

The Opportunity

After-School All-Stars (ASAS) offers a nurturing environment where students thrive, explore, and grow. Students express themselves and feel heard in a safe space while exploring different interests, building confidence in their academic and social skills, and making new friends. From providing one-on-one homework assistance to prioritizing student mental wellness, afterschool programs like After-School All-Stars offer many benefits that equip students to excel in life.

In Practice

Afterschool programs are critical in supporting students' overall development while providing essential services to students and their families.

After-School All-Stars provides one-on-one homework assistance that helps students who struggle academically grasp difficult concepts, improve their grades, and build confidence in their academic abilities. By providing a supportive space for academic growth, the program fosters a positive attitude toward learning and bridges gaps for students who may not have access to additional academic support at home.

After-School All-Stars also places a strong emphasis on mental wellness and helps students articulate their feelings, cope with stress, and build resilience. Using a Life Skills book, we had a "no judgment" zone and policy, and we would go through the book every two days speaking about things happening in our lives, whether related to school or personal life. When students' mental wellness is prioritized, they are more likely to engage positively with their peers, perform better academically, and navigate the challenges of adolescence more effectively. Furthermore, After-School All-Stars promotes a sense of community and provides opportunities to engage in activities that cater to different interests, from sports and arts to technology and science, ensuring that every student can find something that excites and motivates them. Being part of a supportive community where students can make friends, explore new interests, and develop their talents helps them build self-esteem and social skills.

Lastly, the program helps working families. Getting home safely after school can be challenging for a student with working parents. Parents may have conflicting work schedules or limited access to reliable transportation. After-School All-Stars mitigates this issue by providing transportation, ensuring students can participate in the program and return home safely.

In summary, After-School All-Stars benefits students by providing academic and mental wellness support, and a variety of extracurricular activities in a safe, supportive, and enriching environment. By focusing on these critical areas, After-School All-Stars addresses students' immediate needs and sets the foundation for their long-term success and well-being. This program exemplifies how afterschool programs play a transformative role in the lives of young people, providing them with the tools and opportunities they need to flourish both in and out of school.



YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

Aurie-Anne Vixama

After-School All-Stars South Florida, Miami, FL

“Energetic and dedicated, I am a high school freshman with a fervent passion for community service and leadership. Committed to making a positive impact through advocacy, academic excellence, and fostering inclusive environments, I am driven by the belief that determination and kindness can overcome any challenge and create meaningful change. My experiences as a student leader have equipped me with the skills to inspire and mobilize others, while my academic achievements reflect my dedication to excellence. I am particularly passionate about advocating for inclusivity, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued within my community. Whether organizing community service projects, leading school initiatives, or excelling in my studies, I strive to be a positive influence and a catalyst for change. As I continue my high school journey, I am eager to leverage my skills and passion to make a lasting difference, demonstrating that even as a freshman, one can significantly impact the world around them.”



Outcomes

After-School All-Stars (ASAS) measures its impact through school-level academic data and national surveys. Key initiatives include Sports as a Hook, We Are Ready, Career Exploration Opportunities, and Life Service Action, focusing on academic and social-emotional development. A Chicago study (2012-2014) found ASAS students had 18% fewer absences and were 22% less likely to be suspended. National survey results (2015-2016) of 2,813 participants showed: 86% made friends more easily, 95% felt more confident, and 92% were more resilient. Sports as a Hook improved health knowledge, with 91% making healthier choices. We Are Ready enhanced study skills and aspirations, with 94% trying harder in classes. Career Exploration Opportunities increased job knowledge, with 96% expressing increased confidence in job acquisition. Life Service Action boosted community engagement, with 89% of participants feeling more capable of making a difference.

The Challenge

While 89% of Florida parents favor public funding for afterschool programs—and 80% of voters nationally want federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for afterschool programs—too many of Florida’s young people are missing out. Nearly 25 million children are not in an afterschool program but want to be, including nearly 1.5 million children in Florida. Greater investment in afterschool and summer programs is needed to make sure that all young people have the same opportunities as the young people in After-School All-Stars South Florida.

Aurie-Anne’s Tips

For supporting the academic success and wellness of students, and helping working parents:

- ▶ Facilitate transportation and provide one-on-one homework assistance to support students with working parents and ensure safe, productive environments.
- ▶ Prioritize mental health by offering sessions where students can express themselves and feel heard, enhancing overall well-being and academic success.

Reference

After-School All-Stars (2024). Electronic Media and URLs. Retrieved on May 24, 2024, from: <https://afterschoolallstars.org/national-outcomes/>