

Sounding a Voice for Pennsylvania Afterschool and Youth Development Programs



Afterschool Programs...Keep Kids Safe, Inspire Learning and Help Working Families.



Tools and Resources to Continue Your Advocacy Efforts

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This toolkit is available for download on the PSAYDN website at www.psaydn.org. Copies of the sample letters are provided in Word and Pdf formats for your convenience. Please check the website for additions to the toolkit and other helpful resources to assist with your advocacy efforts.

Part of PSAYDN's mission is to promote sustainable, high-quality, out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy.

What is advocacy?

- Speaking out on issues of concern to the public or specific audiences.
- Examples include testifying at a hearing, writing a letter to the editor and generally communicating with government officials.

Why should the Network engage in advocacy?

- Federal and state governments have a large impact on afterschool programs, ranging from funding (appropriations to specific state and federal programs) to program standards.
- Legislators and government officials respond to constituents
- PSAYDN members are an incredible source of information on out-of-school and youth development issues for government officials and the media.

What are some types of advocacy?

- Budget – Influencing how the state and federal governments appropriate funds for programs.
- Administrative – Influencing how the state and federal governments administer certain programs.
- Legislative – Influencing the drafting and passage of legislation at the state and federal levels of government.
- Electoral – Influencing candidates' and voters' opinions on issues of importance.
- Media – Influencing how the media outlets cover topics of interest.

How can Network members get involved?

- Respond to PSAYDN action alerts to write or meet with legislators and administrators on issues of importance.
- Write op-eds and letters to the editor to local newspapers on issues of importance.
- Engage local legislators – arrange site visits, meet in your legislator's district office, involve legislator in key events.
- Engage parents and staff to get involved in advocacy efforts.

What is lobbying?

- An attempt to directly or indirectly (asking another person or group to) influence public officials to take a specific action on a policy issue.
- Examples include asking legislators to increase an appropriation for an afterschool program and asking parents to write letters supporting or opposing legislation to local legislators.

Are there limits for nonprofit lobbying?

- Nonprofits cannot use government funds to lobby government officials.
- Nonprofits must adhere to the "section 501(h) expenditure test":
- Lobbying limits are 20% of the first \$500,000 of a tax-exempt organization's expenditures.
- For organizations with larger budgets, the limit increases on a sliding scale, to a maximum of \$1 million for lobbying.
- Limits apply to both direct and indirect lobbying.

Pennsylvania after 3 PM

- 26% of Pennsylvania's K-12 youth are responsible for taking care of themselves. These children spend an average of more than 6 hours per week unsupervised afterschool.
- 84% of parents in Pennsylvania are extremely or somewhat satisfied with the afterschool program their child attends.
- 26% of youth not in afterschool programs would be likely to participate if an afterschool program were available in the community.
- Just 8% of children in Pennsylvania working families are in afterschool programs, while 28% of children in Pennsylvania working families are "latchkey kids" with no adult supervision in the afternoon.

From a report published by the Afterschool Alliance, *America after 3 PM*, 2004.



The Value of Afterschool Programming



- Children and youth who regularly attend high-quality afterschool programs have better grades and conduct in school; more academic and enrichment opportunities; better peer relations and emotional adjustment and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and pregnancy. (U.S. Department of Education. *21st Century Community Learning Centers: Providing Quality Afterschool Learning Opportunities for America's Families*, September 2000)
- Fourth-graders in afterschool programs supported by Foundations, Inc. in the Philadelphia area, outperformed comparison students in reading, language arts and math. (L.S. Hamilton and S.P. Klein. *Achievement Test Score Gains Among Participants in the Foundations School-Age Enrichment Program*, 1998)
- Students who participate in extracurricular activities achieve better grades, have lower rates of truancy, attain higher levels of achievement in college and feel more attached to their schools, as documented by a seventeen-year study that followed 1,800 sixth-graders in 10 Michigan school districts through high school and college. (Michelle Galley. *Extra Benefits Tied to Extracurricular*. *Education Week*, October 18, 2000)
- Every \$1 invested in the "Quantum Opportunities" afterschool program produced \$3 worth of benefits to youth and the general public. This figure does not include the added savings from a six-fold drop in crime by boys in the program. (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. *America's After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime or Youth Enrichment and Achievement*, 2000)

