



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Gretchen Wright  
202/371-1999

## **Leaders in Sciences, Government, Education Call on Congress to Preserve Funding for Afterschool, Expand Afterschool Science and Math Learning Opportunities**

### ***Tenth Annual Afterschool for All Challenge Focuses on Benefits of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Learning in Programs***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Hundreds of parents, children, educators and advocates from around the country are in the nation’s Capital this week to encourage Congress to preserve funding for afterschool programs and support efforts to expand opportunities for afterschool students to engage in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, the tenth annual *Afterschool for All Challenge* is highlighting the importance of (STEM) learning, in recognition of 2011 being the Year of Science in Afterschool. The event is intended to give people the chance to voice their support for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

Special guests at the two-day event include Robin Schepper of First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move!* Initiative and Kumar Garg of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, who will speak on panels on Monday, May 16.

The *Challenge* will include a “Breakfast of Champions” on Tuesday to recognize *FIRST*® founder Dean Kamen as the national “Afterschool for All” Champion and to honor state afterschool champions from Connecticut, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. National League of Cities President and Charlotte, NC Councilmember James Mitchell will emcee the “Breakfast.” Senators Barbara Boxer (CA), Mark Begich (AK), Patty Murray (WA), Jean Shaheen (NH) and Sheldon Whitehouse (RI), and Representative David Cicilline (RI) are among the Members of Congress scheduled to speak.

After the Breakfast, students, parents and afterschool leaders will meet with hundreds of Members of Congress and aides to discuss the importance of afterschool programs and expanding opportunities for kids to engage in STEM activities in those programs.

“Now, more than ever, we need to hold the line on funding for afterschool programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Kids, families and communities rely on these programs to keep children safe, help working families and give children and youth opportunities to enhance their school day learning. The hours after school provide children with a multitude of hands-on learning

experiences that help them grow academically, socially and professionally. Whether children are engaged in physical activity, the arts, or building rockets, afterschool programs provide space for children to explore their passions and overcome their fears. More and more programs are becoming a gateway to make science, technology, engineering and math come alive for students. Research from high quality, science-rich afterschool programs shows that such programs are effectively engaging and exciting kids about STEM learning and serving as integral partners in helping kids pursue careers in science and engineering, an area in which the United States has been falling behind. Quality afterschool programs can help our children catch up and get ahead in STEM learning and get them started on the pursuit of STEM careers.”

Kyle Gulshen, a high school sophomore from Camdenton, Missouri and Rebecca Dragon, a high school freshman from Laconia, New Hampshire were selected by their communities to receive special scholarships from the to attend the *Challenge* and discuss what afterschool programs mean to them and their families at the “Breakfast” event. Gulshen will also help Senator Shaheen present the national “Afterschool for All Champion” Award to Kamen, along with Sierra Comer, a high school senior from Camdenton. Comer and Gulshen participate in the *FIRST* program at Camdenton High School. Their trips were sponsored by the Noyce Foundation

The youngest speaker at the Breakfast will be Kai Goodall, a third-grader from Washington, DC, who attends Horace Mann Elementary School. The United States Tennis Association sponsored Goodall to speak about the benefits she has experienced in the three years she has participated in the Capital Region Education And Tennis Experience (CREATE).

The state Afterschool Champions being honored are:

- **Connecticut:** Agnes Quiñones, Education Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education
- **Kansas:** Nancy Volpe, Consultant, CVS Pathways to Pharmacy and America’s Promise
- **Michigan:** Kathleen Straus, Board Member, Michigan State Board of Education
- **Minnesota:** R.T. Rybak, Mayor of the City of Minneapolis
- **Missouri:** Sherry Comer, Afterschool Services Director, Camdenton R-III Schools
- **New Jersey:** Vaughn L. McKoy, President, PSEG Foundation
- **New York:** Kyle Stewart, Executive Director, Alliance of New York State YMCAs, Inc.
- **Pennsylvania:** Carmen M. Medina, Chief of the Division of Student Services, Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of Teaching and Learning
- **Virginia:** Mark H. Emery, Administrator for After-School Programs, Fairfax County Public Schools.

The 2011 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, Peavey Electronics, NAMM, Open Society Foundations, Cable in the Classroom, National AfterSchool Association, Clever Crazes for Kids, and Arnold and Sandra Grant. Additional funding is provided by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Time Warner Cable, the Noyce Foundation and jcpenny.

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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).*