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A MILLION PEOPLE TURN THE LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL

From the Empire State Building in New York to the Space Needle in Seattle, the lights were on in big cities and rural townships last week as communities across the country joined the eighth annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Students, parents, teachers, policy makers, and business and community leaders participated in more than 7,500 events around the nation and at U.S. military bases around the world.

"More than 14 million children have nowhere to go after school, but afterschool programs make a big difference... They build communities and help train the workforce of the future. Without enough funding for afterschool programs, we all lose," said actress and *Lights On Afterschool* national spokesperson Rhea Perlman.

Events

The thousands of *Lights On Afterschool* events were as diverse as the communities that hosted them. In Colorado Springs, Colorado, students celebrated literacy with *Lights On Rural Afterschool*. Students joined in a dictionary scavenger hunt and then became key pieces of a life-size scrabble game. The event was sponsored by the KLC School Partnership.

In Atlanta, Georgia, students were treated to a special performance by Grammy Award winning singer-songwriter Johnta Austin. Record producer, rapper and Georgia Music Hall of Fame Inductee Jermaine Dupree introduced Austin. Mayor Shirley Franklin Lights On continued on page eleven...

SEATTLE SHINES FOR LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL

Hundreds of students, parents, business and community leaders came together at Pacific Science Center on October 18 to rally for more funding for afterschool programs. The *Lights On Afterschool* gala celebrated afterschool programs in Washington and honored some of the state's afterschool champions.

T-Mobile USA was the presenting sponsor of the gala, which was hosted by School's Out Washington, Pacific Science Center and the Afterschool Alliance. The program included youth performances and a ceremony honoring afterschool champions, who were inducted into the state's Afterschool Hall of Fame. In honor of this event, Pacific Science Center opened its doors to more than 400 children and youth in area afterschool programs for free.

"T-Mobile is proud to support afterschool programs, which do so much to keep children safe, give them opportunities to learn and grow, and support working families," said Glenn Zaccara, T-Mobile senior manager, corporate responsibility. "We are so happy to be able to sponsor today's event, and give so many young people the chance to have fun and speak out for afterschool."

Educators, policy makers, funders, and other community leaders joined the celebration which concluded with special after-hours access to the *Colossal Fossils* exhibit free of charge. Participants also enjoyed Italian Sodas courtesy of Torani.

OUTREACH

NEW PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL

The hard and productive work of advocates made *Lights On Afterschool* the success that it was. Many used the event to reach out to new partners and win support from lawmakers and others. New relationships will be one of the most enduring outcomes of many *Lights On Afterschool* events.

Policy Maker Support

In Lander, Wyoming, Afterschool Ambassador Linda Barton, who is Program Director for Lights On in Lander, says the key to success in winning policy maker support for her *Lights On Afterschool* event was relationship-building. Barton's event featured the Mayor reading his proclamation, and letters of support from Senators John Barrasso and Mike Enzi and Representative Barbara Cubin. The School Board Chair presented the keynote address and several city council members attended. Governor Dave Freudenthal also issued a proclamation and First Lady Nancy Freudenthal had intended to come but a last minute scheduling conflict kept her away.

"It's all about relationship building," Barton said. "You can't just call them once a year – you have to call them all the time. You need to be on their radar screens. When there's something important, you let them know."

Barton began sending invitations to her event six weeks in advance. She stresses the importance of following up with a phone call. "People can feel your passion, they can't get that through an email," she said.

Barton said that her success stems in part from seven years of advocacy and outreach to lawmakers at the local and national levels. "You have to institutionalize and embed your program in the community to the point where people cannot imagine it not being there."

Support from Faith-Based Communities

Faith-based communities played a big role in many *Lights On Afterschool* celebrations. In Columbus, Georgia, Afterschool Ambassador Ernestine Ramsey, General Director for the Prime Time Afterschool Program at A.J. McClung YMCA, said participation by a local church this year was one reason her *Lights On Afterschool* event "turned out to be really special. With their help, *Lights On* worked out better for the kids and the Church and the community."

