



NEWS RELEASE
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Arcadia Students Daniel and Eric Rodriguez Return to Wisconsin After Sharing Views on Afterschool Programs with Officials in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. – Nine-year-old Daniel Rodriguez and 11-year-old Eric Rodriguez, who both attend Raider’s ARK 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. Daniel and Eric came to Washington, DC for the annual Afterschool for All Challenge, organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#).

On Wednesday, Daniel and Erik shared their experiences and perspectives on afterschool programs with members of Congress, emphasizing the ways afterschool programs engage students, broaden their horizons and allow young people to explore new technologies. The Daniel and Eric’s trip was in collaboration with the [Wisconsin Afterschool Network](#) and the Afterschool Alliance.

Eric and Daniel met with U.S. Representatives Mike Gallagher and Don Kind and staff from the offices of Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson and Rep. Paul Ryan. They told the Representatives and their aides how the Raider’s ARK program is impacting their lives. “My afterschool program is important because the teachers help me learn to read and going over math problems when I don’t understand in class,” Eric said. “They make learning fun.”

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 Daniel and Erik 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.