



NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. Military Bases Stateside and Overseas to Participate in Twelfth Annual Nationwide Rally for Afterschool

All across the country, working parents rely on afterschool programs to keep their children safe, engaged and learning until they get home from work. That includes military personnel stationed at bases here and overseas. Many of those parents, as well as their children, military base commanders and others will be among the more than a million people who participate in some 7,500 *Lights On Afterschool* events being held this October. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance and is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs.

Among the stateside events being held are:

- A science fair on **Peterson Air Force Base** in Colorado. Students ages nine to 18 who participate in the Peterson Air Force Base Youth Center program will conduct chemistry experiments, including cauldron bubbles and using flubbery and putty. For more information, contact Victoria Reid, 719-556-7220.
- An open house at the Columbus Air Force Base Youth Center in **Columbus**, Mississippi. The Center's fourth annual *Lights On Afterschool* open house is open to parents, teachers and community leaders who will have the opportunity to learn more about student activities and engage with the students who will participate in poetry and essay contests, display artwork and lead tours of the center. For more information, contact Kayline Hamilton, , 662-434-2504.
- A "back to school" night at the JBMDL Dix School-Age Program at **Fort Dix**, New Jersey. The event will feature a family potluck dinner and informational sessions for parents and other community members about the various afterschool options available for children. For more information, contact Linda Johnson, 609-562-3873
- An open house at the Minot Air Force Base Youth Program on **Minot Air Force Base**, North Dakota. Parents, students and other community members will learn about 4-H skill-a-thon projects and other opportunities available through the afterschool program. They will also have the opportunity to learn about health, nutrition, smoking cessation and hazardous use of legal and illegal substances from staff at the Health and Wellness Center. For more information, contact Kimberly Sheridan, 701-723-2838.

- An ice cream social at the Tinker Youth Center on **Tinker Air Force Base**, Oklahoma. Staff will present information about the Center's community service project and the Center's Three Words Campaign. For more information, contact Joy Shelly, 405-734-1234.
- A parent information center and program tour organized by students at Monroe Welfare and Recreation Youth Programs at Naval Air Station Oceana in **Virginia Beach**, as part of the Air Station's carnival and fall festival. For more information, contact Cathy Mead, 757-433-3976.

For information about other *Lights On Afterschool* rallies planned across the country and overseas, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

“No matter where they are, our children need supervised, educational, fun activities after the school day ends,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “*Lights On Afterschool* is a celebration of the many ways these programs help kids and families, and this year we are also sending the message that afterschool programs are too important for policy makers to consider cutting their funding or using it for other kinds of programs.”

The children, parents, grandparents, educators, community leaders, policy makers, celebrities and others expected to participate in the 12th annual *Lights On Afterschool* will be urging Congress not to divert or deny federal funding for afterschool. For years, the federal investment in afterschool has lagged far behind the need. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (the chief federal funding stream for afterschool) in 2007, yet funding stands at less than half that today. Congress is currently considering legislation that would allow other programs to compete for the already limited 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds.

During *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance, in conjunction with jcpenny, will release 50 state progress reports that examine how each state is helping keep the lights on for kids and families after school. The progress reports review state policies, funding and other activities that affect afterschool programs, examine the need in each state for these programs, offer tips to parents seeking afterschool programs for their children and suggest ways that all state residents can support afterschool.

A significant body of research demonstrates that students who attend 21st CCLC afterschool programs regularly are more likely to improve their grades, tests scores and overall academic behavior. More than 15 million school-age children – more than one in four kids in the United States – are unsupervised after the school day ends. The parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs – if programs were available.

For the fifth year in a row, the Empire State Building will be bathed in yellow light in support of *Lights On Afterschool*. This year, the Afterschool Alliance and jcpenny are holding a contest to encourage communities across the country to “Light Up a Landmark” as part of their *Lights On Afterschool* events.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.