



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **YMCA of Greater Erie Wins National Afterschool Public Service Announcement Contest**

Two young boys are pondering what they will do after school when suddenly an American Indian pops up and begins to sing, “young man, there’s no need to feel down...” Then the two boys are escorted to the YMCA of Greater Erie by a police officer, an American Indian, a construction worker and a cowboy. These images are in a television Public Service Announcement (PSA) that won the *Don’t Be An American Idle* a national PSA contest sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance. Thirty-five students at the Downtown branch of the YMCA of Greater Erie created and produced the spot.

Aundria and Janelle Van Dyke, two of the students who appear in the video and helped create it, were recognized by Members of Congress this morning at the launch of the Congressional Afterschool Caucus on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

Aundria and Janelle were accompanied by YMCA Executive Director Tina Carter, YMCA Edison Site Director Melissa Fuller, who helped the students develop the script for the PSA, and Jeff Natalie, who loaned the students video recording and editing equipment and helped them produce the spot.

“The kids really did an amazing job creating and producing this spot,” said Carter. “They came up with the concept on their own and learned to operate camera and editing equipment. It just goes to show that with motivation and the right opportunities, kids can do anything they put their minds to.”

*Don’t Be An American Idle* contest judges included: Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman; television’s Judge Glenda Hatchett; Youth Speaks Executive Director James Kass; H2Ed Vice President Patricia Wang; and themusicedge.com’s Laura Johnson.

“All the entries we received were amazingly creative and clever,” said Afterschool Alliance Interim Executive Director Jen Rinehart. “Afterschool programs help kids channel their energy and creativity and achieve remarkable things. Our contest winners are more evidence of the great benefits of afterschool.”

Contest winners were selected in each three categories (print, radio, television) and in two age groups (nine to 12 and 13 to 17). Each winning program received a new digital camcorder. The YMCA of Greater Erie won in the category of Television Ages nine to 12.

Add One

Other winners were:

Television (13 – 17)

Fresno County Office of Education – Fresno, CA

Print (nine – 12)

Price Elementary School – Lancaster, PA

Print (13 – 17)

Goff Community School – Pawtucket, RI

Radio (9-12)

Alvord Unified Half-Time Program – Riverside, CA

Radio (13 – 17)

YWCA of Manchester – Manchester, NH

The winning PSAs can be viewed at [www.afterschoolschoolscene.com](http://www.afterschoolschoolscene.com).

In November 2000, The Afterschool Alliance joined with The Advertising Council and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to launch a highly successful series of PSA campaigns promoting public support for afterschool programs. Print and broadcast PSAs from the third phase of the campaign began running in mid-2004 – humorous spots contrasting the mischief bored children can get into when unoccupied in the afternoons with the constructive and fun activities in afterschool programs.

Research conducted for the Afterschool Alliance has found that more than 14 million kindergarten through 12th-graders take care of themselves after the school day ends, including almost 4 million middle school students in grades six to eight. Studies show that this is precisely the time of day when juvenile crime, drug and alcohol abuse and other risky behaviors by youth increase.

As part of its ongoing youth engagement campaign, the Afterschool Alliance is also sponsoring a youth essay contest, in which students ages 9 to 17 write essays describing why afterschool programs have provided them with “Something Way Better to Do.” Top Prizes of \$1,500 will be awarded to the winning essay for students in two age groups – grades 5-8 and grades 9-12. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

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*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)*