The Afterschool Hours in America

- More than 14 million school-age children (25 percent) are on their own after school. Among them are more than 40,000 kindergarteners. (*America After 3 PM*, May 2004)
- The parents of more than 28 million school-age children work outside the home. (U.S. Department of Labor)
- Only 6.5 million K-12 children (11 percent) participate in afterschool programs. An additional 15 million would participate if a quality program was available in their community. (*America After 3 PM*, May 2004)
- The hours between 3 PM and 6 PM are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex. (*Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, 2002)
- Nine in ten Americans want all children and teens to have some type of organized activity or safe place to go after school. (Election Eve Poll, November 2004)
- More than half of voters (55 percent) think that there are not enough afterschool programs available for children in America today. (Afterschool Alliance Poll, September 2003)

Afterschool Programs Benefit Youth, Families & Communities

- **Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs** are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and they are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and engage in sexual activity. (YMCA of the USA, March 2001)
- Children in LA's BEST **improved their regular school-day attendance** and also reported higher aspirations regarding finishing school and going to college. Drop-out rates among LA's BEST students are 20 percent lower than the overall district drop-out rate. (UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, June 2000 and December 2005)
- Boys and girls in the Quantum Opportunities afterschool program were **half as likely to drop-out** of high school and two and one half times more likely to go on to further education after high school than their peers. (*Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, 2000)
- A Brandeis University study estimates that decreased worker productivity due to stress and absenteeism caused by issues related to afterschool care arrangements costs employers **\$496.00 to \$1,984.00 per employee**, per year, depending on the employee's annual salary. (Community, Families and Work Program at Brandeis University, 2004)
- Students (pre-K through 8th grade) in The After-School Corporation (TASC) supported afterschool programs **improved their math scores** and regular school-day attendance compared to non-participants. High school level afterschool participants passed more Regent exams and earned more high school credits than non-participants. (Policy Studies Associates, July 2004)
- Citizen Schools participants are much more likely to go on to high-quality high schools compared to matched non-participants (65 percent vs 26 percent). High exposure participants are also more **likely to be promoted on-time to tenth grade** (92 percent vs. 81 percent). This is critical, since earning promotion to tenth grade on-time is a key predictor of high school graduation. (Policy Studies Associates, December 2006)



Budget Advocacy Timelines

Federal Budget Timeline	
February	Advocacy Activity: Reaction to Budget The President delivers budget to Congress.
March-April	Advocacy Activity: Urge Budget Committee and Congress to Adopt Adequate Spending Plan-Denominator The Congress prepares budget resolutions.
May-September	Advocacy Activity: Urge Legislators and Key Committees to Adequately Fund Specific Programs The appropriation bills will be developed and considered by the House and Senate.
October 1	New Federal Fiscal Year Begins
October-December	Advocacy Activity: Urge President to Adequately Fund Key Programs The President develops budget.
State Budget Timeline	
February	Advocacy Activity: Reaction to Budget The Governor delivers executive budget to General Assembly.
February-March	House/Senate Appropriations Hearings on Budget
April-June	Advocacy Activity: Urge Adequate Funding for Key Programs The Budget is negotiated and passed by the General Assembly.
July 1	New State Fiscal Years Begin
July-December	Advocacy Activity: Develop Recommended Spending/Programs and Share with Key Executive Branch Officials. The Governor works on new executive budget.

Media Outreach Ideas and Tips

Afterschool advocates can generate local news coverage of the challenges afterschool programs face, particularly during the current wave of funding battles at the local, state and federal levels. Following are ideas, along with some how-to information, for getting out your message about afterschool. At a minimum, you will want to send a news release and/or a letter-to-the-editor about your visit. You will also find in this toolkit some other ways to generate media coverage.

