



Afterschool Advocate

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THE LIGHTS WERE ON FOR AFTERSCHOOL IN OCTOBER

On October 21 and throughout the month, a million people joined open houses, science fairs, talent shows, awards ceremonies, state capitol rallies, news conferences featuring business and community leaders, community service projects and much more as part of the [11th annual Lights On Afterschool](#). The only national rally for afterschool is organized by the Afterschool Alliance. This year it included more than 7,500 events across the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide. To celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*, the lights were on at New York City's Empire State Building, South Dakota's Mount Rushmore, and Los Angeles' Lindbergh Beacon.

At many events, parents, educators and community members lined up to sign the Afterschool Alliance's new [petition to save afterschool funding](#). The petition urges Congress not to deny or divert already limited 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) funds 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.

"Our nation's children and families depend on quality afterschool programs," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Again this year, *Lights On Afterschool* provided a fantastic opportunity to celebrate these programs and to increase awareness about how important they are to children, parents and communities. Now more than ever, we need to safeguard afterschool funding. More than 15 million children and youth are unsupervised after the school day ends, and that is 15 million too

many. We need to make quality afterschool programs available to every child."

President Barack Obama issued a special *Lights On Afterschool* greeting this year, and all 50 governors issued proclamations for the event. The United States House of Representatives passed – by unanimous consent – a bipartisan resolution supporting *Lights On Afterschool*. It was introduced by Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY), co-chair of the House Afterschool Caucus.

Celebrating Afterschool Innovation

At special ceremonies that were part of *Lights On Afterschool* events, MetLife Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance announced the winners of the 2010 Afterschool Innovator Awards, recognizing afterschool programs that take innovative approaches to achieving success in a variety of areas with middle school students. Every program honored as an Innovator will be highlighted in an [Issue Brief](#) that describes how afterschool programs can benefit middle school students. *Lights On continued on page six...*

SEND IN YOUR SIGNED PETITIONS!

With federal afterschool funding at risk, *Lights On Afterschool* this year took on a special significance. It is essential to make sure that every signature in favor of afterschool funding is counted! If you gathered signatures on petitions at your *Lights On Afterschool* event, please be sure to send the signed forms to the Afterschool Alliance by mailing them to: Petitions, Afterschool Alliance, 1616 H Street, NW, Suite #820, Washington, DC, 20006.

OUTREACH

Keeping Critical Messages Before the Public After *Lights On Afterschool*

A million people participated in *Lights On Afterschool* last month, showing their support for afterschool programs. One way to keep momentum going – and to support afterschool funding in the process – is to send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Below is a sample letter that draws attention to the need to safeguard federal afterschool funding. Keep it short, but tailor it in ways that make it specific to your program, community, or the *Lights On Afterschool* event you organized or attended.

Your local newspaper should have information on its website about how to submit your letter – most newspapers prefer email submissions.

Do not send the same letter to more than one newspaper in your market at the same time, but one newspaper declines to run it, go ahead and submit your letter to another.

And remember, it's not too late to organize a signing day and have members of your local community [sign the petition to save afterschool funding!](#)

[Date]

To the Editor:

One of the critical tasks that Congress will address when it returns to Washington, D.C. later this month is to pass a federal budget for the fiscal year that began on October 1. Among other decisions our senators and representatives will have to make is whether or not to stand behind afterschool programs.

One proposal before the Senate would divert afterschool funding to other programs. That would be a grave and costly mistake that would surely lead many of the afterschool programs that children and families rely on to close their doors.

We need quality afterschool programs because they keep kids safe, inspire students to learn, and help working families. Last month, more than a million Americans rallied in support of afterschool at 7,500-plus *Lights On Afterschool* events from coast to coast, including one here in [city] organized by [program]. Their message was one that Congress should heed: don't divert or deny funds for afterschool.

[Insert Your Name]

[Insert Your Title and Program]

[Insert Your Address and Phone Number, not for publication]



STATE BUDGET CUTS AFFECTING EDUCATION, REPORT FINDS

The [National Governors Association](#) has [released a new report](#) detailing the impact of budget shortfalls on state governments across the country, including an examination of how shortfalls are affecting education.

“[State Government Redesign Efforts 2009 and 2010](#)” finds that as many as 39 states made broad cuts to K–12 education in fiscal years 2009 and 2010, including reductions in afterschool funding.

“K–12 education is an area that is usually immune from state budget cuts,” the report says, “but the severity of the recession has resulted in lower K–12 funding in many states.” It cites examples of changes to school aid, teacher and administrator compensation, and related programs and policies, as well as school district consolidation and sharing services.

For more information, click [here](#).



HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES FROM THINKFINITY

Looking for health and wellness activities for your afterschool program? [Thinkfinity.org](#) from the Verizon Foundation is a one-stop shop of excellent online health and wellness resources that help prepare today’s kids for tomorrow. 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:

- Learn more about what’s in the food we eat with [Liquid Calories](#).
- Do your students like scavenger hunts and hands-on activities? Try [Grocery Store Scavenger Hunt](#) to help your

students learn more about everyday nutrition.

