serve students from populations underrepresented in STEM fields and can demonstrate the impact of their programs on students who participate.

"There's no substitute for learning by doing, and that's part of what makes afterschool programs such great places to learn about science, technology, engineering and math," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "We're very excited to work with the Noyce Foundation to present the new Afterschool STEM Impact Awards to recognize programs that are doing an outstanding job of teaching kids about the sciences and math."

Science Club is a mentor-based afterschool program that integrates community expertise from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago, dedicated teachers from Chicago Public Schools and engaging scientist mentors from Northwestern University to form a powerful educational team. Mentors and youth work together in small groups on hands-on science experiments every week throughout the academic year. Science Club is made possible by a Science Education Partnership Award from the National Institutes of Health.

Project GUTS is a STEM and computer science afterschool program that helps middle school students acquire computational thinking and inquiry skills they need to study local issues using computational modeling and simulation. The program is open to students in sixth through eighth grade. Participants design, create and test computer models to simulate “what if” scenarios for real-world questions of community and societal concern – such as the spread of contagious disease or the population dynamics of an ecosystem.

The Afterschool Alliance organizes *Lights On Afterschool* to draw attention to the many ways afterschool programs support students by offering them opportunities to learn new things – such as robotics, Tae Kwon Do and art – and discover new skills. 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. This year, more than a million people nationwide are expected to participate in more than 8,000 events. For the seventh year in a row, the Empire State Building will be lit up on October 17 as part of the celebration.

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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.

The Noyce Foundation aims to help young people become curious, thoughtful, and engaged learners. The Foundation focuses on a few key areas: expanding opportunities for students to experience hands-on science in out-of-school settings; supporting human capital efforts to develop effective teachers and principal leaders; and investing in models and policy for improving the teaching of math, science, and literacy. The Noyce Foundation was created by the Noyce family in 1990 to honor the memory and legacy of Dr. Robert N. Noyce, co-founder of Intel and inventor of the integrated circuit which fueled the personal computer revolution and gave Silicon Valley its name.