

Frankfort resident named afterschool ambassador

STAFF REPORT

The Afterschool Alliance recently announced that Frankfort resident Priscilla Steinmetz, founder and executive director of The Bridge Teen Center in Orland Park, has been selected to serve as a 2011-2012 Afterschool Ambassador.



Steinmetz

She is one of just 20 local leaders from 17 states chosen for the honor this year. Each ambassador will continue directing or supporting a local afterschool program while also serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, and building support for afterschool programs.

“Quality afterschool programs are invaluable to students, families and communities,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs keep kids safe, help

working families and inspire students to learn. But in Washington, D.C., and all across the country, the afterschool programs that families rely on are being threatened by budget cuts and efforts to divert afterschool funds to other programs.

“We need to spread the word about the urgent need to make opportunities to attend afterschool programs available to all children who need them. Priscilla will bring great skill and energy to that work in her role as an Afterschool Ambassador. I look forward to working with her to build even stronger support for afterschool programs among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers and others.”

Steinmetz said she is looking forward to her new role.

“I am delighted to have this chance to help increase support for afterschool programs, which give students opportunities to explore their interests and give parents the security that comes with knowing that their children are

safe and supervised, with engaging, educational activities after the school day ends,” Steinmetz said. “Afterschool programs are critical to students’ success in school, to families trying to survive in this recession, and to America’s workforce in the future. We need to strengthen the afterschool programs we have and ensure that there is a program for every child who needs one.”

The Bridge Teen Center is an innovative nonprofit teen community center that exclusively targets students in seventh through 12th grade. Programs at The Bridge are offered free of charge, and are designed to help students develop mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally in a safe environment. The Bridge Teen Center opened in June 2010, and since then, more than 6,000 hours of free programming have been provided to 700 different teenagers who represent more than 30 different local school districts.