



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Afterschool Alliance Names 12 Afterschool Leaders to 2012-2013 Class of ‘Afterschool Ambassadors’

Afterschool Providers and Advocates from a Dozen States Will Work to Expand Afterschool

Washington, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today announced the selection of 12 afterschool providers and advocates from around the nation to serve as 2012-2013 Afterschool Ambassadors. The dozen local leaders hail from 12 different states. 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.

“Quality afterschool programs are essential to students, families and communities,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs keep kids safe during the afternoon hours, help working families and inspire students to learn by offering hands-on science, math and other activities as well as homework help, mentoring opportunities, and much more. But in Washington, D.C. and all across the country, the afterschool programs that families rely on are being threatened by budget cuts and efforts to divert afterschool funds to other programs. As Afterschool Ambassadors, each of these talented local leaders will bring great energy to the work to build even stronger support for afterschool programs among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers and others. I look forward to working with each of them this year.”

This year’s class of Afterschool Ambassadors is the 13th group selected for the honor. Past Ambassadors include a variety of state and local afterschool leaders – more than 175 in all who are still active in the field.

Afterschool programs are under intense pressure. The Afterschool Alliance’s [Uncertain Times](#) survey project, the only research effort to examine how the economy affects afterschool programs, found that nearly two in five afterschool programs (39 percent) report that their budgets are in worse shape today than at the height of the recession in 2008. More than three in five (62 percent) afterschool programs report that their funding is down “a little or a lot” from three years ago. Even in communities where local economies and program funding are faring better, program leaders express significant concern about their financial outlook and their inability to reach all children who need afterschool.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's 13th annual national rally for afterschool, to be held on October 18 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.

The 2012-2013 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **California, Oakland:** Kasey Blackburn, After School Program Manager, Oakland Unified School District;
- **Delaware, Newark:** Fontella Taylor, Youth Development Extension Educator, University of Delaware, 4-H Afterschool;
- **Florida, Titusville:** Jacalyn Francisco, Assistant District Coordinator, Brevard Public Schools;
- **Georgia, Riceboro:** Christopher Stacy, CEO, Georgia Coastal Youth, Inc.;
- **Indiana, Indianapolis:** Milele Kennedy, Manager, City of Indianapolis Department of Parks & Recreation;
- **New York, Forest Hills:** Patrick Pinchinat, Beacon Director, Queens Community House;
- **North Dakota, Mandan:** Andrew Jordan, Program Director, Missouri River Educational Cooperative;
- **Rhode Island, Cranston:** Kelly Whaley, Program Manager, Cranston Community Learning Center.
- **South Dakota, Sioux Falls:** Heather DeWit, Director of Childcare and Education Services, Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota;
- **Vermont, North Clarendon:** Carrie Becker, Director, Rutland South Supervisory Union Afterschool;
- **Washington, Lynwood:** Victoria Raya, Diversity Program Manager, National Girls Collaborative Project; and
- **Wyoming, Thermopolis:** Jenny Davis, Program Coordinator, Hot Springs County School District #1.

The Robert Bowne Foundation is sponsoring the Ambassadorship of Patrick Pinchinat of New York; Bright House Networks is sponsoring the Ambassadorship of Jacalyn Francisco of Florida; and the Noyce Foundation is sponsoring the Ambassadorships of Kasey Blackburn of California and Victoria Raya of Washington.

More information on *Lights On Afterschool* events and the new Afterschool Ambassadors is available at www.AfterschoolAlliance.org.

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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.