



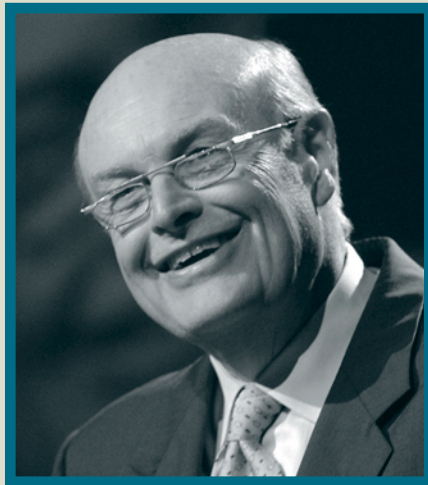
# Afterschool programs: Giving hope and help to all our children

Remarks by **William S. White**, *President*

CHARLES STEWART MOTT FOUNDATION



JULY 2005



**W** William S. White, President and CEO of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, gave these remarks in July 2005 at the Summer Institute of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative in Chicago. At the event, he accepted the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) first William S. White Lifetime Achievement Award in support of children, families and their communities.

In 1998, the Mott Foundation and the ED joined in an unusual private/public partnership to expand the availability of afterschool programs in low-income communities across the U.S. These programs provide academic, skill building and personal development experiences in safe environments for children and youth. In the ensuing years, Mott has provided more than \$100 million for professional development, research on effective practices, building public will, and furthering public policies for these programs and other afterschool initiatives. The federal government has provided \$4.5 billion to local schools and youth organizations to operate the programs.

# Afterschool programs:

## Giving hope and help to all our children

**T**hank you. I am deeply honored to be given this award, particularly because of what it represents — a commitment to young people.

So, let me understand this. I'm the first recipient of an award named after ... me. Because of this honor, I share something in common with Nelson Mandela of South Africa. No, I've never been a political prisoner. And no, I've never carried my country's hopes and dreams on my shoulders — luckily for my country! But there is a connection.

Several years ago, Mandela was the recipient of an award that recognized significant contributors to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund in Johannesburg. At that time, he received a limited edition watch bearing his own signature. He said during the presentation, "I am honored that, for the first time, I am the one that gets presented with the award, a watch signed by myself!" So, I'm equally pleased to be holding this award named in my honor. You might be interested to know that the Mott Foundation was presented with the

second watch by Mr. Mandela.

Earlier this year, I was in South Africa; the Mott Foundation has an office located in Johannesburg. During the trip, I visited several programs sponsored by the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. Guess what? We visited three different afterschool programs. The first two were based in schools and the third was based in a community organization.

At the first site, I saw high school students — boys and girls — discussing AIDS, which as you know is a fundamental challenge to South

Africa's future. It was an ongoing discussion, with no right or wrong answers.

At the second site, a young American is personally raising the money for, and organizing, what he calls NBA basketball clinics. He operates programs in quite a few schools, has players come from America to help him, and the turnout by kids is great.

The third site is sponsored by a community organization. It teaches students music, art and computers. It is trying to train them for the world of work.

Incidentally, music is often a strong component in afterschool programs. I have heard kids turn in spectacular

political persuasion, race, religion, or economic and social status. Afterschool programs tap into a deep-seated human desire — namely, to provide the best possible opportunities and, hopefully, outcomes for our children.

You will notice I did not say “my children” or “your children,” but rather I said, “our children.” It is our children who bring us together today. Every child brought into the world should have plenty of opportunities to succeed.

One reason afterschool is so critical is that, like it or not, the world is getting tougher. More dangers than ever lurk out there, just waiting to snatch the child who has given up and dropped out, the child who is

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performances not only in South Africa, but also in Coventry, England, and in the U.S. I understand that Chicago is the site of a great program sponsored by Gallery 37, also known as Afterschool Matters, of which Chicago's First Lady, Mrs. Maggie Daley, is the patron.

I cite these programs because afterschool programs appeal to all persons — regardless of nationality,

underachieving, the child who is scared, the child who is alienated, the child who is bullied, the child who has no one to turn to, and the child who cannot get the skills he or she will need to get a job someday.

And, no one knows better than educators like you that the environments from which our children and youth come are critical to successful education and reaching



*Robert Stonehill (left), deputy director of academic improvement and teacher quality programs at ED's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, presents award to William S. White.*

their full potential. Afterschool programs bridge the gap between the school and a neighborhood or home setting that is often less than desirable, and sometimes downright chaotic. As an aside, I think it's interesting that the afterschool program operating in Flint, Michigan, is named Bridges to the Future.

