



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

News Release

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Boston's Arthur Pearson Selected as One of Just 17 Afterschool Ambassadors in United States This Year

*Pearson Will Work in Massachusetts and Nationally to Increase Access to
Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced that Arthur Pearson, President and CEO at Thompson Island Outward Bound, has been selected to serve as an Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance in 2022. He is one of just 17 leaders in the country chosen for the honor this year. Afterschool Ambassadors continue their work with local afterschool programs while serving a 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 expanded learning programs.

“We are thrilled that Arthur will serve as an Afterschool Ambassador this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The pandemic has had a profound effect on children and youth, and the afterschool community has a vital role to play in helping everyone recover lost ground. That will require support of all kinds, and we need strong advocates who know their communities to lead the charge. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help give working families peace of mind. They offer hands-on learning, 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 – and students need all that more than ever.”

“I am eager to join the Afterschool Alliance in building support for expanded learning programs,” said Pearson. “Over the last two years, out-of-school and summer learning programs have provided critical services to kids and families, and we have more work to do as we recover. Our kids have ground to make up – not just in academics, but in their social and emotional development as well. I’m proud to be part of the afterschool movement and thrilled to have a chance to serve as an Afterschool Ambassador for Massachusetts.”

Thompson Island is a 204-acre island classroom in the heart of the Boston Harbor. Part of the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park, the island encompasses salt marshes, beaches,

tide pools, woodlands, and meadows. Its natural resources are enhanced by a historic campus with dormitories, classrooms, science labs, challenge courses, and two 62-foot climbing towers.

Serving primarily middle school students in the Boston Public Schools, Thompson Island Outward Bound's research-based programs integrate social-emotional and academic development through field science and challenge-based learning, giving students a unique opportunity to build life skills alongside academic ones. Since the pandemic, Thompson Island Outward Bound has served over 1,000 students through online, at-school, and on-island programs; it will serve over 2,000 students in the 2021-2022 school year.

Thompson Island has 200-year legacy of creating hands-on educational opportunities for Boston youth and a 47-year partnership with the Boston Public Schools (BPS), making it a leader in expanded learning in Boston and beyond. In 2019, the organization received the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) Land Ends Summer Learning Award recognizing quality programs that bring learning to life in informal learning spaces and support families in meaningful ways, particularly those that focus on environmental stewardship and STEM.

Thompson Island Outward Bound has been a part of Outward Bound USA network of 11 regional schools for over 30 years. The network provides community-based programs in 11 states, including partnerships with 11 school districts, 169 public and charter schools, 128 community-based organizations, 98 private schools, and 13 universities. Pearson currently serves as Interim Executive Director of Outward Bound USA.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's annual rally for afterschool. Most of the thousands of local *Lights On Afterschool* events will be on or around Thursday, October 20, 2022.

The 2022 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Homer, Alaska:** Jane Beck, Executive Director, Project GRAD Kenai Peninsula
- **Glendale, Arizona:** Manny Padia, Recreation Coordinator Senior, City of Glendale Public Facilities, Recreation, & Special Events Department
- **Leadville, Colorado:** Taylor Trelka, Out of School Time Director, Project Dream with the Lake County School District
- **Middletown, Connecticut:** Mackenzie Steadman, School Age and Youth Program Coordinator, Middlesex YMCA Kids' Korner Before and Afterschool Programs
- **District of Columbia:** Andrew Blickle, Community Engagement Manager, Life Pieces To Masterpieces
- **Sioux City, Iowa:** Jenna Andrews, Program Director, Beyond the Bell
- **Wichita, Kansas:** Jennifer Hartman, Program Manager, Wichita Public Schools STEALTH Afterschool
- **Boston, Massachusetts:** Arthur Pearson, Chief Executive Officer, Thompson Island Outward Bound

- **Jackson, Mississippi:** Monique Ealey, Director of Education and Programs, Mississippi Children's Museum
- **Bloomfield, New Mexico:** Jarvis Mullahon, Programs and Projects Specialist, Navajo Nation Department of Dine Education
- **Charlotte, North Carolina:** Sil Ganzó, Executive Director, ourBRIDGE for KIDS
- **Ocracoke, North Carolina:** Nancy Leach, Program Director, Hyde 21st Century Community Learning Center, Hyde County Schools
- **Norman, Oklahoma:** Michael Hirsch: Executive Director, Loveworks Leadership
- **Medford, Oregon:** Crystal Ehlig, Director of the Campus Connection Afterschool program, Rogue Valley Family YMCA
- **Salt Lake City, Utah:** Angel Gomez, Community Program Manager, YouthCity - Fairpark
- **Charleston, West Virginia:** Michael Farmer, Chief Operations Officer, Step By Step WV
- **Fairmont, West Virginia:** Shannon Yost, Program Manager, Flipside Afterschool Program

The 2020 [America After 3PM](#) household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted before the pandemic, found that unmet demand for afterschool programs has reached an all-time high. For every child in an afterschool program in America today, three more are waiting to get in. The study found significant inequities, with Black and Latinx children disproportionately without afterschool opportunities. Ninety-four percent of parents of afterschool students say they are satisfied with their child's program.

A large and powerful body of evidence demonstrates improvements in grades, school attendance, behavior and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that students in afterschool programs are more engaged in school and excited about learning and develop critical work and life skills such as problem solving, teamwork, and communications.

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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.

Thompson Island Outward Bound's core mission is to build stronger, more equitable school communities by delivering free experiential learning programs that boost academic success and foster personal growth. More information is available at www.thompsonisland.org.