

Grace Waryas, 8th Grade  
Bellows Falls Middle School  
A.I.M. Afterschool Program

Hello my name is Grace Waryas and I am an 8th grader from Bellows Falls Middle school and afterschool has been a part of my life for the last four years. The A.I.M program at BFMS is the perfect place for kids to feel like they belong. They makes sure students in our school have a place to go if they don't have one. A.I.M. also helps kids get out into the community. For example, the newspaper club at our goes into the town to interview local businesses, firemen, the superintendent, etc. Having access to afterschool also helps working families who may worry where their children are when there are no adults at home.

For academic support, if kids need help in a certain subject or are stuck on a homework problem, they can get it done after school. A.I.M. also introduce kids to new interests and hobbies. For example, in the fifth grade I was introduced to Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and fell in love with it. I saw my skills and confidence get better each week. Programs like A.I.M. prevent kids from going straight home and just sitting in front of a TV, video games, by helping them get out of their comfort zones makes friends. We have different activity choices everyday so kids won't be stuck doing the same thing everyday. Being a part of A.I.M. has personally inspired me to set a new goal. After seeing the State House in action last year, I aspired to become a Legislative Page. My teachers and A.I.M. staff supported me through the application process and I will be serving as a legislative page this Spring, the first to represent our Middle School in over twenty years.

I value this program because you can be yourself and choose what you want to do with your time. It's a space where I feel like I belong.

Thank you to all the committee members for listening.