This toolkit contains tips and sample materials for you to:

- Send a Letter to the Editor of Your Local Newspaper
- Pitch Yourself to a Local Radio Talk Show
- Write an Opinion Article for Your Local Newspaper
- Look for a Local Cable Television Interview Opportunity
- Talk with the Editorial Writer of Your Local Newspaper

Messages that Work

The Afterschool Alliance finds the following messages are most effective with media:

- Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.
- Research from the Afterschool Alliance shows that 14.3 million K-12 youth are unsupervised in the afternoons. In working families – those where both parents or a single parent hold a job – nearly one in three children are looking after themselves.
- Just 6.5 million children are in afterschool programs – but the parents of another 15.3 million children say their children would participate if an afterschool program were available.
- America needs more afterschool programs. The No Child Left Behind Act authorized slow, steady increases for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative – the principal federal funding stream for afterschool – authorizing \$2.5 billion for the current fiscal year. Those increases never materialized and the initiative is currently funded at less than \$1 billion - more than \$20 million in real cuts to the funding provided in 2002.
- To make matters worse, the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) has also been frozen for several years.
- Our children deserve safe, enriching activities after school. We need Congress to invest in afterschool programs.

Pennsylvania Data

- Pennsylvania is home to nearly 1.3 million school-age children and youth (5-18) who have working parents.
- 26%, or 570,548 of Pennsylvania's K-12 youth are responsible for taking care of themselves. These children spend an average of more than 6 hours per week unsupervised after school.

Write an Opinion Article for Your Local Newspaper

Do some research on your newspaper’s opinion page: Check every day for several days to see if they take local articles called op-eds, (short for OPposite the EDitorial page) or guest editorials. Some papers only use staff or syndicated columnists. If your paper does accept op-eds, call and ask for the opinion page editor’s office, and say you’re thinking about writing an op-ed on the funding challenges facing afterschool programs in the community and what it means to families. Then ask what the procedure is – word count, who to send it to and how, and any other guidelines the paper observes. Write it and submit it; following the paper’s instructions, and then call the next day to be sure it arrived.

Here are four tips for writing an op-ed piece:

- First, never exceed the word limit.
- Second, because it’s an opinion article, write with a point of view but without being shrill.
- Third, back up what you say with real facts, and tell real stories.
- Fourth, start with a lead paragraph that captures the reader’s attention, and gives a sense of where you’re headed. For example: “Every weekday afternoon in Pittsburgh, more than 9,000 students stay after the final bell – not as punishment, but as part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers’ afterschool program. The program helps them learn, keeps them safe, and relieves their parents of childcare worries. But with funding lagging so far behind community needs, many of our children have no safe, adult-supervised place to go in the afternoon.”

If you are not successful placing your op-ed piece in a local newspaper, look for a website (the school system, an ally, your own program) that will publish it.

Look for a Local Cable Television Interview Opportunity: Cable television varies from place to place, so there are no firm rules about what kinds of local interview opportunities may be available on your cable system. But many cable systems have a channel devoted to local government or a local school system. Look through the listings of your local cable system to see what’s possible in your community, then send a pitch letter (like the radio letter provided in the toolkit). Particularly for TV, offer to bring several children from your program.

Talk with the Editorial Writers of Your Local Newspaper: There’s nothing quite like having an editorial on your side to help generate support from policy makers. Editorial writers are often looking for topics, so if you think your newspaper’s general editorial disposition might favor full funding for afterschool, see if you can spark an editorial.

First, call the newspaper, ask for the editorial page, and ask who writes editorials on local education issues. Depending on the size of the paper, it could be the editorial page editor, a columnist or even a reporter. Ask to be connected with that person, and then request a meeting to talk about the funding challenges facing afterschool programs. If s/he agrees to meet, bring whatever fact sheets or other material you may have, as well as information on the impact of budget shortfalls – check the Afterschool Alliance’s website at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Be prepared to explain the threat to local programs, what inadequate funding would mean for children and families, and how many would likely be affected if the federal, state, or local government fails to increase afterschool funding next year. Remember, the writer will be thinking in terms of how he or she might write an editorial, so be sure to provide a local angle (that should be easy!) and specific facts that support your case.

