

## 55,000 Degrees To Receive National Leadership Award For Louisville's Movement to Add College Graduates

## After-School Efforts Also Gain National Attention

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LOUISVILLE** (Feb. 20, 2013) – 55,000 Degrees, Louisville's public-private partnership to add 55,000 more college graduates to Louisville by 2020, is being honored tomorrow as a national model of community commitment and vision.

Partners for Livable Communities, a national leadership organization, will present 55,000 Degrees with the Entrepreneurial American Community Award, which honors "civic capacity building, commitment, vision and entrepreneurial spirit."

"Once again, national leaders have recognized Louisville for the entrepreneurial vision and 'can do' spirit that makes our community special," said Mayor Greg Fischer, chairman of the 55,000 Degrees board. "This award honors the hard work of educators, civic and business leaders and the students who are working hard to earn college degrees and the higher-paying jobs that come with them."

Mary Gwen Wheeler, executive director of 55,000 Degrees, and the mayor will accept the award on behalf of the "55K" partnership during the "Celebration of Vision and Community Spirit" event tomorrow night in Washington, D.C.

Louisville's movement will be honored along with six other community and corporate leaders by Partners for Livable Communities, a national nonprofit organization that has worked for more than 30 years to restore and renew America's communities.

"55,000 Degrees is a movement that's dedicated to creating opportunities for our citizens today and making our community more competitive for the future," Wheeler said. "We have much work ahead to reach our goal, but this award is another sign that we're on the right course."

## Louisville's after-school efforts get national exposure

An innovative Louisville partnership to improve after-school programming for children is also on the national stage this week. The city's Out-of-School-Time Coordinating Council Charter will make a presentation at a national conference in Baltimore on Friday.

Louisville is one of nine cities nationwide that received a Wallace Foundation grant to improve systems supporting after-school programs.

Mayor Fischer helped forge the partnership among Louisville Metro Government, Metro United Way and Jefferson County Public Schools last year to implement the four-year \$765,000 grant to expand a data-collection system, KidTrax, to serve 33,000 JCPS and other students using after school programs.

Wheeler will speak on a panel at the national conference sponsored by the Wallace Foundation titled "Better Together: Building Local Systems to Improve Afterschool."

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