The New Life Church International had its beginnings in the YMCA, utilizing the space as a gathering place before it had a formal structure. Now a community of nearly 1,200 members, the Church wanted to celebrate its upcoming anniversary and its beginnings with the YMCA. Reverend Allen contacted Ramsey about coordinating an event, and Ramsey suggested her *Lights On Afterschool* event as the ideal venue.

With Ramsey's help, the Church organized a mass food donation for families attending *Lights On Afterschool*. Tractor trailers filled with donated food were brought to her event site. Volunteers distributed canned and dry goods as well as coupons for perishable items such as eggs, milk and meat. Ramsey estimates that some 400 people were served. The Church was so pleased with the success of the *Lights On Afterschool* food donation that it has already scheduled two more food donations for Ramsey's afterschool program, to take place before Thanksgiving and before Christmas.

Ramsey said the key is continual outreach to the local faith-based communities. She always includes local churches when she issues announcements and news releases. As a result, she says, these churches

will often announce YMCA events at church services or include information in their bulletins. It is a very effective way to spread the word about needs in the afterschool community, as well as services the program provides. Already she has been contacted by another church that would like to adopt ten families from her program to receive Thanksgiving donations.

"Somebody has to make the first contact," Ramsey said. "Just make the phone call and talk to the pastor. Everything will fall into place, because the pastor will pass on your request on to their committees and make things happen."

Celebrity Speakers and Business Partnerships

In Chicago, Illinois, Afterschool Ambassador Mandee Polonsky, Manager of Enrichment Programs for Chicago Public Schools and Executive Director of After-School All-Stars Chicago, used personal contacts to engage a celebrity speaker for her Breakfast of Champions *Lights On Afterschool* event, as well as a business sponsor.

Through friends with connections to the Chicago Bulls, Polonsky was able to identify the best source and place an initial request. Shortly afterward, former Bulls star and current radio personality Bill Wennington was adjusting his schedule so he could keynote her Breakfast.

At the same time, Polonsky turned to a friend from college who had connections with Feit Electric, to see whether the company would be interested in becoming involved with her *Lights On Afterschool* event. Her initial call resulted in energy saving light bulbs being donated for all the gift bags that were distributed to guests. Polonsky is exploring ways to build on this and develop a formal partnership for the next event.

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

Working together, supporters of afterschool have made great strides through increased investments at the state and local levels in recent years. However, years of federal funding freezes have taken their toll, and it is now clear that the nation will not achieve afterschool for all by the year 2010.

Recognizing that the work to advance afterschool is ongoing, the Afterschool Alliance is changing the name of its national sign-on campaign, *Afterschool for All: Project 2010*, to *Afterschool for All*. The Afterschool Alliance remains firmly committed to its work to expand quality afterschool programs. After consulting with partners, it has decided that *Afterschool for All* is a better name to represent the joint effort to expand quality afterschool programming.

The new name will provide greater flexibility to advocate for afterschool. While disappointed by recent federal funding freezes, the Afterschool Alliance remains hopeful that future investments in afterschool – such as the increases in state funding in California and proposed increases to 21st Century Community Learning Centers now being considered by Congress – will make 'afterschool for all' a reality very soon.

Now more than ever, the nation must redouble its efforts to demand quality, affordable afterschool programs for all children and youth.

For more information on Afterschool for All, visit http://www.afterschool2010.org. For questions and comments, contact Marie Coichy, Project Manager, at mcoichy@afterschoolalliance.org or 646/943-8662.

FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance has numerous resources on its website for afterschool providers, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities. *Visit www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding_main.cfm*.

GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

Grants for Learning and Youth Development

The Tiger Woods Foundation is offering grants that focus on providing opportunities to underserved youth ages five to 17. The grants, which range from \$2,500 to \$25,000, are for education programs that enhance learning and youth development that involve year-round mentoring and/or tutoring programs. The deadline to apply is November 1. *For more information, visit http://www.twfound.org/grants/default.sps?itype=7609*.

