



**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Cincinnati Children's Hospital & Medical Center Researcher Honored as an Afterschool Champion in Nation's Capital**

*Parents, Educators, Students, Afterschool Leaders  
Urge Congress to Safeguard Afterschool Funding, Increase Afterschool Investments*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today honored Dr. Monica J. Mitchell, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Co-Director of INNOVATIONS at Cincinnati Children's Hospital & Medical Center, for her support for afterschool programs. Dr. Mitchell was named a State Afterschool Champion at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C. featuring actor Kevin Sorbo and Project Exploration co-founders Dr. Paul Sereno and Dr. Gabrielle Lyon. Dr. Mitchell conducts afterschool research and analysis of studies that help afterschool programs in Ohio and Kentucky obtain needed funding. She was one of just eight state champions from around the country honored at the Breakfast for supporting and working on behalf of afterschool programs. The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati nominated her for the honor.

Dr. Mitchell is the primary researcher and analyst for CincyAfterSchool, Cincinnati Community Learning Centers and several Strive Network affiliates. The Strive Network is a national Cradle to Career network that enables members to share expertise, identify and adapt programs that work and develop effective tools and resources that can be brought to bear on specific challenges. Youth development programs in Ohio and Kentucky regularly call upon Dr. Mitchell for her research and evaluation services. Her findings on the benefits of these programs have helped them to obtain the funding they need to sustain and increase afterschool services, particularly those targeting low-income youth.

“Dr. Monica Mitchell is widely recognized for her outstanding work as a researcher and the research she has done has been invaluable to the afterschool community,” said Rebecca Kelley, Group Vice President for the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati. “Her work has provided a solid evidence base for improving and for generating funding for afterschool. At a time when resources are scarce, being able to demonstrate the positive impact of afterschool is crucial to fundraising. Dr. Mitchell has provided the evidence we need to keep afterschool in Ohio and Kentucky improving and growing.”

The “Breakfast of Champions” is part of the eleventh 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 talk to Members of Congress about the importance of afterschool programs to children, families and communities.

“This year’s champions are working in areas such as research, policy development and advocacy in settings as diverse as universities, foundations, state government and other organizations to ensure that kids have somewhere safe, supervised, educational and inspiring to go after school,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “There’s an enormous body of research proving that afterschool programs are successful in keeping kids engaged in school, helping them learn and even encouraging them to explore possible careers. That’s why it’s more important than ever for us all to do whatever we can, in whatever forums are available to us, to be champions for afterschool.”

Other state champions honored at the *Afterschool for All Challenge* are: Jennifer Peck, Executive Director, Partnership for Children and Youth in California; Claudia Davant, Managing Partner of Adams St. Advocates; Dr. Elaine Johannes, Associate Professor at Kansas State University; Olivia Diaz, Assemblywoman, Nevada State Legislature; Lena Townsend, Executive Director, Robert Bowne Foundation in New York; Anne Lawrence, Program Officer, Robert Bowne Foundation; and Dr. Kathryn Hynes, Assistant Professor, Penn State University.

The 2012 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is generously sponsored by: United States Tennis Association, the NAMM Foundation, Peavey Electronics, Cable in the Classroom, National AfterSchool Association and Arnold and Sandra Grant. Additional funding is provided by Torani and the C.S. Mott Foundation.

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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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*