- [Muscles](#): This interactive activity helps students learn more about their body’s muscles and how they relate to athletic activity.
- [Food Pyramid](#): Use the USDA’s food pyramid to examine why it’s important to exercise regularly and eat properly.
- Learn more about how cell phones are changing how we treat disease with [Cell Phone Medicine](#).

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.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

“I send greetings to all those celebrating *Lights On Afterschool* 2010, and I applaud your efforts to support our Nation’s students, both inside and outside the classroom. Our young people must master 21st-century skills like problem solving and critical thinking so

they can become the next generation of successful, engaged leaders. To develop and strengthen their talents, American students need safe environments and opportunities to continue exploring and discovering once the school day is over. Afterschool programs help fill this need, cultivating our youth with a love of learning and empowering them to reach for their highest aspirations. As you come together on this special occasion to recognize the impact and importance of afterschool programs, I wish you all the best.”

-- Letter from President Barack Obama, October 20, 2010

“It is with pleasure that I extend my greetings to everyone observing *Lights On Afterschool* day. The safety and development of California’s youth is a primary concern and responsibility of the state. With one out of every four children spending their time afterschool alone and unsupervised, it is more important now than ever to establish safe, interesting and affordable afterschool programs in our local schools. Effective afterschool programs engage children and inspire passion for learning while helping them develop social, emotional, physical and academic skills at the same time.”

-- [Letter from California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger](#), October 21, 2010

Voices from the Afterschool Storybook...

“The day that changed my life was the day that I became a member of the Boys & Girls Club. Though I thought that I was just entering a place where I would spend time after school, I soon realized that I was seizing the opportunity to become so much more than I even knew was even possible.”

-- Kara Simpson, Gastonia, North Carolina

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



IN THE NEWS...

Illinois – Chicago teenager Arenique Green aspires to be a computer engineer, thanks to her experience as a summer intern which was made possible by the [Center for Labor & Community Research](#). The nonprofit works with Chicago Public Schools and local businesses to interest students in manufacturing and engineering. The Center runs afterschool programs, plans field trips and integrates career programs in the classroom, the *Chicago Tribune* reports. Last year it funded a Manufacturing and Technology Center, where students learned to operate manual and digital milling machines. *For more information, click [here](#).*

Oklahoma – Children in Oklahoma City are becoming “[Whiz Kids](#)” in a free, faith-based afterschool tutoring program that partners at-risk youth with volunteer mentors from inner-city churches. Whiz Kids started in 1998 with ten children, and now serves nearly 45 students, boasting a waiting list throughout the Oklahoma City School District, reports the *Oklahoman*. The program is multi-denominational, and sometimes includes a snack and Bible lesson in addition to tutoring. “My test scores started going up. I started to read better. I started looking at life different[ly],” says Nelson Williams, who joined the program in first grade and is now a senior in high school. *For more information, click [here](#).*

Washington, D.C. – Some of the District’s public schools have expanded their free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch program to include an early dinner. After piloting the program at a few schools last year, 99 of the system’s 123 schools now serve a healthy third meal instead of the traditional after school juice and snack, the *Washington Post* reports. Officials hope the program will draw more students to afterschool programs, where they can receive academic help, in addition to

fighting childhood hunger and reducing obesity.



AFTERSCHOOL RADIO: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PROGRAMS IN RURAL AREAS?

A new [report](#) from the Afterschool Alliance, sponsored by JCPenney, finds that families in rural areas face particular challenges when it comes to finding and enrolling their children in afterschool programs.

Tune in to Afterschool Radio at www.afterschoolalliance.org to hear the Afterschool Alliance's Executive Director Jodi Grant discuss the [findings](#) of the study with Jodi Gibson, Community Relations and Afterschool Director for JCPenney and Angela Henry, Project Director of the SAFE BASE 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool program in Iola, Kansas.



CONNECT A MILLION MINDS

Young people in the United States will connect with students across the world and leaders in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in a "Global Online Town Hall" on November 17, moderated by former Vice President Al Gore. "[Math, Science and the Future of Our Nation](#)" is an effort to spark interest in STEM careers by discussing youth attitudes toward math and science and its role in a competitive global marketplace. The event is part of Time Warner Cable's [Connect a Million Minds](#) campaign.

"We want to put a human face on a very sobering statistic – the U.S. ranks 35th in math and 29th in science worldwide – to spark a new level of interest among our kids so they are prepared for what lies ahead," Time

Warner Cable CEO Glenn Britt said in a release announcing the event. "As parents, educators, elected officials and business leaders, we need to do all we can to encourage our youth to take an active, enthusiastic interest in STEM and connect them to opportunities that stoke this passion."

Special guests on the panel include inventor Dean Kamen and astronaut Sally Ride. Members of the public can join the town hall at connectamillionminds.com, and submit live video questions and comments from anywhere in the world.

More than 1,000 students will gather across the country to host "viewing parties" for the town hall in Time Warner Cable's 16 viewing markets. Following the program, students will engage in discussions on local solutions for generating better student outcomes in STEM subjects.