Grants for Handball Projects

The United States Handball Association provides funding for youth handball projects across the country provided through afterschool programs, YMCAs or community programs. Any individual or group applicants interested in starting a handball program are encouraged to apply. The application deadline is November 23. *For more information, visit http://www.ushandball.org/content/view/559/301*.

Grants to Help Underserved Youth

The Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) and Candlewick Press are partnering to offer a one-time grant of \$5,000 to a library conducting exemplary outreach to underserved youth. An ALSC committee will select a winner, and may name up to three Honorable Mentions. Special population children may include youth with learning or physical differences, non-native English-speakers, those in a non-traditional school environment, those in non-traditional family settings, and those who need accommodation services to meet their needs. The application deadline is December 3. For more information, visit

http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/profawards/candlewicklighttheway/lighttheway.htm.

Grants for Early Childhood Care and Education

Rosie's For All Kids Foundation awards grants in major cities to expand services to children from low-income families. Projects include the expansion of a school building, the renovation of a newly purchased building, or the construction of a new building on a vacant site. Nonprofits are eligible, and applications for the grants – which range from \$15,000 to \$30,000 – are accepted on a rolling basis. *For more information, visit*

http://www.forallkids.org/site.php?module=article&pageid=60.



NH EDUCATORS WANT MORE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

A new survey, *Spotlight on New Hampshire*, finds that an overwhelming majority of the state's education leaders say that afterschool programs benefit students in their communities, and that they are an absolute necessity for children and youth. But nearly all these leaders say that students in their schools or districts are unable to participate because afterschool programs are not available, and they want the state and federal governments to increase their investment in afterschool.

Nearly all respondents in the new survey say it is important for older youth to have a safe haven and a coordinated offering of enriching activities after school. Academic support and alternative learning/credit attainment and recovery are seen as the most important benefits afterschool provides to older youth. Education leaders also rank recreational sports/activities and the chance to develop personal, social and life skills highly for older youth.

Among the other results:

- 96 percent of state education leaders agree that children in afterschool programs are more likely to attend school regularly, turn in homework on time, and improve their grades and test scores than similar students not in afterschool programs and that afterschool students are more likely to be engaged in the classroom and less likely to drop out.
- While seven in ten respondents say their school or school district offers an afterschool program, 94 percent say there are students in their school or school district who would benefit from participating in an afterschool program but do not currently participate.
- More than half (58 percent) who say students in their school or district who would benefit from an afterschool program and are *not* in one cite the lack of

- transportation home as the top barrier that prevents kids from participating.
- Of those who do *not* have an afterschool program available in their school or school district, 38 percent of state education leaders say lack of resources or sufficient grant opportunities to support afterschool programs are the biggest barriers.

"Schools and the people who work in them are doing noble work to support the learning of students they serve. To fully honor those efforts and to enhance student success, we need to go further in rethinking where, with whom and when we educate our youth," said Nicholas C. Donohue, President and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. "The challenge of preparing students to become well-rounded and successful citizens demands this."

The online survey of New Hampshire's superintendents and public school K – 12 principals was released by the Afterschool Alliance, PlusTime New Hampshire and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. *Spotlight on New Hampshire* is the fourth installment in the Afterschool Alliance's *New England After 3 PM* series, which explores the status of afterschool across New England. With help from the state Department of Education, the Alliance drew 214 responses from the 500 New Hampshire education leaders surveyed in September.

The full report is available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/document s/NH_Spotlight_Report.pdf.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

"The State of Nebraska has provided significant leadership in the area of community involvement in the education and well-being of our youth, grounded in the principle that quality afterschool programs are

key to helping our children become successful adults."