I believe our vision should be that every child in the U.S. has the opportunity to succeed, the opportunity to run the race. Tragically, too many children never make it to the starting blocks. And others don't get the help they need to leave the starting blocks. Our task, if not our duty as a nation, is to ensure that each child not

only runs that race but also crosses the finish line. He or she may have an occasional stumble or fall, but with help, mentoring and encouragement, they will succeed. And those hours when a child is not in school or supervised appropriately can make the difference. It's as simple as that.

Later in my remarks, I will return to the words "vision" and "task," but first a few important observations.

**A**s I was thinking about what to say, I examined the conference program and frankly, to use the expression, "I was bowled over." I liked the theme "Building Relationships That Engage Students and Meet Their

Needs.” It’s great. But what “bowled me over” is the quality of the program content for this year’s Summer Institute. This is the fifth Summer Institute that I have had the privilege to address. My first one was in 1998, and my last before today was in 2001. Since then, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative has evolved and matured.

Back in 1998, many participants at the institute were learning how to write grants; were learning what infrastructure or organization, sustainability, content and evaluation meant in the afterschool setting.

Today you are hearing case studies on good practices, discussing practical ways to ensure sustainability, sharing ideas on organization or management,

and developing the program’s relationship to the K-12 system, parents and the community at large. Most importantly, you have learned what works and what does not. Also, the schedule for this year’s program is heavy on content, evaluation and accountability. As we all know, kids, families and communities need the afterschool experience to be rich in information as well as be practical and enjoyable.

What follows will sound like I am shifting gears, but I am not. Back in 1935, C.S. Mott met a young educator named Frank Manley. Together Mott and Manley pioneered the Flint version of community schools. Mott was an automotive executive who was used to running his factories 24/7 or full-time. Yet he saw the public schools were open only five days a week from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. He felt this was a terrible waste of a valuable community resource, particularly since the community — i.e., kids and adults — had need for recreation, further education and enrichment after the schools had closed.

Now to my point. If C.S. Mott and Frank Manley were here today, they would be tickled pink to see all of you here and to hear your stories of great programs. What you people — in this room — have accomplished in a short timeline is remarkable and a dream come true for Frank and C.S. So, congratulations.



One of the reasons this program has been so successful is that it is bipartisan and has received the support of both the Clinton and Bush administrations. As Mrs. Bush said earlier this year, “Afterschool programs

Now for my second observation. Since my first Summer Institute in 1998, the size and sophistication of the 21st Century Learning program have expanded dramatically. Despite pressures on the federal budget,

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... can keep children safe and improve their academic performance.” In addition, Secretaries Riley, Paige and now Spellings have all been supportive of the 21st Century Community Learning programs.

The key point here is that from the very beginning, Secretary Riley assigned superior staff to this program, and Secretaries Paige and Spellings have kept them on. Competent, continuous, but more important, committed — and I will say passionate — staff involvement is one of the keys to this program’s success. Bob Stonehill, Joe Conaty and Carol Mitchell, and in the earlier years, Adriana de Kanter and Jen Reinhart, have been the critical component. Let us join C.S. Mott and Frank Manley in giving Bob Stonehill a round of applause and congratulations on a job well done. Thank you, Bob. You are the best.

Congress has continued to support the program at a generous level of about \$1 billion per year.

Decisions about funding of individual afterschool programs are now being made at the state level, and there is an active and effective network of states working together on afterschool programming and concerns. Increasingly, organizations representing stakeholders — such as mayors, governors, chiefs of police and superintendents of schools, to name just a few — are actively working on behalf of afterschool. And afterschool programs, like our public school systems, are being held to higher levels of accountability and performance.

Speaking of governors, I am a board member of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s After-School All-Stars. That program operates in 15 different cities. The challenge that program faces is how to ensure that the

local programs provide content-rich, comprehensive, quality offerings. And that is the same challenge we face in Flint, Michigan. As you have learned at this Summer Institute, you are not alone in addressing the issues of sustainability, management, relationships and content — in other words, quality.

Another way to define the program's evolution is to throw out a few statistics. When we began this partnership in 1998, the Department of Education made 99 grants. Seven years later, 2,700 grants have made it possible for communities around the

support afterschool programs. And 76 percent of voters tell pollsters they would be willing to pay additional taxes if they resulted in more afterschool programs. This is important, because developing the financial resources to keep these programs going is a big challenge.

