

— THE TOP OF THE CLASS: —

Afterschool's NEXT GENERATION

Emerging Professionals in the Afterschool Field

In selecting the **2014 AFTERSCHOOL'S NEXT GENERATION**, the National AfterSchool Association sought to highlight emerging professionals who are active in the afterschool community—who possess **PASSION, CREATIVITY, AND A COMMITMENT TO YOUTH**; who embrace professional development; who embody the NAA core competencies. NAA state affiliate leaders worked with their local programs to identify individuals for this recognition and honor. We're pleased to present this inaugural list of next generation performers. We hope you share in the excitement about these leaders and how their contributions are shaping the next generation of the afterschool field.



ALLI LIDIE

**New York State
Afterschool Network,**
New York, New York

Nominated by
Lucy Friedman and
Jennifer Curry

What makes Alli Lidie outstanding?

In partnership with myriad OST partners, Alli has transformed OST communications in New York state. She developed a widely read newsletter, among the top ways information is shared statewide. She created new communications initiatives, such as advanced social media use to share information about professional development and funding opportunities. She's organized high-level meetings of policymakers, including an NLC-sponsored summit, resulting in increased OST and expanded learning awareness throughout the state. Everything with her name on it is clear, relevant, and high-quality.

What path did Alli take to enter the afterschool field?

Alli's past is part of her strength. Prior to this role, Alli worked at the Dallas AfterSchool Network, where she supported quality and capacity-building initiatives. She showed clear dedication to the field when she moved, as she sought a position with NYSAN to continue making contributions to the OST community.

What habits influence Alli's success?

Alli has mastered presenting information in a clear, concise manner—a benefit to busy afterschool providers, policymakers, and other audiences. She brings a calm presence to her work, even when coordinating a steering committee meeting of high-level partners or a large-scale conference.

What makes Alli stand out?

Alli has made her mark in New York and on the SANs network nationally. She is a pleasure to work with, and we have no doubt many of NYSAN's successes would not be achieved if not for her hard work.

I am the policy and communications coordinator at NYSAN, which has a staff of two. I manage communications, and focus on our quality and policy work. On the quality side, last year, I facilitated a work group, and turned recommendations into our School-Community Partnerships Guidebook. I lead NYSAN Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool trainings throughout the state and via webinar. I've led development of new tools to make the QSA easier to implement. On the policy side, this year, I assisted in organizing two state summits focusing on the importance of expanded learning opportunities throughout the state, and to engage state and local leaders in the issue. I also submitted recommendations for updates to the School-Age Child Care regulations, based on field feedback.

What makes Nina Agrawal outstanding?

Nina is a true leader in our field. She is both a keen listener and worker bee, focusing her attention on the areas in which the Every Hour Counts partners need her support, as well as a visionary who exercises leadership often. She has contributed to numerous publications on building citywide OST systems and supporting high-quality STEM programming. Nina has also led a number of national events that have yielded stronger OST systems across the country. Her advice is sought by seasoned OST stakeholders from organizations such as TASC, PASA, Boston AfterSchool and Beyond, and the Partnership for Children and Youth.

What path did Nina take to enter the afterschool field?

Nina started her career in journalism, writing about international policy issues. She translated her interest in policy to an issue closer to home when she joined Every Hour Counts.

What habits influence Nina's success?

Nina is very adept at posing suggestions to her senior peers in a way that pushes progress without being forceful. Nina is also a skilled writer and communicator, which is critical to Every Hour Counts' work given their national scope and the need to work virtually.

What makes Nina stand out?

Nina is highly intelligent and shows professional maturity far beyond her years. During her short career, she has had a tremendous impact on the national OST movement.

Nina Agrawal recently left Every Hour Counts to pursue graduate studies in journalism and international affairs at Columbia University.



NINA AGRAWAL

Every Hour Counts,
New York, New York

Nominated by
Lucy Friedman and
Jennifer Curry



Every Hour Counts is a coalition of citywide organizations that increase access to quality learning opportunities through expanded-learning systems. I have led a national communications strategy to build a community of practice for building expanded-learning systems. I have also helped lead strategic initiatives for Every Hour Counts, including federal policy advocacy, national demonstrations around informal STEM education and digital learning, and technical assistance. Most recently, I planned and implemented a national peer-learning institute for teams from twenty-five cities across the country.





CANDICE L. THOMPSON

**Child Care
Resource Network,**
Buffalo, New York

*Nominated by
Carla A. Murphy*

What makes Candice L. Thompson outstanding?

Candice is a highly skilled professional who exemplifies excellence in her school age presentations. She's proficient in the field and a valuable resource to school age child care (SACC) programs in New York. She builds several presentations around Common Core Standards, Project-Based Learning, Family Engagement, and Positive Youth Development. As a school age expert, she delivers educational presentations with passion and conviction as she shares information during classes, trainings, workshops, panel discussions, and conferences.

What path did Candice take to enter the afterschool field?

Candice started working with SACC programs as a college student, volunteering. She attended graduate school for education, and completed her master's degree in educational psychology because she was interested in looking at external factors affecting educational attainment in academic achievement. Her effect on others is important to Candice and shows in every facet of her research, planning and presenting. She's worked as a school age program monitor, evaluator, advisor, and tutor. Her skills have shaped her to be a dynamic facilitator and trainer as an SACC education specialist.

What habits influence Candice's success?

Candice thrives on engaging in professional development opportunities, helping to strengthen her skill and increase her level of expertise. She conducts research to stay on the cutting edge of providing high-quality programming for school age children. Her welcoming, encouraging personality opens her to making strong connections and forming partnerships throughout the community.

What makes Candice stand out?

Candice has found her professional niche in the SACC field. Her experiences have allowed her to gain a greater understanding of what goes into creating a quality SACC environment. She's taught hundreds of local school age providers to consider quality when looking at afterschool program space, activities, furnishings, staff development, and structure. Her dedicated service helps other SACC professionals improve their program quality by using the SACC environmental rating scale. She excels in every area her work and has gained the respect of her peers, allowing her to have a great effect on the school age community, locally and regionally.

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In my position, I instruct, advise, evaluate, and mentor adults who serve school age children in afterschool programs, day care centers, and home-based programs. What I find most rewarding is my ability to effect change by supporting adults working directly with children and youth. I am able to impact adults' thinking and skills, encourage self-reflection, and ultimately influence child and youth development. I take my position seriously, as my work affects their work, which will in turn have a lasting affect on an entire generation.

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What makes Joe Loye outstanding?

Joe has the most positive attitude towards children and adults I have ever witnessed. He engages children of all ages in real conversation and actively listens to them when they respond to him. He plans engaging activities that reflect the children in his group, and draws out excitement from children who may have been skeptical beforehand. Joe allows the children to see his excitement in their success and in the activities they do together. If there is music, he dances; in all activities with children, he just “does.” Children and their parents are drawn into a relationship with him by his genuineness and enthusiasm.

What path did Joe take to enter the afterschool field?

Joe worked in Minneapolis Parks and Recreation while attending school to get his elementary education degree. After graduation, Joe came to Discovery Club to work as a group leader in our Before & After School program.

What habits influence Joe’s success?

Joe is an incredibly organized worker; when I planned a staff meeting in December and asked my staff to plan as a team with a group theme for January, I discovered he already had his themes picked through May! His lesson plans are very thorough and well mapped out. He communicates often and clearly with the parents of his children.

What makes Joe stand out?

Joe was asked to step into a leadership role this year and sub for me (his site manager). He not only filled in seamlessly, he demonstrated how I could better organize my workload. He led a schoolwide food drive, partnering with the newly formed student council of J.J. Hill and their teacher-advisors and the parent/teacher collaborative. There is not a job in our organization that I would not entrust to Joe; if he doesn’t know how it is done, he seeks out how to do it well, and perhaps better than it has been done before.



**JOE
LOYE**

**Discovery Club, St.
Paul Public Schools,
St. Paul, Minnesota**

Nominated by
Melissa Hanson



I am very honored to be receiving this award. It’s because of the wonderful staff, families, and kids of Discovery Club that I am able to continue to do the work that I do. My favorite thing about our program is the excitement and high energy that every child brings each day.





NICOLE EWERT

School of Engineering and Arts Adventure Club, Robbinsdale Area Schools Program, Golden Valley, Minnesota

Nominated by
Melissa Hanson

What makes Nicole Ewert outstanding?

Nicole engages children with creative curriculum ideas. She incorporates children's interests into learning opportunities through planned projects and enrichment classes. You often find her participating with children while they explore through play and hands-on learning. Nicole's energetic ways and joyful spirit are uplifting to everyone. She has developed strong, trusting relationships with the families she serves, her co-workers, and building staff. Her communication style is open and approachable.

