

Afterschool Programs Open A World of Opportunity for Children

A Statement from Vanessa Castagna, Chairman and CEO of JCPenney Stores, Catalog and Internet

When you see the eyes of a child light up because of their experience in an Afterschool program, you see their future brighten because of the added opportunity they've had to learn and grow. Afterschool programs, like those offered by the YMCA of the USA, Junior Achievement, Boys & Girls Clubs of America and 4-H Afterschool, open a world of opportunity for millions of children each year. They clearly improve the quality of life and the future potential that each child has to make a difference in our nation.

But there are many more children who need this support. In May, a study funded by JCPenney Afterschool and published by the Afterschool Alliance found that more than 14 million children are left on their own after the school day ends, with many spending their afternoon in an unsupervised environment. Research and experience shows that these children will dramatically benefit from the enriching and safe environment Afterschool programs provide. Afterschool programs can help them succeed personally, academically, socially, and physically.

Today's 5th annual Lights on Afterschool rally includes more than 7,000 events and half a million Americans across the nation who are focused on this need. At JCPenney, we think this is such a critical mission that we created the JCPenney Afterschool Fund to help achieve it. JCPenney Afterschool has become the nation's largest corporate sponsor of afterschool programs, contributing more than \$30 million to help them succeed.

We cannot do it alone, though, and this year close to 300 of our country's CEO's shared their support by joining their companies with JCPenney in contributing to the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. Their dollars are helping provide safe learning environments for children through some of the best and most innovative afterschool programs in the country.

At JCPenney we are proud to support organizations that help our country's youth, and our efforts to increase the availability of afterschool opportunities will continue. By working together, we can help children reach the true "power of their potential."

About JCPenney

JCPenney is one of America's largest department store, catalog, and e-commerce retailers, employing approximately 150,000 associates. The company operates 1,021 JCPenney department stores throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. JCPenney is a contributor to JCPenney Afterschool Fund, a charitable organization committed to providing children with high quality after school programs to help them reach their full potential.

About JCPenney Afterschool

JCPenney Afterschool is committed to helping provide children with high-quality, affordable after-school programs to help them reach the power of their potential. JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization contributing financial support to five of America's leading after-school advocates: the YMCA of the USA, Junior Achievement, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H Afterschool, and the Afterschool Alliance. JCPenney Afterschool's support helps provide safe, fun and educational afterschool programs and raise awareness of the need for more such programs across the country.