Send a Letter to the Editor of Your Local Newspaper

Look at your newspaper's letters page. Scan the page itself, and the newspaper's website letters section, for instructions on word counts and where to send your letter. If you can't find instructions, count the number of words in a given day's letters. Also, see whether published letters all refer to stories or editorials the newspaper recently ran – some newspapers insist on it, some don't. Then write a letter that reflects what you've learned – length, tone, keyed to something already in the paper or not, etc. If you're responding to something in the paper, remember not to bury your own message by spending all your space refuting the other message.

Be sure your letter says that afterschool is the key to inspiring students to learn, keeping them safe, and helping working families – and that afterschool programs are facing funding shortfalls. Follow the newspaper's instructions on how to submit the letter, and be sure to include a phone number (not for publication), where the paper can call to confirm that it's actually from you.

You'll find a sample letter on the next page. We urge you to modify the content of the letter, so that if the newspaper asks if the letter is being submitted to other papers around the state and nation; you can honestly answer that the letter is unique. Newspapers are increasingly sensitive to this issue.

Sample Letter to the Editor

[Date]

[Letters to the Editor]

[Name of Newspaper]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip]

To the Editor:

Each weekday afternoon in America, after the final school bells ring, as many as 15 million children have no adult supervision for several hours. These latchkey children, as they've come to be called, are the children of working parents -- our neighbors, friends, and family. In Pennsylvania, nearly 1.3 million school-age children and youth (5-18) have working parents. These children spend an average of more than 6 hours per week unsupervised after school.

What these kids need is a safe environment where they can take part in constructive, educational activities. That's just exactly what afterschool programs offer, and over the last several years we've seen a huge growth in such programs around the country. Unfortunately, however, too many children who need afterschool still don't have access to it. And to make matters worse, many programs are being forced to cut services or hours - or even to close - because of budget shortfalls. A minority of Pennsylvania students benefit from afterschool programs while many youth in the state are unable to enroll because space is limited and funding is not keeping pace with demand. Unfortunately, program leaders report that they are serving a high-need population; are serving more children than expected; and are struggling to maintain funding.

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help them learn, and relieve their parents of worries about what their children are doing during the sometimes perilous afternoon hours. Our kids and our communities need these programs - and as afterschool programs face budget crunches and cutbacks, they need all of us to stand up for them.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Program]

[Your phone number, not for publication]

Pitch Yourself to a Local Radio Talk Show

First, scout local talk shows. Most medium-size or larger markets have a talk-news station, and that's probably where you'll have the best luck. Check listings for that and other stations carefully — they're often available on the web. Don't overlook public radio and college/university stations. See which programs are locally produced.

Then listen to each show, to get a sense of whether any of them would be useful shows to pursue.

Put together a three-paragraph *pitch letter* like the sample that follows. It should explain briefly (in less than one side of a piece of paper):

- Why afterschool is important?
- Why and how it is threatened?
- How funding shortages affect local children and their families?
- Why you are qualified to talk about it?

Address the letter to the show's producer (call the station for the name). Send the letter, then call to follow up the day after it arrives.

Sample Pitch Letter to Radio Talk Show

[Date]

[Name of Producer]

[Name of Show], [radio station name]

[Address]

Dear [Mr./Ms. Producer]:

As any working parent in [name of community] can tell you, the hours immediately following the regular school day are often a time for parents to worry about what their children are doing – whether they're safe and constructively engaged. Over the last two decades, the increasing number of afterschool programs has helped millions of families across the nation. But millions more are without the after school care they need as a result of severe funding shortages. A minority of Pennsylvania students benefit from afterschool programs while many youth in the state are unable to enroll because space is limited and funding is not keeping pace with demand. Unfortunately, program leaders report that they are serving a high-need population; are serving more children than expected; and are struggling to maintain funding.

As the director of the [name of program] in [name of community], I've seen first-hand what a difference afterschool makes in the lives of our kids, our families, and our communities. Afterschool programs are more than just babysitting. Quality afterschool and youth development programs give children the opportunity to enhance their learning, engage in sports and recreational activities, build social relationships and explore interests which may lead to careers. The programs are an integral part of preparing our youth for post-secondary education, productive employment and active citizenship.

