



CELEBRATING *LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL!*

It's here. At some 7,500 sites around the country today, a million people are joining *Lights On Afterschool* rallies to send the message that we want to keep the lights on and the doors open at afterschool programs. The 11th nationwide rally for afterschool includes student performances, runs and walks, open houses, poetry slams, essay contests, art displays, tree lightings, carnivals, award ceremonies, and much more. A representative list of events is available [here](#).

"The months of planning and outreach are ending, and we are thrilled that *Lights On Afterschool 2010* is finally here," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "At thousands of events around the country today, youth will have the chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at afterschool programs. But *Lights On Afterschool* is also an opportunity to draw attention to the fact that 15 million children have no safe, enriching, educational activities available to them after the school day ends. So today we also are sending the message that *all* children need access to quality afterschool programs."

Key Moment for Afterschool

Just in time for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance launched a [petition campaign](#) to give supporters an easy way to tell Congress: "We rely on afterschool programs. Don't deny or divert afterschool funds!"

Participants at *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country, and everyone who supports afterschool programs, are being *Celebrating continued on page seven...*

A LETTER FROM JODI GRANT

Today, more than 7,500 communities across America will celebrate the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. Afterschool programs are an innovative, yet practical and proven way to expand and extend learning opportunities in a manner that is targeted to individual students, before school, after school and through summer learning programs.

While we celebrate today, we are in grave danger of having the lights turned off because of a proposal to use federal afterschool dollars to pay for mandatory extensions of the school day – a proposal put forth by the Obama Administration and modeled roughly after the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative. Based on costs associated with the Massachusetts ELT initiative, for each school that eliminates its afterschool program and instead uses 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) funding to extend the school day to 3:30 or 4 pm, six other communities with afterschool and summer learning programs supported by 21st CCLC will lose funding and be left with no expanded learning opportunities for kids. Children and families in those communities will have nowhere to turn, and afterschool program jobs will be lost.

21st CCLC currently supports 10,339 afterschool sites nationwide, but would support just 1,548 schools to extend their school day. That means federal support to provide expanded learning opportunities in nearly 9,000 communities is at risk.

For this reason, it is more important than ever that we use *Lights On Afterschool* to *Letter continued on page eight...*

OUTREACH

Today is *Lights On Afterschool!* If you have not done so already, please be sure to sign the [petition](#) to tell Congress: “We rely on afterschool programs. Don’t deny or divert afterschool funds!”

The petition, which supporters can sign [online](#), says:

I think quality afterschool, before school, and summer learning programs are tremendously important to working families, children and youth. They provide homework help, mentoring, field trips, hands-on science, art, community service, job preparation, snacks, physical activity, and similar activities that students need – all with supervision so kids are safe when their parents are at work. Please, support children and working families by increasing funding for afterschool programs and by making sure that afterschool funding goes only to after school, before school, and summer learning programs. Thank you!

If you gather petition signatures at a *Lights On Afterschool* event, send the signed petitions to the Afterschool Alliance, 1616 H St, NW, Suite #820, Washington, DC 20006.

Afterschool Alliance leaders will ensure that your petitions are delivered to your Representatives and Senators in Congress.



FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance's website has resources for afterschool providers, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities. *To learn more, click [here](#).*

GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

Grants for Athletic Fields

The NFL Youth Football Fund Grassroots Program is sponsoring grants from \$50,000 to \$200,000 to improve the quality, safety and accessibility of football fields in low-income neighborhoods. Projects sponsored by middle schools, high schools or community-based nonprofits in NFL target markets are eligible to apply. The deadline is December 15. *For more information, and to see a map of NFL target markets, click [here](#).*

Grants for Community Improvement

AmeriCorps is awarding state and national grants, totaling \$311 million, to nonprofits, faith-based and community organizations, and public agencies that improve and strengthen communities and encourage civil engagement. Eligible organizations should promote volunteerism in education, healthy futures, clean energy/environment, and veterans or disaster services. The deadline to apply is January 25, 2011. *For more information, click [here](#).*

Grants for Scientific Problem-Solving

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation is sponsoring the Christopher Columbus Awards, to recognize middle school students who use a scientific method to create innovative solutions to problems in their communities. Teams of three or four students, with an adult coach, are eligible to enter. Thirty semi-finalists will be recognized, and eight finalist teams and their coaches will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Walt Disney World to attend and compete in National Championship Week for additional prizes. The grand prize is a \$25,000 grant to make the winning idea a reality in the team's community. The deadline to apply is February 7, 2011. *For more information, click [here](#).*



