



NEWS RELEASE
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Cambridge Afterschool Science Program for Middle School Girls Wins National Award from MetLife Foundation

Program is one of six nationwide recognized for innovation and excellence.

MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance today honored The Science Club for Girls and C.E.L.L.S. (Career Exploration, Leadership and Life Skills) program with an Afterschool Innovator Award in recognition of the program's success increasing the science literacy and self-confidence of girls. Scott Batey, a Financial Advisor with New England Financial, a MetLife company, presented the award at a special event that was part of *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. The Science Club for Girls and C.E.L.L.S. also received \$5,000 to sustain its work.

"Middle school is a pivotal point in young people's development," said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "We are pleased to join the Afterschool Alliance in recognizing the Science Club for Girls and C.E.L.L.S. program model, which is addressing the needs of middle school students and putting them on the path to success."

The Science Club for Girls and C.E.L.L.S. is one of only six afterschool programs nationwide to be named a 2010 Afterschool Innovator. It was highlighted in an [Issue Brief](#) on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) in middle school, part of a series developed by the Afterschool Alliance with funding from MetLife Foundation, examining critical issues facing older youth, schools and communities, and the role that the programs play in addressing these issues. The briefs address a variety of benefits that afterschool programs provide, including opportunities for community involvement; leadership development; pathways to higher education and careers; health and wellness; and STEM learning.

Through The Science Club for Girls and C.E.L.L.S., middle school students participate in hands-on science clubs in 6th and 7th grades and in the C.E.L.L.S. (Career Exploration, Leadership and Life Skills) program in the second semester of 7th and 8th grade. The curricula encompass a range of STEM topics including astronomy, astronautics, climate change and oceans. These interdisciplinary curricula stress hands-on learning and many culminate in a final, collaborative project. Girls are exposed to a variety of STEM fields and the real-world applications of principles and tools related to these fields. The clubs are guided by undergraduate, graduate, and professional women in STEM, who serve as role models, mentors, and sources of information on college and careers. Internal outcomes evaluations have found that participants have a more positive attitude toward science, are more confident in themselves as science students, and are more aware of careers in STEM.

"It's a great honor to be recognized by MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance for our work on STEM," said Dr. Connie Chow, Executive Director of The Science Club for Girls. "It's so important that our nation's youth gain a solid understanding of and interest in science,

technology, engineering and math if we are going to raise a generation that can compete in the global marketplace and become engaged citizens. We are proud to be part of the national movement to make sure that girls have every opportunity, inside and outside of school, to learn more about these disciplines and develop a lifelong interest in them. I am so proud of the young women in our program and to see them develop as leaders and explorers. Receiving this award for our work with them is extremely gratifying.”

The *Lights On Afterschool* event included remarks by Dr. Chow, a video about the program and testimony by current program participants and alumnae about how The Science Club for Girls has affected their lives and choices.

Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. The event in Cambridge is one of more than 7,500 being held across the country at which children, parents, community leaders, educators and others come together to urge leaders to increase support for the afterschool programs that children and families need. The events also give youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs.

“Afterschool programs pick up where the school day leaves off,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “They provide children with unique opportunities to broaden their horizons and receive the support, experiences, and exposure they need to achieve success. The Afterschool Innovator Awards honor programs that have developed and are using promising practices to help children and youth excel.”

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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.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. In youth development, MetLife Foundation funds initiatives that promote mentoring and provide safe places and constructive activities for young people, particularly during out-of-school time. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.