I think the issue would be of interest to your listeners, many of whom would sign their kids up for afterschool programs if one were available to them. If you're interested in doing a segment or show on the subject, I'd be happy to join you, and to help identify a parent or student who has benefited from afterschool, as well as a teacher or school principal who could describe the vital role that afterschool programs play in reinforcing academic learning from the regular school day. I'll be in touch to follow up. Thanks very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[your name]

[your title]

[your phone number]

Organizing a Site Visit for a Policymaker

Inviting policymakers to visit your afterschool program is a powerful way to help them understand the benefits your program provides to the community.

Below are suggested steps, a timeline and a sample schedule for the event, as well as sample invitation and thank you letters. Be sure to identify dates during the next Congressional recess, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org to find Key Dates when your members of Congress will be back in your community.

Step 1: Find the home district address and phone number for your elected officials.

- For Congress: Visit the Afterschool Alliance website, www.afterschoolalliance.org, and look for the “Contact Congress” box on the left side of the homepage. Enter your zip code to access contact information for your lawmakers. (You can also visit www.senate.gov or www.house.gov to find this information.) Most Senators and some Representatives have more than one district office. Select the office closest to you. If you do not have access to the Internet, look in the blue government pages of your local phone book.
- For the Pennsylvania General Assembly visit www.legis.state.pa.us. You will be able to search for your State Senator or Representative by entering your zip code.

Step 2: Identify a few dates when you could host a visit to your program. Using the date that is most optimal for you, write an invitation letter based on the sample provided in this toolkit. Have the letter on hand when you call the district office.

- **For Congress:** Be sure to identify dates during the next Congressional recess.
- **For the Pennsylvania General Assembly:** Pennsylvania General Assembly members are often available to visit your programs throughout the year. State Senators and Representatives are generally in Harrisburg, Monday - Wednesday and in their districts on Thursdays and Fridays. So be mindful of this when scheduling.

Step 3: Call the district office. Tell the person who answers that you would like to schedule a visit to your afterschool program for the Senator or Representative. You may be connected with a legislative aide or a scheduler.

- **Try for the top.** Ask if the lawmaker can visit during the next Congressional or General Assembly recess. Provide options for dates and times if your first choice does not work. Be sure to mention that staff and parents will be on hand for the visit and offer to invite media as well. Point out how your program relates to the policy maker’s interests (literacy, improving academic achievement in public schools, keeping communities safe by decreasing juvenile crime, helping families, etc.). Offer to re-send your “Invite Letter” and more information about the program and who will be at the visit. Encourage the policy maker to bring staff members.
- **Be flexible.** If the lawmaker is not available, ask whether a senior staff person can visit instead. Even if the lawmaker agrees to come, keep in mind that elected officials’ schedules can change with little notice. Several days before the visit, call to confirm the event and be prepared to reschedule.
- **Mail or fax your personalized invitation letter** (see sample). Be sure to send along a program profile, brochure and background materials about your program.

Organizing a Site Visit for a Policymaker

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Step 4: Before the visit. Identify youth, parents, program staff, school officials and community partners who would be convincing spokespeople for your program. Ask them to be available for the visit and give them background material on the policymaker, so they will feel comfortable at the event. Share the basic schedule for the visit and clarify their roles. Make sure to invite key partners, supporters, your school's principal and even school board members. Send a media advisory to invite press and prepare a press release for the day of the event. Visit www.afterschoolalliance.org for tips and samples.

Step 5: The visit. On the day of the visit, have someone wait outside the building to greet and direct the visitors to the right location. Be sure to have program brochures or a program profile on hand. You may want to make copies of any articles, youth essays, parent letters, awards or other documents that demonstrate community support for your program. Be sure the policymaker gets to hear from the young people at your program. Let him/her ask questions of the students or facilitate a discussion to get their perspectives on afterschool and what they gain from the program. Other ideas: ask parents to share their perspectives; ask a principal to talk about the ways the program affects students; ask a police officer, youth counselor, pediatrician or health leader talk about the benefits to youth who attend it; invite community members to comment on how the program keeps kids out of trouble.