STEM RESOURCES FROM THINKFINITY

Looking for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities for your afterschool program? Thinkfinity.org from the Verizon Foundation is a one-stop shop of excellent online STEM resources that help prepare today's kids for tomorrow. In addition to an extensive [STEM collection](#), Thinkfinity has thousands of free lesson plans, activities, games, podcasts and more that cover all core subject areas. A few ideas to get you thinking:

- Ever wonder what it is like to work as a paleontologist? In [Fossils Rock! Takes from the Field](#), students join a virtual dig and hear from real paleontologists.
- [Invention at Play](#): Think like an inventor as you test different ways to get the ball into the hole with this interactive game.
- [Weekly Science Updates](#): Quirky, entertaining and informative, these 60-second features cover the latest discoveries in science, technology and medicine, like the effect of climate change on the world's oceans and how scientists predict earthquakes.
- Post your questions or peruse posts by others, like this one on [Robotic Resources](#).
- To teach students about energy and the environment, check out these two great resources: [Energy Resources and Tradeoffs](#) and [Conservation in My Community](#).

The content on Thinkfinity is developed by some of the nation's leading education organizations, so it's accurate, up-to-date, and appropriate for students. Thinkfinity's search engine is easy to use and allows you to search by grade level, subject and resource type so

you can easily find exactly what you're looking for.

You can also join the [Thinkfinity Online Community](#), which allows you to organize your resources, exchange ideas with other educators, participate in discussions, find resources, and network with colleagues and friends. Click [here](#) to become a member – it's completely free!

Thinkfinity also has a great [professional development](#) program, which you can use to engage students and enhance your programming. You can schedule or join webinars, access free tips and tools, and sign up for trainings.



AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE NAMES 18 'AFTERSCHOOL AMBASSADORS'

The Afterschool Alliance recently announced the selection of 18 afterschool providers and advocates from around the nation to serve as 2010-2011 Afterschool Ambassadors. The 18 local leaders hail from 16 states. Each Afterschool Ambassador will continue directing or supporting a local afterschool program while also serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, and building support for afterschool programs.

“Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Americans strongly support afterschool programs, but across the nation many of the programs that working families rely on are being threatened because of budget cuts or efforts to divert afterschool funds to other programs. We need to spread the word about the urgent need to make afterschool programs available to all children who need them. Our new Afterschool Ambassadors will bring great

energy and talent to that challenge. I look forward to working with them to build even stronger support for afterschool among parents, business and community leaders, lawmakers and others. We are proud to have them on our team.”

This year’s class of Afterschool Ambassadors is the eleventh group selected for the honor. Past Ambassadors include a variety of state and local afterschool leaders – more than 150 in all who are still active in the field.

Each 2010-2011 Afterschool Ambassador has organized a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*.

The new Afterschool Ambassadors are:

- **Alabama, Birmingham:** Bretta Freeman, Northeast YMCA;
- **California, Richmond:** Tariq Norris, Director of Community Service Programs, West Contra Costa YMCA of the East Bay;
- **Colorado, Boulder:** Karen Brown, Director of Middle School, Teen, Summer Programs, YMCA of Boulder Valley;
- **Connecticut, Willimantic:** Bill Stover, Director of NCLB/SES, Windham Public School District;
- **Indiana, Carmel:** Don Kent, Chairman, Net Literacy;
- **Iowa, Cedar Rapids:** Lynelle Henricksen, Childcare Services Director, Cedar Rapids YMCA, Helen G. Nassif YMCA;
- **Louisiana, Baton Rouge:** Gaylynn Mack, Executive Director, Big Buddy Program;
- **Maine, Waterville:** Laura Brock, 21st Century Grant Director, Greater Waterville Communities for Children;
- **Massachusetts, Malden:** Karen Steele, Partnership for Community Schools in Malden;
- **Minnesota, Faribault:** Lisa Wetzel, Kids World School Age Child Care;
- **New York, Bronx:** Alberto Cruz, Co-President, Afterschool Works! New York/Managing Director, PS87 Afterschool Program;
- **New York, Elmhurst:** Neha Gautam, Afterschool Program Coordinator, Richmond High School, South Asian Youth Action;
- **New York, White Plains:** Byron Smalls, After School Connection, White Plains Youth Bureau;
- **Oklahoma, Stratford:** Laticia Wade, Stratford SAFE Bulldog Academy;
- **Oregon, Salem:** Krina Lemons, Executive Director, Salem-Keizer Education Foundation;
- **Pennsylvania, Philadelphia:** Lola Rooney, YMCA of Philadelphia & Vicinity;
- **South Dakota, Rapid City:** Carla Allard, Program Coordinator, The Learning Zone; and
- **Tennessee, Memphis:** Sonja Currie, Director of Grants and Initiatives, Memphis Leadership Foundation.

