



## Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership

### News Release

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## Irmo's Scott Selected as One of Just 15 Afterschool Ambassadors in United States This Year

*Julius Scott Will Work Locally and Across the Country to Make Quality Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs Available to More Students and Families*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance today announced that it has selected Julius Scott, Coordinator of Community Services who supports multiple afterschool programs within School District Five of Lexington/Richland Counties, to serve as a 2025 Afterschool Ambassador – one of only 15 leaders in the country chosen for the honor this year. Afterschool Ambassadors continue working with local afterschool programs while serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, during which they engage with community leaders and policy makers to organize events and in other ways grow support for the afterschool and summer learning programs that students and families rely on.

“We are absolutely delighted that Julius Scott will serve as a 2025 Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance,” said Jodi Grant, Afterschool Alliance executive director. “This is going to be a pivotal year when we must continue the progress in making afterschool and summer learning programs available to more students, even as federal education spending is under scrutiny. We intend to continue spreading the word that afterschool programs are a wise, essential investment because they keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give parents peace of mind that their children are safe and supervised after the school day ends. Scott is exactly the kind of champion we need.”

“I am honored to serve as an Afterschool Alliance Ambassador, championing the transformative power of afterschool and summer learning programs this year,” said Scott. “This opportunity allows me to advocate for equitable access to high-quality enrichment experiences that bridge opportunity gaps, foster academic success, and nurture the social-emotional growth of students. Through this role, I will work alongside educators, policymakers, and community leaders to elevate the critical role of afterschool programs in shaping bright futures. By amplifying the voices of students and families, building cross-sector partnerships, and raising awareness of unmet needs, I aim to expand opportunities that empower youth, strengthen communities, and create pathways to lifelong success.”

Scott said that School District Five’s work as a district is unique in that it extends beyond school walls, reaching directly into the communities where students live, including under-resourced neighborhoods. Its approach is rooted in cross-sector collaboration, ensuring that students have access to afterschool and summer learning programs that offer academic support, mentorship, STEM activities, career readiness, social-emotional learning, and enrichment opportunities. By partnering with schools,

afterschool providers, and community partners, District Five is creating a seamless web of support that removes barriers, expands opportunities, and transforms the way students and families experience afterschool learning — making it more accessible, sustainable, and impactful.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance’s annual rally for afterschool. Most of the thousands of local *Lights On Afterschool* events will be on or around Thursday, October 23, 2025.

The 2025 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama, Gadsden:** Janie Browning, Gadsden City Schools
- **Alaska, Palmer:** Tyler Healy, Youth 360
- **Louisiana, Shreveport:** Victoria Morris, Volunteers of America LightHouse Program
- **Michigan, Detroit:** Curtis Blackwell, Sound Mind Sound Body Foundation
- **Minnesota, Minneapolis:** Clayton “Clyde” Quarles, Minneapolis Youth Congress
- **Nebraska, Omaha:** Nicole Everingham, Collective for Youth
- **New Hampshire, Stratham:** Melissa Goerbig, Big Brothers Big Sisters of New Hampshire
- **Nevada, Las Vegas:** Linda Johnson-McClinton, Enriching Explorations in Engineering
- **New York, Brooklyn:** Ghiles Jackson, After-School All-Stars
- **New York, Buffalo:** Talisa King, YWCA Western New York
- **South Carolina, Charleston:** Lauren Herterich, Kids on Point
- **South Carolina, Irmo:** Julius Scott, School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties
- **South Dakota, Rapid City:** Malachi Nelson, 21st Century CFS South Middle Club Hub
- **Virginia, Richmond:** Jeanine Turner, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond
- **Wisconsin, Rhinelander:** Abbie Cline, YMCA of the Northwoods

A [public opinion survey](#) released in February found that 85% of voters say they want their newly elected leaders to provide more funds for afterschool programs, including 92% of Democrats, 81% of Independents, 77% of Republicans, and 77% of people who voted for President Trump. The unmet need is great. Some 24.7 million U.S. children not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them, according to [a survey of nearly 1,500 parents](#) commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance in 2022. That is the highest number ever recorded. Unmet demand for afterschool programs is significantly higher among Latino and Black children (at 60% and 54% respectively) than among children overall (49%). Cost is the top barrier to enroll, cited by 57% of parents as a reason for not enrolling their child. Ninety percent of parents rate the quality of the program their child attends as excellent (51%) or very good (39%).

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

*The work of Community Support Services in Lexington/Richland School District 5 is rooted in an emerging cradle-to-career network dedicated to improving student outcomes by fostering cross-sector partnerships that extend beyond schools and into communities. Its work prioritizes students in under-resourced areas, ensuring they have access to high-quality afterschool programs, kindergarten readiness, career pathways, mentorship, and holistic support. By collaborating with educators, businesses, and community leaders, it strives to remove barriers, increase equity, and create opportunities that empower students and families for lifelong success.*