



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Eldon's Abbott Selected as One of Just 15 'Afterschool Ambassadors' from Across Nation

*Colleen Abbott Will Work in Missouri and Nationally to
Make Afterschool Available to More Students*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced that Colleen Abbott, Director of Afterschool Programs at the Eldon R-1 School District's Learning Enriched Afterschool Program (LEAP), has been selected to serve as a 2015-2016 Afterschool Ambassador. She is one of just 15 leaders from across the country to be chosen for the honor this year. Each Afterschool Ambassador will continue directing or supporting a local afterschool program while also serving the one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, and building support for afterschool programs.

“We are so pleased to have Colleen serving as an Afterschool Ambassador this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “She will mobilize even more support for quality afterschool and summer learning programs among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers, educators and others in Eldon. Quality afterschool programs keep students safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. They offer young people hands-on, team-based learning opportunities, help with homework, science and technology activities, opportunities for sports and fitness, access to healthy snacks and meals, and much more. I look forward to working with Colleen this year to bring us closer to the day when every child will have the chance to participate in an afterschool program.”

“I am excited to be part of the Afterschool Alliance's work to increase resources for afterschool programs, here and across the country,” said Abbott. “In my 12 years working with young people, I've seen firsthand how afterschool programs give students opportunities to explore their interests and discover their passions, while giving parents the peace of mind that comes with knowing that their children are safe and supervised, with engaging, educational activities, after the school day ends. I look forward to helping raise awareness about the growing need for out-of-school-time opportunities for all children and youth.”

The Eldon Learning Enriched Afterschool Program (LEAP) provides services for students and families including before and afterschool programming, as well as, summer learning experiences. LEAP is funded by 21st Century Community Learning Centers federal grants and local school support. LEAP partners with many community businesses and groups to provide programming including: the Mustang Wellness – Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities, and AmeriCorps members to provide Mustangs in Motion fitness and health activities as a part of the afterschool

program. This past year, LEAP provided programming for more than 700 pre-K to 12th grade students. LEAP afterschool activities include homework help; math, communication arts, and science; and a variety of enrichment activities including robotics, archery, gardening, cooking, and community impact activities.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's annual rally for afterschool, to be held on October 22 this year. Last year, 1 million people participated in some 8,000 *Lights On Afterschool* events across the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide.

The 2015-2016 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama:** Dr. Michael Wilson, Principal, Glen Iris Elementary School in Birmingham;
- **Colorado:** Patrick Wilhelm, Site Coordinator, Scholars Unlimited in Denver;
- **Connecticut:** Mark Fopeano, Program Manager, Dwight Hall at Yale in New Haven;
- **Indiana:** Brigitte Gurden, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Club of Morgan County in Mooresville;
- **Louisiana:** Patricia Johnson, Project Director, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Monroe City Schools in Monroe;
- **Maryland:** Kat Stork, Deputy Director, Caroline County Recreation & Parks in Denton;
- **Minnesota:** Christian Kibler, Program Coordinator, Burnsville Youth Collaborative in Burnsville;
- **Mississippi:** Jannette Adams, Project Director, 21st Century Afterschool Academy, Columbus Municipal School District in Columbus;
- **Missouri:** Colleen Abbott, Director, Learning Enriched Afterschool Program in Eldon;
- **New York:** Marcel Braithwaite, Director of Center Operations, The Police Athletic League in New York City;
- **Oklahoma:** Kim Templeman, Principal, Central Oak Elementary in Oklahoma City;
- **Tennessee:** Kelly Drummond, Vice President of Human Resources and Administration at Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley in Knoxville;
- **Virginia:** Allyson Graul, Director of Youth Civic Engagement, Alternatives, Inc. in Fort Monroe;
- **Washington:** Beth Wyant, Program Coordinator, Northwest Community Action Center, a division of Yakima Valley FarmWorkers Clinic in Toppenish; and
- **West Virginia:** Kasey Carter, Executive Director, Communities In Schools of Greenbrier County in Lewisburg.

A large and growing body of evidence demonstrates improvements in attendance, behavior, academic achievement and more among children in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that afterschool programs encourage increased parental involvement – an important building block for student success.

The 2014 “[America After 3PM](#)” household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, found that participation in afterschool programs increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs has increased as well. Today, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two

more whose parents say they would participate, if a program were available. One in five students in the United States today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

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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 Learning Enriched Afterschool Program focuses on keeping students safe and healthy, assisting working families, and inspiring learning through supported academic and enrichment opportunities for students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grades in the Eldon R-1 School District. More information is available at www.eldonleap.weebly.com