

Afterschool Alliance

In 1998 the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation asked FowlerHoffman to help design a public education campaign that would build support for safe, stimulating afterschool programs. FowlerHoffman stepped forward with strategic thinking and effective tactics. The results: exponential increases in public funding for afterschool, an engaged grassroots constituency, and the emergence of the Afterschool Alliance, a dynamic organization grown from a public-private coalition that in three years has become the definitive national voice for afterschool.

When Mott approached FowlerHoffman, it already had a strong partner in the U.S. Department of Education, whose 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative provides grants to communities for afterschool programs. Other organizations had also expressed interest in supporting afterschool, among them the Advertising Council, Entertainment Industry Foundation, Creative Artists Agency Foundation and J.C. Penney Co., Inc. FowlerHoffman assessed existing polls and realized that the public was not far behind: concern about education and the after school hours was growing. At the same time, FowlerHoffman's ongoing monitoring of the political landscape indicated that policy makers were searching for positive solutions for youth and communities. With the assets of nonprofit, private and public support, FowlerHoffman encouraged Mott to dream bigger than their original goal of a public education campaign.

The result was the creation of the Afterschool Alliance, a broad coalition of public, private and nonprofit organizations dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to quality, affordable afterschool programs by 2010. FowlerHoffman was retained as the strategic lead coordinator under the direction of the Alliance's Executive Director. The firm helped the Alliance to develop a mission, as well as goals and plans to use communications and advocacy to increase resources for afterschool at the national, state and local levels. Through strategic thinking, research, outreach and advocacy, special events and projects, networking, grassroots mobilization, policy maker education and partnership development, FowlerHoffman helped the Alliance evolve from a good idea to an organization that has a proven record in galvanizing and increasing public engagement in afterschool.



Since the Afterschool Alliance was publicly launched in 1999 by then-Secretary of Education Richard Riley, FowlerHoffman has helped its assets grow to include:

- a database of more than 40,000 advocates;
- a PSA campaign worth \$80 million;
- an active corps of practitioners willing to advocate for afterschool;
- a strong presence on Capitol Hill;
- more than a dozen state networks of advocates and opinion leaders;
- a hallmark annual event, *Lights On Afterschool!*, which in its second year had more than 60 partners, boasted 3,600 sites across the nation, and was pleased to welcome Arnold Schwarzenegger as National Chair;
- three years of polling data documenting public support for afterschool;
- tool kits distributed to more than 6,000 afterschool programs; and
- a website (www.afterschoolalliance.org) that receives an average of 1.5 million visits per month.

Today the Alliance is an independent, \$5 million nonprofit organization with diverse funding and broad grassroots support. Thanks in part to the Alliance's efforts on behalf of afterschool, federal funding of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative has grown from \$40 million in FY1998 to \$1 billion in FY2002.

The Afterschool Alliance has come a long way in three short years, and FowlerHoffman has helped it get there by conceiving, implementing and/or overseeing programs that have leveraged existing partnerships and highlighted public support for quality, affordable afterschool. FowlerHoffman will continue to help the Alliance reach its goal of afterschool for all by 2010, not only by seeing opportunities, but by seizing them.

For more information, please visit www.afterschoolalliance.org.