



# AFTERSCHOOL IN FALLS CHURCH

## FEATURING LUTHER JACKSON AFTER HOURS

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MIDDLE SCHOOL AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

### *From a Safe Space to Sophisticated Academic Enrichment*

LJ After Hours serves students at both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum. Academic enrichment is big with students engaging in programs such as Science Olympiad, Mathcounts, Technology Student Association (TSA), Model UN, and Battle of the Books. However, most students simply need a safe place to stay, build relationships, and get academic support, while their parents are still at work.

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*Approximately 700  
students served annually,  
225 daily average*



### *The Power of Connection*

A few years ago, an at-risk student, Marco, was headed down the wrong path. He wasn't mean-spirited or disrespectful but was hanging with the wrong crowd and didn't always make great choices. After participating in LJ After Hours, Marco made a connection with some of the afterschool staff and started coming every single day. He played soccer, and with encouragement, sought extra help from his math teacher. While progress was made, it was unclear as he transitioned to high school if he would make it to graduation.

Fast forward to the spring of 2022, Afterschool Program Specialist, Matt, received an email from Marco, now a high school senior on track to graduate, asking if he could volunteer. In high school, he joined the football and wrestling teams, while also working part-time.

Marco began volunteering at LJ After Hours, informally coaching soccer and basketball. Unprompted he would mentor students with the most challenging behaviors, by sharing his own experiences and how he managed to turn things around.

In Marco's case, it wasn't so much what activity he participated in, rather the true value was access to a program with adults who cared about helping Marco make the right choices to turn things around.