The Robert Bowne Foundation has sponsored the Ambassadorships of Alberto Cruz and Neha Gautam of New York, and Bright House Networks has sponsored the Ambassadorships of Bretta Freeman of Alabama and Don Kent of Indiana.



IN HIS OWN WORDS...

Voices from the Afterschool Storybook...

“With my students, I often feel like a ‘big kid’ - just as happy as they are to sit on floor with my Legos or Tinker Toys. These types of activities are the stepping stones to big engineering projects, and afterschool is where it takes place for our middle school students.”
-- Christopher Gooding, Lorton, Virginia

To read Gooding's story, and read more afterschool voices from across the country, [click here](#). Share your story [here](#).



IN THE NEWS...

California – In an effort to get more parents involved at their children's schools, Costa Mesa schools have started a "10/20 Program," asking parents to volunteer for ten hours or give a donation of \$20. While having parents volunteer is helpful after budget cuts have forced layoffs, school administrators say the main goal of the program is to get parents involved and improve student behavior. Costa Mesa High School and Middle School are asking for help with afterschool programs, tutoring, mentoring and supervision, and Estancia High School is asking for help with dances, lunch duty and weekend day trips. "We need to reach from within the community to make a better community," Costa Mesa High Principal Phil D'Agostino told the *Orange County Register*. "Our parent base is under used."

Maine – A concrete retaining wall behind the [Maine Children's Alliance](#) is now a work of art, thanks to [ArtVan](#) and children at Lincoln Elementary School. ArtVan, a mobile arts therapy program that brings art lessons to youth in low-income neighborhoods who do not have access to afterschool or summer programs, helped the children create the large mural that can now be seen from the building's conference room. Students painted their creations on paper in the classroom, and recreated them on the wall with the help of outlines drawn by ArtVan staff. "We're a child-advocacy organization and thought it would be a perfect place to show the community that we're for kids and we want kids to be a part of our work," Maine Children's Alliance Research Coordinator Claire Berkowitz told the *Kennebec Journal*.

New Jersey – Brielle Elementary School is now home to an afterschool sewing club and 25 new Singer sewing machines, thanks to three students who entered, and won, a video contest. Sixth-grader Emma Craven and two friends entered a video skit contest that Craven learned about in a magazine last year. The sewing machines are housed in a repurposed computer lab, and the club will eventually be open to the entire community. Their first project is making pillowcases for children with cancer, the *Asbury Park Press* reports, and they hope to help with costumes for the school's spring play.

New York – Thirty-six girls from East High School will become Science STARS this year at an afterschool program directed by graduate students from the University of Rochester's [Warner School of Education](#). The seventh- through tenth-graders will learn the science behind dancing, forensics, energy drinks, video games and cooking. They will also spend time every week considering the stereotypes that exist about girls and science by watching movies, blogging and hearing from guest speakers in the field. The 10-week program will culminate with a presentation of the girls' scientific findings at a community conference in December.

Pennsylvania – In Venezuela, [El Sistema](#) is providing life-changing music education for children in the poorest neighborhoods. Children receive free music instruction in a safe and encouraging environment, and the instruction has been hailed as an important model for social change. And now, thanks to 23-year-old Stanford Thompson, a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, the program has come to Philadelphia. Tune Up Philly, a project of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, is giving 85 first- through seventh-graders free afterschool music education, as well as offering a summer program. "Some [of these children] have dealt with hardships in their young lives that I can't even imagine," Sister Mary McNulty, principal of St. Francis de

Sales School, told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. “They need someone or something to lift them up, and this program is doing that. I see smiles on faces I haven’t seen smiles on in a long time.” Tune Up Philly will hold its first concert on December 11. *For more information, click [here](#).*



KEEP UP WITH AFTERSCHOOL NEWS!

