



Youth Afterschool Ambassador Program
A Project of the Afterschool Alliance

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**Student at International High School at Union Square One of Nine
in Country to Serve as a Youth Afterschool Ambassador for
2021/2022**

*Zhonghui Zheng Will Work to Raise Awareness About Importance and Value of
Afterschool Programs*

Washington, D.C. -- The Afterschool Alliance announced today that Zhonghui Zheng, a student at the Global Kids Afterschool Program and at International High School at Union Square, is serving in its 2021/2022 class of Youth Afterschool Ambassadors. Zheng is one of just nine students from across the country selected for the honor. He was chosen on the basis of his video submission in a competition held earlier this year.

The nine Youth Ambassadors promote the value of afterschool programs by sharing their experiences in these programs and their views about the role afterschool programs play in their communities. They write for the [Afterschool Snack](#), the Afterschool Alliance blog, about the importance of afterschool programs. The Youth Ambassadors will also connect with members of Congress and their aides as part of the Afterschool for All Challenge next spring.

“We are delighted that Zhonghui is part of this year’s class of Youth Afterschool Ambassadors,” said Jodi Grant, Afterschool Alliance Executive Director. “He has powerful personal experience that speaks to the importance of afterschool programs in his life and the lives of other youth. As the pandemic continues disrupting the lives of so many young people, their schools and communities, it is especially important that we continue to share the benefits these essential programs provide. Afterschool programs keep students safe, inspire them to learn, provide peace of mind to working parents, and also help children re-engage and recover during this difficult time. But too many young people don't have a program available to them. Zhonghui will do a terrific job spreading the word about the need for more support for afterschool programs.”

“I’m really excited to serve as a Youth Afterschool Ambassador,” Zhonghui Zheng said. “At the Global Kids Afterschool Program, I’ve learned about civic participation, made new friends from other schools, explored new neighborhoods in New York City and connected with mentors who have helped me grow as a leader. The pandemic has been very isolating, but this program has helped me stay engaged and connected to my community. I’m excited to share about my experiences as a Youth Afterschool Ambassador, so more students can find support and community in afterschool programs.”

The nine Youth Afterschool Ambassadors in this class come from California, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, New York, Illinois, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. They are:

- **Kyla Anderson**, from East St. Louis, Illinois’ Southern Illinois University Edwardsville East Saint Louis Charter High School’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers Afterschool Program, age 17
- **Brock Brewer**, from Kelso, Washington’s Youth And Family Link Afterschool Program, age 16
- **Kaiya Jones**, from Ellicott City, Maryland’s Howard County Library System Teen Advisory Board Afterschool Program, age 15
- **Juliana Montell**, from Gardiner, Maine’s Boys & Girls Clubs of Kennebec Valley Afterschool Program, age 16
- **Belen Perez**, from Alexandria, Virginia’s Community Lodgings Afterschool Program, age 14
- **Naomi Porter**, from Los Angeles, California’s Boys & Girls Club at LA Harbor EntreprenUership Afterschool Program , age 16
- **Noah Shaw**, from Murray, Utah’s Miller Family Boys & Girls Club Afterschool Program, age [AGE]
- **Ramaya Thomas**, from Dallas, Georgia’s VOXATL Afterschool Program, age 17
- **Zhonghui Zheng**, from New York, New York’s Global Kids Afterschool Program, age 17

The most recent [America After 3PM household survey](#) of more than 31,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, finds that for every child in an afterschool program in the United States, three more are waiting to get in. The families of 24.6 million children — more than ever before — are unable to access a program. Many report cost as a barrier. There are significant inequities, with Black and Latinx children unable to access the afterschool programs their parents want for them.

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

Global Kids thoughtfully partners with schools to offer an array of services and programs that advance school goals and fulfill our mission to develop active global citizens who are prepared to engage and succeed in our ever-changing world. During the school day, Global Kids is able to provide academic enrichment/classroom residencies in collaboration with classroom teachers; one to one and group counseling for students; advisory workshops; college exploration and support services; attendance outreach; parent engagement activities, service-learning programs, and more. During the out of school time/extended day, Global Kids provides its award-winning programs, which combine youth development, leadership development, global awareness, and civic engagement.