



NEWS RELEASE
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CONTACT: [Luci Manning](#)
202/371-1999

11th and 6th Graders Brennan and Aiden Shope Return to West Virginia After Sharing Views on Afterschool Programs with Officials in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. – As part of a trip sponsored by Four V.L.L.C., 16-year-old Brennan Shope who attends Cabell Midland High School and participates in afterschool programs at Westmoreland Teen Center and 11-year-old Aiden Shope, who attends Barboursville Middle School and participates in Ceredo Child Development afterschool program, spent part of this week meeting with U.S. Senators and Representatives and their aides to discuss the importance of investing in afterschool and summer learning programs for youth. The Shopes are two of just five afterschool students from around the country selected to travel to Washington, D.C. for the annual Afterschool for All Challenge, organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#).

On Wednesday, Brennan and Aiden shared their experiences and perspectives on afterschool programs with members of Congress, emphasizing the ways afterschool programs engage students and broaden their horizons – through tutoring and electronic design. Four V.L.L.C. sponsored Brennan and Aiden’s trip in collaboration with the West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network and the Afterschool Alliance.

“Four V L.L.C. is elated to sponsor Brennan and Aiden Shope’s trip to Washington D.C.,” said Russell Vance, Four V.L.L.C. President. “The afterschool learning and STEM boost academic performance, promote physical health, and provide a safe, structured environment for children. The afterschool program is essential for student development. The program helps the children develop socially. Children get to meet others who share their interest and they can make new friendships. The programs are educational as well as recreational. The bottom line is this; The

afterschool programs inspires the children to learn and keeps them in a safe environment. It is also a help to the America working family. The afterschool program is a necessity.”

“My afterschool program helps me to succeed because it provides me with homework help and tutoring,” Brennan said. “I used to struggle with some of my schoolwork, but now I’m back on track, learning new skills and have a chance to learn and grow outside of school.”

The Afterschool for All Challenge is an annual event that brings together afterschool program providers and experts, along with students, to showcase some of the innovative activities their afterschool programs provide.

“Students like Aiden and Brennan speak so eloquently about the kinds of innovative, hands-on learning activities that quality afterschool programs offer students,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. They help young people discover their passions and have fun while they learn. We need to increase public and private funding so all students can take advantage of the opportunities afterschool and summer learning programs provide.”

Afterschool providers, educators, community leaders, parents and youth from 46 states visited Washington, D.C. this week as part of the Afterschool for All Challenge. Congress will soon begin working on the federal budget for the next fiscal year; President Trump is proposing to eliminate federal funding for afterschool programs in 2018.

Participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004, according to [the America After 3PM household survey](#) of 30,000 U.S. families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs has increased as well. Today, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two more whose parents say they would participate, if a program were available. One in five students in the country today is unsupervised 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 and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.