

Press Release

Carla Allard Named After School Ambassador for South Dakota

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The Afterschool Alliance announced the selection of Carla Allard, Coordinator of *The Learning Zone* which is an afterschool program serving alternative school youth from the Rapid City School District, to serve as a 2010-2011 Afterschool Ambassador.

Carla represents one of 16 states selected for the honor this year. Carla, along with all Ambassadors throughout the country, 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.

"Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Americans strongly support afterschool programs, but across the nation many of the programs that working families rely on are being threatened because of budget cuts or efforts to divert afterschool funds to other programs. We need to spread the word about the urgent need to make afterschool programs available to all children who need them."

"I'm thrilled to have this wonderful opportunity to help secure the future of afterschool programs for kids and families in our community, and across the state and nation," said Carla. "Afterschool programs are critical to student success and the economic security of working families. I look forward to helping expand support for them."

A *Lights On Afterschool* Ceremony in South Dakota will be held at Mt. Rushmore on October 16 starting at 6 PM. The public

is invited to attend. There will be a chili feed, special program and lighting ceremony, and an honoring of quality afterschool providers.

The Learning Zone is funded through a competitive grant process from the South Dakota Department of Education. Black Hills Special Services Cooperative is the recipient of this funding and has been instrumental in securing funds for various afterschool programs in Western South Dakota. *The Learning Zone* provides over 350 alternative school students with afterschool academic support, career counseling and postsecondary education preparation assistance to high school students enrolled in the Academies at the Rapid City Area School.

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