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Youth Representatives Visit Capitol Hill to Advocate for Afterschool Programs

May 28th, 2014 - Posted in [Events](#), [Partners](#) by Mary Mathias

On Thursday, May 22, 2014, youth representatives from museum programs met with Members of Congress to advocate for afterschool programs as part of the [Afterschool Alliance's](#) Afterschool for All Challenge. Held as part of the Afterschool Alliance's National Network Meeting, the [Afterschool for All Challenge](#) "[provided] unique networking and professional development opportunities that empower participants to become informed, capable afterschool advocates of all ages." Participants were sent to Capitol Hill to advocate for the [Afterschool for America's Children Act](#) as part of the 21st Century Learning Centers initiative (S. 326 in the Senate and HR 4086 in the House of Representatives).

The teenage representatives traveled to Washington, DC from the New Jersey Academy of Aquatic Sciences in Camden, the Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey, The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Natural History Museum of Utah in Salt Lake City.



The teens started with a day of advocacy training on May 21 as part of the conference. They ended the day with additional preparation over pizza at the ASTC office, which gave them an opportunity to meet the rest of the youth participants and learn about the programs at other institutions.



The groups were up early the next morning for the Breakfast of Champions, which honored leading advocates and practitioners in afterschool programs. Then it was off to Capitol Hill for meetings in the offices of Members of Congress from each group's home state. Overall, the reaction from both the teens and the staffers with whom they met was enthusiastic, and all parted in high spirits, satisfied that they had made an excellent case for afterschool programs.





Over the next few weeks, the participating ASTC programs will be posting guest entries about their experiences here on the ASTC blog, so stay tuned!



Photos by Mary Mathias