



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

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Morgan of Cuyahoga County Selected as One of Just 14 Afterschool Ambassadors in United States This Year

*Kasey T. Morgan Will Work in Ohio 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 Kasey T. Morgan, Chief Strategy Officer for the MyCom Youth Development Initiative of Greater Cleveland, 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 Kasey Morgan 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. Kasey Morgan is exactly the kind of champion we need.”

“Being selected for this distinguished program is a profound honor. I am eager to explore pathways to leverage national attention and resources to amplify our efforts and promote cross-sector collaboration in youth development work, while providing the vital afterschool programs that serve youth and their families,” said Morgan. “I am grateful for this opportunity to increase support for initiatives that enrich and empower youth beyond the classroom. This amazing opportunity validates the hard work and dedication that we have poured into our mission. MyCom is one of northeast Ohio’s greatest assets as it plays the integral role of connecting government, philanthropic leaders, neighborhoods and key resources to youth and their families. Through strategic programming, data collection, and advocacy, MyCom is aiding youth in the process of realizing their best potential while making Cuyahoga County a better place to live, work and raise a family. I’m so proud to be part of the after school movement and to be a 2024 Afterschool Ambassador.”

The MyCom Youth Development Network of Greater Cleveland is Cuyahoga County’s premier youth serving organization providing a network of resources aimed at creating healthy, safe and thriving communities. MyCom has developed community-based systems that position communities to achieve

common goals through partnerships that increase authentic youth engagement and college and career readiness. It has over 300 neighborhood service providers in 20 neighborhoods, providing services in the areas of Out of School Time, Quality Improvement, Neighborhood Planning, Youth Workforce Development and Youth Engagement, with an emphasis on Youth Voice.

The core tenets of the work for youth across the MyCom Network are: 1) A Youth Voice is respected and promoted in all of our decisions; 2) Neighborhoods are engaged to facilitate planning based on their community need with a holistic approach of solutions for youth in their neighborhood; 3) Opportunities for employment and positive out of school time activities are made available to all youth; 4) Youth are successfully transitioning into Kindergarten, Middle School, High School, and Post-Secondary education or work; and, 5) The Network is successfully advocating FOR youth-WITH youth.

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, 21CCLC 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.