



NEWS RELEASE  
October 22, 2009

CONTACT: Gretchen Wright  
202/371-1999

## **Minnesota Tops 'States on the Move to Afterschool for All' List, But Expert Says State Has More Work to Do**

*Afterschool Alliance Survey of Minnesota Households, Sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, Finds Marked Increase in Afterschool Enrollment Since 2004, But Also Vast Unmet Demand for Afterschool Programs*

Washington, DC – A significant increase in participation in afterschool programs by Minnesota youth over the last five years, along with reductions in the number of children in self care, has put the state atop the Afterschool Alliance's newly named "Six States on the Move to Afterschool for All" list. The list is based on data from the landmark *America After 3PM* study, conducted for the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. It is being released today in conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool*, a nationwide rally for afterschool, at a news conference at the State Office Building with local leaders and national experts.

*America After 3PM* found that 12 percent of Minnesota schoolchildren are enrolled in afterschool programs, up from 8 percent in 2004. "Minnesota should be proud that it is making such good progress, but the state still trails the national average of 15 percent of children in afterschool programs," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "There's more work to do. Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families. The majority of Minnesota parents who want their kids in afterschool programs aren't able to find them, usually because programs aren't available, they can't afford the fees, or transportation issues make it impossible. These are all barriers we must overcome."

Despite the significant increase in the number of Minnesota children attending afterschool programs over the last five years, today 32 percent of the state's schoolchildren are on their own in the afternoons, and another 14 percent are in the care of their brothers or sisters. In addition, the parents of 33 percent of children not already in afterschool say they would enroll their kids in a program if one were available.

Ninety-four percent of Minnesota parents say they are satisfied with the afterschool program their child attends. "We're proud that Minnesota is being named one of just six *States on the Move to Afterschool for All*," said Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn, executive director of Youth Community Connections, Minnesota's Afterschool Alliance. "But we still have a lot of work ahead. Too many children and youth who need afterschool programs don't have them, and are at-risk as a result. Especially during this recession, we need government at all levels, businesses

and the philanthropic community to step up and help meet the huge unmet need for afterschool programs in this state."

In key respects, the Minnesota results from the *America After 3PM* study reflect national findings:

- The number and percentage of children participating in afterschool programs in the nation has increased significantly in the last five years, with 8.4 million children (15 percent) now participating. That compares with 6.5 million children in 2004 (11 percent).
- But the number of children left alone after the school day ends also has risen, to 15.1 million children (26 percent of school-age children) in 2009. That is an increase of 800,000 children since 2004. Thirty percent of middle schoolers (3.7 million kids) are on their own, as are four percent of elementary school children (1.1 million children).
- The parents of 18.5 million children (38 percent) not currently participating in an afterschool program would enroll their children in a program if one were available to them, a significant increase from the 15.3 million (30 percent) seen in 2004.
- The vast majority of parents of children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the programs their children attend, and overall public support for afterschool programs is similarly strong. Nine in 10 parents (89 percent) are satisfied with the afterschool programs their children attend. Eight in 10 parents support public funding for afterschool programs.

In conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool* events across the nation, the JCPenney Afterschool Round-Up program will kick off in JCPenney stores throughout the U.S. From Oct. 16 to Oct. 25, customers will have the opportunity to "round-up" their JCPenney purchases to the nearest whole dollar and donate the difference to afterschool programs in their local communities that provide life-enriching programs for children in need. Last year, through "Round Up" and other initiatives, JCPenney contributed approximately \$140,000 in Minnesota to support local afterschool initiatives.

"With more than \$80 million contributed to afterschool programs over the past 10 years, JCPenney stands out among the nation's corporations for helping to frame and solve the afterschool issue and increasing access to afterschool programs that provide meaningful activities for children in need," Grant added.

The *America After 3PM* report and accompanying data are available online at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

Findings from *America After 3PM* are based on 29,754 parent/guardian responses to survey questions about after school child care arrangements during the 2008-2009 school year. RTi, a market research firm, conducted the survey and analyzed the data for the Afterschool Alliance. The entire survey was sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. RTi also conducted the 2004 *America After 3PM* household survey.

###

***The Afterschool Alliance** is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

***The JCPenney Afterschool Fund** is a charitable organization committed to providing children in need with access to life-enriching afterschool programs that inspire children to be smart, strong and socially responsible. To date, JCPenney and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund have contributed more than \$80 million to local afterschool programs in every JCPenney community through partnerships with the YMCA of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H and FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). For more information, visit [www.jcpennyafterschool.org](http://www.jcpennyafterschool.org).*