San Francisco’s Einhorn Chosen to Be One of Just 15 ‘Afterschool Ambassadors’ in the Country This Year

Leslie Einhorn Will Work in California and Nationally to Increase Access to Afterschool Programs

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced that Leslie Einhorn, Founder & Executive Director of Children’s After School Arts (CASA), has been selected to serve as an Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance in 2019-2020. She is one of just 15 leaders in the United States chosen for the honor this year. Ambassadors will continue their work supporting 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.

“We are delighted that Leslie Einhorn will serve as an Afterschool Ambassador this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “With federal funding for quality afterschool and summer learning programs at risk, we need strong advocates like Leslie. Her work will mobilize parents, educators and business, community and faith leaders, among others, to send the message that afterschool programs are vital to the future of our children, families, and communities. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help give working families peace of mind. They offer hands-on learning opportunities, opportunities to think critically and collaborate, homework help, mentors, science and technology, healthy snacks and meals, sports and fitness, arts programming, college and job prep, and much more."

“I am eager to join the Afterschool Alliance in building support for afterschool programs,” said Einhorn. “In my 25 years working in the field, I’ve seen time and again the extraordinary difference that afterschool makes in the lives of young people in California. These programs help students explore their interests, discover their passions, and learn to communicate with peers and adults 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.”

Children’s After School Arts (CASA) is an independent, nonprofit, creative arts after school program with an emphasis on social justice and social emotional wellness. It recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. CASA is located at Rooftop School in San Francisco. CASA has special outreach to marginalized communities including LGBTQ+ families and gender expansive youth. CASA serves 300+ kindergarten through sixth graders, and also offers a service learning
opportunity for seventh graders. CASA’s diverse team of artist/educators are committed to addressing social justice themes; not just in the top-notch creative arts curriculum, but also in daily interactions with students. CASA teachers encourage positive connections and community building. We focus on relationships and communication and work daily on peaceful conflict resolution using restorative practices.

CASA produces an annual original musical starring 200 students working in partnership with professional theater artists. CASA’s 2015 musical, “City Not for Sale” received national recognition after being featured on NPR’s “This American Life.”

CASA also produces an annual Art & Music Festival featuring work from our K-5 students. Artwork in the 2016 festival was a culmination of creative arts programming exploring gender identity, which was underwritten by the San Francisco Arts Commission. A research study about this innovative curriculum was recently published in the Journal of LGBT Youth. Other recent stories include: “Not Our Town” Story about CASA musical on This American Life by Jon Mooallem; SF Chronicle Article about ‘City Not for Sale’ (1/5/16); MissionBox article about Leslie Einhorn (6/6/19).

CASA is funded in part by a generous grant from the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth & Their Families. At CASA, we are dedicated to guiding San Francisco youth toward open expression, expansive hearts and questioning minds.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for Lights On Afterschool, the Afterschool Alliance’s annual rally for afterschool, which will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year. Most Lights On Afterschool events will be on or around Thursday, October 24. Last year, 1 million people participated in some 8,000 events across the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide.

The 2019-2020 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alaska**: Courtney Havrilek, Lead Coordinator, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Fairbanks NSB School District, Fairbanks;
- **California**: Leslie Einhorn, Founder & Executive Director, CASA (Children’s After School Arts), San Francisco;
- **Colorado**: Sarah Johnson, Senior Vice President of Education & Arts YouthPower365, Avon;
- **Florida**: Suzette L. Harvey, President/CEO, Prime Time Palm Beach County, Boynton Beach;
- **Iowa**: Robert C. Reid, Executive Director, Camp Fire Heart of Iowa, Des Moines;
- **Michigan**: Willie Buford, Site Manager, Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce – YouthQuest, Flint;
- **Michigan**: Trevor Davies, Sr. Manager, Forum for Youth Investment, David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, Wyoming;
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.

###

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.

Children’s After School Arts (CASA) is a San Francisco-based after school program with an emphasis on art, social justice and social emotional wellness. More information is available at http://casasf.org/.