Sample Schedule

3:00 PM	Policymaker and staff arrive at the program and are greeted by the program director or other lead host.
3:05-3:15 PM	Lead the policymaker and staff on a tour. Let them see the youth activities.
3:15-3:30 PM	Afterschool snack time! Let the policymaker enjoy a snack and talk with the children about their favorite parts of the program. Ask the kids where they would be if they did not attend afterschool or what their friends outside the program do after school.
3:30-3:45 PM	After the snack, facilitate a discussion between parents and the policymaker. Ask the parents to explain how the afterschool program helps their families.
3:45-4:00 PM	Ask your invited guest (principal or superintendent, police officer, youth counselor, etc.) to talk about the benefits they see the program offering youth.
4:00 PM	Thank you and goodbye!

Planning Timeline

Time Prior to Visit	Task
1 Month	Invite policymaker
3 Weeks	Invite parents, community members, school official and youth
2 Weeks	Develop schedule for the day; identify roles
1 Week	Finalize program agenda
3 Days	Call policymaker's office to confirm visit
2 Days	Invite the media

Sample Invitation Letter to Send to Your Member of Congress/General Assembly Member

[Your Program Letterhead]

[Date]

The Honorable Ruth Smith
500 XXXXXXXX
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Senator Smith:

I would like to invite you and your staff to visit the [Name of Your Afterschool Program] during your next district working session. Our program provides 300 middle school children with safe, educational afterschool activities during the critical hours from 3 to 6 PM, when many parents are still working and juvenile crime rates triple. Students in our program are not only safe; they are doing better in school, and show more interest in learning.

We would like to take you on a short tour of our program on [date] at [time]. If that time is not convenient, we would be happy to work with you to find a time that is. I have also invited members of the local [Rotary Club] and several parents to attend. They are eager to talk with you about the importance of keeping afterschool programs open and making these programs available to more children.

I hope you will join us to see our program, and our students, in action. Afterschool and youth development programs play an important role in the healthy development of our children and youth and ultimately the success of our communities - they inspire students to learn, keep kids safe and help working families. The [name of your community] community relies on us.

A profile of the [Name of Your Afterschool Program] is enclosed for your reference. I will contact your office within the next two weeks to follow up. I look forward to seeing you on [date].

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Phone Number]

[E-mail Address]

Sample Thank You Letter to Send to Your Member of Congress/General Assembly Member

[Your Program Letterhead]

[Date]

The Honorable Ruth Smith
500 XXXXXXXX.
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Senator Smith:

Thank you for taking the time to tour our [name of your Afterschool Program] during your recent district working session. The youth, parents and program staff enjoyed meeting you tremendously, and were delighted to have the chance to share our activities with you.

I hope your visit helped reinforce how much our community values this program. As we discussed, and as I have witnessed first-hand, afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families.

I look forward to meeting with you again to further discuss the ways in which we can work together to ensure that afterschool programs stay open and are available to more children in our community and our state.

Thank you again for taking the time to visit!

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Phone Number]

[E-mail Address]

NOTE: If a Member of Congress, send to Washington, DC and a copy of this letter should also be sent to the district office.

It is also a good idea to thank staff members who joined the policymaker on the visit to help further your relationship with the office.

Take Action Success Story:

Pennsylvania Area Council of Boys & Girls Club's Annual Youth of the Year/Legislative Breakfast



Description

A dual-purpose activity to both recognize and award local "Youth of the Year" candidates, announce the selection of a "Pennsylvania Youth of the Year" and showcase those youth in such a way as to demonstrate to legislators and others the value of Boys & Girls Club programming as we attempt to garner state budget support for Boys & Girls Club programs.

Goal

To showcase those youth in such a way as to demonstrate to legislators and others the value of Boys & Girls Club programming as we attempt to garner state budget support for Boys & Girls Club programs.

Results

Over the past four years the statewide Boys & Girls Club movement and its programs have received recognition from the educational establishment of the state, removed administrative unwillingness to support club budgetary initiatives and have increased state funding to \$1.35 million over this period of time.

How it was done...