Nicole is eager to continuously learn new things that will improve her leadership skills. She seeks professional developmental opportunities through District 281, MnSACA, and other organizations. Some of her strong attributes are organizational skills, dependability, and being a team player. Nicole is an emerging leader who takes her job seriously to ensure the children at Adventure Club have a fun, safe, learning environment.

What path did Nicole take to enter the afterschool field?

Nicole always knew she wanted to work with people. She worked in various places to find where her passion lied. Nicole worked at an assisted living home with the elderly, a group home with adults with disabilities, and at an at-risk youth group home where she mentored youth in various ways. She worked at Adventure Club during the summer her last two years of college, and quickly discovered she wanted to work with school age care after graduation. Her first choice was to continue her work with Adventure Club. Nicole has been the assistant supervisor at School of Engineering and Arts Adventure Club the past two years.

What habits influence Nicole's success?

Nicole has a strong work ethic. She works until the job is done, even if that means staying after her shift is done. She sets professional goals and works hard to accomplish them. She is very respectful and has open communication with others.

What makes Nicole stand out?

Nicole goes above and beyond her job duties. She is a go-getter. She collaborates with other assistant supervisors and is seen as a leader.

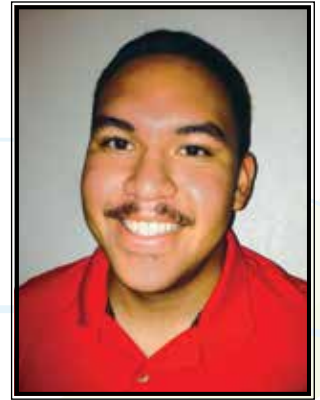
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I am the assistant site supervisor in the Robbinsdale Area School District's before and after school program, Adventure Club. I am positioned at the School of Engineering and Arts Adventure Club during the school year, where I work with K-5 students. During summer, I am the assistant site supervisor in the 6-8-grade program. My supervisor and I started the School of Engineering and Arts Adventure Club two years ago, when the school opened. This past year, we went through the accreditation process and are now an accredited site! I love being a part of this growing site.

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What makes Adrian Izaguirre outstanding?

Adrian is a University of North Texas undergraduate student, pursuing a career in Radio, Television, and Film, with minors in Social Science and Spanish. Although he's a busy full-time student, he chooses to work in afterschool. In the afterschool Film Club, Adrian teaches students about different aspects film analysis, including storyline and character development. He leads sports activities. His daily lessons include healthy exercise habits, teamwork, communication, and sportsmanship. He mediates and resolves conflicts, and reports to his supervisor on behavior issues. His work exemplifies the importance of the frontline worker's role in afterschool. He takes his role seriously and provides safe, inclusive learning environments. He incorporates his career passion, sharing what he learns in college with his afterschool students. His athletic program helps young people learn how to deal with success and failure.



ADRIAN IZAGUIRRE

**Cooperative for After
School Enrichment
(CASE), Hedrick
Elementary School,
Lewisville, Texas**

What path did Adrian take to enter the afterschool field?

Adrian wanted to work in an area he knows best. He's been in afterschool programs since elementary school. In his junior and senior year, he participated in the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment Ambassador Program. For two years, he was chosen as a CASE Ambassador for the After-School for All Challenge in Washington, D.C., participated in the youth conference, and was chosen his senior year to speak at the After-School Alliance Breakfast of Champions. In 2011, he received the Texas ACE Student of the Year award for his CASE Ambassador work and involvement in many of the other activities offered.

What habits influence Adrian's success?

Adrian is willing to try new things and take risks. As an employee at CASE, I've seen him in his high school afterschool program. I observed him on many occasions stepping in to take the lead on an activity. Through his desire to try new things and learn, he opens himself to greater success every day.

Nominated by
Mary Doyle Glover

What makes Adrian stand out?

Adrian is a friend to anyone he meets. He doesn't hesitate to greet and welcome you, whether you're an adult or young student. What stands out most is his ability to lead by example, share leadership, and encourage others to try new things. This is the key to his success as a teacher and makes him stand out amongst his peers. He's a leader who can work with a team that will not only follow his directions, but collaborate and bring their own ideas to the table.



One of the things I am most proud of is to be a decorated and recognized alum of these after school programs, and being able to turn around and give back and help students whose position I was once in. Within this short year that I've been at Hedrick, I've quickly earned a significant role and have seen the assistance I've provided these students make a major change in them. Overall, being able to take what I've gotten from afterschool and reciprocate it to these kids I work with is something I take pride in.





LESLEY GREEVER

Cooperative for After School Enrichment,
Houston, Texas

Nominated by
Avice Chambers

What makes Lesley Greever outstanding?

Lesley is passionate about providing children and youth with the skills and opportunities to flourish into happy, successful adults. She's demonstrated passion, creativity, and commitment to youth through the CASE Connections program for children with special needs. Through this, she has embodied NAA's core competencies. Awareness of child growth and development, learning environments, and curriculum are demonstrated through collaboration with the Pasadena ISD special needs department to ensure students receive individualized, quality programming. The program utilizes individualized homework help, social play, and an interactive library to help students develop skills to be successful in class, at home, and in the community.

What path did Lesley take to enter the afterschool field?

Lesley wanted to work within child development. During her first year at University of Texas, she was majoring in mathematics and working on her teaching certificate through the UTeach program. Through academic and applied experiences, she refined her interests and switched her major to psychology, with a specific focus on child psychology. After graduating, she began working on her Master of Education in Counseling degree at University of Houston. Lesley served her dual internship in a preschool and private practice setting practicing play therapy with young children, specifically with autism and ADHD. Her first post-graduate job was with a Houston nonprofit, working in a youth services program. Through a professional development opportunity, she learned about CASE and its vision and mission—a cause directly aligned with her interests; when a position became available, she jumped on the opportunity.

What habits influence Lesley's success?

Lesley is highly organized, willing to do whatever she can to help the team, and determined. She takes the time to be knowledgeable about afterschool research and national organizations, and attends afterschool conferences. She's always thinking of ways to refine and improve projects and is fully engaged with the programs she manages. Her ability to multitask, be organized, and see a project to completion is a great asset.

What makes Lesley stand out?

She's able to use her passion for working with youth in an analytical and creative way to affect youth. While new to afterschool, she has fully immersed herself in becoming knowledgeable about field research, best practices, and using newfound knowledge to bring ideas and energy to the programs she works with. She's proven herself to have a strong and valuable voice in helping to set the strategic direction for our organization.



One of the most exciting aspects of working at CASE is the opportunity to implement new ideas. One such is a pilot program I supervise with Pasadena ISD—Connections at Teague Elementary—specifically designed for children with special needs such as pervasive developmental disorders like autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other behavioral-related disorders. This program has proven to provide a safe place for students to develop socio-emotional skills the regular school day does not allow time for. Also, this program allows parents the comfort of knowing their children are receiving the quality care they need, so the parents can secure work outside of the home.



What makes Matt Rushing outstanding?

Matt is a person to watch in afterschool, in Texas and throughout our nation. He's the go-to person. He embodies our core values with examples of Joy in Work, Compassion, and Teamwork. Matt always has time to assist a child, colleague, or the executive director, and always wants to learn a new way to ensure a child with special needs is accepted and flourishing. He makes others feel at ease. He's a sounding board and mentor for peers and assists with their challenges. His centers exemplify a welcoming learning environment and he strives to ensure the curriculum is delivered with consistent integrity.

What path did Matt take to enter the afterschool field?

Matt became group leader while at Texas State University, and arranged his class schedule around his work at Extend-A-Care for Kids. It was easy to see he was a superstar! He rose quickly through the ranks as a center supervisor, full-time center director, and center director and professional development team member. In addition to local and statewide conferences, he presented sessions at the past three NAA Annual Conventions. This year's presentation was rated a perfect 10 by attendees, landing him in the convention's top ten best presentations list!

What habits influence Matt's success?

Matt carefully selects, trains, and nurtures staff at his center. Team meetings, training, and time investment are hallmarks of his success. Annual Department of Family Protection Services visits have yielded zero citations regarding compliance, and school principals commend his programs and invite him to return each year. Parents rave about his staff and his relationships with them.

Matt continuously improves sessions through event-specific feedback forms. His presentations are research-based and ready-to-use! He uses hands-on activities, multimedia presentations, follow-up resources, and communication after sessions, via e-mail. His passion for reading and expanding his knowledge is the driving force behind a monthly reading session that Matt leads, based upon a peer reviewed research article, with his co-workers. This helps the team stay proactive, work together to create new ideas, and provide growth opportunities.

What makes Matt stand out?

Matt's maturity, sincerity, and respect are evident and astoundingly well-developed beyond his years. His optimism and problem-solving skills make him a leader and role model. He was nominated by his peers and staff for 2014 Best of Extend-A-Care Awards in several categories and won the Best of Teamwork Award and our highest recognition, The Margaret Gregg Award. We're honored to have Matt on staff, and hope he'll make afterschool a lifelong career. He's already developed a legacy in the children and families he serves, the staff he supervises, and those he has trained locally and nationally.



