

Local After-school Advocate Honored in Washington, DC

Jennifer Peck, a locally based advocate and leader in promoting after-school and summer learning for youth, was honored this month as an "Afterschool Champion" at a ceremony in the nation's Capitol.

- By [Charles Burress](#)
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Jennifer Peck, executive director of the Oakland-based nonprofit [Partnership for Children and Youth](#), is one of nine people in the nation recently honored as "State Afterschool Champions" in a ceremony in Washington, DC.

The award from the nonprofit [Afterschool Alliance](#) lauded the nine individuals "for their tireless and extraordinary support for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families," the alliance said in a news release.

They were honored at a "Breakfast of Champions" gala in Washington on May 9.

Peck's organization focuses in particular on after-school and summer programs for youth in low-income communities. Founded in 1997 and formerly known as the Bay Area Partnership, the nonprofit has raised more than \$70 million for youth programs in the lowest-income communities in the Bay Area and played an important role in advocacy and policy-making, according to the organization's Web site.

Peck, who lives in Richmond and is married to Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, was named in December 2010 by then state Superintendent of Public Instruction-elect Tom Torlakson as Transition Team Director and Policy Advisor. She continues to serve as an advisor to Torlakson for expanded learning and community school issues.

In 2008, when Torlakson was a state senator from Contra Costa County, he named Peck "Woman of the Year," following her leadership in 2006 in shaping Proposition 49 and state legislation that supported school funding in low-income communities.

Peck also established the California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance and leads a coalition of organizations in the state seeking more effective federal policies for after-school and summer-learning programs. She also recently helped pass SB 429 to support summer-learning programs.

“Jennifer Peck is a tireless and committed advocate for afterschool and summer learning programs,” said a statement from Renee Newton, Director of the Center for Community School Partnerships, who serves on the Executive Committee of the California AfterSchool Network. “Jennifer’s legislative expertise, her dedication to ensuring that children have opportunities to learn during out-of-school time, and her effectiveness in improving the quality of and access to afterschool and summer programs are deeply inspiring.”

The executive director of the Afterschool Alliance, Jodi Grant, said in a statement:

“This year’s champions are working in areas such as research, policy development and advocacy in settings as diverse as universities, foundations, state government and community-based organizations to ensure that kids have somewhere safe, supervised, educational and inspiring to go after school. There’s an enormous body of research proving that afterschool programs are successful in keeping kids engaged in school, helping them learn and even encouraging them to explore possible careers. That’s why it’s more important than ever for us all to do whatever we can, in whatever forums are available to us, to be champions for afterschool.”

Other State Afterschool Champions honored at the "Breakfast of Champions" are:

- **Florida:** Claudia Davant, Managing Partner, Adams St. Advocates
- **Kansas:** Dr. Elaine Johannes, Associate Professor, Kansas State University
- **Nevada:** Olivia Diaz, Assemblywoman, Nevada State Legislature
- **New York:** Lena Townsend, Executive Director, Robert Bowne Foundation
- **New York:** Anne Lawrence, Program Officer, Robert Bowne Foundation
- **Ohio:** Dr. Monica J. Mitchell, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Co-Director of INNOVATIONS, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital & Medical Center
- **Pennsylvania:** Dr. Kathryn Hynes, Assistant Professor, Penn State University