



NEWS RELEASE
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Afterschool Alliance Honors Nine Afterschool State Champions From Across the Country

State and Local Officials and Afterschool Providers Honored at Tenth Annual Afterschool for All Challenge in Washington, DC

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today honored nine state champions for their tireless and steadfast support for afterschool programs at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C. featuring *FIRST*® founder Dean Kamen. The nine Afterschool State Champions are from all across the country and their support of afterschool programs has resulted in greater access to quality programs for children and families and, in many cases, more opportunities for children and youth to learn and get excited about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

The 2011 Afterschool State Champions are:

- **Connecticut:** Agnes Quiñones, Education Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education
- **Kansas:** Nancy Volpe, Consultant, CVS Pathways to Pharmacy and America’s Promise
- **Michigan:** Kathleen Straus, Board Member, Michigan State Board of Education
- **Minnesota:** R.T. Rybak, Mayor of the City of Minneapolis
- **Missouri:** Sherry Comer, Afterschool Services Director, Camdenton R-III Schools
- **New Jersey:** Vaughn L. McKoy, President, PSEG Foundation
- **New York:** Kyle Stewart, Executive Director, Alliance of New York State YMCAs, Inc.
- **Pennsylvania:** Carmen M. Medina, Chief of the Division of Student Services, Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of Teaching and Learning
- **Virginia:** Mark H. Emery, Administrator for After-School Programs, Fairfax County Public Schools.

The “Breakfast of Champions” is part of the tenth annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, which brings together hundreds of parents, educators, children, program directors and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. Following the Breakfast, participants fanned out across Capitol Hill to meet with Members of Congress and talk to them about the importance of afterschool programs and expanding opportunities for kids to engage in STEM activities in those programs. This year is The Year of Science in Afterschool.

“Afterschool programs are a lifeline for working families, they keep kids safe and – most important – inspire them to learn. These programs are uniquely positioned to provide hands-on and real-world STEM learning opportunities,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “It’s no secret that our nation has some serious catching-up to do when it comes to math and the sciences. We know that afterschool programs are successful in getting children excited about the sciences. That excitement and interest has been shown to be a better predictor than good grades or test scores of who will pursue careers in the sciences. By offering children the opportunity to try robotics, CSI, rocket-building or constructing wind turbines, afterschool programs are developing future computer programmers, forensic scientists and engineers.”

The 2011 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, Peavey Electronics, NAMM, Open Society Foundations, Cable in the Classroom, National AfterSchool Association, Clever Crazes for Kids, and Arnold and Sandra Grant. Additional funding is provided by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Time Warner Cable, the Noyce Foundation and jcpenny.

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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.