MATT RUSHING

Extend-A-Care for Kids,
Austin, Texas

Nominated by
Dr. Joan Altobelli



I am the director of six afterschool programs that serve approximately 300 school-age children annually. I have the opportunity to work hands-on with children, learn from those experiences, and apply what I learn on a larger scale. As a trainer, I participate in NAA and state-level conferences, work as a contract trainer for Workforce Solutions, and support Extend-A-Care's 250 school year employees with professional development. I am proud to collaborate with so many other leaders to bring attention to afterschool programs and to continue to further our field.





KATIE ROLLINO

**Lights on in Lander
Afterschool Program,
Lander, Wyoming**

Nominated by
Linda Barton

What makes Katie Rollino outstanding?

Katie is committed and dedicated to the students in the Lights On in Lander Afterschool Program. She has spent time learning the afterschool profession and understands the youth development and the management sides of the field.

What path did Katie take to enter the afterschool field?

Katie started out as a tutor in the program, several years ago. She was then promoted to site coordinator for Baldwin Creek Elementary School. Concurrently, Katie has worked in the office managing the administration of program structure, program details, staffing and student information, and assisting the program director.

What habits influence Katie's success?

Katie makes it her business to know each and every student in the program and their parents. She is involved with the program at all levels. She is conscientious and dedicated to seeing that the work is done and the students are happy.

What makes Katie stand out?

Katie's desire to work with the children, parents, and staff to ensure that the program is high-quality set her apart. She is dedicated and reliable, and works toward positive outcomes.

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I work for Lights On in the office as program coordinator, and in our afterschool program as site director for fourth- and fifth-graders. We help our students understand and complete homework, develop skills, and enjoy reading. Our students have a variety of abilities, and it's gratifying to see them make progress at their level. I'm particularly proud of our students when, after mastering a new skill or learning about a new subject, they eagerly turn to fellow students to help them with their work! When learning becomes enjoyable and something the children want to share, I feel my work has been successful. I'm proud to have started working for Lights On as a tutor, and moved up from there to site director and program coordinator. Because I started as a tutor, I've been able to experience our program from many angles.

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What makes Laura Ashley outstanding?

Laura is an employee every supervisor hopes to have working for them. She has a positive attitude, an interest in child development, and enthusiasm for and a deep dedication to Care After School. She's in tune to the program's needs and steps in when needed. She's committed to following policies and procedures, and questions what she doesn't understand. She's respected by parents, colleagues, school staff, and, most important, the children. A parent wrote, "When I asked my daughter why she loved Miss Ashley, she responded with her eyes lit and a huge smile, 'She always smiles and never breaks her promise.'"

What path did Laura take to enter the afterschool field?

Laura is a recreation leader at the Bluffsvew Care After School Program. She was hired in fall 2012. We could tell from her first day that she'd be a strong staff member. Laura is attending Columbus State Community College, working toward her early childhood education degree. Through her experience at Care After School, she's decided she would like to stay with our program and work her way up through the ranks. She has applied for assistant site director and will start in that position next school year.

What habits influence Laura's success?

An employee of Laura's caliber comes around every once in awhile. She has a strong work ethic, is always prepared, arrives early, and looks about for what needs to be done. Certain months can get a little crazy for the site director, and Laura, acting on her own initiative, will take on additional work to allow her site director time to deal with paperwork, parents, and challenging children. She seems to have a sixth sense for knowing where she's needed and what she can do to help. She's a role model for other staff and the group cheerleader. Laura has been involved in many difficult conversations with parents, something recreation leaders are rarely involved in, and has handled them with grace and professionalism.

What makes Laura stand out?

A parent wrote, "Laura is a role model for both the students and colleagues. Working with children comes so naturally and it is demonstrated through her interactions with the kids. She also provides comfort to parents with her genuine responses and interest in knowing us. She seems to understand that a relationship with the family is important in understanding and working with the whole child."



**LAURA
ASHLEY**

**Bluffsvew Care
After School,
Worthington, Ohio**

Nominated by
Deborah Kittredge



I work at the amazing school of Bluffsvew Elementary. I plan crafts and activities for the kids to do, and I am also responsible of building relationships with both children and parents. I was recently the recipient for the Toni Spangler award, given to a recreation leader who is seen as going above and beyond at work. My supervisor and a family at our program nominated me for this award.





ALEAH ROSARIO

California School Age Consortium (CalSAC),
Oakland, California

Nominated by
Ruth Obel-Jorgensen

What makes Aleah Rosario outstanding?

Aleah was active in local direct service programming and statewide professional development projects. She worked with youth in Riverbank USD. She provided technical assistance as a senior consultant with Consult4Kids. She attended CalSAC's CA Afterschool Challenge, a two-day advocacy event, and completed the endorsement process to become a CalSAC Trainer. She's served as Central CA chapter advocacy coordinator and president. Aleah sought out intentional development opportunities and found ways to give back to the field at all levels. At the heart of it all are the kids. She'll be first to ask how our efforts tie back to positive outcomes and quality programming.

What path did the Aleah take to enter the afterschool field?

Volunteering at the family resource center in Riverbank, she began supporting projects and ideas families organized around their children. The assistant superintendent hired her as administrative support to strengthen the academic alignment between afterschool and the school day. Aleah's strong understanding of the significance of systems to support this work was instrumental in bridging support between the school day and OST. During this process, she got to work directly with youth. She launched the cross-age Junior Executive Team, empowering students grades three to twelve to create a strong voice in the design of programs they participated in. She was quickly identified as having skills to coach and lead students and adults to carry out initiatives important to them.

What habits influence Aleah's success?

She's resilient and driven. She wants to change systems and adapts to environments. She draws from her direct experience to more effectively provide technical assistance in an intermediary role. She's a planner. She identifies an achievable strategy and creates a comprehensive roadmap to reach her goals. She's creative and committed to providing quality programs. She taps into these strengths to deepen her efforts each day.

What makes the Aleah stand out?

Aleah is a change agent and approaches her work in the field with a social justice framework. She leads with a commitment to equity that guides her practices. As a young woman of color from a rural area in the state, she's committed to ensuring our field represents the children and youth we serve. Aleah is making meaningful connections that tie back to systems change. She's intense, passionate and dedicated to work that's meaningful to others, above self, which creates an unwavering momentum in her to help others recognize the possible.

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I am a program coordinator with CalSAC, a non-profit organization that works to support and advance the out-of-school time field through training, professional development and advocacy across the state. I provide leadership over CalSAC projects, such as the Summer TA Network and regional chapters. I am most proud of supporting CalSAC's Leadership Development Institute (LDI), of which I am an alumna of the first cohort of fellows. LDI prepares emerging leaders of color in the youth development field for advanced leadership positions to ensure there are more responsive programming, policies and services that reflect the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of California.

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What makes Gaoshia Yang outstanding?

Campus Club is a great place for kids: Gaoshia Yang is one of the reasons. She leads her program at Freedom Elementary so children are the center. She provides a program engaging students in active outdoor play, creative craft projects, NPASS science activities, junior staff leadership, and community service projects. She guides her excellent staff with mutual respect, shared decision-making, support, and a commitment to continuous program improvement. She collaborates with students' parents, working together to ensure students get what they need from the program. Integrity is the core of her leadership. Parents appreciate her as a role model and mentor for children. Staff admire her efforts to ensure they're appreciated for their hard work. Her supervisor trusts her ability to manage a large, diverse program, always doing the right thing. And kids know that every day they have a fun, loving place to go.



GAOSHIA YANG

**Campus Club at
Freedom Elementary,
Clovis, California**

Nominated by
Ruth Obel-Jorgensen
(on behalf of Michael
McGarity, CalSAC
trainer and chapter
leader)

What path did Gaoshia take to enter the afterschool field?

She's a teacher—a gifted person who's a teacher by nature. She's also a teacher by training. She began her career in afterschool care as an aide and has advanced to a lead instructor position, overseeing a site that serves more than 125 students before and after school each day.

What habits influence Gaoshia's success?

She's developed great organizational skills. Using crosschecks consistently means students are safe. She leads a team of ten and her extraordinary organization allows staff to lead and mentor children in a safe environment, where they know they're welcome and respected. She leads by example. She abides by policies and guidelines. She has exemplary professional standards. She leads through collaboration, making her a popular lead instructor; staff offer ideas to improve curriculum and make suggestions to run the program more effectively and improve their own performance.

What makes Gaoshia stand out?

Passion separates Gaoshia from other team members. She's devoted to ensuring students in her program are happy and their needs are being met in every way possible. Her education provided her with a broad base of knowledge in children's development. She takes time to assess and understand those with the greatest needs. She ensures her program accommodates the child. She helps students develop the skills to better cope with challenges.