Hungry for the latest news on afterschool? Be sure to check out [Afterschool Snack](#), the Afterschool Alliance’s up-to-the-minute blog on afterschool news, trends and information from across the country. Recent posts include:

- [From Executive Director Jodi Grant: Every Effort Counts for Afterschool](#)
- [New Research Released to Kick-Off Lights On](#)

And be sure to tune in every Wednesday for a national news round-up, and throughout the week for your daily dose of afterschool. *Check out Afterschool Snack [here](#).*



Celebrating continued from page one...

asked to sign the petition. It urges Congress not to divert already limited 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) dollars to other programs. 21st CCLC is the chief federal funding stream for afterschool, providing grants to local programs that serve more than one million children nationwide.

“With federal afterschool funding lagging far behind the need, and other funding sources drying up in this recession, this is not the time to divert precious afterschool funds to untested programs. We urge everyone who cares about kids, working families and

healthy communities to [sign our petition](#),” she added.

Showcasing 21st Century Skills

To highlight the work being done in afterschool programs to provide science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning opportunities, the Afterschool Alliance is partnering with two initiatives – 4-H National Science Day, and the U.S.A. Science and Engineering Festival – to encourage afterschool programs to showcase their STEM work.

All programs holding *Lights On Afterschool* events that focus on STEM activities are invited to participate in the first national [USA Science and Engineering Festival](#) which aims to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers. The Afterschool Alliance will be part of the Festival’s two-day expo on the National Mall, where a number of afterschool providers will demonstrate the kinds of exciting, hands-on STEM activities that take place every day in afterschool programs.

“Afterschool programs are centers of innovation that are doing wonderful work to inspire students to master math, science and related skills,” Grant said. “This year, we are making a special point of showcasing those programs and encouraging them to participate in national events that shine a spotlight on the exciting opportunities that STEM learning provides.”

National Treasures Lighting Up

For the first time ever, Mount Rushmore was lit up for a special celebration of *Lights On Afterschool*. The October 16 kick-off event featured a Lakota Indian dance and song and provided powerful imagery as a week of *Lights On Afterschool* events began.

Tonight, for the fourth year in a row, the Empire State Building will also be lit up for *Lights On Afterschool*. And tomorrow, LA’s Beyond the Bell and Woodcraft Rangers will be on hand for the lighting of the Lindbergh

Beacon at City Hall in Los Angeles, California.

A Closer Look at Afterschool

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance and JCPenney released the latest findings from a new special report from *America After 3PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool*. The new report, [America After 3PM: From Big Cities to Small Towns](#), examines the differences in afterschool participation, satisfaction and demand across rural, suburban and urban communities and looks at participation and satisfaction in four major cities.

The report features city-level data on Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and New York. Released yesterday, it found that 27 percent of schoolchildren in Chicago and Los Angeles, and 28 percent of New York City schoolchildren, participate in afterschool programs – nearly twice the 15 percent national participation rate. But just 14 percent of students in Dallas attend afterschool programs.

All four cities outpace the national average by a significant amount in terms of the percentage of students in summer learning programs.

Yet, despite the relatively strong rates of participation in afterschool programs, thousands of children in all four cities are unsupervised in the afternoons. While 26 percent of children nationally are unsupervised in the afternoons, 29 percent of schoolchildren in Chicago, 27 percent of schoolchildren in Dallas, 23 percent of schoolchildren in New York City and 20 percent of schoolchildren in Los Angeles are unsupervised after the school day ends.

Afterschool Round-Up

To rally public support for life-enriching afterschool programs for children in need, JCPenney is hosting “Round-Up” in its stores from October 13 through 26. During this time, JCPenney customers are invited to round-up their purchases to the nearest whole dollar and

donate the difference to local afterschool programs in their communities.

“Since 1999, JCPenney has distributed more than \$100 million to help increase afterschool opportunities across the country by supporting innovative programming in more communities and making access grants available each year to families experiencing financial hardship,” said Michael Theilmann, group executive vice president for JCPenney and chairman of the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. “Data from the *America After 3PM* study is powerful evidence that we’ve made progress on the afterschool issue but more resources are needed to help meet the rising demand for afterschool programs across the country.”

Actress Rhea Perlman is a spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

For more information on Lights On Afterschool, [click here](#).



