

After-School Staff Appreciation Week To Be Celebrated

Partners After School programs are joining with the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) in celebrating the professionals that are at the heart of afterschool programs during the inaugural Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week, April 25-29.

An after-school 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.

"We believe after-school professionals make a difference in the life of a child," said Fred Polce, director of the Local Management Board, which oversees Partners After School in Garrett County. "We encourage everyone to join us this week in thanking the after-school professionals in their lives."

Partners After School programs serve children in the Accident, Grantsville, and Oakland areas. Programs are provided by the Garrett County Local Management Board (LMB), Garrett County commissioners, Governor's Office for Children, United Way of Garrett County, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the 21st Century Community Learning Center. The programs are administered by the Garrett County Health Department and Garrett County Com-



AFTERSCHOOL PROFESSIONALS APPRECIATION WEEK NOTED – Partners After School programs in Garrett County are joining a national observance next week, as the inaugural Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week will take place April 25-29. These individuals to be honored are those who work 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. Pictured above are some of the staff from Partners After School @ Oakland. From left to right are James Michaels, Sadie Liller, Remington Sweitzer, and Christina Yapps. See story.

munity Action Committee.

An estimated 10.2 million children participate in after-school programs each year. The programs are viewed as much more significant than simply childcare, Polce noted. They are widely credited as the way to enhance education in STEM, literacy, the arts, social and emotional learning, and health and wellness. With that demand comes increased responsibility on the estimated 850,000 of professionals who work in the program.

"Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week is a joint effort of partners, after-school 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," Polce said.

The week will be marked with celebrations and public relations efforts to encourage people to thank after-school professionals serving children in programs and organizations across the nation.

The organizers of the week's designation offered several ways for persons to express appreciation to the professionals. They may post comments on social media, such as "I believe after-school professionals make a differ-

ence in the life of a child (#heartofafterschool)"; give a hand-written card to local after-school professionals; or send an email to an after-school professional's supervisor describing why that person is appreciated.

For more information about Partners After School, persons may call the LMB at 301-334-7445 or 301-895-3111.