



FAST Five Friday



Your Voice is Important!!!

If you attended our grantee meeting you had the pleasure of hearing Sherry Comer discuss marketing and advocacy and the importance of letting your voice be heard by educating stakeholders on the benefits of afterschool. As Sherry said during her breakout: **you** can advocate and educate, however, you cannot advocate using 21st CCLC money.

I realize that everyone is very busy but contacting key stakeholders takes only a few minutes of your time; literally 5 minutes to send an email or a fax. Now I know what you are thinking: I'm only one person how can I have any impact? Legislatures pay attention when they begin to receive multiple correspondence on the same topic. For example: Senator Scott recently stated that constituents should contact their legislators on issues important to them because "That's when things start to happen" (St. Louis Post Dispatch, Thursday, October 13, 2011).

Another example of mass marketing and advocacy:

For those of you that are sports fans there has been some recent news about the University of Missouri joining another athletic conference. Many fans are in favor of the move. So much so that a grassroots effort made up of fans and alumni flooded the members of the Board of Curators, Chancellor, and interim President with letters expressing their hope for a move. What is newsworthy is that during the Board of Curators meeting one curator commented on how many emails he had received and the impact it had on his decision. Additionally, this grassroots effort created a Facebook page and Twitter account promoting their cause.

As afterschool educators we need a similar effort to convey the message to our stakeholders: legislators, businesses, law enforcement, parents, and community leaders. Remember you are not just marketing your program you are marketing the importance of afterschool!