

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Johanna Diaz  
202/371-1999

## **Farmington Student Wins National Student Art Contest**

*For Second Year in a Row, Local Teen's Artwork is Displayed on Limited-Edition Beverage Labels; Torani to Donate Percentage of Proceeds to the Afterschool Alliance*

The Farmington Public Library's Great After School Program (GASP) has drawn a winner for the second straight year. This fall, Torani Sugar Free French Vanilla Syrup will sport a new, limited-edition art label designed by 13-year-old budding artist Savannah Lesser. The eighth-grader's artwork was selected from hundreds of entries submitted by afterschool students around the country, and her work will be celebrated at a pizza and Italian soda party sponsored by Torani at her afterschool program today. Torani, the number one specialty syrup in North America, will donate five percent of the product's sales from September through December to the Afterschool Alliance.

"For the past six years, Torani has sponsored the Art for Kids contest for afterschool students, and year after year we are amazed and impressed by the results," said Lisa Lucheta, Torani principal and family-owner. "Torani has a long history of bringing splashes of color and creativity into people's everyday lives. We are thrilled that Art for Kids and our partnership with the Afterschool Alliance allows us to brighten many more lives, and help young people everywhere participate in exciting, colorful experiences after the school day ends."

"Too often we hear about schools having to cut back on the arts and limit creative opportunities for students. In some cases, afterschool programs are the only places left where children can find creative outlets. That is why we are once again delighted to partner with Torani for Art for Kids," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "These colorful labels provide the perfect venue to showcase the incredible talent nurtured in afterschool programs each day. This contest and the Afterschool Alliance's longstanding partnership with Torani support afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help families."

Lesser describes her afterschool program as a safe place where she can get help with her homework, read, draw and spend time with friends. Winning the Art for Kids contest was an exciting moment, and her illustration was especially meaningful to her. "I drew a butterfly for my label. I picked it because it has freedom and can fly anywhere it wants to. It can travel to different places, and I like that. It's how I am. Everyone was amazed by how nice it turned out."

The rural GASP program serves approximately 150 elementary and high school youth, offering arts enrichment, story-telling, online tutoring, Hands-on-Science classes, gaming, "booktalking," and more. "We have something here for every child in this community," said Beneditke Whitman, President and CPO of the Boys & Girls Club of Farmington, a partner of the GASP program which Lesser attends. "Between the hours of three to six, children can get into a lot of

trouble if they haven't got safe, structured activities with adult supervision. Savannah's really excelled in this program."

This is the sixth year that Torani has sponsored the Art for Kids contest in support of afterschool. The other winner this year is from an Ohio afterschool program; she designed the label for Torani Raspberry syrup.

Afterschool programs offer young people safe, enriching, fun and engaging places to spend their afternoons. Youth in afterschool programs have been shown to perform better in school and have greater expectations for the future, while children who are unsupervised in the afternoons are at greater risk of becoming involved with crime, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy.

Research conducted for the Afterschool Alliance has shown that only 17 percent of New Mexico's kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are in afterschool programs, while 22 percent care for themselves after the school day ends.

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*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)*

*Torani/R. Torre & Company - For over 80 years, familiar Torani labels in bold shades of red, gold and blue have been visible in coffeehouses, restaurants and consumer kitchens. Torani, the premier brand of R. Torre & Company, is the number one flavored specialty syrup in North America and its products have spanned generations and inspired creativity. For more information or recipe inspiration, visit [www.torani.com](http://www.torani.com) or call 800-775-1925.*