



## **Afterschool Ambassador Program: Legacy of Leadership**

### **News Release**

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### **Travis Stevens of Northumberland Named One of 16 Afterschool Ambassadors in United States This Year**

*Stevens Will Work to Make Quality Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs Available to  
More Students and Families, Locally and Nationwide*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance has selected Travis Stevens, Program Director at Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit Afterschool STEAMS, to serve as a 2026 Afterschool Ambassador – one of just 16 leaders in the entire nation chosen for the honor this year. Afterschool Ambassadors continue working with local afterschool programs while serving the one-year Afterschool Ambassador term during which they engage with policy makers and community leaders to organize events and in other ways grow support for the afterschool and summer learning programs that students and families rely on.

“The country urgently needs strong afterschool advocates, so we are thrilled that Travis Stevens will serve as an Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance this year. He will help spread the word that too many children and youth are without the afterschool programs that help them succeed in school and in life,” said Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance. “This is a pivotal year when we must continue building support for these essential programs, which 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. Stevens is exactly the kind of champion we need.”

“I am honored and energized to work with the Afterschool Alliance to increase awareness and support for afterschool and summer learning programs,” said Stevens. “Through our STEAMS Afterschool and Summer Programs in the Susquehanna Valley, I see every day how high-quality out-of-school time programming gives students opportunities to grow academically, build confidence, and explore new interests in safe and supportive environments. Afterschool and summer programs are uniquely positioned to help students connect with peers and caring mentors while discovering new passions and building skills for the future. I am proud to represent our community as a 2026 Afterschool Ambassador and to help amplify the importance of programs that strengthen students, families, and communities across Pennsylvania.”

Throughout the school year and summer months, STEAMS Afterschool and Summer Programs serve more than 200 students across five program sites in the Milton, Shamokin, and Mount Carmel Area School Districts. Students participate in daily homework help and academic enrichment, hands-on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and robotics activities, college and career readiness exploration, physical fitness and recreation, social growth opportunities, and access to healthy meals and snacks in a safe, structured environment. Programs are strengthened through dynamic community

partnerships with local universities, Penn State Extension, Box of Light Studios, Geisinger, WellSpan, KJ Music, and other regional organizations that bring specialized expertise and real-world learning experiences directly to students. Together, these programs and partners are creating spaces where young people can explore, build skills, and grow into confident learners beyond the school day.

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 22, 2026.

The 2026 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama, Tuscaloosa:** Lindsey Blevins, Tuscaloosa City Schools
- **Alaska, Fairbanks:** Lindsay Weaver, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
- **Arkansas, Hot Springs:** Amos Gray, High Impact Movement, Inc.
- **Arkansas, Texarkana:** Tina Jones, Four States Urban Development Project
- **DC, Washington:** Katrina Owens, DC SCORES
- **Florida, Miami:** Sean Prospect, South Florida After-School All-Stars, Inc.
- **Indiana, Indianapolis:** Christine (Chrissy) Balak, Central Indiana Educational Service Center, MSD of Pike Township Schools
- **Mississippi, Cleveland:** Tracy Henshaw Cameron, Delta Area Association for Improvement of Schools
- **Mississippi, Hattiesburg:** Jo Hawkins-Jones, Going Beyond Apprenticeship 21st CCLC Program
- **North Dakota, Grafton:** Lori Zahradka, North Valley Career and Technology Center
- **Oklahoma, Oklahoma City:** Les Thomas, Urban Bridge
- **Pennsylvania, Milton:** Travis Stevens, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, STEAMS Afterschool & Summer Programs
- **Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh:** Ana Kay Yaghoubian, Building for Success in School and Life, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania
- **Texas, Dallas:** Angelica Portillo, Dallas Afterschool
- **Virginia, Arlington:** Paula Fynboh, Aspire Afterschool Learning
- **West Virginia, Shinnston:** Michelle Frase, Buzz Learning Academy

A [2025 household survey](#) found that the parents of 29.6 million children want afterschool programs for their children – but less than 7 million kids are currently enrolled. Another 22.6 million children would attend an afterschool program if it were available. That means three in four kids whose parents want afterschool programs for them (77%)—including many in middle- as well as low-income families – are being left behind. Cost and accessibility are the barriers many families cannot overcome. It's no wonder that 89% of parents favor public funding for these programs. Ninety-five percent of parents with children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the program their child attends.

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, more 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 Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) is one of 29 intermediate units in Pennsylvania, providing innovative educational services and support to public and nonpublic schools across Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties. CSIU partners with school districts, educators, families, and community organizations to deliver high-quality programs in special education, professional development, early childhood education, technology services, and student enrichment. Through collaboration and forward-thinking solutions, CSIU works to strengthen schools, empower educators, and improve outcomes for students across the region.*