NEWS RELEASE
May 17, 2011

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Dean Kamen, Founder of *FIRST*, Honored As Afterschool Champion for Helping Children Build Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Skills

WASHINGTON, DC – Dean Kamen, founder of the *FIRST*©, today received the Afterschool Alliance's national "Afterschool for All" Champion Award for his work advocating for improved teaching of science and technology and his efforts to help young people discover the excitement and rewards of science and technology through the *FIRST* programs. *FIRST* stands for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology." Founded in 1989, *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs that motivate young people to pursue education and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math, while building self-confidence, knowledge and life skills. *FIRST* targets children in kindergarten through twelfth grades, providing age-appropriate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) projects, including building motorized models and robots and participating in tournaments and competitions.

U.S. Senator Jean Shaheen (NH) today presented the Award at the Afterschool Alliance's Breakfast of Champions, part of the tenth annual *Afterschool for All Challenge* in Washington, DC. The theme for this year's *Challenge* is "Expanding STEM Afterschool."

"Dean is all about making engineering and science fun and cool," said Grant. "Through *FIRST* Robotics, kids learn that science isn't just about workrooms, textbooks or laboratories, it can also be about monster car racing! Through cooperation, teams, mentors and hard work, Dean is making science and technology hip, and getting students excited about them. He's a strong believer in hands-on engagement and giving youth the power to shape their own in inventions and thereby their own futures. Because of Dean's vision, *FIRST* is developing and inspiring our next generation of scientists, engineers and inventors. Afterschool programs across the county are proud *FIRST* participants and we hope that in the years to come, more children will have the opportunity to be a part of these incredible programs."

Through its mentor-based programs, *FIRST* provides an education and career path for young people science and technology. The programs also help children develop their self-confidence, as well as communications and leadership skills. A recent study found that FIRST participants are three times more likely than their peers to major in engineering at the college level, more than twice as likely to pursue a career in science and technology and more than twice as likely to volunteer in their communities.

"At *FIRST*, we are at the forefront of transforming our nation's culture," said Kamen. "We are creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology leaders. We are already making great headway, but we need more people to join the effort to engage children in these important fields if we are going to have a younger generation that is able to compete in the global economy and keep the United States a leader among nations."

Kamen holds more than 440 US and foreign patents, many of them for innovative medical devices that have expanded the frontiers of health care worldwide. In 1976, he founded his first medical device company, AutoSyringe, Inc. At age 30, he sold that company to Baxter International Corporation. Following the sale of AutoSyringe, Inc., he founded DEKA Research & Development Corporation to develop internally generated inventions as well as to provide research and development for major corporate clients. He is also the inventor of the groundbreaking Segway® Human Transporter.

Kamen has received many awards for his efforts. Notably, Kamen was awarded the National Medal of Technology in 2000. Presented by President Clinton, this award was in recognition for inventions that have advanced medical care worldwide, and for innovative and imaginative leadership in awakening America to the excitement of science and technology. Kamen was also awarded the Lemelson-MIT Prize in 2002, and was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in May 2005.

The 2011 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, NAMM, Open Society Foundations, Cable in the Classroom, National AfterSchool Association, Clever Crazes for Kids, and Arnold and Sandra Grant. Additional funding is provided by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Time Warner Cable, the Noyce Foundation and jcpenney.

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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.