For more information on the Global Online Town Hall and the Connect a Million Minds campaign, click [here](#).



RESOURCE

Building Quality Afterschool Systems: Lessons Learned

The RAND Corporation and the Wallace Foundation have released a three-volume report, [Hours of Opportunity](#), which profiles afterschool, summer and other out-of-school time programs in five major U.S. cities: Boston, Chicago, Providence, New York and Washington, D.C.. The report explores coordination between schools, parks, nonprofits, local governments and other community organizations to improve access to and quality of out of school programs.

In addition to profiling the successes and challenges each city has experienced, the report includes a volume on "The Power of Data," offering insight into the use of management information systems by the five cities as well as by three additional initiatives.

The new report finds that the most successful efforts enjoy strong support and leadership from their mayors and use rich data systems to assess and drive program improvement. *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:

- [Afterschool Alliance Goes to the USA Science and Engineering Festival](#)
- [Firsthand Afterschool Account: Keerthi Harishankar](#)
- [Gloriana Joins Afterschool Rocks Campaign](#)
- [We're Celebrating Lights On Afterschool from Coast to Coast!](#)

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](#).*



Lights On continued from page one...

students, and will receive \$5,000 to sustain its work.

This year's Afterschool Innovator Awards were presented to:

- The **Cypress Hills/East New York (CHENY) Beacon Program** in Brooklyn, New York, for providing multiple benefits to middle school students, including service opportunities and leadership and social development;

- The **Junior ACE Program** in Sacramento, California, for providing pathways to higher education and careers for middle school students;
- The **Learning through an Expanded Arts Program (LeAp 22)** in the Bronx, New York, for providing a hands-on, arts-based approach to teaching the academic curriculum;
- **SA Youth** in San Antonio, Texas, for teaching youth the value of a healthy lifestyle;
- The **Science Club for Girls and C.E.L.L.S. (Career Exploration, Leadership and Life Skills)** in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for increasing the science literacy and self-confidence of girls; and
- The **Bridge Project** in Denver, Colorado, for teaching middle school students about science and technology.

Events from Coast to Coast

Lights On Afterschool events this year were as varied as the communities hosting them. In Fairbanks, **Alaska**, more than 500 families, community members and dignitaries enjoyed dinner and afterschool demonstrations. The formal program included the premier of a film produced by a 21st CCLC high school afterschool program on the importance of afterschool; martial arts and tennis demonstrations by community partners; breakdancing; and a rally led by 100 students sharing their signs on "What afterschool means to me." As a special treat, the mayor of North Pole, Alaska, drove to Fairbanks with the "North Pole bus," bringing in students and parents from Santa's community.

In Willimantic, **Connecticut**, four schools in the Windham Public School District held child-centered events with a mix of different shows: Music to Motion, Puppet Party and Show, and Talent Show. More than 450 family and friends attended the performances.

The theme of Florida's Prime Time Palm Beach County, Inc.'s event was "Tomorrow's

Leaders STEM from Today's Learners." It took place at the City Center Plaza courtyard at City Hall in West Palm Beach, **Florida**. The event highlighted the role of afterschool programs in sparking interest in and reinforcing student understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

An afternoon of free horseback riding, led by a certified American Riding Instructor Association instructor, was the centerpiece of *Lights On Afterschool* at the Lio Lapa'au Healing Horses program in Hawi, **Hawaii**. Children and teens groomed, interacted with and rode the program's horses.

On the Capitol lawn in Topeka, the **Kansas** Enrichment Network celebrated *Lights on Afterschool* with a rally for afterschool programs. The rally created awareness about afterschool programs and celebrated the accomplishments of the local programs.

The Louisville Central Community Center, in collaboration with the Louisville Metro Board of Health and the Teen Leadership Council, hosted a Kids Care Fair at Central High School in Louisville, **Kentucky**. The community festival promoted the importance of a healthy lifestyle and featured booths, representatives and literature from local health organizations.

The Big Buddy Program, the YWCA and other groups in Baton Rouge, **Louisiana** co-sponsored a *Lights On Rally, Expo and Talent Show* that included workshops for parents and students, a Battle of the Bands featuring two local high schools, a vendor expo and a "*Lights On, So Bring It On!*" talent competition.

In Richmond Hill, Queens, **New York**, South Asian Youth Action hosted the first-ever *Lights On Afterschool* event at Richmond Hill High School. More than 200 youth attended well as community members, school faculty, staff and parents. Activity stations included: a silk screening station where youth made posters; a mural making station; a henna tattoo station; a capoeira

station where youth practiced capoeira, a bhangra dance station; a breakdance station; and a "take action" station for petition signing and distribution of information about afterschool in New York City and State.

At a "Power Saver Program" at the McCurtain County Boys & Girls Club in Broken Arrow, **Oklahoma**, students learned power saving tips and received goody bags. A local electrician discussed the importance of energy conservation and other power saving habits.

To view a photo gallery of *Lights On Afterschool* events across the country, [click here](#).



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

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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