



## **Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership**

### **News Release**

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### **Dugan of Pittsburgh Selected as One of Just 14 Afterschool Ambassadors in United States This Year**

*Deanna Dugan Will Work in Pennsylvania and Across Nation to Make Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs Available to More Students and Families*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance announced today that it has selected Deanna Dugan, Assistant Director of Afterschool Programs at Propel Schools, to serve as a 2024 Afterschool Ambassador. She is one of just 14 leaders in the country chosen for the honor this year. Afterschool Ambassadors continue working with local afterschool programs while serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, working with community leaders and policy makers, organizing events, and in other ways growing support for the afterschool and summer learning programs families rely on.

“We are thrilled that Deanna Dugan is serving as a 2024 Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance,” said Jodi Grant, Afterschool Alliance executive director. “This is a challenging time for the country’s students and families, and afterschool and summer learning programs are uniquely positioned to help. But there aren’t nearly enough programs to meet the need, and programs are facing significant challenges including funding shortfalls as the pandemic relief tapers off, staff shortages, and more. Now more than ever, we need leaders to spread the word that afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give parents peace of mind that their children are safe and supervised after the school day ends. Dugan is exactly the kind of champion we need.”

“I am delighted to collaborate with the Afterschool Alliance this year to increase awareness and support for afterschool and summer learning programs,” said Dugan. “I’ve seen firsthand the numerous benefits these programs provide students and families in overcoming challenges. That is particularly important now. With many students needing to catch up academically, afterschool programs can play a vital role in assisting them. I am honored to be part of the afterschool movement and to be a 2024 Afterschool Ambassador.”

Propel Afterschool MAGIC (Making a Greater Investment in our Children, Communities, and City) serves more than 650 scholars at 11 sites during the school year and close to 300 scholars in the summer. Its award-winning afterschool program is free to scholars in grades K-12. Held Monday through Thursday, it utilizes an ever-growing partner network to provide scholars with unique academic and enrichment opportunities during after-school hours. A nutritious snack or dinner is provided at some Propel locations.

Propel Afterschool programs are committed to improving academic achievement (homework help and tutoring); encouraging healthy lifelong skills (art, physical education, STEAM, social-emotional learning, nutrition); providing resources for children and families (family engagement activities); and connecting with communities (Advisory Board, community partners, and Service Learning).

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 24, 2024.

The 2024 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Colorado, Thornton:** Mandi Browning, The PEAK Learning Center
- **Delaware, Laurel:** Tasha Esham, Laurel Boys & Girls Club
- **Iowa, Des Moines:** Linda Phillips, 21CCCLC and Metro Kids/ Des Moines Public Schools
- **Kentucky, Covington:** Beth Wiseman, Learning Grove
- **Louisiana, Baton Rouge:** Yashica Newby, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Louisiana
- **Louisiana, New Orleans:** Aaron Frumin, unCommon Construction
- **Nebraska, Crete:** Joel Bramhall, Cardinal Community Learning Centers, Crete Public Schools
- **New Mexico, Farmington:** Teahonna James-Belin, Navajo Preparatory School
- **Ohio, Columbus:** DeAndra Harrison, The Actions that Matter for Youth
- **Ohio, Cleveland:** Kasey Morgan, MyCom
- **Pennsylvania, Philadelphia:** Cecelia Armstrong, Sunrise of Philadelphia
- **Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh:** Deanna Dugan, Propel Schools
- **Rhode Island, Providence:** Elliot A. Rivera, Youth In Action
- **Tennessee, Knoxville:** Sindy Dawkins-Schade, SHADES of Development

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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

**About Propel Schools**

*Propel Schools is a network of public charter schools that transforms the lives of children through innovative, student-centered learning. Propel sets a standard for creating productive citizens by prioritizing academic excellence and fundamental life skills. Based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Propel has become one of the largest, fastest-expanding charter school organizations since its establishment in 2003. Today, Propel serves 4,000 students at 13 Allegheny County locations. Visit [propelschools.org](https://www.propelschools.org/) to learn more.*