



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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New York's Whitfield Selected as One of Just 16 Afterschool Ambassadors in Country This Year

*CAMBA's Earl Whitfield Will Work in New York and Across Nation to Make Afterschool
and Summer Learning Programs Available to More Children and Youth*

Washington, D.C. – Earl Whitfield, Program Director of CAMBA's East New York Beacon 166 Community Center at The Van Siclen Community Middle School in East New York, has been selected to serve as a 2023 Afterschool Ambassador, the Afterschool Alliance announced today. He is one of just 16 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 events, working with community leaders and policy makers, and in other ways increasing support for the afterschool and summer learning programs families rely on.

"We are absolutely delighted that Earl Whitfield will serve as a 2023 Afterschool Ambassador," Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant said. "While students and families need afterschool and summer learning programs more than ever, programs are facing significant challenges including staff shortages, funding shortfalls, and finding ways to meet the academic and social needs of students as they recover from the challenges the pandemic created. We need strong, creative champions to spread the word about the essential role afterschool programs play in keeping kids safe, inspiring them to learn, and giving parents peace of mind that their children are safe and supervised after the school day ends. Whitfield is poised to be just the kind of powerful advocate we need."

"I look forward to joining the Afterschool Alliance in growing support for afterschool and summer learning programs this year," said Whitfield. "I've seen up close the incredible ways these programs support students and families, and the critical services they provide. As our students continue to recover from the isolation and hardship the pandemic caused, these services become even more important. Many of our kids have ground to make up – and quality afterschool programs can help them do that. I'm so proud to be part of the afterschool movement and to have a chance to serve as an Afterschool Ambassador for New York this year."

CAMBA's Beacon Community Centers offer a variety of services and activities to enhance community engagement and healthy living. Located in public schools, CAMBA's four Beacon Centers operate year-round during non-school hours, on weekdays, weekends and in the summer – representing a City-wide collaboration between the New York City Department of Youth & Community Development and the New York City Department of Education. CAMBA's Beacon Centers transform their host school into a

resource for the whole community by offering an integrated range of programming tailored to local needs. Each Beacon Center serves as a hub for youth, adults, and families to access integrated and comprehensive services. Service categories include academic enhancement, after school programs and summer camps, career awareness/school-to-work transition, civic engagement/community building, community events, culture and arts, life skills, and recreation/health and fitness. Last year, CAMBA Education & Youth Development provided more than 12,000 student participants at our Beacon and Cornerstone Community Centers with educational and recreational activities throughout the year.

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 26, 2023.

The 2023 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Stamford, Connecticut:** Tiffany Wilson, Mill River Park Collaborative
- **Shoshone, Idaho:** Karma Metzler Fitzgerald, Lincoln County Youth Commission
- **Indianapolis, Indiana:** Chrystal Struben, AYS – At Your School
- **Terre Haute, Indiana:** Eleanor Ramseier, Camp Navigate, Inc.
- **Skowhegan, Maine:** Dawn Fickett, RSU/MSAD 54's 21st CCLC The REACH Afterschool Program
- **Derwood, Maryland:** Zainab Abbas, SciTech2U
- **Battle Creek, Michigan:** Deondra Ramsey, Battle Creek Public Schools 21st Century Program
- **Medford, New Jersey:** Becca Gutwirth, YMCA of the Pines
- **Newark, New Jersey:** Dorine Francis, FOCUS Hispanic Center for Community Development, Inc.
- **Zuni, New Mexico:** Valarie Bellson, Pueblo of Zuni, Zuni Public Library
- **Brooklyn, New York:** Earl Whitfield, CAMBA East New York Beacon 166
- **Norman, Oklahoma:** Whitney Dunn, Boys & Girls Club of Norman, Center for Children and Families
- **San Antonio, Texas:** Shawn Petty, Texas ACE Program @ Westat
- **Newport, Vermont:** Elizabeth Chambers, NCSU Encore Afterschool and Summer Program
- **Hampton, Virginia:** Michelle Simpson, Alternatives World Changers
- **Pasco, Washington:** Margarita Alaman, Educational Service Districts 123 21st Century Programs

Some 24.7 million U.S. children not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them, according to a survey of nearly 1,500 parents commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research in May and June of 2022. That is the highest number ever recorded. Unmet demand for afterschool programs is significantly higher among Latino and Black children (at 60% and 54% respectively) than among children overall (49%). Cost is the top barrier to enroll, cited by 57% of parents as a reason for not enrolling their child. Ninety percent of parents rate the quality of the program their child attends as excellent (51%) or very good (39%).

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.

Founded in 1977, CAMBA, Inc. is one of New York City's largest community-based social services organizations. CAMBA annually provides services to more than 70,000 individuals and families in six core areas: Economic Development; Education and Youth Development; Family Support; Health, Housing and Legal Services. CAMBA clients are those who are: moving from welfare to work; individuals and families experiencing, at risk of, or transitioning out of homelessness; individuals living with or at risk of HIV/AIDS; immigrants and refugees; children and young adults; entrepreneurs; and others struggling to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency. CAMBA provides 170 life-changing services at over 90 locations across New York City.