



NEWS RELEASE  
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**At Congressional Ceremony, Afterschool Alliance  
Presents Champion Award to Lilburn Elementary School**

***Nation's Leading Afterschool Advocacy Organization Honors  
Afterschool Program for Contributions to Students and Community***

WASHINGTON, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today presented its Afterschool Champion Award to Georgia's Lilburn Elementary School at a Congressional Breakfast in Washington, D.C. The award, presented to Lilburn's Assistant Principal, Virginia Nall, recognizes the program's dedication to providing safe and enriching activities for students along with educational opportunities for their parents.

"We are proud to recognize Lilburn Elementary School for its commitment to improving student achievement and its efforts to improve the lives of students and their families through education," said Afterschool Alliance Interim Executive Director Jen Rinehart. "The success of Lilburn Elementary School afterschool programs comes from their academic focus and recognition that afterschool programs are crucial to the development of the whole community."

"We are honored to be recognized for our dedication not only to students but also to their parents, who strive to provide the best opportunities for their children," Nall said in accepting the award. "Our afterschool programs fill a critical need in our community. By keeping our students safe and expanding educational opportunities for students and their parents, our programs have made a tremendous difference in many lives."

Lilburn Elementary School's afterschool program provides 150 students, the majority of whom speak a language other than English at home and live below the poverty level, with tutoring sessions and enrichment activities in technology, music and creative problem solving. Additional programming is offered in partnership with Junior Achievement. The program also offers evening classes designed to enable parents, many of whom are newcomers to the United States, to play a greater role in their children's education. A parent leadership class helps participants understand the school system, local government, and other aspects of life in their new country. Parents can also take English and computer classes, receive literacy tutoring, and study for a High School Equivalency Diploma.

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Although the program has recently experienced funding cuts, Lilburn has been able to sustain its programs through grants from the Office of English Language Acquisition, the United Way and other donors. Still, like so many other afterschool programs around the country, Lilburn is able to serve fewer students than in the past because of budget shortfalls.

“We know that our afterschool programs have had an enormous impact on student achievement, and help our children overcome challenges related to poverty and language barriers,” said Lilburn Principal Jackie Beasley. “Unfortunately, we are still not able to provide programming for all of our students, but we continue to seek out new funding opportunities to expand this vital service.”

The Afterschool Champion Award was presented during the Afterschool Alliance’s annual *Breakfast of Champions*, part of its Afterschool for All Challenge on Capitol Hill. More than 500 afterschool providers and advocates participated in the *Breakfast*, joined by more than a dozen Members of Congress. In addition to Lilburn Elementary School, the Afterschool Alliance honored Tennessee’s Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority and the Shoshoni Lights On! afterschool program in Shoshoni, Wyoming.

After the *Breakfast of Champions*, participants met with lawmakers to highlight the value of afterschool programs in their communities, and to urge them to support full funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers initiative, the federal government’s chief funding stream for afterschool programs. The President has proposed allocating just \$991 million for the initiative in Fiscal Year 2006. If approved, the proposal would leave afterschool funding at less than half the level promised in the landmark *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, leaving millions of children without the afterschool care they need.

An Afterschool Alliance household survey, funded by the J.C. Penney Co., Inc., found that more than 14 million K-12 youth are responsible for taking care of themselves after school. Afterschool programs offer young people safe, enriching, fun and engaging places to go once the school day ends. Research shows that afterschool programs are a good investment. Youth who participate have been shown to perform better in school and to hold greater expectations for the future, while children who are unsupervised during the afternoons are at greater risk of becoming involved with crime, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy.

The event is sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. Information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

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