How to Enter & Eligibility:
Complete the entry form before 11:59 a.m. June 15, 2023, to be entered to win the sweepstakes. The Sweepstakes is open only to individuals who are 18 years-of-age or older and reside in the fifty (50) United States or District of Columbia (the “Territory”) on May 15, 2023, with a valid email account. Two winners will receive:
✓ One (1) 2023-2024 FIRST LEGO League Explore Class Pack (supports 24 students)
✓ Six (6) LEGO Education SPIKE Essential Sets
✓ One (1) Seat of FIRST Professional Development (in-person and remote options available)
Winners will be announced by June 30, 2023.

Register Here
At the end of May we gathered our 12 Pathway to Accreditation Guides for their very first in-person meeting! We did some reflection and planned for next year and shared some food and fun! If you have extensive experience in out of school time leadership and are interested in a part-time contract position please consider submitting an application to join our team of Guides.

Find out more information here!

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**Practice Emotional Inclusion at Work, Not Toxic Positivity**

*Contributed by Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits*

Emotions other than joy, when expressed at work, can make us uncomfortable. This article explains why that discomfort can lead to emotional damage when we have to mask our true feelings. Read more to learn ways that we can encourage staff to be their authentic, emotional selves.

[Read More](#)

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**Voters, parents, and youth agree: Afterschool supports mental health**

*By CHARLOTTE STEINECKE  Posted: May 04, 2023*

“For me, the introduction to my culture and the feeling of being a part of something bigger than myself, goes hand in hand with a spark or an increase to my mental, spiritual, and physical health,” writes Sasha Neyra, 16. Sasha is a high school junior and Member of Big Lagoon Rancheria. In her role as a Student Research Assistant at Two Feathers Native American Family Services, she shared her experience of completing her Flower Dance and how...
the support of Two Feather Native American Family Services program, ACORN, has impacted her mental health.

“I believe that more people, specifically Native youth, should have opportunities similar to mine, to explore themselves and realize that they have a community of people that come with nothing but support and love. Afterschool programs should and must prioritize this.”

Many afterschool programs are essential supports for the mental health and well-being for children, young people, and families, and their efforts are being recognized. Recent research bears out that afterschool and summer learning programs are helping young people thrive and providing essential protective factors for youth development.

- A poll of registered voters in November 2022 found that 84 percent of voters and 89 percent of parents who voted agree that afterschool programs support young people’s social and emotional well-being by helping them develop confidence, communicate and build connections with others, and work in a team.
- Eighty-six percent of Black voters agreed that afterschool programs are supporting young people’s social and emotional well-being.
- Among women voters, 86 percent of respondents agreed that afterschool programs support young people’s social and emotional well-being.
- A spring 2022 survey found that parents with a child in an afterschool program overwhelmingly report that their child has supports for their health and well-being, such as time to interact with their peers and build social skills (91 percent), connect with caring adults (79 percent), and learn responsible decision-making (78 percent). Additionally, 86 percent of parents say that their child is building their confidence in their program.
- The spring 2022 survey also found that programs are helping connect families to critical community resources; 67 percent report that their child’s afterschool program is connecting them with community resources such as dental clinics, financial planning, or mental health services.

Young people themselves are sharing the important impact afterschool programs can have on their mental health. Avery Reisinger, an Afterschool Youth Ambassador, shared that her afterschool program provided “a sense of stability and a place to connect” with others in her life as a military child. Other programs are empowering students to take action – Afterschool Youth Ambassador Nekayla Stokes recalls designing workshops relevant to the needs of herself and her peers, as well as developing a service learning project focused on mental health challenges among students ages 15-18 and the types of services and resources they need.

Voters, parents and caregivers, and young people themselves agree that afterschool programs are promoting youth mental health and well-being. During May’s Mental Health Awareness Month, we’ll dig deeper into the supports afterschool programs provide and how these important protective factors are helping young people and families.