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shine a light on the inspired, engaged and innovative learning that occurs after the school day ends and before parents get home from work. Today’s afterschool programs have moved far beyond the mission to keep kids safe. Today, afterschool programs are at the forefront of educational innovation – creating school, community and faith based partnerships to bring resources, caring adults and exciting curricula to children in the hours after school.

Because programs are voluntary, children have to want to come, so engagement and motivation are paramount. Whether students are building solar-powered box cars, providing services to the elderly, or developing a computer program to record their own songs, afterschool programs are a place where students learn through fun, hands-on, engaging activities.

A growing research base shows that quality afterschool programs work. Students in afterschool programs are more likely to come to school, stay in school and graduate. They show improvement on engagement as well as academic, behavioral and professional skills. Ironically, the data to support an extension of the school day is far from clear, with little or no evidence to show that lengthening the school day alone has a significant impact on student achievement. We can, in fact, we *must* be more creative in expanding learning time for kids. We have innovative approaches that work. Let's apply them.

It's important to take this day to celebrate the wonderful things happening in afterschool programs across the country. We should remember – today and every day – that more than 15 million children are unsupervised after school. Research suggests that these children are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of crime, to use drugs or alcohol and to engage in sexual activity.

We need to be doing more with afterschool programs, not less. President Obama campaigned with a promise to double funding for afterschool programs and create a new funding stream so that one million more children could attend summer learning programs. Secretary Duncan consistently highlights the value of school/community partnerships in bringing resources to help children succeed in school and prepare for the 21st Century workforce. The Secretary often names individual students whose lives were changed by his mother's afterschool program. That's why it's so disappointing that the policy proposals coming from the Administration – and supported by the Senate Appropriations Committee – would undermine the very programs the President and the Secretary of Education say they support.

So as you celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*, make sure to raise your voice. Let everyone in your community know the impact you are having on children's lives and the many ways

you are supporting families. Brag a little about the value of your work. Invite your elected officials to come see it. Send a letter to the President. [Sign the petition to save afterschool funds](#). Now is the time to remind everyone about how important it is to keep the lights on afterschool for all our kids.

Jodi Grant, Executive Director
Afterschool Alliance



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

October 21, 2010

The Afterschool Alliance is sponsoring the 11th annual *Lights On Afterschool*, raising awareness about the benefits that afterschool programs offer to families and communities across the country. *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool programs, and in recent years it has included some 7,500 events throughout the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide. This year, a million people are expected to participate. *For more information, click [here](#).*

November 2 – 4, 2010

The California Afterschool Network will host its second annual Step Up High School Summit in San Diego. Afterschool professionals, staff members and high school administrators will gather to discuss ideas and promising practices for high school afterschool programs. *For more information, click [here](#).*

November 4 – 6, 2010

The National Middle School Association will host its 37th annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland. This conference will give participants the information, tools and encouragement needed to provide a high-quality education for every young adolescent. *For further information, click [here](#).*

✍ November 9 – 10, 2010

The Summer Changes Everything Conference, hosted by the National Summer Learning Association, will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana. This is the only national conference focused only on summer. At it, summer program practitioners and advocates will gather to discuss how to build, strengthen and expand summer learning programs. *For more information, click [here](#).*

✍ November 18 – 20, 2010

The Big Tent Conference, hosted by the Search Institute, will be held in Houston, Texas. This Conference brings together youth and adult leaders from many organizations, networks and perspectives to focus on what they hold in common: Ensuring that all children and youth have the opportunity to grow up successfully. *For more information, click [here](#).*

✍ November 18 – 21, 2010

The National Association of Black School Educators (NASBE) will host its 38th annual conference in Fort Worth, Texas. NASBE is the nation’s premier association of African American educators. Nearly 4,000 attendees from across the country are expected to join this event, which will include workshops, more than 250 exhibits, and networking opportunities with members and friends of NASBE. *For further information, click [here](#).*

✍ February 23 – 26, 2011

The 14th annual Beyond School Hours conference, hosted by Foundations, Inc., will be held in Atlanta, Georgia. Afterschool advocates will gather for professional development. Participants will also address before- and afterschool, extended day, community-based and summer opportunities, as well as workforce development, higher education, and field-building research. *For information, click [here](#).*



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.

The Alliance is proud to count among its founding partners the Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, JCPenney Afterschool Fund, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation.

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