



NEWS RELEASE
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Atlanta Afterschool Program Wins National Award for Improving Literacy Skills of Middle School Students

New American Pathways' Bright Futures Afterschool Program Received First-Ever Dollar General Afterschool Literacy Award

The Afterschool Alliance today presented the first Dollar General Afterschool Literacy Award to the Atlanta-based New American Pathways' Bright Futures Afterschool Program. The program was honored for its success in building the literacy skills of middle school children. The Afterschool Alliance presented the award, made possible by the generous support of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, at its 14th annual *Afterschool for All Challenge* in Washington, D.C.

Peter Epstein, Education and Youth Manager, and Mary Kathryn Tippett, Middle School Youth Coordinator of the Bright Futures Afterschool Program, and students Bishal Mager (eighth grade) and Paler Mar (sixth grade) accepted the award, including \$10,000, on behalf of the program.

"New American Pathways is honored to receive this award," said Paedia Mixon, Chief Executive Officer of the Bright Futures Afterschool Program. "We are proud of Bright Futures, which is a critical element of our comprehensive network of youth and early learning services. This year, we also received a generous challenge grant from The Zeist Foundation for our middle-school program. This award has doubled the impact as it helps us meet the required match."

"For more than 20 years, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has been committed to the enhancement of literacy and education in the communities we serve," said Dollar General's Director of Community Initiatives, Denine Torr. "We are excited to present New American Pathways with this award. We appreciate the life-changing impact their program is having on the students they serve."

The New American Pathways' Bright Futures Afterschool Program focuses on preparing refugee students to enter high school. It provides targeted one-on-one support to students who are at the highest risk of falling behind academically, and staff use a customized literacy curriculum designed for English as a Second Language learners. During the 2012-2013 school year, 100 percent of middle schoolers who regularly participated in the program increased at least one letter grade in English language arts and 97 percent were promoted to the next grade level on time.

New American Pathways' Bright Futures Afterschool Program staff also work with parents of refugee students to improve the parents' literacy skills, inform them about their children's progress in the program, and help them navigate the education system and build relationships with teachers and school administrators. The program provides a continuum of support for families in their program, including case managers who help parents understand the health care system and social services, career services, financial literacy classes and immigration services.

The [New American Pathways' Bright Futures Afterschool Program](#) is featured in an Issue Brief on ways afterschool programs benefit middle school students. The Afterschool Alliance's [Issue Brief series](#) examines the role of afterschool programs in addressing a variety of contemporary issues facing youth, schools and communities.

"The middle school years are a critical time for students," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "We are proud to work with the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to highlight the ways afterschool programs can improve middle school students' literacy and support their families. Afterschool programs play a crucial role in so many communities, keeping students safe, while providing educational opportunities, and helping working families thrive. New American Pathways' Bright Futures Afterschool Program is a perfect example."

The 14th annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, brought together hundreds of educators, parents, afterschool leaders and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress to discuss the ways afterschool programs benefit children, families and communities.

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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.

About Dollar General Literacy Foundation

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is proud to support initiatives that help others improve their lives through literacy and education as part of the company's mission of serving others for over 20 years. Since its inception in 1993, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has awarded more than \$98 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, helping more than 5.8 million individuals take their first steps toward literacy or continued education. For more information about the Dollar General Literacy Foundation and its grant programs, visit www.dgliteracy.com.