



NEWS RELEASE  
March 28, 2005

CONTACT: Christie Constantine  
202/371-1999

## **Has an Afterschool Program Changed Your Life?**

*Afterschool Alliance & Ad Council Announce New Youth Essay Contest,  
Encourage Students to Share Inspiring Stories about Afterschool Programs*

Washington, D.C. – As an extension of their national public service advertising (PSA) campaign, the Afterschool Alliance and The Advertising Council have launched an essay contest for students who discovered a new passion in life through an afterschool program. The *Something Way Better to Do: Finding Inspiration Afterschool* essay contest will award two \$1,500 savings bonds as its top prizes, and is open to students in grades five through 12.

“Afterschool programs provide safe, supervised environments where children thrive,” said Afterschool Alliance Interim Executive Director Jen Rinehart. “Through this contest, we hope to hear from students directly about the wide variety of fun, enriching afterschool activities that capture their imaginations.”

The contest is part of the Afterschool Alliance’s ongoing youth engagement campaign. Last month, winners were selected in the *Don’t Be An American Idle* contest, which challenged kids age nine to 17 to devise PSAs promoting afterschool programs. In the Spring of 2004, the Alliance joined The Advertising Council and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to launch a youth campaign called “Something Way Better to Do,” with television, print and internet PSAs that encourage kids to check out afterschool programs.

Research conducted for the Afterschool Alliance has found that more than 14 million kindergarten through 12th-graders take care of themselves after school, including almost four million middle school students in grades six to eight. Studies show that this is precisely the time of day when juvenile crime and drug and alcohol abuse by youth increase. “Afterschool programs provide an alternative for children who might otherwise experiment with risky behaviors after the school day ends,” added Rinehart.

more

## Add One

To enter the essay contest, students may submit an essay of 500 words or less that answers one of the following questions:

- Has an afterschool activity changed your life, and what you want to do when you grow up?
- Has a person you met through an afterschool program made a big difference in your life?
- Do you think your experiences in afterschool programs make you better off?
- What if you had never been in an afterschool program?

Official rules and entry forms are available at [www.afterschoolscene.com](http://www.afterschoolscene.com) and [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org). Entries are due June 30, 2005, and can be submitted online on either web site.

# # # #

*The Afterschool Alliance is 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 the year 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

*The Advertising Council is a private, non-profit organization with a rich history of marshalling volunteer talent from the advertising and media industries to deliver critical messages to the American public. Having produced literally thousands of PSA campaigns addressing the most pressing social issues of the day, the Ad Council has effected, and continues to effect, tremendous positive change by raising awareness, inspiring action and saving lives. To learn more about the Ad Council and its campaigns, visit [www.adcouncil.org](http://www.adcouncil.org).*

*The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, established in 1926 in Flint, Michigan, by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. More information is available at [www.mott.org](http://www.mott.org)*