



NEWS RELEASE
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Six Local Programs Win 2010 Afterschool Innovator Awards *Afterschool Alliance, MetLife Foundation recognize programs for innovation and excellence.*

MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance today announced the winners of the 2010 Afterschool Innovator Awards, recognizing afterschool programs that are taking innovative approaches to achieving success in a variety of areas with middle school students. Each winning program will receive \$5,000 to sustain its work.

“Middle school is a pivotal point in young people’s development,” said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “We are pleased to join the Afterschool Alliance in recognizing these six outstanding afterschool programs, all of which are addressing the needs of middle school students and putting them on the path to success.”

Every program honored as an Innovator will be highlighted in an [Issue Brief](#) that describes how afterschool programs can benefit middle school students. The Issue Briefs are part of a multi-year series developed by the Afterschool Alliance with funding from MetLife Foundation, examining critical issues facing youth, schools and communities, and the role that the programs play in addressing these issues. The briefs bring to life the benefits that afterschool programs provide, including opportunities for community involvement; leadership development; pathways to higher education and careers; health and wellness; and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning.

This year’s Afterschool Innovator Awards were presented to:

- The **Cypress Hills/East New York (CHENY) Beacon program** in Brooklyn, New York, for providing multiple benefits to middle school students, including service opportunities and leadership and social development;
- The **Junior ACE Program** in Sacramento, California, for providing pathways to higher education and careers for middle school students;
- The **Learning through an Expanded Arts Program (LeAp 22)** at the Jordon L. Mott School CIS 22 in the Bronx, New York, for providing a hands-on, arts-based approach to teaching the academic curriculum.
- The **SA Youth** in San Antonio, Texas, for teaching youth the value of a healthy lifestyle;
- The **Science Club for Girls and C.E.L.L.S. (Career Exploration, Leadership and Life Skills)** in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for increasing the science literacy and self-confidence of girls; and
- The **Bridge Project** in Denver, Colorado, for teaching middle school students about science and technology.

Representatives of MetLife and MetLife Foundation presented the organizations with their awards at special ceremonies that were part of *Lights On Afterschool* events held by the programs. *Lights On Afterschool* is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs.

Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, the eleventh annual *Lights On Afterschool* included more than 7,500 events across the country at which children, parents, community leaders, educators and others came together to urge leaders to increase support for the afterschool programs that children and families need. The events give youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs and send the message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs.

“Afterschool programs pick up where the school day leaves off,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “They provide children with unique opportunities to broaden their horizons and receive the support, experiences, and exposure they need to achieve success. The Afterschool Innovator Awards honor programs that have developed and are using promising practices to help children and youth excel.”

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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.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. In youth development, MetLife Foundation funds initiatives that promote mentoring and provide safe places and constructive activities for young people, particularly during out-of-school time. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.