



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Georgetown, South Carolina's Funnye Chosen to Be One of Just 18 'Afterschool Ambassadors' in the Nation This Year

*Ray C. Funnye Will Work in South Carolina to Raise Awareness About and Increase Access to
Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance announced today that Ray C. Funnye, Executive Director at The Village Group, has been selected to serve as an Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance in 2020-2021. He is one of just 18 leaders in the United States chosen for the honor this year. Afterschool Ambassadors continue their work at local afterschool programs while serving the one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, organizing public events, communicating with policy makers and community leaders, and in other ways increasing awareness and support for afterschool and summer learning programs.

“We are so pleased that Ray Funnye will serve as an Afterschool Ambassador this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “With the pandemic increasing the need for quality afterschool and summer learning programs so dramatically, we need strong advocates who have their fingers on the pulse of their communities. Ray will do a terrific job mobilizing community and business leaders, parents, policy makers, educators and others to send the message that afterschool programs are vital to our recovery from COVID-19. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give families peace of mind that their children are safe, learning, and constructively engaged while parents are at work or looking for jobs.”

"I am delighted to work with the Afterschool Alliance to increase support for afterschool programs," said Funnye. "It's a tremendously important issue in my community and state. In normal times, afterschool programs help young people succeed in school and in life, and support working families throughout South Carolina. These days, we need to help children with academic, social and emotional needs created by the pandemic and support efforts to rebuild our economy. That makes these programs even more essential. I look forward to helping build support for the out-of-school-time opportunities all students need, now and over time."

The Village Group (TVG) cultivates a love of learning for more than 260 Georgetown County K-9th graders enrolled in its Plantersville Summer Academy and 21st Century Plantersville Enrichment Academy. The programs help students with basic studies and introduces them to career opportunities through hands-on activities and educational field trips. The program's focus is on literacy and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math), as well as on physical activity, healthy living and finding connection to the community by exploring local

history and discovering the environment. This comprehensive program is made possible by strong partnerships with the Georgetown County School District, Coastal Carolina University, Lowcountry Food Bank, Boeing, Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics and numerous other organizations. Helping children draw the connection between their education, health, and cultural background and their potential accomplishments in the future brings focus, drive, and purpose, and results in long-term success and contributions to the community.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's annual rally for afterschool, which will include events on or around Thursday, October 28, 2021.

The 2020-2021 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Delaware:** Ray Taylor, 4H After-school Program, Newark;
- **Florida:** Nicole Carter, City of Hallandale Beach-Hepburn Center Afterschool Tutorial Enrichment Program, Hallandale Beach;
- **Florida:** Kwamara Thompson, Palm Beach County Boys & Girls Clubs, Palm Beach (and Classroom, Inc., New York, NY);
- **Georgia:** Tiffany Collie-Bailey, Girls Inc. of Greater Atlanta, Marietta;
- **Georgia:** Dr. Janice Flowers, Bibb County School District, Macon;
- **Illinois:** Kenny Riley, Carole Robertson Center for Learning, Chicago;
- **Illinois:** Teresa Dothard-Campbell, Lights ON for Learning – Glenview Middle School, East Moline;
- **Maine:** Barrett Takesian, Portland Community Squash, Portland;
- **New Jersey:** Darnell A. Scott, The Jointure, Rariton and Branchburg;
- **New York:** Angela Todriff Mundy, Family YMCA of the Glens Falls Area, Glens Falls;
- **New York:** Stephanie Graf, Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County, Watertown;
- **North Carolina:** Emily Neff, WAMY Community Action, Inc. / Avery County Afterschool Program, Boone;
- **Ohio:** Debbie Frison, 21st Century Community Learning Center Glenwood/Rosa Parks Elementary, Toledo;
- **Oregon:** Amber Lomascola, Expanding Horizon Youth Center, Myrtle Creek;
- **Pennsylvania:** Chuck Inverso, Neshaminy Kids Club, Langhorne;
- **South Carolina:** Ray C. Funnye, The Village Group, Georgetown;
- **Wyoming:** Shannon Christian, Worland Youth Learning Center, Worland;
- **Wyoming:** Tiffany L. Wutzke, Youth Clubs of Park County, Cody.

The [America After 3PM](#) household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and released this month, finds that unmet demand for afterschool programs has reached an all-time high. For every child in an afterschool program in America today, three more are waiting to get in. The study finds significant inequities, with Black and Latinx children disproportionately without afterschool opportunities. Ninety-four percent of parents of afterschool students say they are satisfied with their child's program.

A large and powerful body of evidence demonstrates improvements in grades, school attendance, behavior and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that students in afterschool programs are more engaged in school and excited about learning and develop critical work and life skills such as problem solving, teamwork, and communications.

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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.

The Village Group seeks to develop and sustain meaningful partnerships with individuals, public agencies and organizations in order to promote and achieve – Youth Development, Literacy Enrichment, STEM-Based Education, Recreation enhancements and Community improvements. To learn more about The Village Group or to donate, please visit www.TheVillageGroup.org.