



## **Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership**

NEWS RELEASE  
September 12, 2007

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### **Afterschool Alliance Names Lisa Merrihew of Oneonta One of 22 ‘Afterschool Ambassadors’ from 19 States**

#### ***Merrihew Will Work in New York and Nationally to Expand Afterschool***

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced the selection of Lisa Merrihew, Interim Program Director of Creating Rural Opportunities Partnership (CROP), Otsego Northern Catskill BOCES to serve as a 2007-2008 Afterschool Ambassador. She is one of just 22 local leaders from 19 states selected for the honor. Each Ambassador will continue directing or supporting a local afterschool program while also serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, and building support for afterschool programs. Merrihew’s Ambassadorship is sponsored by The Afterschool Corporation (TASC).

“Afterschool programs keep children safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The public strongly supports afterschool programs and wants to see them expanded, but at the federal level and in many states, dollars for these programs are frozen or even shrinking. In her work as an Afterschool Ambassador, Lisa Merrihew will bring talent and experience to the challenge of making afterschool programs available to all families that need them. I’m looking forward to working with Lisa to share the good news about afterschool with parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers, and the media. We are very proud to have her on our team.”

CROP provides afterschool programming to 1,260 children in 16 BOCES school districts in Otsego, Delaware and Schoharie counties, offering them high quality learning, enrichment, health and wellness, and community service experiences. Partnerships with ONC BOCES Adult Education, the Roxbury Arts Group, SUNY Oneonta AmeriCorps, The Upper Catskill Community Council of the Arts, Learning for Life, Girls on the Run, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Delaware County, Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse of Schoharie County, Leatherstocking Education on Alcoholism/Addictions Foundation, ONC BOCES Curriculum and Instruction, ONC BOCES Media Services Library and Cherry Valley Community Facilities Corporation supplement the daily school routine and serve as a mechanism for long-term personal, social and academic growth.

Each Ambassador will plan a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance’s October 18 nationwide rally for afterschool. Despite overwhelming public support,

and an agreement embodied in the *No Child Left Behind Act* to steadily increase federal funding, federal support for afterschool has been flat or declining for several years. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for afterschool this year, but funding is less than \$1 billion. The House of Representatives and Senate are considering increases for next year. In New York, the lack of federal funding has resulted in programs closing across the state.

The 2007-08 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **California, Sacramento:** Joe Hudson, Sacramento City Unified School District (returning Ambassador)
- **California, San Jose:** Mary Hoshiko, YMCA of Santa Clara Valley
- **Colorado, Denver:** Sandy Baca-Sandoval, Skinner Neighborhood Center, Denver Public Schools Extended Learning Department
- **Florida, Orlando:** Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Fulmer, Orange County Public Schools
- **Idaho, Pocatello:** Joyce Anderson, 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- **Iowa, Sioux City:** Brenda Hervey, Beyond the Bell
- **Illinois, Chicago:** Roslind Blasingame-Buford, Broader Urban Involvement & Leadership Development (BUILD, Inc.)
- **Illinois, Chicago:** Mande Polonsky, After-School All-Stars Chicago & Office of Extended Learning Opportunities at Chicago Public Schools
- **Kentucky, Independence:** Chris Francis, Community Services, YMCA of Greater Cincinnati (returning Ambassador)
- **Massachusetts, Salem:** Jennifer Anderson, For Kids Only Afterschool
- **Minnesota, St. Paul:** Audrey Kendig, John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School and YMCA of Greater St. Paul
- **Montana, Missoula:** Rosalie (Rosie) Buzzas, The Flagship Program
- **Nebraska, Lincoln:** Dayna Krannawitter, Community Learning Center, Arnold Elementary
- **Nevada, Reno:** Danielle Bowen, Washoe County Public Schools Team Up (returning Ambassador)
- **New Mexico, Albuquerque:** Cindy Schlenker Davies, Urban 4-H, New Mexico State University
- **New York, New York City:** Megan Demarkis, Harlem RBIs REAL Kids Program
- **New York, Oneonta:** Lisa Merrihew, Creating Rural Opportunities Partnership, Otsego Northern Catskill BOCES
- **Ohio, Toledo:** Becky Spencer, YMCA/JCC of Greater Toledo
- **Pennsylvania, State College:** Robin Foltz, Child Development & Family Council
- **South Carolina, Columbia:** Traci Young Cooper, Richland County School District One
- **Washington, Seattle:** April Bowman, Garfield Community Center
- **Wisconsin, Green Bay:** Trina Lambert, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, Wequiock Elementary School

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.

A groundbreaking study conducted for the Afterschool Alliance in 2004 (with funding from the J.C. Penney Co., Inc.) concluded that 14.3 million latchkey children have no adult supervision in the afternoons and that the parents of 15.3 million children would send their child to an afterschool program if one were available.

*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 by 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

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