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The Center for Afterschool Education Receives \$2.3 Million Grant to Support Professional Development of More Than 5,000 Staff and Leaders of Out-of-School Time Programs

Moorestown, NJ, July 29, 2008 -- The Center for Afterschool Education at Foundations Inc., an organization that offers professional development, technical assistance, tools and publications to thousands of practitioners and leaders in the out-of-school time field, has received a grant of \$2.3 million to improve the educational quality of out-of-school time programs serving children and youth by training educators for the particular demands of afterschool. The two-year grant will support the training and professional development of more than 5,000 afterschool staff and leaders, will promote out-of-school time as a unique teaching and learning opportunity, and will contribute to building systems and higher education opportunities to sustain a skilled workforce for the field. It is expected that trainings and tools will reach over 5,000 out-of-school time programs serving more than 350,000 children. The grant is awarded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, an international foundation committed to specific goals in the United States, including access to high-quality out-of-school-time learning opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth.

In the face of persisting achievement gaps, high drop-out rates, and low-performing schools, out-of-school time programs – including those active before- and after-school and during summers – offer important avenues for reaching struggling students, and for teaching in ways that re-engage all children with learning. Dr. Claudia Weisburd, Executive Director of the Center for Afterschool Education explained, “Children spend more time out of school than they do in school. We have the opportunity – and responsibility – to use this time to help children learn and grow socially, emotionally, and academically. Skilled staff are absolutely essential to making the afterschool experience more than solely child care or tedious remedial tutoring.”

Providing afterschool education differs in a number of ways from classroom teaching. Afterschool staff may not have backgrounds in education, children are in mixed age groups, there is no pre-determined curriculum, and schedules are flexible. This grant will help the Center for Afterschool Education provide training and tools to show all staff how to work as specifically *afterschool* educators, able to turn the afterschool hours into a time for dynamic, hands-on learning that inspires children and reconnects them with the excitement of exploring and learning, while also building skills for success as students.

Finally, to sustain development of a skilled workforce, the Center for Afterschool Education will expand its emerging work with institutions of higher education to develop courses and certificate programs in afterschool education. This system-building initiative will be advanced through partnerships with The After School Corporation in New York and Arcadia University in Pennsylvania.

The mission of the Center for Afterschool Education is to improve the educational quality of afterschool, and to make out-of-school time an additional educational environment with its own distinct approaches to teaching and learning. The Center provides professional development, training, consulting, as well as tools and publications for education, 'afterschool style.'

The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Atlantic focuses on four critical social problems: Aging, Disadvantaged Children & Youth, Population Health and Reconciliation & Human Rights. Programs funded by Atlantic operate in Australia, Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United States and VietNam.

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