MAYORS FROM TACOMA, SPOKANE & PULLMAN SHARE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT YOUTH PROGRAMS

Mayors Marilyn Strickland, Mary Verner and Glenn Johnson discuss the value of supporting and investing in afterschool programs through collaboration and better coordination of services.

June 21, 2011 – Tomorrow at the annual Association of Washington Cities conference in Spokane, Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland, Spokane Mayor Mary Verner and Pullman Mayor Glenn Johnson will be discussing the value and importance of afterschool and summer programs in supporting young people and making communities healthy, vibrant places to live. City leaders from across the state will hear from all three Mayors about how they have used their leadership to advance successful afterschool programs and what others can do in their communities to support improved educational outcomes for children and youth in partnership with schools, community based organizations, parents and youth.

Research now confirms that since only 20% of a child’s waking hours are spent in formal education settings, how they spend the remaining time outside of school can have dramatic impacts on their lives. We also know from reports compiled by Fight Crime Invest in Kids (www.fightcrime.org) that the peak hours for juvenile crime and engagement in risky behaviors are between 3 - 6 pm after the school bell rings. Afterschool, youth development and summer programs provide young people with safe places to go during those critical hours. These programs offer academic supports, recreational activities which help to stem obesity, social and emotional learning opportunities, support working families, keep communities safe by engaging youth in productive outlets during the hours they are not in school and can support economic and workforce development.

In these dire economic times, Washington State received some good news this month that we will be able to expand efforts to raise awareness among municipal leaders of their important role in supporting afterschool, summer and other expanded learning opportunities. The National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families recently selected Washington State as one of nine states to host mayoral summits on expanding access to afterschool programs and building citywide out-of-school time systems. School’s Out Washington is the recipient of the grant and will work collaboratively through its Washington Afterschool Network with key partners and leaders across the state to host the mayoral summit in 2012.

“Today, as we launch this statewide effort to further engage municipal and community leaders in better coordinating access to afterschool, youth development and summer programs, we are thrilled to have Mayors Strickland, Verner and Johnson leading the way,” explains Janet Frieling, Network Director at School’s Out Washington. “This is the beginning of what we hope will be a process led by Mayors and other community leaders who value the important role of afterschool programs in supporting young people’s school and life success and can provide concrete examples of what has worked in their community and how to expand similar efforts across our state.”

The summit will convene mayors, city council members, state agency officials, school and business leaders and community partners to discuss the importance of afterschool programming and how to expand opportunities for youth by improving policies and partnerships at the state and city levels. The Washington Afterschool Network will receive $6,600 to host a summit and will also receive assistance from the YEF Institute on outreach, messaging to city leaders and strategic planning.

School’s Out Washington (www.schoolsoutwashington.org) is a statewide organization with a mission of providing services and guidance for organizations to ensure all young people have safe places to learn and grow when not in school. School’s Out Washington is dedicated to building community systems to support quality out-of-school time programs for Washington’s 5-18 year olds through training, advocacy and leadership.
The National League of Cities (www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/iyef/afterschool) is the nation’s oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans. The Institute for Youth, Education and Families, an entity within the National League of Cities, helps city leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city council members and other local leaders can play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

The Mayoral summit project is generously supported through a partnership between the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (www.mott.org/ourissues/Afterschool.aspx) and The Wallace Foundation (www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/CurrentAreasofFocus/Out-Of-SchoolLearning/Pages/default.aspx).