



NEWS RELEASE
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Retired Oklahoma Brigadier General Honored in Nation's Capital as a Powerful and Effective Champion for Afterschool and Youth

Educators, Parents, Afterschool Leaders Come Together to Urge Congress to Increase Funding for Afterschool Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today honored retired Brigadier General Ben Robinson for his support for afterschool programs. Robinson was named a State Afterschool Champion at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C. featuring Members of Congress and national afterschool champions. He was one of 18 state champions from around the country honored at the Breakfast for supporting and working on behalf of afterschool programs and the children and families who benefit from quality programs. The Oklahoma Afterschool Network nominated him for the honor.

Working with the Oklahoma Aerospace Alliance, General Robinson helped establish the Aerospace Education and Industry Partnership Day. The event, which began in 2009, brings together more than 100 school-day and afterschool educators with representatives of Oklahoma’s commercial and military aerospace industry, so that programs can partner with industry to teach students about careers in aerospace. Robinson also serves as Chair of the STEM subcommittee of Governor Mary Fallin’s Science and Technology Council and as a Commissioner on the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Commission.

“Ben Robinson is an outspoken, dedicated and exuberant voice for afterschool and for promoting science, technology, engineering and math in afterschool,” said Sheryl Lovelady, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Afterschool Network. “His efforts have helped build a school-to-workforce pipeline for the aerospace industry in Oklahoma. We are proud to have him as a partner in the effort to strengthen and expand afterschool in our state.”

The “Breakfast of Champions” is part of the 12th annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, which brings together hundreds of educators, parents, afterschool leaders and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. Following the Breakfast, participants fanned out across Capitol Hill to talk to their senators and representatives about the importance of afterschool programs to children, families and communities. This year, the Alliance is also encouraging advocates for afterschool to participate in the *Challenge* at home by calling or visiting Congressional district offices to urge their representatives in Congress to increase funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the Child Care Development Fund.

“There’s no question that afterschool programs are a lifeline for working parents, give our children and youth a safe place to be and inspire academic and social/emotional learning,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “But they also do much more. They expose kids to possible careers in the sciences or the arts, teach them the value of community service, and provide them with mentors, meals, physical activity and so much more. The people we honor as champions today are helping to educate, support and guide the young people who will be our future leaders.”

The full list of State Champions being honored at the *Afterschool for All Challenge* is:

- **Arkansas:** Tammie Cloyes, 21st CCLC Program Coordinator, Department of Education
- **California:** Michael Funk, Director of the After School Division, Department of Education
- **Florida:** Modesto Abety-Gutierrez, President and CEO, The Children’s Trust
- **Georgia:** N. Jean Walker Ph.D., Vice President of Education, United Way of Greater Atlanta
- **Iowa:** Dave Welter, Principal, Holmes Junior High School
- **Indiana:** Willis Bright, Former Director of Youth Programs, Lilly Endowment
- **Kansas:** Laura Kaiser, Family Engagement Chair, Kansas Parent Teacher Association
- **Massachusetts:** The Honorable Thomas McGee, Massachusetts State Senate
- **North Carolina:** Carr Thompson, Senior Program Officer, Burroughs Wellcome Fund
- **Nebraska:** Kristin Williams, Director of Community Initiatives, The Sherwood Foundation
- **New Jersey:** The Honorable Connie Wagner, New Jersey General Assembly
- **New Mexico:** Laurie Mueller, Former 21st CCLC State Coordinator, Department of Education
- **Oklahoma:** General Ben Robinson USAF (Ret.), President, Sentry One LLC
- **Pennsylvania:** Leslie Roesler, Associate Director, Pennsylvania Key – Berks County Intermediate Unit
- **Rhode Island:** The Honorable Frank Ferri, Rhode Island House of Representatives
- **Texas:** Jennifer Esterline, Independent Nonprofit Consultant
- **Virginia:** Kathryn Johnson, Executive Director, Alternatives, Inc.
- **West Virginia:** Gayle Manchin, Vice President, State Board of Education.

In addition to the 18 State Champions, the Afterschool Alliance honored John Galvin, Assistant Principal of New York’s I.S. 318 in Brooklyn, as a national Afterschool Champion at the Breakfast. A veteran educator who has devoted 20 years to the students of I.S. 318, Galvin is also a coach for the school’s afterschool chess program. The school’s chess team has won more national championships than any other junior high chess team in the nation and is the subject of the recent, critically acclaimed documentary “Brooklyn Castle.”

The 2013 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is generously sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, United States Chess Federation, the NAMM Foundation, Cable in the Classroom

and the National AfterSchool Association. Additional generous support is provided by Torani Syrups, the Noyce Foundation and the C.S. Mott Foundation.

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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.