



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

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### **Chicago's Kenny Riley Chosen to Be One of Just 18 'Afterschool Ambassadors' in the Nation This Year**

*Kenny Riley Will Work in Illinois to Raise Awareness About and  
Increase Access to Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs*

Washington, DC – The Afterschool Alliance announced today that Kenny Riley, Director of Out of School Time Programs at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning, has been selected to serve as an Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance in 2020-2021. He is one of just 18 leaders in the United States chosen for the honor this year. Afterschool Ambassadors continue their work at local afterschool programs while serving the one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, organizing public events, communicating with policy makers and community leaders, and in other ways increasing awareness and support for afterschool and summer learning programs.

“We are so pleased that Kenny Riley will serve as an Afterschool Ambassador this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “With the pandemic increasing the need for quality afterschool and summer learning programs so dramatically, we need strong advocates who have their fingers on the pulse of their communities. Kenny will do a terrific job mobilizing community and business leaders, parents, policy makers, educators and others to send the message that afterschool programs are vital to our recovery from Covid-19. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give families peace of mind that their children are safe, learning, and constructively engaged while parents are at work or looking for jobs.”

“I am excited and honored to work with the Afterschool Alliance to increase support for afterschool programs,” said Riley. “The programs are incredibly important for youth and families in Chicago and across Illinois. In typical times, afterschool programs help young people succeed in school and in life, and support working families throughout Illinois. These days, we need to help children with academic, social and emotional needs created by the pandemic and support families in their efforts to obtain or keep employment. I look forward to helping build support for the out-of-school-time opportunities all students need, now and in the coming year.”

Carole Robertson Center for Learning, the agency where Riley works, was founded in 1973 and serves 1,000 youth from birth through age 17. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, the Center began offering some remote learning enrichment in the spring. Since June 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Center has continued offering full-day in-person programming for youth between the ages of 5 and 17 to provide an enriching and safe environment.

Over the summer, youth engaged in socially distanced programming from fishing to kite-flying. During the fall, school-age programming transitioned to support Chicago Public Schools students with remote learning while still providing enriching hands-on activities such as woodworking, gardening and a virtual talent show. Programs for school-age students are currently taking place at their two centers on the west side of Chicago, (2929 W 19<sup>th</sup> St, and 3701 W Ogden Ave). After the pandemic, the Center plans to serve additional students again at KIPP Ascend elementary in North Lawndale and Saucedo Academy in Little Village, if Covid restrictions allow. Carole Robertson Center recognizes how crucial these school partnerships are to a child's learning success, along with many other school and community organization partnerships.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's annual rally for afterschool, which will include events on or around Thursday, October 28, 2021.

The 2020-2021 Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Delaware:** Ray Taylor, 4H After-school Program, Newark;
- **Florida:** Nicole Carter, City of Hallandale Beach-Hepburn Center Afterschool Tutorial Enrichment Program, Hallandale Beach;
- **Florida:** Kwamara Thompson, Palm Beach County Boys & Girls Clubs, Palm Beach (and Classroom, Inc., New York, NY);
- **Georgia:** Tiffany Collie-Bailey, Girls Inc. of Greater Atlanta, Marietta;
- **Georgia:** Dr. Janice Flowers, Bibb County School District, Macon;
- **Illinois:** Kenny Riley, Carole Robertson Center for Learning, Chicago;
- **Illinois:** Teresa Dothard-Campbell, Lights ON for Learning – Glenview Middle School, East Moline;
- **Maine:** Barrett Takesian, Portland Community Squash, Portland;
- **New Jersey:** Darnell A. Scott, The Jointure, Rariton and Branchburg;
- **New York:** Angela Todriff Mundy, Family YMCA of the Glens Falls Area, Glens Falls;
- **New York:** Stephanie Graf, Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County, Watertown;
- **North Carolina:** Emily Neff, WAMY Community Action, Inc. / Avery County Afterschool Program, Boone;
- **Ohio:** Debbie Frison, 21st Century Community Learning Center Glenwood/Rosa Parks Elementary, Toledo;
- **Oregon:** Amber Lomascola, Expanding Horizon Youth Center, Myrtle Creek;
- **Pennsylvania:** Chuck Inverso, Neshaminy Kids Club, Langhorne;
- **South Carolina:** Ray C. Funnye, The Village Group, Georgetown;
- **Wyoming:** Shannon Christian, Worland Youth Learning Center, Worland;
- **Wyoming:** Tiffany L Wutzke, Youth Clubs of Park County, Cody.

The [America After 3PM](#) household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and released this month, finds that unmet demand for afterschool programs has reached an all-time high. For every child in an afterschool program in America today, three more are waiting to get in. The study finds significant inequities, with Black and Latinx children

disproportionately without afterschool opportunities. Ninety-four percent of parents of afterschool students say they are satisfied with their child's program.

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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

*The Carole Robertson Center for Learning is a private non-profit organization serving more than 1000 children and their families on the west side of Chicago. Programs reach children at every stage of development — from birth to age 17 — and are bilingual in English and Spanish. Children with special needs are welcome in all programs. Current programs include center-based and home-based early childhood programs for ages birth through five years, full-day school age programming for children through age 14, summer camp for youth 5-17 years, and extensive support services for all families.*