- --Governor Dave Heineman, Nebraska, *Arizona City News*, October 10, 2007
- "A commitment to keeping the *Lights On Afterschool* gives our next generation of business and community leaders, educators, artists, scientists, and parents the opportunity to succeed in school and life...working together, we can create and support programs that engage our children's minds and give them hope for the future."
- --Governor Ed Rendell, Pennsylvania, *Arizona City News*, October 10, 2007
- "Lots of parents work full time, so after school programming makes a huge impact on their lives."
- --Mayor Kathy Taylor, Tulsa, Oklahoma, *Tulsa World*, October 17, 2007
- "Lights On Afterschool is a powerful reminder that afterschool and out-of-school programs are critical to the success of our children."
- --Mayor Chris Coleman, St. Paul, Minnesota, *My Fox Twin Cities*, October 18, 2007
- "Afterschool programs were once considered a luxury – a supplement to classroom instruction... Today afterschool programs are no longer supplements. They constitute a vital part of the battle to raise student performance and keep children engaged in positive activities in times when we know the challenges faced by many public school students are daunting to say the least... We collectively have to advocate for more money to provide the afterschool activities that many children so desperately need. The only question is: do we have the will to do it? If we invest in our young people the way we invest in convention hotels and waterfront condominiums, then there will be more than enough afterschool programs to ensure success for almost every child. It is up to us, the adults, to make the difference."

- --Baltimore City Councilwoman Belinda Conaway, keynote address, YMCA 21st Century BOOST Afterschool Program at Robert Coleman Elementary School's *Lights On Afterschool* Celebration, October 18, 2007
- "I want to thank the Afterschool Alliance for putting the spotlight on afterschool." --CEO for Chicago Public Schools, Arne Duncan, Chicago *Lights On Afterschool* Breakfast of Champions, October 18, 2007
- "You are making a tremendous contribution to improving public education with your afterschool programs. If we get public education right, everything else will follow. But if we get it wrong, not much else will matter."
- --Representative Steve Kagen, M.D., Green Bay, Wisconsin, *Lights On Afterschool*, October 18, 2007
- "The teachers and advisers are almost all volunteers, but you still have to pay the utilities and gas for the buses and the food. It takes public support to get political support." -- Nancy Schweitzer, First Lady of Montana, *Missoulin.com*, October 18, 2007
- "I wouldn't be here talking to you today if it weren't for afterschool... Afterschool helped me get back on track and made me who I am today... Young people [in afterschool programs] can better themselves with tutoring and find out who they are by exploring programs that aren't offered in school. The mentors and teachers and coaches that stay afterschool, they make the difference. It was a basketball coach for me. He didn't have to. He didn't get paid for it. But he did it and it changed my life."
- -- Bill Wennington, former Chicago Bulls center and radio personality, Chicago *Lights On Afterschool* Breakfast of Champions, October 18, 2007
- "All four of my children attended afterschool programs, my oldest son is in his second year

at college. As a parent I could not manage providing all the wonderful activities and opportunities my children receive from their afterschool programs on my own... My work for this program is not about dollars and cents, it is about creating learners who will grow up to be good adults someday." -- Mrs. Feuy Yang, parent, bilingual paraprofessional, and afterschool staff member at the Green Bay Area Public Schools, Green Bay, Wisconsin, *Lights On Afterschool* Breakfast of Champions, October 18, 2007

"The city has expanded after school offerings to help keep youth off the streets and involved in positive activities. It's part of our antiviolence program and is a complement to our street outreach program."

--Mayor John DeStefano Jr., New Haven, Connecticut, *New Haven Register*, October 19, 2007

"I've been a big supporter of CROP and other afterschool programs because of what they offer kids and families. With many parents working, it's important for children to have an alternative to coming home to an empty house. We have to keep this going."
--State Senator James Seward, New York, *The Daily Star*, October 19, 2007

"Afterschool programs expand upon classroom learning, provide a safe place for Wyoming students of all ages to go after school, support family needs, and allow for exciting enrichment opportunities and academic support... Afterschool programs are important, and the benefits of these programs to youth, families and communities are valuable to Wyoming schools."

--Dr. Jim McBride, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Wyoming Department of Education, in memorandum on importance of afterschool programs, October 19, 2007

"All children need a good, safe place to go after school. A lot of children don't have that.

As I've traveled around, I've met a lot of young mothers crying out for programs like (West After School Center)."

--Francis Strickland, First Lady of Ohio, Lancaster Eagle Gazette, October 19, 2007

"Three significant contributions that afterschool programs make to Maine's children, youth and families: Keeping kids safe and healthy, inspiring them to learn, and relieving working parents of worries about their children's activities during the afternoon hours."

