

WELCOME

Wellesley College, home of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, has a significant connection to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, site of the Parkland, Florida, school shooting. Stoneman Douglas graduated from Wellesley in 1912 as an English major. She was an activist who devoted her life to protecting the Florida Everglades from destruction. In 1977, Stoneman Douglas won Wellesley's Alumnae Achievement Award, the college's highest honor. In 1993, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The values of Stoneman Douglas' life—and our field's commitment to the value of the life of every student, in school and out—are reflected in this issue of *Afterschool Matters*.

Our authors remind us that afterschool programs nurture positive peer relationships that in turn foster learning in and out of the classroom. They show us how afterschool programs help young people take on leadership roles to work toward social justice and environmental stewardship. Articles by an Afterschool Matters Fellow and by our own NIOST researchers point toward the critical roles of professional development and quality assessment in reaching our common vision of quality afterschool for all.

These are turbulent times. Our children's lives are at risk. Principles that guide our work—the right of every child to be protected from harm, the vital importance of youth development in building sustainable communities, the value of youth voice—swirl with debates about mental health care, public safety, and federal investments in afterschool programming.

How shall we navigate these turbulent times? Every afterschool practitioner and stakeholder has his or her own answers to this question. One answer we can share is simply to hold true to our values—the values embodied in the work we do every day to lift up the field and change children's lives.



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