



NEWS RELEASE
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Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak Honored as an Afterschool Champion in Nation's Capital

*Parents, Educators, Students, Afterschool Leaders
Urge Congress to Increase Afterschool Funding, Help Expand Science, Technology,
Engineering and Math Programming*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today honored Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak for his support for afterschool programs at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C. featuring FIRST Robotics founder Dean Kamen. Mayor Rybak has spearheaded and supported numerous efforts to provide Minneapolis youth with structured out of school time activities, to support their education, increase civic engagement and help keep them safe after school. He was one of just nine state champions from around the country honored at the Breakfast for supporting and working on behalf of afterschool programs. Youth Community Connections: Minnesota’s Statewide Afterschool Alliance nominated him for the honor.

Mayor Rybak was honored as an Afterschool Champion for his work with:

- [The Minneapolis Promise](#), an innovative cluster of coordinated efforts that eliminate barriers to college for Minneapolis students. The Minneapolis Promise provides young people with high-quality summer jobs, privately-funded College and Career Centers in every public high school that help them plan a vision for their future, and financial assistance to attend college.
- The [Minneapolis Youth Congress](#), an organization of 55 teens in 8th through 12th grade from neighborhoods across Minneapolis who collaborate with elected officials to create and influence public policy that positively affect local youth.
- [Minneapolis’ Youth Violence Prevention initiative](#), a multi-year collaboration in 22 Minneapolis neighborhoods that treats youth violence as a public-health epidemic that requires a holistic, multi-faceted response. The four goals of the initiative’s [Blueprint for Action](#) are to connect every youth to a trusted adult, intervene at the first sign that youth are at risk of violence, restore youth who have gone down the wrong path, and unlearn the culture of violence in the community. Since 2006, the number of youth suspects in violent crime has declined 62%, and the number of youth arrested for violent crime has declined 52%.

“Mayor Rybak has been a tireless and true champion for the city’s youth,” said Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn, Executive Director of Youth Community Connections: Minnesota’s Statewide

Afterschool Alliance. “He knows that we must work on multiple fronts to help ensure a brighter future for young people and he has dedicated himself and the city to achieving that goal.”

“The real champions are the thousands of volunteers in our community of keep working in big and small ways to make sure we don’t stop caring about our youth once the school bell rings,” said Mayor Rybak.

The “Breakfast of Champions” is part of the tenth annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance, which brings together hundreds of parents, educators, children, program directors and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. Following the Breakfast, participants fanned out across Capitol Hill to meet with Members of Congress and talk to them about the importance of afterschool programs and expanding opportunities for kids to engage in STEM activities in those programs. This year is The Year of Science in Afterschool.

“Afterschool programs are lifeline for working families, they keep kids safe and – most important – inspire them to learn,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Today, we are proud to honor the state champions who have dedicated themselves to ensuring that children have access to these crucial programs. It’s no secret that our nation has some serious catching-up to do when it comes to math and the sciences. We know that afterschool programs are successful in getting children excited about the sciences. That excitement and interest has been shown to be a better predictor than good grades or test scores of who will pursue careers in the sciences. By offering children the opportunity to try robotics, CSI, rocket-building or constructing wind turbines, afterschool programs are developing future computer programmers, forensic scientists and engineers.”

Other state champions honored at the *Afterschool for All Challenge* are: Agnes Quiñones, Education Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education; Nancy Volpe, Consultant-Youth Programs/America’s Promise, CVS Consultant, Pathways to Pharmacy and President, Volpe Communications in Kansas; Kathleen Straus, Board Member, Michigan State Board of Education; Sherry Comer, Afterschool Services Director, Camdenton R-III Schools, Camdenton, Missouri; Vaughn L. McKoy, President, PSEG Foundation, New Jersey; Kyle Stewart, Executive Director, Alliance of New York State YMCAs, Inc.; Carmen M. Medina, Chief of the Division, Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of Teaching and Learning, Division of Student Services; Mark H. Emery, Administrator for After-School Programs, Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia.

The 2011 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, Peavey Electronics, 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, Noyce Foundation and jcpenny.

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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.