The Legislative Breakfast initiative has been a regular part of the state "Youth of the Year" program for the past four years with an ever increasing number of state legislators and administrative officials participating and/or attending the event. Invitations to the breakfast are sent out two months prior to the event with follow-up phone calls. Other personal contacts are made by the local Club executive staff and/or Board members to their local Representatives and Senators. Specific and influential legislators and Administrative officials are selected to serve as hosts of the event and participate as speakers and/or presenters at the event. In the past four years we have had the following people serve in various capacities at our breakfast: Senate and House Appropriation chairs; chairs of the House and Senate Education committees; the Secretary of Education; and the Lt. Governor.

Lessons Learned

- Develop and/or nurture existing relationships between local club staff, board of directors and local legislators – This builds a strong grassroots network that can be useful in critical times as legislators are pressed to cut state budgets in order to meet budgetary requirements. Strong local support will make a difference as to whether your budgetary request are either reduced or eliminated or are championed by your local legislators.
- Develop a strong relationship at the state level with Administration officials and staff – This will allow you the opportunity to demonstrate the value of your club and its programs and, possibly, reduce any opposition to your efforts by the Administration. It is better to be viewed as an active partner in their efforts rather than an additional program that may be replicating what they already do or want to do.
- Develop a strong and active role within the educational establishment of the state – Work with other non-Administration groups to find common ground and, thereby, present a unified non-competitive image to the Administration and the Legislature.

Take Action Success Story:

Pennsylvania Area Council of Boys & Girls Club's
Annual Youth of the Year/Legislative Breakfast



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- Develop a strong and working relationship, at the state-level, with Legislative staff – This will increase the access to Legislators for their participation and/or attendance at the Legislative Breakfast and encouraging them to champion the Club's cause.
- Encourage local Club "Youth of the Year" winners to offer their assistance to local Legislators in serving as Club tour guides for their constituents and as possible youth voices in any town meeting or panel discussions that the local Legislator may want to sponsor.
- Encourage local Legislators to publicly recognize their local "Youth of the Year" winners through Legislative Resolutions and other awards – This provides local Legislators with "feel good" opportunities within their local districts and further encourages them to become part of the local Club's family of supporters.

Where to Start?

So where do your advocacy efforts begin?

The best place to begin is with your local legislator. Find out which legislators or policymakers are in key leadership and/or committee positions. It would be most helpful to remain bi-partisan in order to get the work done.

Resources to help you begin your advocacy efforts:

- **Alliance for Justice:** Alliance for Justice is a national association of environmental, civil rights, mental health, women's, children's and consumer advocacy organizations. Since its inception in 1979, the Alliance has worked to advance the cause of justice for all Americans, strengthen the public interest community's ability to influence public policy, and foster the next generation of advocates.
www.afj.org
- **Congress.org:** Congress.org is a service of Capitol Advantage and Knowlegis, LLC; private, non-partisan companies that specialize in facilitating civic participation. www.congress.org
- **Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children:** Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children is a strong, effective and trusted voice to improve the health, education, and well-being of the Commonwealth's children.
www.papartnerships.org
- **The Afterschool Alliance:** The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of afterschool programs and advocating for quality, affordable programs for all children. It is supported by a group of public, private and nonprofit organizations that share the Alliance's vision of ensuring that all children have access to afterschool programs by 2010.
www.afterschoolalliance.org
- **The Pennsylvania General Assembly:** The Pennsylvania State Senate and House of Representatives.
www.legis.state.pa.us
- **The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN):** PSAYDN promotes sustainable, high-quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity-building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania's children, youth and families.
www.psaydn.org

About the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network

The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) promotes sustainable, high-quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity-building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania's children, youth and families. PSAYDN's mission is that all children and youth deserve access to high-quality out-of-school time programs that promote positive youth development and support the successful transition to adulthood.

PSAYDN is managed by the Center for Schools and Communities with leadership from the PSAYDN Steering Committee. The Steering Committee represents the organizational partners in the Network's leadership, and provides oversight for the Network work plan, and the appropriate use of fiscal and administrative resources to ensure effective implementation.

PSAYDN's Steering Committee partners include Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Center for Schools and Communities, Harrisburg Area YMCA, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Key, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, Philadelphia Safe and Sound, and Three Rivers Connect.

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For more information on afterschool or to join PSAYDN, please visit our website at www.psaydn.org.



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