



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Afterschool Alliance Names 18 'Afterschool Ambassadors' from 12 States

Local Afterschool Leaders Will Work to Expand Afterschool Opportunities

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance has selected 18 local leaders from 12 states to serve as Afterschool Ambassadors for the 2006/2007 school year. Each Ambassador directs, works for, or provides support to a local afterschool program, and will continue that work while also serving a one-year Ambassador term organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, and building support for afterschool programs. The 2006/2007 Afterschool Ambassadors are from California, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee and Vermont.

“Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The 2006/2007 Afterschool Ambassadors are men and women with vast experience serving children and families in their communities. Their task over the next year will be to share the good news about afterschool with parents, community and business leaders, policy makers and others. At a time when federal funding for afterschool has been stagnant, we are especially proud to have these accomplished leaders join our team.”

Despite overwhelming public support, and an agreement embodied in the *No Child Left Behind Act* to steadily increase funding, federal support for afterschool has been flat or declining for several years. As a result, many states were unable to make new grants to afterschool programs last year.

Each Ambassador is planning a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's October 12 nationwide rally for afterschool. On that day, more than 7,500 programs are expected to hold events showcasing children's activities and accomplishments. Many of the events will feature high-ranking school officials, lawmakers, sports figures and other leaders. The 2006-07 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **CA, Concord:** Stephanie Roberts, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Mt. Diablo CARES
- **CA, Fresno:** Roy Mendiola, Ed.D, Fresno CORAL Inc. (returning Ambassador)
- **CA, Los Angeles:** Anna Araujo, Boys & Girls Clubs of East Los Angeles (returning Ambassador)
- **CA, Los Angeles:** Cathie Mostovoy, Woodcraft Rangers (returning Ambassador)

- **CA, Sacramento:** Joe Hudson, Sacramento City Unified School District
- **CA, San Diego:** Steve Amick, San Diego County Office of Education (returning Ambassador)
- **Colchester, CT:** Arline Linger, Colchester Alternative School-Age Total Learning Experience (CASTLE)
- **GA, Columbus:** Ernestine Ramsey, A.J. McClung YMCA Prime Time Afterschool Program
- **IA, Grundy Center:** Chris Francis, Grundy Family YMCA
- **NV, Reno:** Danielle Bowen, Washoe County School District
- **NH, Laconia:** Martina Green, Laconia School District, Project EXTRA!
- **NM, Santa Fe:** Sharon Guerrero, Santa Fe Public School (SFPS) District
- **NY, Syracuse:** Frances Howard, Dunbar-Hughes 21st Century Learning Center Afterschool Program
- **NC, Supply:** United Communities' Assistance Network (UCAN!) (returning Ambassador)
- **OH, North Olmstead:** Megan Henkel, Young Rembrandts – Greater Cleveland-West, and JCPenney Afterschool Fund Coordinator, Store 1323
- **OH, Cincinnati:** Jorge A. Perez, CincyAfterSchool, YMCA of Greater Cincinnati (returning Ambassador)
- **TN, Morristown:** Cathy Kitts, Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority Education Center
- **VT, Bennington:** Elaine Harwood, Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union, The Opportunities Program (TOPS)

The selection of six Ambassadors in California reflects the importance of the roll-out of Proposition 49's expansion of afterschool in the state, with several hundred million dollars in new state funding coming to afterschool programs over the next year.

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.

A web-based survey of 1,600 afterschool programs, released by the Afterschool Alliance this month, found that 75 percent of the nation's afterschool programs operated at or above maximum capacity during the 2005/2006 school year. Eighty-six percent of respondents said children in their communities need afterschool programs and don't have access to them.

The Afterschool Ambassador program is supported in part by the William T. Grant 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 by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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