

**Contact:** Sandi Connors, 401.444.0652 / 401.523.9668 / [Sandi.Connors@uwri.org](mailto:Sandi.Connors@uwri.org)  
*Follow the conversation on Twitter: #AfterschoolRI and #LiveUnitedRI*

## Parents Have Greater Job Security thanks to Afterschool & Summer Learning Programs

**Providence, R.I. (May 26, 2017)** Demand for high-quality summer learning programs in Rhode Island is expected to outstrip availability this summer, and the shortage could impact jobs. According to United Way of Rhode Island, when families have choices for afterschool and summer learning, they have greater peace of mind: 4 in 5 parents say these programs help them keep their jobs.

That was one of the key messages delivered by United Way of Rhode Island's (UWRI) [Afterschool Leadership Circle](#) (ALC) when the group hosted an Afterschool and Summer Learning Day at the State House on Thursday, May 25. More than 100 education professionals, representing high-quality programs statewide, attended to share the impact of their work.

"Afterschool and summer learning are much more than nice-to-have programs; they provide a tremendous benefit to our children, families, and communities," said Anthony Maione, President and CEO of United Way of Rhode Island. "High-quality programs are proven to help close the achievement gap, while supporting working parents. If we're going to succeed in best preparing all children for college and careers, it's imperative that we expand access to afterschool and summer learning opportunities."

### **Students Achieve More with Afterschool & Summer Programs**

According to the [Afterschool Alliance](#), when students participate in afterschool programs, they attend school more often, do better in school and are more likely to graduate. In addition:

- By increasing kids' earning potential, improving academic achievement and reducing juvenile crime and delinquency, afterschool programs save up to \$9 for every \$1 invested.
- All students, regardless of socioeconomic status, lose up to two months of math skills when they lack access to active learning opportunities during the summer, while low-income youth may also lose two months of reading comprehension.
- By keeping kids safe, supported and supervised when not in school, out-of-school programs help businesses hire the workforce they need.

-More-

According to a study by the [Harvard Family Research Project](#), by the time children reach sixth grade, middle-class students have spent 6,000 more hours in learning activities outside of school than students from families who live in poverty.

Students who participated in the local 2016 Hasbro Summer Learning Initiative (HSLI), a collaboration between United Way and Hasbro, Inc. averaged gains of 22 percent in literacy skills and 30 percent in math skills, based on pre- and post-test participation. The program provides youth six weeks of education that combines hands-on, real-world learning with a focus on service learning projects.

“One of the goals of our network is to become even stronger advocates for the needs of students and the out-of-school learning programs we know make a difference in their academic performance,” said Elana Rosenberg, Senior Project Manager of Expanded Learning for United Way of Rhode Island. “But the fact is that everyone can be an advocate for these programs and influence change at the state systems level to bring them to scale to reach more youth—the proof of their success is in the data.”

The event concluded with attendees being recognized on the floor of both the House and Senate, with May 25 being named “Afterschool and Summer Learning Day” in Rhode Island by State Proclamation.

#### **About United Way of Rhode Island**

United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) has been working to improve the quality of life in Rhode Island for nearly 90 years. Together with its partners, UWRI is changing lives and strengthening our communities by investing in proven programs that work over the short-term, and are scalable over the long-term. For more information, visit [www.LIVEUNITEDri.org](http://www.LIVEUNITEDri.org).

###