I oversee terrific staff members and we engage students with exciting activities such as art, group games, and homework help, daily. I'm proud of our site's community service projects. Our students were able to raise \$50 by collecting bottles and cans to recycle, and adopted a California Sea Lion at the Chaffee Zoo. The students were so excited that they couldn't wait to meet their new friend at the zoo!





NANCY YARAHUAN

**After-School All-
Stars at Bevedere
Middle School,
East Los Angeles,
California**

**Nominated by
Ruth Obel-Jorgensen
(on behalf of Silvestre
Vallejo, CalSAC trainer
and chapter leader)**

What makes Nancy Yarahuan outstanding?

She's incredibly hard working; I've seen her attention to detail, high expectations, and commitment to youth. I know Nancy best from her volunteer work at College Track, as one of my advisory leaders. She met with me before the semester for training, to review curriculum, and to put together interactive and dynamic scholarship workshops to further support students. She drove to UC San Diego to help give a campus tour and participate in a panel. She's helped me chaperone scholars to universities. Nancy shows up every week to teach for us after working a full shift at her ASAS job. She's always there with a smile, full of energy, and never fails in engaging and inspiring our scholars. She has a deep knowledge of college-readiness topics: financial aid/scholarships, essay writing, career/interview skills, and graduation requirements. Her ability to convey this content accessibly is part of why she's so successful as a College Track advisory leader.

What path did the Nancy take to enter the afterschool field?

Nancy is a recent UC San Diego graduate with a degree in theater and psychology. Her passion for education, and being a first-generation Latina graduate, led her to work at After-School All-Stars, where she has moved up and now runs an afterschool program in East Los Angeles.

What habits influence Nancy's success?

Nancy is always looking for innovative best practices and opportunities to refine her program. She's a voracious reader and devours links, articles, and websites I send her with resources for youth development. She's a great networker and looks for opportunities to partner with individuals and organizations that can further enhance her program.

What makes Nancy stand out?

Nancy is one of the most hard-working and humble people I know. Her humility makes her great to work with. She does not seek the spotlight and always puts students first. Nancy is great at what she does.



As a site mentor with ASAS, Los Angeles, and an advisory leader with College Track, Boyle Heights, I have the opportunity to work with youth and lead a team of staff to ensure that during the afterschool program, the youth we serve are being inspired to succeed academically, but most importantly, in life. I am able to serve students who, like myself, are from a low-income household; are first-generation college-bound, or come from broken homes. My greatest accomplishment thus far has been motivating and inspiring youth and even adults to pursue their dreams, and believe in themselves because I believe in them. I lead by example, and I feel that I have made a difference in the communities I have been blessed to service after school. 'My life is my message.' (Mahatma Gandhi)



What makes Jackie Hawkins outstanding?

Jackie is a classic type-A personality. She is extremely organized and her attention to detail is impeccable. She is also a terrific problem-solver with a work ethic straight out of the 1950s. Jackie's commitment to the Lancaster Rec's mission is part of the reason the department she works in is so successful.

What path did Jackie take to enter the afterschool field?

Jackie graduated from Lycoming College and started working with children with severe behavior and emotional issues. After the company closed, she started working for the Lancaster Rec as site director at one the Rec's Before and After School programs. After two years in this position, she was promoted to school age coordinator; a new position without a job description. She chiseled out what a successful school age coordinator should look like, and created her job description her first year in the position. As the director of Children and Family Services, I rely heavily on her to help keep the department running smoothly. We have twelve OST programs with fifty employees. I would be lost without her. Jackie provides amazing communication between the office and the front-line staff, and makes the staff feel valued. She's also the director for our Summer Day Camp program over the summer months. This summer will be her fourth year.

What habits influence Jackie's success?

Jackie is always on time, completes tasks given to her, offers support to staff/families/children, mentors new site directors, doesn't hesitate to ask questions, and, above all, puts the needs of the children, families, and staff above her own—a quality that is extremely hard to find.

What makes Jackie stand out?

Jackie's work ethic makes her stand out among her peers. It's because of this work ethic I know I have found my replacement, should I ever leave my post as the director for the department. I know the department, families, children, and staff will be well taken care of under her leadership. Her ability to have her finger on the pulse is another reason she stands out. She is able to multitask with little to no error. The department I have worked so hard to improve over the past seventeen years will continue to grow and blossom with Jackie at the helm. She is truly a blessing to the Lancaster community!



JACKIE HAWKINS

Lancaster Recreation Commission,
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Nominated by
Lucy Stauffer



I'm the School Age Care Coordinator for the Lancaster Recreation Commission, overseeing twelve before and after school programs in Lancaster City, and all of them are Keystone Stars Star 4 Centers. During the summer, I'm the director of one of our three summer camps. I take care of the day-to-day schedule, and help the sites prepare for their Department of Public Welfare inspections, as well as ensuring that sites continuously maintain their Star 4 status. I'm most proud of the close relationships I was able to maintain from supervisor of a site, to my administrative role.





JENNA RICHIE

**Enrichment Workshop
for Children,**
Bensalem, Pennsylvania

Nominated by
Valerie Clark

What makes Jenna Richie outstanding?

Jenna's art background allows children and youth in her care to embrace their creative energies. She designed her program to allow children free choice of materials, and encourages their creative juices. Her program is clearly child-directed. Jenna is thoughtful and observant. She shows keen knowledge of the development of those in her care. When assessing the children's strengths and needs, she recognizes individual differences and temperaments, and makes program changes to best serve the children. She's also developed strong communications skills. She's made strong connections with parents, children, and staff at our host school, which have allowed her to make partnerships with our host school, the parents, and her directors.

What path did Jenna take to enter the afterschool field?

Jenna earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with an elementary teaching certification. She was hired by Enrichment Workshop for Children as an assistant teacher. When a lead teacher position opened up, she enthusiastically accepted the challenge. She has demonstrated that she's up for the challenge!

What habits influence Jenna's success?

Becoming a strong communicator helped Jenna step into a Keystone STAR 4 program (the highest level in Pennsylvania) and seamlessly maintain that designation. Jenna enthusiastically takes in the information she receives at workshops and trainings, and succinctly articulates it to others. She seeks advice from her directors and shows the ability to ask the right questions to strengthen her skills and her program. Her assistant teachers look to her for knowledge and guidance. Jenna's knowledge of the individual children in her program, and her warm, welcoming nature allow the children to be extremely comfortable talking and working with her.

What makes Jenna stand out?

Jenna's enthusiasm for her position as lead teacher has proven to spark the enthusiasm of her fellow lead teachers. She has much to add to our weekly teacher meetings. She shares her insights on curriculum development and implementation. She has shown a strong aptitude in her position as lead teacher. I believe Jenna will become a leader in the afterschool profession.



Each day, I welcome the children with a warm smile, and invite them to explore the many different centers and activities we have waiting for them. When training opportunities are offered, I take any newfound knowledge and apply it to my program. For instance, I attended a puppetry workshop and created a puppet club. The children loved using their imaginations to create their very own characters. They even wrote and performed a puppet show for the other children in the program! I am blessed to have the opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child.



What makes Tavia James outstanding?

Tavia began as a teacher assistant. Her gift of creativity and management was identified early; she was quickly promoted to a lead teacher, where she motivated students to learn good study habits and engage in extraordinary expeditions, and partnered with families to give students an experience that surpassed our host school's expectations. When our company landed contracts with four new schools, Tavia became a site director at one. There, under her leadership, we held our first summer camp: a huge success with an enrollment of one hundred. Tavia's experience inspired her to go back to school for her master's in elementary education/special education. She attended full time and still gave one hundred percent to the field. Today, she serves as my executive director. She's led workshops with me at two NAA conventions; we'll present at Arcadia's STEAM Conference. She's passionate, creative, and innovative. Her commitment to children and to developing staff is unmatched!

What path did Tavia take to enter the afterschool field?

Tavia entered the field just after graduating from college. She was hired as an assistant teacher and quickly demonstrated the skills, knowledge, passion, and gifts that have led her to be the executive director of the company.

What habits influence Tavia's success?

Tavia is open to continuous learning. She stays current on school-age care research. She outlines professional development plans that allow her to serve her programs well. She strives for accuracy. She's extremely well-organized, can multitask, and often creates management tools that keep her programs running like a well-oiled machine.

What makes Tavia stand out?

In five short years, Tavia has gone from teacher assistant in a class of fifteen to executive director of six sites with two hundred fifty-plus children, while obtaining a master's degree and teaching. She's focused, driven, and committed to the field. She gives back through workshops at national conferences. It's rare to find a young person so passionate about her craft. When you see her at work, you know she's walking in her purpose, and many children and adults benefit. She's a bright spot in my company. There's no doubt she'll continue to make her mark.



