



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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[Matthew Freeman](#), 202/371-1999
[Lisa Verdin](#), 605/306-5335

Sioux Falls, South Dakota's Mawhiney Chosen as One of Just 15 'Afterschool Ambassadors' in United States This Year

*Billy Mawhiney Will Work in South Dakota and Nationally to Increase Access to
Afterschool Programs*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced that Billy Mawhiney, Director of Operations at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire has been selected to serve as a 2018-2019 Afterschool Ambassador. He is one of just 15 leaders in the country who was chosen for the honor this year. Each Afterschool Ambassador will continue leading a local afterschool program while also serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, organizing public events, communicating with policy makers and in other ways growing awareness and support for afterschool and summer learning programs.

“We’re thrilled that Mawhiney will serve as an Afterschool Ambassador this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Now more than ever, with federal funding for quality afterschool and summer learning programs under attack, we need strong advocates like him. He will mobilize parents, educators and business, community and faith leaders, among others, to help safeguard funding for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help give working families peace of mind. These programs offer hands-on learning opportunities, homework help, mentors, science and technology, healthy snacks and meals, sports and fitness, arts programming, college and job prep, and much more.”

“I am delighted to join in the Afterschool Alliance’s work to build support for afterschool programs,” said Mawhiney. “In my 30 years working in the field, I’ve seen over and over again the extraordinary difference that afterschool makes in the lives of young people in South Dakota. They help students explore their interests and discover their passions, while giving parents the security that comes from knowing their children are safe and supervised, with opportunities to learn and grow, after the school day ends. I look forward to building support for the out-of-school-time opportunities all students need.”

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire serves children 4 weeks to age 18 through three distinct programs in the communities of Sioux Falls, Brandon and Harrisburg. Serving school aged children during out of school hours has been a decade’s long focus for Boys & Girls Clubs throughout the country. By coupling this vast experience with nationally recognized curriculum and caring mentors, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire is working to provide children and

their families with the tools necessary to grow into caring and productive citizens. The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire:

- serves nearly 1,700 children throughout the year in school aged programming;
- provides school aged programming at 11 locations in Sioux Falls, Brandon and Harrisburg;
- is a 21st CCLC funded agency;
- provides children with core programming in Career & Education, The Arts, Character & Leadership, Sports & Recreation and Healthy Lifestyles;
- works with community agencies such as The Washington Pavilion, Boy & Girl Scouts, 4-H, Lego League to provide children with a well-rounded experience ;
- implements a workforce development program for teens that partners with companies such as Buffalo Wild Wings to give gives on the job experience helping to prepare them for the future;
- partnering with Lloyd Companies to launch ClubHouses on low income properties to serve children and their families where we are needed most.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's annual rally for afterschool, to be held on October 25 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 2018-2019 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama:** Andrea Bridges, Education Coordinator, The CARE Center, **New Hope**
- **Alaska:** Heather Schloeman, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula, **Kenai**;
- **Arizona:** Mike Cassidy, Youth Services Administrator, City of Surprise Youth Services, **Surprise**;
- **Arizona:** Eva Harlow, Community Education Program Supervisor, Deer Valley Unified School District, **Phoenix**;
- **Georgia:** Chris Bass, Community Schools Division Manager, Columbus Parks and Recreation, **Columbus**;
- **Georgia:** Michael "Bull" Brown, Coffee County 21st CCLC Program Director, Coffee County 21st CCLC/ Boys and Girls Club of Coffee County Region, **Douglas**;
- **Indiana:** Desiree Frederick, Unit Director, Boys & Girls Club of Huntington County, Huntington;
- **Maine:** Jenn Carter, Program Director, Lewiston 21st Century, **Lewiston**;
- **Missouri:** Mark Cowsert, Program Director, Tiger Academy-Hollister Schools, **Hollister**;
- **Nevada:** McKenna Hines, 21st Century District Data Coordinator, 21st Century Community Learning Center – Southside Elementary, **Elko**;
- **Nevada:** Jessica Knudson, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Mendoza Elementary School, **Las Vegas**

- **South Dakota:** Billy Mawhiney, Director of Operations, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire, Sioux Falls;
- **Texas:** Johanna L. Friedel, M.Ed., Director, Afterschool Center of Education at Greenville ISD, **Greenville**;
- **Texas:** Jack Garcia, Afterschool Program Director, San Benito Consolidated Independent School District Afterschool Program, **San Benito**; and
- **Vermont:** Christy Gallese, Director of Expanded Learning Opportunities, Burlington School District, **Burlington**.

The [America After 3PM](#) household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, found that participation in afterschool programs has 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. Unmet demand is especially high in rural communities and communities of concentrated poverty. One in five students in the United States today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

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.

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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 mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire is to nurture, educate and enrich children and youth for lifelong success. The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire is an area non-profit dedicated exclusively to serving youth from 4 weeks to 18 years. For more information regarding programs and services visit www.bgcsiouxempire.org or call 605.338.8061.