****

**MEDIA ALERT**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thomas Azzarella

(907) 602-0569

tazzarella@akafterschool.org

**Alaska Afterschool Network Celebrates Afterschool Superheroes.** Out-of-School Time Workers Recognized During Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week.

**Anchorage, AK –** The Alaska Afterschool Network is recognizing five outstanding afterschool professionals from across the state who act as everyday superheroes in youth’s lives during Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week, happening April 24-28.

These Afterschool Superheroes provide academic enrichment and keep youth safe, while making it possible for families to go to work with peace of mind. Out-of-school time staff step forward every day to help children in need, provide healthy snacks and meals, foster success in school, and serve as role models.

Last month, the Alaska Afterschool Network asked afterschool professionals, parents, and community members in the state of Alaska to nominate their Afterschool Superhero. From this pool of nominees, five Afterschool Superheroes were selected to be featured this year.

This year’s five recognized Afterschool Superheroes are:

**Tracey Hupe** | Club Manager at Boys & Girls Club of Eagle River, Eagle River
**Missy Odsather** | Afterschool Program Coordinator at Barnette Magnet School, Fairbanks

**Janice Hadley** | Onsite Coordinator at Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC) 21st Century

**Thomas Burek** | Executive Director at Trailside Discovery, Anchorage
**Courtney Havrilek** | Lead Afterschool Coordinator at Lathrop High School, Fairbanks

These individuals help prepare teens for their first jobs and life beyond high school, fundraise to provide scholarships to youth that cannot afford to attend the program, and ensure that all students have a safe way home. To read more about how these everyday superheroes go above and beyond for Alaska’s youth, [visit the Alaska Afterschool Network blog.](https://www.akafterschool.org/blog/2017/4/21/alaska-afterschool-network-celebrates-afterschool-superheroes)

The five highlighted Afterschool Superheroes will receive an award to honor their impact on youth, as well as free registration to the 2017 [Alaska Afterschool Conference](https://www.akafterschool.org/alaska-afterschool-conference/), to be held November 16-17.

Afterschool Superheroes is a movement in conjunction with the [National AfterSchool Association](http://www.naaweb.org) (NAA) to celebrate the professionals that are at the heart of afterschool programs during [Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week](http://www.heartofafterschool.com) April 24-28, 2017.

The[**Alaska Afterschool Network**](http://www.akafterschool.org/) is statewide collaboration supporting, strengthening and advocating for afterschool programs in Alaska and is a project of the [Alaska Children’s Trust](http://www.alaskachildrenstrust.org/). Founded in 2013with a grant from the Mott Foundation and local support from the Alaska Children’s Trust, State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Rasmuson Foundation, Mat-Su Health Foundation, ExxonMobil, Alaska Association for Community Education, and United Way of Anchorage.  Contact Thomas Azzarella, Director, for more information.

###