TAVIA JAMES

**Watoto After
School Care, Inc.,**
*Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania*

Nominated by
Michelle Robinson

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I work with a phenomenal after school program, where we serve students from six elementary schools across Philadelphia. I'm proud of the implementation and execution of our 'Great Game Show' enrichment theme, requiring students to design, build, and create life-size versions of arcade games, inspired by Caine Monroy's 'Caine's Arcade' YouTube video. Their showcase/celebration of learning was held in the front lobby of our school, where teachers and parents all stopped by to play games and win prizes. This moment of achievement for our students was enough to get goose bumps by just watching.

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BRANDON BILES

Play Centers, Inc.,
Lutherville, Maryland

Nominated by
Diane Mellot

What makes Brandon Biles outstanding?

Brandon began as a center director and quickly became a leader. His programs were enhanced with literacy and STEM opportunities, hands-on learning, and opportunities for discovery through exciting themes and enhancement. A great example: A half-dozen bikes were brought in for the bike safety unit. Children learned road safety and the importance of wearing a helmet, and had the opportunity to pump and change a tire, grease and replace a chain, and other important activities. The bikes were then given to the children. That's how Brandon approaches opportunities. Is the experience fun? Did participants become invested in learning? Was the activity memorable? Yes, yes, and yes!

What path did Brandon take to enter the afterschool field?

Brandon worked at the YMCA, at a camp for children with emotional disturbances, and in Baltimore County Public School, assisting teachers with children with special needs. He completed associate's degree coursework and plans to finish his bachelor's. Meeting with our administrative team members, he determined professional development areas of focus to position himself for advancement. He was promoted to program coordinator and program enrichment director for the School-Age division of Play Centers, Inc., leading staff in attaining the highest possible SACERS, MSDE Accreditation, and Maryland EXCELS rating. He learned about new quality initiatives and how he could bring those programs and philosophies to the programs, staff, children, and families. He connected with personnel overseeing those initiatives, and brought the mission of higher quality to staff to develop buy-in, positive energy, and a strong support network promoting individual growth. Under his leadership, programs have taken the first MSDE accreditation step and have reached Level 1 of Maryland EXCELS.

What habits influence Brandon's success?

As soon as one goal is attained, he's planning out next steps and how to best implement on-going growth in the centers without overwhelming anyone. He's a navigator, cheerleader, and friend as he helps the staff negotiate quality initiatives. His energy is contagious! He's positive and upbeat, an enthusiastic leader, and dedicated to the underlying principles of high-quality, enriching programs.

What makes Brandon stand out?

Brandon constantly searches out hands-on, fun activities that teach concepts. He meets staff where they are on the spectrum of learning and exposure to quality concepts and initiatives; he elicits trust from the staff. Initiatives can be overwhelming, but he whittles them down to manageable pieces; staff trust and follow him. He's friendly and outgoing, often with child-like enthusiasm. When children see him walk in the door, they flock to him. He sees every conversation as an opportunity for conversation, learning, motivation, igniting curiosity. He really has a gift.

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I'm proud to have worked my way up from a support staff member, director, and, now, administration. I started working with children when I was only sixteen, and could not begin to list all the wonderful things that have happened in these past twelve years. But if I had to pick one thing I am most proud of, it would be playing a critical part in the social and emotional development of each child's journey as they learn and grow.

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What makes Nicole Miller outstanding?

Nicole is truly an asset to the field of Afterschool in Vermont. Not only is she an exceptional director with a solid program that meets the needs of the families she serves, she is a seasoned supervisor, trainer and professional mentor.

What path did Nicole take to enter the afterschool field?

Nicole has earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education, and has served for several years as a teacher, para-educator, and summer program coordinator. She was a site coordinator in her current program, and was tapped as program director for the four schools in the system five years ago.

What habits influence Nicole's success?

Nicole exhibits all of the attributes of a wonderful program director. She grew up in the region of the state, so she has a tremendous understanding of what the families and children in the area need. In addition, she is an exemplary employee, and a statewide mentor and trainer for VT Afterschool.

What makes Nicole stand out?

Nicole's professional demeanor, extensive knowledge and experience set her apart from others her age. She is a trusted mentor and trainer for the statewide afterschool network, and is often sought after to help with statewide events.



NICOLE MILLER

REACH! Afterschool & Summer Programs at Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union, Hardwick, Vermont

Nominated by
Karen Scott



Our program serves students in the towns of Craftsbury, Hardwick, and Wolcott, Vermont. Our area, like much of Vermont, is rural. We value small schools. The population of the three schools we serve is just over 460 students. I also serve as a regional coordinator for Vermont Afterschool, Inc. (our state NAA affiliate), helping to provide professional development and support systems for afterschool providers in Northern Vermont. I'm also stepping into the role of trainer for the David P. Weikart Center's Youth Work Methods workshops in Vermont.





ALISSA FABER

**Vermont
Afterschool, Inc.,**
Burlington, Vermont

Nominated by
Karen Scott

What makes Alissa Faber outstanding?

Alissa is an independent trainer for Vermont Afterschool, Inc. She has participated in all aspects of afterschool education, from leading activities to program development and staff supervision. Alissa started in afterschool as a core teacher who led a variety of art classes. She then moved into the assistant director role and learned how to support a program by creating relationships with families and staff. As an afterschool director, she worked hard and was successful in developing new program offerings and creating family supports. She understands the tasks and challenges of a new director, and she is comfortable with all of the details that accompany that role. Her passion for positive communication and behavior management within the afterschool setting is seen in her new role as an afterschool trainer. She currently leads “Introduction to Nonviolent Communication in Afterschool” and “Lesson Planning in Afterschool” workshops through Vermont Afterschool, Inc.

What path did Alissa take to enter the afterschool field?

Alissa has always worked with children and been engaged in arts education. Her professional career started in an afterschool program, and since then has branched out to include activities on the state level through providing professional development and support to afterschool programs.

What habits influence Alissa’s success?

Alissa is knowledgeable, reliable, committed, and articulate—all attributes that have made her a tremendous addition to the afterschool field in Vermont.

What makes Alissa stand out?

Alissa has gained a statewide perspective that has made her an invaluable contributor to the state of Vermont and Vermont Afterschool, Inc. Most recently, this has been evident as a statewide grant reader for 21st Century Afterschool grants and Vermont’s Child Development Division Afterschool grants, and earning her certification as a statewide trainer for Safe Families through the Department of Children and Families.

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I filled a leadership role in afterschool for three years, running an elementary program of 160 families. Last year I decided to leave my role in order to provide direct service to afterschool programs. As an outside provider, I lead art programming in afterschool and summer programs in my Burlington community. I have a passion for expanded learning opportunities for students of all ages. Being a Vermont Afterschool, Inc. trainer and mentor provides me with an opportunity to share my knowledge and experience with other programs and afterschool professionals. This year, I will be taking a year-long course in afterschool state policy and research to continue my own education in afterschool leadership.

”

What makes Madeline Scott outstanding?

Madeline has a great passion for school-age children and endeavors to make her program exciting, nurturing, and educational. Madeline has a natural ability to build relationships with children, families, and school administrators that only serves to improve all aspects of her program.

What path did Madeline take to enter the afterschool field?

Madeline has always wanted to work with children in some capacity, and absolutely shines in the afterschool field. She began working at ABC Care during her freshman year of college, and has worked her way up to a dual role as a site director and district manager.

What habits influence Madeline's success?

Madeline exhibits enthusiasm and creative thinking that allow her to provide high-quality programming in a center that serves children in grades kindergarten through eight, who come together from a wide range of public and private schools in the area. She works hard to make sure her programming meets the needs of all of the children and families served. Madeline also has the rare ability to be “present” in each moment on the job. She is always giving 110 percent of her effort to see that everyone has the support they need to be engaged and happy.

What makes Madeline stand out?

Madeline stands out from her peers for her commitment to excellence, her willingness to embrace new ideas and try new things, and her desire to provide the highest quality program possible. Her professionalism, maturity, and sense of humor have stood her above even seasoned veterans in the field.



MADELINE SCOTT

ABC Care, Inc.,
Finksburg, Maryland

Nominated by
Sylvia Nunnalee

I began my employment at ABC Care Inc. as an assistant at St. John Catholic School location. My role was to provide the before and after care for sixty children. I had worked as an assistant at our St. John's location for two years before getting my associate's degree in early childhood education from Carroll Community College. From that point, I moved on to become a group leader, then senior group leader, and now am a director of our St. John's location, as well as being a manager for another site. While in my position as director at our Westminster location, I served on the accreditation team and helped them obtain national accreditation through COA. After this success, I was moved to St. John's as the director. I not only work with children from the private school, but also from two other private schools and five other public schools in the surrounding area.



MEGAN YEAGER

ABC Care, Inc.,
Finksburg, Maryland

Nominated by
Sylvia Nunnalee

What makes Megan Yeager outstanding?

