



NEWS RELEASE
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Farmington Hills Mayor Honored as an Afterschool Champion in Nation's Capital

***Parents, Educators, Students, Afterschool Leaders
Urge Congress to Increase Afterschool Funding***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today honored Farmington Hills Mayor Jerry M. Ellis, for his support for afterschool programs at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C. that featured performances by lead guitarist Mark Bryan of Hootie and the Blowfish and afterschool youth. Mayor Ellis is well known throughout Farmington Hills as a powerful advocate for youth and a champion of afterschool programs that help them succeed. He was one of just ten individuals from around the country honored at the “Breakfast” for supporting and working on behalf of the afterschool programs. The Michigan After-School Partnership nominated him for the honor.

Mayor Ellis has made afterschool one of his top three city priorities for the last several years and has been instrumental in helping establish five decentralized afterschool youth centers in Farmington Hills. Through the Mayor’s Youth Council, he has given a voice to the city’s youth, encouraging students to share their concerns with council members. He attends and helps put together youth fundraising activities that support afterschool, and all of the fees he collects from performing marriage ceremonies go directly to afterschool programs in Farmington Hills.

As a coach of youth baseball, soccer and basketball, Mayor Ellis became aware of the need for more athletic fields in the community for young people to have safe places to play. He spearheaded the campaign to build Founders Sports Park in Farmington Hills which is now home to six soccer fields, eight baseball/softball diamonds, an indoor ice arena, volleyball, basketball, bocce ball courts and a disc golf course. Mayor Ellis was a strong advocate for the most recent addition to Founders Sports Park – The Riley Skate Park, dedicated in June of 2009. It is the largest skate board park in the Midwest and is enjoyed by people of all ages in the greater Michigan area.

The “Breakfast of Champions” is part of the ninth annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, which brings together hundreds of parents, educators, children, program directors and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. It is being held this year in conjunction with Be the Change, the National AfterSchool Association’s annual convention. At these events, afterschool advocates are urging Congress to safeguard federal funding for these programs and reject

Administration proposals to cut funding by \$13 million in Fiscal Year 2011 and to allow non-afterschool programs to compete for federal afterschool dollars.

“This year, federal support for afterschool programs is in serious peril,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The Obama Administration is proposing making non-afterschool programs eligible for the already limited federal dollars available through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative, which is the principal federal funding stream for afterschool. It is more important than ever that advocates speak up and speak out to ensure that every child who needs afterschool has access to the programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.”

Other state champions honored at the *Afterschool for All Challenge* are: William Byars, State Director of the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice; David Davison, President and CEO of the American Savings Foundation in New Britain, Connecticut; Wendell Maddox, President and CEO of the United Way of Wyandotte County, Kansas; Thierry Malley, State Director of the Pennsylvania Area Council of Boys & Girls Clubs; Chuck Oberlie, Mayor of Michigan City, Indiana; Rhode Island State Representative Edwin Pacheco; Renee Rider, Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Child Care Services, New York State Office of Children and Family Services; Carla Sanger, President and CEO of LA’s BEST in Los Angeles, California; and Ronnie Steine, Councilmember-at-Large, Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee.

The 2010 “Breakfast of Champions” is sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, Bright House Networks, Quaker Chewy, Torani, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Open Society Institute, Peavey Electronics, NAMM, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, D.C. Children & Youth Investment Trust Corporation and Cable in the Classroom.

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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.