NEWS RELEASE
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Afterschool Alliance Names New Class of Youth Afterschool Ambassadors for 2023

Youth Ambassadors Are Raising Awareness About the Value and Impact of Afterschool Programs

Washington, D.C. -- The Afterschool Alliance announced the selection of seven students from across the country to serve in its 2023 class of Youth Afterschool Ambassadors. The students were chosen on the basis of their essay and video submissions in a competition held late last year.

The seven Youth Ambassadors promote the value and impact of afterschool programs by sharing their personal experiences in their programs and their views about the role afterschool programs play in their communities. The Youth Ambassadors will participate in the annual Afterschool Alliance Youth Voice Week, as well as connect with members of Congress and their aides as part of the annual Afterschool for All Challenge later this year. They also write for the Afterschool Snack, the Afterschool Alliance blog, about the importance of afterschool programs.

“We are thrilled about the remarkable students in the 2023 class of Youth Afterschool Ambassadors,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “They each have a powerful story to tell about the impact afterschool programs have had in their lives, and we are proud to give them a platform to share their experiences and advocate for afterschool. 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 sadly, too many young people don't have a program available to them. These students will do a
terrific job showing us all why we need to expand afterschool programs to reach more of their peers.”

The seven Youth Afterschool Ambassadors in this class come from Alabama, Delaware, California, Florida, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Washington. They are:

- **Trinity Ansley**, from San Diego, California’s Urban League Project Ready, age 17
- **Jamora Arroyo-Jefferson**, from Miami, Florida’s Breakthrough Miami, PAMM Teen Arts Council, Miami Waterkeeper Junior Ambassador Program, and The Children’s Trust of Miami-Dade Youth Advisory Committee, age 17
- **Spencer Harrison**, from Pryor, Oklahoma’s Tiger Pride Clubs, age 13
- **Madelyn Hinkleman**, from Summit, South Dakota’s South Dakota Afterschool Network, age 16
- **Katelyn Miller**, from Birmingham, Alabama’s Create 205 Lab, age 17
- **Avery Reisinger**, from Puyallup, Washington’s Kids Rank Afterschool Club, Summer Club, and Youth Advisory Board, age 16
- **Nekayla Stokes**, from New Castle, Delaware’s Black Student Union, Delaware Afterschool Network, and United Way of Delaware, age 16

The unmet demand for afterschool programs is huge, and programs today are struggling. A survey of parents released last summer found that some 24.7 million U.S. children not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them. An even more recent survey of 1,016 afterschool program providers representing 7,400 centers found that the majority of afterschool programs operating today have waiting lists of students they are unable to serve. Some 85% of providers are concerned about their ability to hire and/or retain staff, and more than half report that their costs have increased. Both surveys were conducted by Edge Research for the Afterschool Alliance.

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.*