Megan stands out in the afterschool field through her dedication to the children and families. She has chosen the field of afterschool as a career path, taking classes and training, implementing best practices, participating in COA Accreditation activities, and providing the highest quality program possible for the children in her care.

What path did Megan take to enter the afterschool field?

Megan began working in the afterschool field while still in high school. Her original plan was to pursue a career in nursing; however, she found that she loved working in afterschool and changed direction. She completed her Associate of Arts degree in education this past year.

What habits influence Megan's success?

Megan has worked her way up from her start as an aide to site director, and just recently added a second role as a district manager, overseeing several sites. One of her most valuable assets is her willingness to take initiative and responsibility. She has filled many roles for our company, always taking the time to learn and do things in accordance with policy and procedure and to the best of her ability.

What makes Megan stand out?

Megan stands out among her peers for her commitment to the field of afterschool, her willingness to embrace new ideas, and her creativity. She creates a warm and inviting environment that nurtures children at all ages and abilities. She recently took part in the NPASS training offered by the Maryland Out of School Time SySTEM and is implementing the STEM activities through a weekly club at her center. Where others of her generation are biding their time until they finish school or move on to another field, Megan's goal is to excel in afterschool.

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I started working with ABC Care, Inc. as an assistant at the Mechanicsville Elementary location, providing before and after care for about seventy children. I spent two years as an assistant while I attended college to obtain the required classes to continue to grow within the company. During this time, I served on an accreditation team to obtain national accreditation at Mechanicsville. I became a School Age Child Care teacher at age nineteen, and a director at twenty-one. After one year as a director, I was promoted to district manager and co-chair of the professional development committee. I oversee multiple before and after sites providing guidance and support. I'm proud that my commitment and work ethic enabled me to be in a management role at a young age. Most important, I'm proud of the many children and families whom I've been blessed to work with. I would be remiss to not mention that I've worked with an amazing group of woman who've made me the young professional I am today.

”

What makes Chris Jorn outstanding?

We've known Chris for several years, having met him at one of our science trainings. The group was asked to bring recyclables for an activity. Chris had the most I've ever seen anyone bring, and his group had a great time completing the task. He explained what they made and was clearly excited about the finished product and being able to take the activity back to his program. He loves to work with kids; he sees a wonderful opportunity to introduce them to new and exciting experiences. He knows what it takes to provide quality programming in various settings. He happily accepts the challenges of working in an area where you have to be creative with your budgeting and resources to accomplish everything you want. He's excited to attend trainings, and is a trainer. He provides engaging, informative trainings that motivate people to do their jobs to the best of their ability.



CHRIS JORN

Prime Time,
Cranford, New Jersey

Nominated by
Diane Genco

What path did Chris take to enter the afterschool field?

In high school, Chris took a job in the recreation department. He realized working with children was what he wanted to do. He enjoyed the freedom he had to try new things and create a fun learning experience for kids. In college, he became a community recreation major, providing various possible career choices. When he graduated, he took a job at Prime Time as a counselor. During that time, his director was unable to attend NJSACC's annual afterschool conference and offered for Chris to take her place. While there, he met numerous people in the field and ended up transitioning to a site coordinator position in a new program. After five years with the Work-Family Connection, an opportunity came up at Prime Time for a program coordinator.

What habits influence Chris' success?

Chris is extremely resourceful. He tries to find a new use and purpose for things that otherwise would be discarded. He's always trying new things. He does his best to expose the children to different activities and experiences. He's not afraid to fail. He knows some of the best discoveries come from the least successful ventures. Trial and error are an important part of life and learning, and he wants the children to see that it's OK if things don't turn out like you expected.

What makes Chris stand out?

Chris' positive attitude and enthusiasm are evident in all he does. He truly loves his job and doesn't see it as work. His favorite quote is, "Be the change that you want to see in the world." He lives that through his work. He strives to set a good example and be a positive role model for the children in his program. His goal is to create a positive ripple effect, so each generation that follows will have an increasingly positive effect on the world around them.

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I do not consider my work at PrimeTime as a job, but more of a community service to my hometown that has given so much to me. Community service is one of my passions that I love to incorporate into my program and in my work with NJSACC. I started hosting trainings last year for NJSACC and truly enjoy presenting new enrichment activities to my colleagues in the afterschool industry. The Next Generation Award gave me a chance to thank everyone who has supported me throughout my career. I would especially like to thank my parents for all of their hard work and loving support that they have given to me. I am truly honored to accept this award and look forward to what the future has in store.

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KAYLA STRONG

**21st Century
Community Learning
Centers, Battle Creek
Public School District,
Battle Creek, Michigan**

Nominated by
Jennifer Bonner

What makes Kayla Strong outstanding?

Kayla is passionate about kids, parents, and co-workers. She reaches out to everyone to help support afterschool programs. She is very creative. She is responsible for our afterschool websites, our newsletters, parent nights, and scheduling of programs, under the direction of her supervisor.

What path did Kayla take to enter the afterschool field?

Kayla graduated as an English major and works as a freelance newspaper writer. She stumbled on afterschool through another friend. She came to work in the afterschool field and fell in love with the program.

What habits influence Kayla's success?

Kayla is always there to help, and to support, and to talk about the afterschool field. She feels strongly about the programs that come in the afterschool hours. She is a willing participant, and she goes the extra mile to make sure that the word is out about afterschool and how important it is.

What makes Kayla stand out?

Kayla is always lending a helping hand. She steps up to the plate when needed, and she always embraces her colleagues.

“

I have been privileged to work for the past three years as an elementary-level site supervisor and office staff. During this time, one of the things I have strived to do is spread the word about the importance of after school programming. By submitting photos and articles to local newspapers, the community has been able to see the amazing things this program does to help enrich the lives of our youth.

”

What makes Jessica Samolewicz outstanding?

We met Jessica while doing a quality improvement project for our state grant. Immediately, we could see that she was special. The first site visit we had, her enthusiasm and desire to give children the best program she could was evident. Jessica genuinely cares for the children and staff in their programs. She is passionate about quality programming and being able to provide services to a community that faces many challenges.

What path did Jessica take to enter the afterschool field?

When Jessica graduated from college, she took a summer job as a camp counselor at the Union YMCA. When summer ended, she was offered a site supervisor position. During this time, she was still pursuing a full-time teaching position. After completing several substitute stints for teachers on maternity leave, she was offered a full-time position in the YMCA afterschool program. Shortly thereafter, she was promoted to SACC coordinator. From there, she became SACC and camp director, then senior director of youth development, and now associate branch executive.

What habits influence Jessica's success?

She takes a team approach to her programs. She hires staff with a variety of strengths and talents to create a group that compliments and balances each other. She doesn't like to be called a supervisor and will do every aspect of every job. Her staff knows she'll never ask them to do anything she wouldn't do herself. She's fair but firm, and supports her staff. For many, it's a part-time job that may lead to other job opportunities. She tries to coach staff on job etiquette and how to develop a well-rounded work ethic. She's open-minded and loves to hear new ideas. She's also a firm believer in good communication and knows it's essential to a successful program.

What makes Jessica stand out?

Jessica is a pleasure to work with. Her supervisors have nothing but great things to say about her. It's clear from her career track at the Y that she's dedicated to the work she does. She puts in the time and energy it takes to make sure things are running the way they should. Her goal is to expand access to high-quality programs in a lower-income area where the children would greatly benefit from increased support.



**JESSICA
SAMOLEWICZ**

YMCA,
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Nominated by
Diane Genco

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I work at The Gateway Family YMCA in the Elizabeth branch, with NJSACC, and the Five Points branch in Union. In the Elizabeth branch, I directly oversee our school-age childcare and camp programs. We offer financial assistance opportunities to our families, with about eighty-five percent of our participants receiving some type of assistance; this enables children to attend camp and experience things they may otherwise never have the opportunity to do. Knowing how much we're helping our families makes it all worth it! While working for the Elizabeth and Five Points branches, I've seen our programming expand to include a variety of class choices and options for youth. I'm most looking forward to seeing our youth programs grow, as well as provide opportunities for the entire family.

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JOSH ANDERSON

**Bauer Family
Resources,**
Lafayette, Indiana

Nominated by
Jessica Kleffman and
Stepheney Bauer

What makes Josh Anderson outstanding?

Josh serves the youth development program members, and his staff and his co-workers. He comes up with exciting programming for YD kids, such as Author of the Month. He features a children's books author whose books are available to read and take quizzes over; youth who read the books and pass the quizzes receive a prize. He also developed a quarterly family literacy program that provides families with books and resources to promote literacy and family learning.

What path did Josh take to enter the afterschool field?

Josh is youth services supervisor at Bauer Family Resources, a social service agency that serves over 10,000 clients in its three divisions each year. He oversees the youth development program, and is responsible for supervising its staff members.

