



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

News Release

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Mat-Su's Healy Selected as One of Just 15 Afterschool Ambassadors in United States This Year

Tyler Healy Will Work Locally and Across the Country to Make Quality Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs Available to More Students and Families

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced that it has selected Tyler Healy, Project Director at Youth 360, to serve as a 2025 Afterschool Ambassador – one of only 15 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, during which they engage with community leaders and policy makers to organize events and in other ways grow support for the afterschool and summer learning programs that students and families rely on.

“We are absolutely delighted that Tyler Healy will serve as a 2025 Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance,” said Jodi Grant, Afterschool Alliance executive director. “This is going to be a pivotal year when we must continue the progress in making afterschool and summer learning programs available to more students, even as federal education spending is under scrutiny. We intend to continue spreading the word that afterschool programs are a wise, essential investment because they 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. Healy is exactly the kind of champion we need.”

“I am excited to have the chance to work with the Afterschool Alliance to increase awareness and support for afterschool and summer learning programs this year,” said Healy. “We have seen the great value that Youth 360 and other afterschool programs around Alaska and the country provide for youth and families. As teens work to manage mental health challenges, loneliness, and isolation, afterschool programs can help connect them to positive peer groups and networks of support. It’s essential to provide safe, supervised areas for local youth to spend time after school and build skills and confidence. I’m very proud to be part of the afterschool movement and to be a 2025 Afterschool Ambassador.”

Youth 360 seeks to build community and social connections for Mat-Su middle and high school students. In 2024, over 600 local youth were served through Youth 360’s afterschool youth clubs and activity scholarships. Youth 360 operates free afterschool youth clubs at four local sites: Houston Middle School, Houston High School, Wasilla (501 E Bogard Rd), and Northgate Alaska (2900 N Northgate Pl). Students attending Youth 360 clubs receive access to high-quality activities designed to build skills and keep them engaged during afterschool hours. Regular activities include recreation, life skills, cooking, e-sports, games and crafts, youth leadership opportunities and much more. The program provides transportation and food. The youth clubs operate year-round, with a focus on community involvement and outings during the summer months.

Youth 360 also operates an activity scholarship program, which allows underprivileged students to participate in school sports and other community activities such as dance, karate, music, basketball and more. Other Youth 360 initiatives include a parent/family advisory group, surveys and data sharing, and participation in large youth-focused community events and activities.

Each Afterschool 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 23, 2025.

The 2025 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama, Gadsden:** Janie Browning, Gadsden City Schools
- **Alaska, Palmer:** Tyler Healy, Youth 360
- **Louisiana, Shreveport:** Victoria Morris, Volunteers of America LightHouse Program
- **Michigan, Detroit:** Curtis Blackwell, Sound Mind Sound Body Foundation
- **Minnesota, Minneapolis:** Clayton "Clyde" Quarles, Minneapolis Youth Congress
- **Nebraska, Omaha:** Nicole Everingham, Collective for Youth
- **New Hampshire, Stratham:** Melissa Goerbig, Big Brothers Big Sisters of New Hampshire
- **Nevada, Las Vegas:** Linda Johnson-McClinton, Enriching Explorations in Engineering
- **New York, Brooklyn:** Ghiles Jackson, After-School All-Stars
- **New York, Buffalo:** Talisa King, YWCA Western New York
- **South Carolina, Charleston:** Lauren Herterich, Kids on Point
- **South Carolina, Irmo:** Julius Scott, School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties
- **South Dakota, Rapid City:** Malachi Nelson, 21st Century CFS South Middle Club Hub
- **Virginia, Richmond:** Jeanine Turner, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond
- **Wisconsin, Rhinelander:** Abbie Cline, YMCA of the Northwoods

A [public opinion survey](#) released in February found that 85% of voters say they want their newly elected leaders to provide more funds for afterschool programs, including 92% of Democrats, 81% of Independents, 77% of Republicans, and 77% of people who voted for President Trump. The unmet need is great. 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 in 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.

Youth 360 is a project of United Way of Mat-Su, providing afterschool youth clubs and other youth connection opportunities around the Mat-Su Valley. Our mission is to provide activities and opportunities to help youth and families thrive. Visit www.youth-360.org for more information.