

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Noelle Furon
760-296-2201
nfuron@drd.us.com

**DESERT RECREATION DISTRICT'S AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
CELEBRATE THE HEART OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS DURING
"AFTERSCHOOL PROFESSIONALS APPRECIATION WEEK"
*April 23-27, 2018***

Indio, California, April 19, 2018 – Desert Recreation District (DRD) is joining with the [National AfterSchool Association](#) (NAA) to celebrate the professionals that are at the heart of afterschool programs during "[Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week](#)" April 23-27, 2018.

"We believe Afterschool professionals make a difference in the lives of young people," said Maureen Archuleta, Community Services Supervisor for DRD. "We encourage everyone to join us this week in thanking the afterschool professionals in their lives."

Why is it important to recognize Afterschool Professionals?

An estimated 10.2 million children participate in afterschool programs each year. Today, afterschool programs are viewed as much more than just childcare. They are widely credited as the way to enhance education in STEM, literacy, the arts, social and emotional learning, health and wellness, and more. With that demand comes increased responsibility on the estimated 850,000 of professionals who are making a difference in the lives of our children.

What is Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week?

Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week is a joint effort of community partners, afterschool programs, youth and child care workers, and individuals who have committed to dedicating time to recognize and appreciate those who work with youth during out-of-school hours. The week is marked by celebrations and public relations efforts to encourage people to thank afterschool professionals serving children in programs and organizations across the nation.

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Who is an Afterschool Professional?

An Afterschool Professional is someone who works with children and youth in diverse school and community-based settings to provide a wide variety of extended learning opportunities and care during out-of-school hours. Currently, there is an estimated 850,000 afterschool professionals in the US.

How can I thank an Afterschool Professional?

- Declare on social media: I appreciate the Afterschool Professionals who make a difference in the lives of young people. #heartofafterschool
- Give a hand-written card from you and/or your child to the afterschool professional in your life.
- Send an email to an afterschool professional's supervisor describing why that person is appreciated.
- Bring treats to the staff at your afterschool program.
- Join the movement by donating your social media influence via Thunderclap (link on web site).

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For more information about Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week visit:

<http://www.heartofafterschool.com>