What habits influence Josh's success?

He checks in regularly with staff, provides training and professional development opportunities, and encourages staff to come up with new ideas. I enjoyed working for Josh; he helped me discover my passion and talent for working with youth. He sees individual strengths and works to give staff projects that best use their talents. He's trustworthy and honest. He understands his primary job is to provide a caring, encouraging environment for the participants and the staff he oversees. He has vision; he does whatever it takes to ensure kids and staff have positive experiences. He provides thoughtful feedback to ensure staff grow in the field. He's sensitive to participants' needs.

What makes Josh stand out?

He's an out-of-the-box thinker—way outside. He comes up with unique, engaging ideas. Realizing how much his group liked a particular board game, he turned it into a life-sized game where kids are the game pieces. He sees what youth enjoy and tries to expand their enjoyment. Sometimes I see him playing Pretty Pretty Princess with a group of young participants, or hear him singing, "What Does the Fox Say?" with others; each time, the youth are on cloud nine. They think it's the best thing in the world that he's sporting a tiara and earrings. It's clear Josh has a genuine love for the youth his program serves.



We take pride in being one of the only programs in the area to provide all of our services at no cost to our families. We operate until 8 p.m. Monday to Friday, well beyond typical afterschool programs. We've taken several steps to provide students in our youth development program a well-rounded experience that allows them learning and growth opportunities. I've helped spearhead several renovation/room design projects that helped transform our program space into a warm, welcoming environment for our families and visitors—including renovation of our library, which led to providing opportunities for literacy programming, an area about which I'm especially passionate. I'm constantly humbled by the realization that I play a part in taking the expectations youth have for themselves and turning them on their heads by opening doors to new experiences and learning opportunities.



What makes Emily Krauser outstanding?

She's passionate about advocating for youth and for good use of data and research. She speaks enthusiastically with youth workers about the state of youth in their community, based on statistics she gathers and publishes. She's a passionate advocate for the local youth worker, striving to create issue briefs and other publications accessible, meaningful, and useful to busy youth-serving professionals. Her commitment to youth is obvious in everything she does. She takes time out of work (with IYI's blessing) to serve as a volunteer facilitator for educational groups at Girls, Inc. She's especially good at advocating for youth with mental health issues, and champions greater awareness, information, and practical resources for workers who may not know how to best support these youth. She's shown consistent professional growth.



What path did Emily take to enter the afterschool field?

Emily earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Ball State University. A musician from an early age, she volunteered at a summer music camp, eventually taking on greater responsibility in administrative roles, including fundraising. This led to her interest in nonprofit management, and she completed a master's degree in philanthropic studies from the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. She worked for a crisis youth shelter, compiled impressive research experience, and founded Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Indianapolis (YNPN Indy). With this under her belt, she came to IYI as a program manager for data.

EMILY KRAUSER

**Indiana Youth
Institute,**
Indianapolis, Indiana

Nominated by
Jessica Kleffman and
Julie Whitman

What habits influence Emily's success?

She's a classic early bird. Our organization's flex hours allow for a 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. workday, which she uses to great advantage, getting a lot of concentrated thinking and writing done in the early hours. She knows herself and is comfortable with her brain. She shares that knowledge with colleagues, making it easy to collaborate with her. She relentlessly, yet cheerfully, shepherds her data products through the internal approval process, design, and publication. She has a masterful way of reminding others of deadlines, making them feel they're doing her a favor by completing their responsibilities. Her consistent cheerfulness coupled with a strong work ethic make her efficient, effective, and a pleasure to work with.

What makes Emily stand out?

Emily stands out among her peers for her keen intelligence, boundless cheerfulness, and passion for serving youth and those who work with them.

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I work on the eighth floor of a building in downtown Indianapolis that probably used to be a factory. I sit in an office reading research and sifting through in-depth Excel files. Perhaps this doesn't sound much like an afterschool program. It's true: My role is not direct service, but rather to bridge the gap between research and practice. After my research, I turn the information into quick, easy-to-read issue briefs or data book sections. That way, youth workers around the state can incorporate solid, research-based knowledge in their day-to-day lives, without taking away from the precious time they spend serving kids every day.

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ELENA PIPERNO

**Catholic Partnership
Schools,**
Camden, New Jersey

Nominated by
Diane Genco

What makes Elena Piperno outstanding?

Since March 2011, Elena has worked in the lowest-performing school district in New Jersey—Camden—developing programs in tandem with the Catholic Schools, providing afterschool programs and summer programs to kids in need, and serving 500 kids a year in one of the lowest-performing schools and the most unsafe city in New Jersey.

What path did Elena take to enter the afterschool field?

Elena worked as a college student in afterschool, completed an internship with PASA in Providence, Rhode Island, and volunteered in programs in there. She came back to New Jersey after graduation, and was a volunteer for this Catholic Partnership. Basically, this position was created for her!

What habits influence Elena's success?

Passion and commitment influence Elena's success. Public and community service studies was her college major, and she has never lost sight of the prize: a better life for the kids of Camden, New Jersey.

What makes Elena stand out?

Elena dives deep. She builds bridges that have never existed before. This city is aching and sad, but she is able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. Her passion, love of life, and finding joy every day in the children she works with is inspiring. She generates positive change for the children and families of the forgotten city of Camden, New Jersey.



The Catholic Partnership Schools (CPS) educates over one thousand students in the five parochial schools in Camden. As the coordinator of After-School and Summer Programs, I oversee a variety of activities through the SOAR (Student Opportunities for Achievement and Recreation) Program, including athletics—basketball, cross country, and baseball—aviation, robotics, instrumental music, and choir. These programs engage over three hundred students each year. It is been a joy to watch our students progress, and to see their hard work shine. I am most proud that our programs, such as the CPS Choir and Orchestra, bring students together and create community among our five schools!



What makes Megan Bauer outstanding?

Megan, an exemplary leader, demonstrates remarkable responsibility in providing a leadership experience to all girls. She encourages creativity, celebrates diversity, demonstrates flexibility, and responds appropriately to professional and personal challenges. She pursues opportunities to grow professionally and engages in trainings that transform her into an increasingly competent program provider. She manages staff, writes curriculum, implements programs, and mentors the girls under her supervision. She creates a safe environment for her Girl Scouts to grow, develop, and take risks that lead to life-long learning.

What path did Megan take to enter the afterschool field?

A career in politics was her path before she joined Girl Scouts of Central Indiana; this experience enhances her capabilities. Communication, critical thinking, and community relations are strong skills that make Megan's influence as an afterschool manager even stronger. She jumped into her job with a passion to influence positive change, which has only grown stronger. She has passed her increased knowledge and expertise directly to the girls she works with and the entire organization.

What habits influence Megan's success?

Megan balances her professional and personal work. She frequently competes in Spartan and Iron Man races; her perseverance and ability to overcome physical obstacles reflect her ability to tackle career challenges. Her passion and strength resonate throughout her life. She leads by example. She creates a legacy of philanthropy. She stays engaged in organizations that benefit her community. Youth touched by her example see leadership in action. She manages crucial situations through engaging multiple viewpoints; when there's a conflict between Scouts, she ensures each involved learns from the situation and walks away with enhanced conflict resolution and communication skills. She makes collaborative conflict resolution an integral part of her life.

What makes Megan stand out?

Megan works with the Peace Learning Center, Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Center of Wellness for Urban Women, and National Afterschool Alliance, relationships that also provided opportunities for the girls she serves. She's a leader in the Girl Scout office and her community. She lives to make a difference. She stands out through her fierce advocacy for those entrusted to her care. She'll "go to the mat" and defend anyone when necessary. She has an intense, tangible sense of protection and responsibility for her colleagues, staff members, and the youth she works with.



**MEGAN
BAUER**

**Girl Scouts of
Central Indiana,
Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Nominated by
Jessica Kleffman**



I work with over six thousand girls K-12 who wouldn't typically have an opportunity to participate in the Girl Scout leadership experience. GSCI's unique partnership programming proactively addresses barriers to leadership among Central Indiana girls. Our Girl Scouting Beyond Bars (GSBB) program partners with Indiana Women's Prison (Department of Corrections) to bring the scouting experience to girls of incarcerated mothers/female guardians. I'm fortunate to manage our WINGS program, similar to GSBB, where we work with Child Advocates and the Children's Bureau in Indianapolis to offer the Girl Scout Leadership program to girls in the foster care system. The GSCI PEARL program brings the troop experience to the Indiana Housing Authority communities through Central Indiana. Troops meet at various housing complexes weekly and operate as a traditional troop.





BRIANA KNEELAND

For Kids Only,
Salem, Massachusetts

Nominated by
Maryellen Coffey

What makes Briana Kneeland outstanding?

