



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Kwamara Thompson Chosen to Be One of Just 18 'Afterschool Ambassadors' in the Nation This Year

Thompson Will Work in FL, NY and Across the Country to Raise Awareness About and Increase Access to Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance announced today that Kwamara Thompson, Managing Director, Programs and Partnerships at Classroom, Inc., has been selected to serve as an Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance in 2020-2021. She 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.

Classroom, Inc (headquartered in NYC) is a national organization working with afterschool providers across the country. It enjoys many deep and long-lasting relationships with these organizations. In her role as Managing Director of Programs and Partnerships, Thompson works closely with the Palm Beach County Boys & Girls Club, supporting their educators, working with leadership, and advocating for the youth of that community.

“We are so pleased that Kwamara Thompson 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. Kwamara 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 Thompson. “It’s a tremendously important issue that I am very passionate about. In normal times, afterschool programs help young people succeed in school and in life, and support working families. 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.”

Classroom, Inc. is a philanthropically supported EdTech nonprofit that helps middle school youth in high-poverty communities develop the literacy, life and career skills that are essential for success and to ensure a smooth transition to high school and beyond. Classroom, Inc., engages middle school youth in deep learning experiences. The organization's 28 years of research demonstrates that the approach works. When middle school youth are given the chance to connect the dots between school and their future, immerse themselves in career exploration, and develop critical literacy and leadership skills, they are ready to bring their full potential to any opportunity they wish to pursue.

Classroom, Inc., created and launched [Read to Lead](#) in 2017, a platform offering supplemental literacy curriculum in the form of unique digital learning games set in diverse professional worlds. Its learning games, personalized pathways and curriculum empower students to take charge of their learning. Through virtual workplace experiences, students improve reading and writing skills, apply essential 21st century skills and imagine new possibilities for themselves to achieve newfound ambitions. Students participating in Read to Lead programs outpace their peers in literacy gains on standardized assessments; demonstrate growth in the 21st century skills that are critical to thrive in the modern workplace such as collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving; and gain exposure to new career paths and opportunities. Through Read to Lead, Classroom, Inc., has served 124,000 students across the country who have read a billion words, and made 2.5 million decisions.

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.

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