



NEWS RELEASE
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**Washington, D.C., Afterschool Program
Wins National Award From MetLife Foundation**
Initiative is one of five nationwide recognized for innovation and excellence.

MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance today honored Higher Achievement, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, with an Afterschool Innovator Award. The award recognizes the program's success at providing multiple benefits for middle school students, particularly in the area of aligning afterschool with school-day learning, lessons and content. Ann Nicocelli, Vice President, Government and Industry Relations, MetLife, presented the award at the Warner Theatre during the *Going Places!* Gala, the signature fundraising event for Higher Achievement's DC Metro affiliate. The event was part of *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Higher Achievement also received \$10,000 to sustain its work.

"The lessons young people learn in middle school stay with them for a lifetime," said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "It's extremely important to take advantage of this unique time in young people's development to provide them with the tools they will need to be successful in high school, college and life. MetLife Foundation is pleased to partner with the Afterschool Alliance to recognize afterschool programs that are doing an outstanding job of teaching life lessons and skills and helping young people achieve their potential."

Higher Achievement is one of only five afterschool programs nationwide to be named a 2011 MetLife Foundation Afterschool Innovator. It was highlighted in an [Issue Brief](#) on how afterschool programs benefit middle school students – part of an Afterschool Alliance series that examines critical issues facing youth, schools and communities, and the role that the programs play in addressing these issues. Other award categories and Issue Brief topics this year include: providing middle school students with opportunities for service learning, addressing bullying in middle school and supporting literacy for middle school students.

Higher Achievement – which operates achievement centers in Washington, D.C.; Alexandria and Richmond, Va.; and Baltimore, Md. – focuses on closing the opportunity gap for middle school youth in at-risk communities, showering them with academic opportunities: academic mentors; an accelerated, hands-on curriculum aligned with the school day; university stays; academic contests; and top high school placement. Despite the downward academic trend prevalent during middle school, Higher Achievement scholars show exemplary gains: on average, a GPA increase of at least one point; graduating with a B average; improved school attendance; and attending a top high school.

"It's a great honor to be recognized by MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance for our work to close the opportunity gap for middle school youth," said Richard Tagle, CEO of Higher Achievement. "Every day, we see first-hand what an extraordinary difference afterschool

opportunities can make in a student's life. And recognition such as this reinforces that the students and families served by Higher Achievement are the real winners.”

Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* includes more than 7,500 events being held across the country on and around October 20, providing children, parents, community leaders, educators and others an opportunity to come together to urge Congress not to divert funds away from the afterschool programs that children and families need. Events will also 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 are a fundamental way to make sure that learning doesn't stop when the school day ends,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs utilize countless creative ways to help children expand their horizons and get the support they need for educational success. The MetLife Foundation Afterschool Innovator Awards honor programs that stand out in helping kids 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 to carry on MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide. Through programs focusing on empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities, MetLife Foundation increases access and opportunities for people of all ages. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has made more than \$500 million in grants and \$75 million in program-related investments. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.