Briana demonstrates good humor, commitment, professional discipline to tackle challenges, and the desire to innovate. These traits exemplify qualities important for future leaders who will shape the out-of-school time field.

What path did Briana take to enter the afterschool field?

Briana began working at For Kids Only (FKO) afterschool program as a young person, and moved into development, policy, and operations at FKO after college. She completed a master's program in the evenings, while working full time at her position.

What habits influence Briana's success?

Briana makes a point of pushing for continuous quality improvement across all eighteen FKO sites. She believes in high communication between sites and sharing data results with staff, to set program goals, not just using data to communicate results to funders.

What makes Briana stand out?

Briana is a passionate advocate, regularly visiting legislators for each community where FKO has a program, and participates in NAA conferences and local professional development opportunities, both as a panelist and participant. She has made a point of developing a large network of contacts among seasoned and emerging leaders across Massachusetts.

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Since 2008, I have been employed as director of development at FKO, a nonprofit organization that provides year-round out-of-school time programming in partnership with families, schools, and communities to over fourteen hundred children each year in East Boston and communities across the north shore of Massachusetts. I oversee fundraising, grant writing, and program planning; budgeting, assessment, and evaluation. Over the past six years, I've contributed to the substantial growth of FKO, raising over \$10 million in public and private funding (i.e., Child Care and Development Block Grant, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley) to support access, program expansion, and quality enhancements. My greatest joy of my job is seeing the results and long-term impact of the resource investment and dedicated team I work with. As a child who grew up every day in afterschool and summer programs, a former OST teacher, and now as an administrator, I know firsthand that out-of-school-time programs are a real solution in closing the achievement gap and supporting children to become confident and competent, engaged in learning, and prepared for future success.

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What makes Aviva Vincent outstanding?

Aviva's a member of the steering committee for New Britain Youth Network, a coalition working to improve the quality and quantity of afterschool opportunities. She's co-chair for its Quality and Evaluation Task Force, leading a Network Quality Assessment Project that includes graduate students and local afterschool programs piloting the APTO-tool. United Way plays a leadership role in an innovative Summer Program complementing the city's summer school program; Aviva is lead staff person. She's written and pursued grants to support the project, enlisted assistance of community-based afterschool providers, and helps coordinate project-associated training. She's thoughtful, quick to grasp new concepts, a strong presenter, and an excellent, organized planner.



What path did Aviva take to enter the afterschool field?

Aviva earned a B.A. from University of Massachusetts and her MSW from University of Connecticut. While attending college, she worked and interned in programs that supported children after school and during summer. These included internships with urban and therapeutic equine programs for children in Connecticut, and a work as a summer camp director. She interned at the United Nations in New York, primarily assigned to the Working Group on Girls and The Committee for Social Development. Working for United Way, she was immediately assigned as representative to The New Britain Youth Network.

AVIVA VINCENT

**United Way of Central
and Northeastern
Connecticut,
Hartford, Connecticut**

What habits influence Aviva's success?

Aviva describes herself as "a passionate community organizer who recognizes the value of true grassroots organizing, access to quality education, and community empowerment." Her energy and enthusiasm are abundant. She works well partner agencies. She's perceived by peers as a leader and willingly takes on new leadership roles within the Network to improve New Britain's afterschool environment. She's a critical thinker, offers constructive feedback, and displays great self-confidence. Even those with more years of experience recognize her strengths and willingly follow her lead.

Nominated by
Tracey Madden-
Hennessey

What makes Aviva stand out?

She's made a tremendous impact. Since joining the Quality Task Force, she's taken a leadership role in helping the Network adopt quality standards, choose a common quality assessment tool, and work with community partners to pilot it. She assumed leadership for a university partnership that brings into programs graduate students who observe and give feedback, helping programmers make changes and improve. She played a significant staffing role in 2013's summer enrichment program; the program is tripling in size for 2014 and she's again taking a lead planning role. She's mature beyond her years. Her body of work is impressive and New Britain is a better community as a result.



In my role as senior community investment manager at United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, I support system-wide efforts to address summer learning loss and engage the community and school to collaboratively reframe and align school-day and out-of-school time opportunities. These efforts have resulted in the growth of the Summer Enrichment Experience to serving 700 students, a 350 percent increase over four years. Eighteen CBO's will offer academically aligned programming in SEE, which strengthens their support for achievement year-round.





KAREN MARINO

**Farmington Extended
Care & Learning,**
Farmington, Connecticut

Nominated by
Vincent LaFontan

What makes Karen Marino outstanding?

Karen is passionate about the work she does every day with children and families in Farmington, Connecticut. She is an energetic site supervisor who embraces professional development, and embodies the core competencies of NAA. Karen has been an innovator when it comes to designing and operating programs that build social responsibility skills in children. Her programs have received local and state level attention (via newspaper articles) as outstanding youth development programs.

What path did Karen take to enter the afterschool field?

Karen has a bachelor's degree and master's degree. She has always worked in the out-of-school time field and is an example of how you can make a career of working in this field. She started as a group leader, and was promoted to senior group leader and then site supervisor over the past six years, working mainly with PK-4 elementary children.

What habits influence Karen's success?

Karen is fiercely dedicated to her students and staff in our afterschool programs. She demonstrates exemplary performance in all areas of her responsibilities. She has an excellent rapport with the parents and the school staff at her site. She has increased enrollment and attendance every year that she has supervised her site.

What makes Karen stand out?

Karen has been selected to present to her peers on the several topics: "Running Afterschool Programs that Build Social Responsibility in Children," "Using Technology in AfterSchool," and "Implementing the Common Core in your AfterSchool Program." She has presented at our local level, state level, regional level (in a neighboring state), and national level at the 2012, 2013, and 2014 NAA Conventions.

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I have been the site supervisor at East Farms Elementary School for the Farmington Extended Care & Learning Program for over five years. Our program is situated throughout the Farmington school district, housed in each of the elementary-level schools there. I feel fortunate to have such a strong partnership with East Farms, as it has helped me truly engage with the district's core beliefs as well as the Common Core State Standards. Through my work, I have engaged my students in various project-based learning activities, as well as many community giveback endeavors. Further, I present workshops on the subjects of technology, social justice, and Common Core integration to support others in my field, not only at the state level, but also at the national level for the past three NAA Conventions.

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What makes Ian Mouser outstanding?

Through his passion for music and understanding it's a catalyst for changing lives, Ian developed a program that engages hundreds of youth in music and performance to help them to cope, heal, and thrive while developing skills to create a fulfilling life; most youth served live in foster care or mental health treatment centers. MVM partners with local human services and education organizations to reach youth through collaborative music programs. It recently moved into its own programs space, launching programs to provide songwriting, recording, performance, and personal development opportunities for any young person looking to get involved.

What path did Ian take to enter the afterschool field?

Ian has extensive experience working with youth. Prior to founding MVM, he was program director for Wilderness Trails and treatment counselor, psychiatric technician, and music teacher for Albertina Kerr Centers. Working in a treatment center, he brought in instruments to work with a particularly difficult student; the rest is history. Programs created range from weekly "Music as Therapy" sessions with drum circle participation, to sing-along groups celebrating music's therapeutic aspects, to multiweek songwriting workshops and rock band camps where youth learn to play instruments, write, and record songs, to multiyear mentorships where older students aid younger students in artistic development.

What habits influence Ian's success?

Ian believes that being part of and contributing to our community is transformative and empowering; that long-term relationships provide guidance and create a concept of social accountability; that education paired with a desire for knowledge creates rich, fulfilled lives that positively affect individuals and the community. He believes in the arts' ability to inspire and connect with individuals; that arts education has the power to equip youth with tools for learning; that successful relationships are built on a foundation of trust. He's committed to maintaining a level of professionalism and transparency that fosters trust. He believes engaging, relevant, challenging experiences can uniquely connect with individuals and teach lifetime skills.

What makes Ian stand out?

Ian gives his time, talent, and treasure to make a difference in youth lives. MVM provides free music programs in areas where needs are high, but funding for services is low. MVM has been recognized by the city of Portland for having "greatly contributed to bringing music back into the lives of the next generation ... fostering personal, social, creative, and intellectual development ... and transforming marginalized youth." MVM's executive director was honored with a 2011 Skidmore Prize by Willamette Week, in recognition of excellent emerging nonprofit leaders.



IAN MOUSER

**My Voice Music
(MVM),**
Portland, Oregon

Nominated by
Beth Unverzagt

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I founded My Voice Music while working in a residential treatment facility for youth facing emotional and behavioral challenges. Music helped youth to cope, heal, and thrive during some of the darkest of moments in their lives. My Voice Music now serves 2,000 young people annually. Programs range from 'music as therapy,' afterschool, and in-school classes, to year-round mentorships and service opportunities. I am proud to part of a community that is helping young people to find their voice, based on their unique story, and in that process, unveiling remarkable gifts and fostering next-generation artists and leaders.

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