



**NEWS RELEASE**  
**May 10, 2010**

**CONTACT: Gretchen Wright, 202/371-1999**  
**Chris Francis (YMCA), 715-362-9622**

**CEO of YMCA of the Northwoods to Testify to Congress;**

***Chris Francis to Discuss Funding for  
Afterschool Programs with Obey Appropriations Panel***

Washington, DC --- The Afterschool Alliance today announced that Chris Francis, CEO of the YMCA of the Northwoods in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, will join Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant in testifying this Wednesday, May 12, before a congressional panel about funding for afterschool programs. Francis has worked with the Afterschool Alliance for several years, serving as one of the organization's Afterschool Ambassadors. He will testify Wednesday afternoon before the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies. The subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee are both chaired by Rep. Dave Obey (D-WI).

"I'm looking forward to the opportunity to testify about the importance of afterschool programs," Francis said before leaving for Washington. "Funding for afterschool programs has always been precarious, and it shouldn't be. It's just too important to our kids and to the community. At the YMCA of the Northwoods, we partner closely with the School District of Rhinelander to make sure students get a constructive afterschool experience that's closely connected to what they're doing during the regular school day. But federal support for afterschool doesn't stretch nearly as far as it needs to, so the school district doesn't have funds for K-3 students. And across the nation, afterschool programs are facing challenging economic times. Congress can do something about it, and that's why I'm eager to tell our story."

"Chris Francis has been a real leader in the afterschool movement," said Grant, "even before coming to Rhinelander. He makes the case for afterschool from a position of experience and authority. I'm sure his testimony will have an impact."

The subcommittee is now considering an appropriations bill that would provide funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) initiative, the federal government's principal funding stream for afterschool programs. The School District of Rhinelander now receives two 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants, one to provide afterschool services for fourth and fifth graders, and another to provide afterschool services for children in grades six through eight. The district contracts with the YMCA to provide that afterschool programming. The school district also sought 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding for afterschool programs for younger children, but was not awarded a grant. The YMCA of the Northwoods provides services for that age group, but on a fee-for-service basis.

###

*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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*