



Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

For Immediate Release
April 21, 2022

Contact: [Lisa Lederer](#)
202/371-1997

Afterschool Alliance Names 2022 Class of Afterschool Ambassadors

Seventeen Afterschool Leaders Will Work in Their Communities and States to Advance Out-of-School-Time Opportunities

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance announced the selection of 17 afterschool leaders from around the country to serve as the 2022 class of Afterschool Ambassadors. Each will continue their work with local afterschool programs while serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, organizing public events, communicating with policy makers and community leaders, and in other ways increasing awareness and support for afterschool and summer learning programs. The 17 Ambassadors hail from 14 states and the District of Columbia: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina (2), Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, West Virginia (2).

“We could not be more thrilled to have such dedicated and talented advocates serve as Afterschool Ambassadors this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The pandemic has had a profound effect on children and youth, and the afterschool community is playing a vital role in helping everyone recover lost ground. That requires support of all kinds, and we need strong advocates who know their communities to lead the charge. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help give working families peace of mind. They offer hands-on learning opportunities to think critically and collaborate, homework help, mentors, science and technology, healthy snacks and meals, sports and fitness, arts programming, college and job prep, and much more – and students need all that more than ever.”

Among other initiatives, each of the Ambassadors will organize a local *Lights On Afterschool* event on or around October 20. The events will be among thousands organized by local afterschool program providers around the nation, marking the only nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs and the important role they play in the lives of children, families and communities. Launched in 2000, *Lights On Afterschool* has grown steadily over the years and, during the pandemic, afterschool programs continued to host live or virtual events as part of their commitment to serve families and children in their communities.

The 2022 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Homer, Alaska:** Jane Beck, Executive Director, Project GRAD Kenai Peninsula
- **Glendale, Arizona:** Manny Padia, Recreation Coordinator Senior, City of Glendale Public Facilities, Recreation, & Special Events Department
- **Leadville, Colorado:** Taylor Trelka, Out of School Time Director, Project Dream with the Lake County School District
- **Middletown, Connecticut:** Mackenzie Steadman, School Age and Youth Program Coordinator, Middlesex YMCA Kids' Korner Before and Afterschool Programs
- **District of Columbia:** Andrew Blickle, Community Engagement Manager, Life Pieces To Masterpieces
- **Sioux City, Iowa:** Jenna Andrews, Program Director, Beyond the Bell
- **Wichita, Kansas:** Jennifer Hartman, Program Manager, Wichita Public Schools STEALTH Afterschool
- **Belmont, Massachusetts:** Arthur Pearson, Chief Executive Officer, Thompson Island Outward Bound
- **Jackson, Mississippi:** Monique Ealey, Director of Education and Programs, Mississippi Children's Museum
- **Bloomfield, New Mexico:** Jarvis Mullahon, Programs and Projects Specialist, Navajo Nation Department of Dine Education
- **Charlotte, North Carolina:** Sil Ganzó, Executive Director, ourBRIDGE for KIDS
- **Ocracoke, North Carolina:** Nancy Leach, Program Director, Hyde 21st Century Community Learning Center, Hyde County Schools
- **Norman, Oklahoma:** Michael Hirsch: Executive Director, Loveworks Leadership
- **Medford, Oregon:** Crystal Ehlig, Director of the Campus Connection Afterschool program, Rogue Valley Family YMCA
- **Salt Lake City, Utah:** Angel Gomez, Community Program Manager, YouthCity - Fairpark
- **Charleston, West Virginia:** Michael Farmer, Chief Operations Officer, Step By Step WV
- **Fairmont, West Virginia:** Shannon Yost, Program Manager, Flipside Afterschool Program

The 2020 [America After 3PM](#) household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research before the pandemic, found that unmet demand for afterschool programs has reached an all-time high. For every child in an afterschool program in America, three more are waiting to get in. The study found significant inequities, with Black and Latinx children and those in low-income families disproportionately without the afterschool programs their parents want for them. Ninety-four percent of parents of afterschool students say they are satisfied with their child's program.

A large and powerful body of evidence demonstrates improvements in grades, school attendance, behavior and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that students in afterschool programs are more engaged in school and excited about learning and develop critical work and life skills such as problem solving, teamwork, and communications.

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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.