



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

NEWS RELEASE  
September 28, 2010

CONTACT: Luci Manning  
202/371-1999

### **Afterschool Alliance Names Indiana Afterschool Net Literacy One of Just 18 ‘Afterschool Ambassadors’ from Across Nation**

#### ***Don Kent Will Work in Indiana and Nationally to Expand Afterschool***

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced the selection of Don Kent, Chairman of Net Literacy, to serve as a 2010-2011 Afterschool Ambassador. He is one of just 18 local leaders from 16 states selected for the honor this year. 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. Kent’s Ambassadorship is sponsored by Bright House Networks.

“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. Don will bring great energy and talent to that challenge in his role as an Afterschool Ambassador. I look forward to working with him to build even stronger support for afterschool among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers and others. We are proud to have Don on our team.”

“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,” Kent said. “Afterschool programs are critical to student success and the economic security of working families. I look forward to helping expand support for them.”

Net Literacy was founded by middle school students, and students comprise 50 percent of its board of directors and are responsible for all of the volunteering. Net Literacy’s student volunteers have increased digital literacy and computer access to more than 150,000 Hoosiers in 27 counties throughout Indiana. Working with Bright House Networks, Net Literacy’s 2010 *Lights On Afterschool* program will increase Internet safety awareness to almost 10,000 high school students. U.S. Senators Lugar and Bayh serve as Net Literacy Honorary Co-Chairs and the organization has been recognized by two American Presidents. Kent has served as Chairman since 2005.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance’s 11<sup>th</sup> annual national rally for afterschool, to be held on October 21 this year. Last year, a million people participated in some 7,500 *Lights On Afterschool* events across the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide. Afterschool programs are under intense pressure this year, with the Senate preparing to consider legislation that would divert some of the already limited afterschool funds to other programs. At

*Lights On Afterschool* rallies this year, participants will sign a parents' petition calling on Congress not to divert or deny afterschool funding.

The 2010-2011 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama, Birmingham:** Bretta Freeman, Northeast YMCA;
- **California, Richmond:** Tariq Norris, Director of Community Service Programs, West Contra Costa YMCA of the East Bay;
- **Colorado, Boulder:** Karen Brown, Director of Middle School, Teen, Summer Programs, YMCA of Boulder Valley;
- **Connecticut, Willimantic:** Bill Stover, Director of NCLB/SES, Windham Public School District;
- **Indiana, Carmel:** Don Kent, Chairman, Net Literacy;
- **Iowa, Cedar Rapids:** Lynelle Henricksen, Childcare Services Director, Cedar Rapids YMCA, Helen G. Nassif YMCA;
- **Louisiana, Baton Rouge:** Gaylynne Mack, Executive Director, Big Buddy Program;
- **Maine, Waterville:** Laura Brock, 21st Century Grant Director, Greater Waterville Communities for Children;
- **Massachusetts, Malden:** Karen Steele, Partnership for Community Schools in Malden;
- **Minnesota, Faribault:** Lisa Wetzel, Kids World School Age Child Care;
- **New York, Bronx:** Alberto Cruz, Co-President, Afterschool Works! New York/Managing Director, PS87 Afterschool Program;
- **New York, Elmhurst:** Neha Gautam, Afterschool Program Coordinator, Richmond High School, South Asian Youth Action;
- **New York, White Plains:** Byron Smalls, After School Connection, White Plains Youth Bureau;
- **Oklahoma, Stratford:** Laticia Wade, Stratford SAFE Bulldog Academy;
- **Oregon, Salem:** Krina Lemons, Executive Director, Salem-Keizer Education Foundation;
- **Pennsylvania, Philadelphia:** Lola Rooney, YMCA of Philadelphia & Vicinity;
- **South Dakota, Rapid City:** Carla Allard, Program Coordinator, The Learning Zone; and
- **Tennessee, Memphis:** Sonja Currie, Director of Grants and Initiatives, Memphis Leadership Foundation.

###

*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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*