



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Kenai Peninsula's Schloeman Chosen as One of Just 15 'Afterschool Ambassadors' in United States This Year

*Heather Schloeman Will Work in the State of Alaska and
Nationally to Increase Access to Afterschool Programs*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced that Heather Schloeman, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula has been selected to serve as a 2018-2019 Afterschool Ambassador. She 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 Schloeman 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 her. She 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 Schloeman. “In my 10 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 Alaska. 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.”

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula serves approximately 1,500 registered members annually in their afterschool and summer youth development programs with an average of 420 kids entering Club doors daily. Programs are offered at 8 locations across the Kenai Peninsula from Seward to Kasilof. They also offer affordable year-round athletic programs giving all youth the opportunity to participate in team sports regardless of income or ability. The Club was recently notified that it has been awarded another grant for an additional fifth year of 21st CCLC

funding, which is critical to keeping programs operating and doors open for all kids and especially those who need the programs the most.

Their vision is to provide a world-class Club experience that ensures success is within reach of every young person who walks through their doors, with all members on track to graduate from high school on time with a plan for their future demonstrating good character and citizenship and living a healthy lifestyle. The Club provides homemade meals to members daily through USDA Meal Programs ensuring that no child leaves the program hungry. They have five core focus areas which include career and education, character and leadership, health and life skills, sports and recreation and the arts. Comprehensive homework help and tutoring programs are designed to raise academic proficiency. Running clubs, sports and fitness opportunities are offered daily. Leadership clubs help youth become responsible citizens and develop leadership skills while contributing to the Club and community. Their STEM programs teach critical 21st Century skills. There are endless opportunities for kids to participate in a wide variety of activities such as dance, karate, robotics, prevention programs, Youth of the Month and Youth of the Year and more.

The Club is embedded into the communities it serves by way of important community partnerships including the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, local city government, local hospitals, local law enforcement, Park and Recreation, local libraries, other youth serving organizations such as 4-H and local dance studios to name a few.

Out of school time programs are vital, not only on the Kenai Peninsula, but across the entire State of Alaska. According to the Alaska Afterschool Network, 25,600 children participate in afterschool programs in Alaska. Forty-five thousand school-age children in Alaska who do not participate in an afterschool program would be enrolled if one were available to them, according to [research from the Afterschool Alliance](#).

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.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula is a charter under our national organization, Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Our programs provide a fun, safe and constructive environment for kids and teens during out-of-school time. Clubs are community based and led by professional staff. More information is available at www.bgckp.com.