



NEWS RELEASE
May 13 - 14, 2008

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Parents, Students, Afterschool & Community Leaders Urge Congress to Increase Afterschool Funding

*Former Education Secretary Richard Riley, Food Network Star Tyler Florence,
Mayors from Across Nation Help Honor Congressional & Other Afterschool Champions*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Hundreds of parents, children, educators and advocates from around the country are in the nation’s Capital this week to encourage Congress to increase funding for afterschool programs and reject a White House proposal that would slash afterschool funding and transform the federal afterschool initiative into a risky voucher program. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance and the National League of Cities, the seventh annual *Afterschool for All Challenge* includes a “Breakfast of Champions” on Tuesday to honor afterschool champions in Congress, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and other city and state leaders, and innovators from California, Nebraska, New York and South Dakota.

Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Jack Reed (D-RI), as well as Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), Dale Kildee (D-MI), Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Ralph Regula (R-OH) are among the members of Congress who are scheduled to speak.

Other “Breakfast of Champions” speakers include: former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley; Food Network Star and Afterschool Alliance board member Tyler Florence; Providence Mayor and Afterschool Alliance board member David Cicilline; Clifford M. Johnson, Executive Director of the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families for the National League of Cities; and Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant.

After the “Breakfast of Champions,” students, parents and afterschool leaders will hold meetings with hundreds of members of Congress and aides to discuss the benefits offered by afterschool programs. They will urge Congress to increase support for quality afterschool programs and to reject the President’s proposal to cut \$281 million from the federal afterschool budget next year, which would result in 300,000 students losing access to afterschool programs. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative this year, and it is currently funded at just \$1.1 billion.

Three extraordinary young people have been chosen to discuss what afterschool programs mean to them and their families at this week’s events: Milwaukie, Oregon eighth grader Brandon Brown; Lakeland, Florida high school junior Jamia Gary; and Lake Washington, Washington seventh grader Jaida Morgan.

T-Mobile USA sponsored the trips for Brown and Morgan, and Bright House Networks sponsored the trip for Gary.

“Parents, children and communities rely on afterschool programs to keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “But federal funding isn’t keeping up with the demand for afterschool, and President Bush proposes to cut federal afterschool funding even further. We’re in our nation’s capital this week to honor afterschool champions. We want to thank Congress for increasing afterschool funding last year and remind lawmakers that the proposed cuts are short-sighted and counterproductive. All kids need the opportunities that afterschool programs provide. Bipartisan support in Congress defeated the last proposed cut to afterschool programs, and we are seeking bipartisan support again this year so we can counter the President’s proposal and bring quality afterschool programs to all children who need them.”

In addition to San Francisco’s Mayor Newsom, the state Afterschool Champions being honored are:

Maxine Quintana, Denver, **Colorado** Mayor’s Office for Education and Children
Savannah, **Georgia** Mayor Otis Johnson
Boise, **Idaho** Mayor David Bieter
Linda Robinson, **Kentucky** Department of Education
Kacy Conley, YMCA of Central **Maryland** in Baltimore
Grand Rapids, **Michigan** Mayor George Heartwell
St. Paul, **Minnesota** Mayor Christopher Coleman
Missouri State Representative Danie Moore
Omaha, **Nebraska** Mayor Mike Fahey
New Hampshire State Senator Kathleen Sgambati
New York City Commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community Development Jeanne Mullgrav
Charlotte, **North Carolina** City Council Member James Mitchell
Pennsylvania State Representative Jake Wheatley
Columbia, **South Carolina** Mayor Bob Coble
Morgantown, **West Virginia** Mayor Ron Justice

At the “Breakfast of Champion,” the Afterschool Alliance and MetLife Foundation are presenting the first-ever MetLife Afterschool Innovator Awards to organizations that have developed innovative afterschool practices. The awardees are profiled in *Afterschool Innovations in Brief*, a series of Issue Briefs developed by the Afterschool Alliance with funding from MetLife Foundation. They are: LA’s BEST in **California**; The After-School Corporation in **New York**; Lincoln Community Learning Centers in **Nebraska**; and The Native Youth Club in **South Dakota**.

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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.