



NEWS RELEASE
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Alliance of New York State YMCAs Executive Director 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 Kyle Stewart, Executive Director of the Alliance of New York State YMCAs, for his support for afterschool programs at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C. featuring FIRST Robotics founder Dean Kamen. In addition to his position with the Alliance of New York State YMCAs, Stewart holds several leadership positions in the New York afterschool community, including the NYSAN Steering Committee and Policy Committee. 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. The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) nominated him for the honor.

Stewart has a demonstrated commitment to advancing not only the programmatic and organizational interests of the Ys, but also of all afterschool programs across the state. He is considered an expert on afterschool funding in New York and leads annual state advocacy efforts to preserve and expand state funding for afterschool programs. He was pivotal in the development of NYSAN’s policy agenda laying out the principles and recommendations for a high quality afterschool system.

“Kyle Stewart has worked tirelessly to not only increase public awareness of the importance of afterschool programs, but also public commitment to preserving and expanding afterschool opportunities for our youth,” said Sanjiv Rao, Director of the New York State Afterschool Network. “He is truly a champion for afterschool programs in New York and for all the children who need or benefit from them across the state.”

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 a 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; R.T. Rybak, Mayor of the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Sherry Comer, Afterschool Services Director, Camdenton R-III Schools, Camdenton, Missouri; Vaughn L. McKoy, President, PSEG Foundation, New Jersey; 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, the 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.