**T**hird, taken as a field, afterschool programming is fairly new, and we are now just figuring out how best to measure its effectiveness. A growing number of studies indicate that these programs do make a positive difference in the lives of the kids who participate.

**There is no single formula for a successful afterschool program. ... The most effective afterschool programs reflect the needs of the young people they serve, and the resources available within a community to address those needs.**

country to serve more than a million youth and adult family members in nearly 8,500 local programs.

Now that is what I call — in the jargon of the foundation world — taking a program to scale!

Public opinion surveys tell us that support for comprehensive afterschool programs remains strong. On average, about 90 percent of those surveyed over the past seven years say they

We know that afterschool programs provide a safe haven during nonschool hours. But we are also finding out that students who regularly participate in quality afterschool activities make better grades, complete more homework, and have less absenteeism and tardiness.

We've also gained some insights into what makes an afterschool program work. There is no single



formula for a successful afterschool program. That shouldn't come as a surprise, because the most effective afterschool programs reflect the needs of the young people they serve, and the resources available within a community to address those needs. By resources, I don't mean just money. I'm talking about staff and volunteer commitment, creative approaches to get the job done, and partnerships, whether between schools and other organizations serving youth or between the afterschool providers and the business community.

For instance, I remember visiting a program operated by the After-School All-Stars in Los Angeles. The All-Stars were started by then-Mr. Schwarzenegger. Shootings in and around the program's playground were a regular occurrence. With the help of the community and local police, the afterschool program transformed the schoolyard. Today kids who were once gang-related troublemakers have turned around and are engaged in productive activity, and the middle school boasts a long waiting list.

In Flint, there is Kathy. Kathy was a career employee at a retail store. For health reasons, she resigned. Soon after that, she became an afterschool coordinator at Eisenhower Elementary School. While her hours were 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., she soon realized that help was needed during lunch in the cafeteria, so she volunteered. She later

extended her time into the morning. To properly coordinate the program, which also extended into adult activities, she recruited — free of charge — her high school son and some of his friends to help out. She also enlisted the support of a neighborhood church and other organizations. It is a great story of organization, commitment and passion, building sustainability and integration into the K-6 program, and using community resources.

These are just a few examples of the thousands of afterschool programs operating around the country, each quite representative of its community. Unfortunately, time doesn't permit me to talk about L.A.'s Best on the West Coast and TASK in New York on the East Coast and the great work being done in cities, villages and neighborhoods across the nation.

However, experience has taught us that regardless of location, there are certain conditions that must exist for quality programs to develop and be sustained. Researchers and practitioners alike tell us that effective programs combine academic, enrichment, cultural and recreational activities.

When I think about the programs I have seen, I realize it's not just about afterschool. It's bigger than that. It's about what all our kids need from us if they're going to unlock their potential — whether it's at 8 a.m. in a classroom or at 4 p.m. in a program at

the local Y or 1 p.m. in a summer school program. And if afterschool can remind us of these elements of success, all the better.

**N**ow to my fourth observation, which comes from my 1998 remarks. Some 30 years ago, the then-superintendent of schools in Flint, where the community schools experiment had captured the imagination of the nation, was quoted as saying that afterschool programs were the frosting on the cake.

Well, you have proven that he was wrong. Cake is the wrong metaphor. Cake is dessert. Bread comes with the main course. It's fulfilling and substantial. Afterschool learning programs aren't the frosting on the cake, but the yeast in the bread.

Indeed, just as the yeast helps the bread to rise, afterschool and other forms of productive activity help students to grow; they help excellence to rise through learning. Just as the yeast brings all the ingredients together to produce a nourishing bread, extended learning partnerships bring individuals and

organizations from all levels of the community together in common purpose, to meet the needs of local citizens — and especially children. I'd label this variety of yeast as "passion for kids."

Afterschool programs are a critical first step in the process of changing not just how we educate our children, but how we come together, in partnership — school and community — to ensure their success. I believe that all of us here today share a common vision of finding new ways to help our schools and communities reach out more effectively to our nation's children and their families.

I'd like to close with one of my favorite quotes, taken from the walls of a 17th century church in England:

*"A vision without a task is a dream.  
"A task without a vision is drudgery.  
"But a vision with a task is the hope  
of the world."*

Ladies and gentlemen, the vision is clear, the task is upon us, and our children — all of them — are the hope for the world.

Thank you.

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