--Karen Baldacci, First Lady of Maine, *Waldo County Citizen*, October 23, 2007



CALIFORNIA UPDATE

Lights On Afterschool in California

California led the way with more than 500 events registered for *Lights On Afterschool* this year! Among these diverse and successful events was a news conference and carnival held by the Central Valley Afterschool Foundation at Birney Elementary School in Fresno.

The Foundation used Lights On Afterschool to release a new report, Afterschool Programs in the Central Valley Addressing the Needs of Our Youth, which describes an urgent need for adequate funding for afterschool programs and to make them more available in California's Central Valley region. The report finds that, although afterschool programs are well funded elsewhere in the state, afterschool only reaches five to 11 percent of area students.

In the survey of schools in six counties, researchers found that although afterschool funding has doubled to \$67 million in recent years, now reaching 40,000 youth, that is "still woefully short" of meeting the need. Of the 285 schools in the region that applied for afterschool funding from the state, just 184 received it, the study finds. It urges

community members to support afterschool by talking to local representatives and by volunteering. *The new study is available at http://centralvalleyafterschool.org/tools/publi cations.htm.*

TAKE THE NAA SURVEY TODAY!

The National AfterSchool Association (NAA), the only national professional association for the afterschool field, is urging professionals to take the short, 15-minute survey that is posted at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=a_2f5qcSLvFQQRemZCDgUZ_2fQ_3d_3d

Your answers will help NAA better represent and serve the afterschool workforce. All responses will be kept confidential. The survey closes on Monday, October 29 – so take it today and share the link with your colleagues!

IN THE NEWS...

Connecticut - Through a 15-week intergenerational alliance that began with the start of the school year, students from the city magnet school and an independent retirement community are cherishing the time they spend together twice each week as part of a new afterschool program. According to Shannon Ruedlinger, manager of Watermark in Bridgeport, she got the idea after participating in a "Principal for a Day" program at the Classical Studies Academy. "The main thing is that they see that, despite the differences, there are commonalities in people," Principal Helen Giles told the *Connecticut Post*.

Maryland – Teachers and staff from the Annapolis Maritime Museum gave more than a few Eastport Elementary School students their first boat rides on October 19 when they helped kick off an afterschool program. Their cruise on the region's storied waterway aboard the *Annapolitan II* was only the first activity offered by the program, "Chesapeake Champions," which will also include time at the museum, opportunities to grow oysters, measure water quality and even raise diamondback terrapins, according to the *Maryland Gazette*. The program is funded by the school's Title I money and a \$10,000 grant from Bank of America.

Missouri – Area foundations are looking to support future afterschool programs by investing \$240,000 in a pilot program to train 100 credentialed workers to work at area youth programs. The Missouri Youth Worker Pathways Project will team Penn Valley with the Local Investment Commission, (LINC) a nonprofit agency that provides afterschool programs, to strengthen afterschool by building a workforce with the skills to help schools attract more state and federal dollars and raise salaries. Afterschool programs, after all, are "a notoriously underpaid venue," Candace Cheatem, LINC deputy director, told the *Kansas City Star*.

Missouri – Despite their scary costumes, area students involved in afterschool programs will be promoting a cause more in the spirit of Christmas than Halloween this year when they trick-or-treat for canned goods instead of candy. The students, who attend 25 afterschool programs sponsored by Johnson County Park and Recreation District, will once again go door-to-door with staff seeking donations for area food pantries, according to the *Kansas City Star*. Collection bins will also be placed at two locations through October 31.

New York – Not only did Niagra Falls School District summer sports, special needs and preparatory camps keep area students busy this summer – they also kept them out of trouble, said Police Superintendent John R.

Chella who wrote a letter to Susan Ross, director of the district's 21st Century Community Learning Center. Ross led three camps for 800 students, according to the *Buffalo News*. "Our numbers show we had fewer contacts with juveniles during the summer months from noon to 8 p.m.," Chella said in the letter. "So I would say [the camps] are a contributing factor in keeping down juvenile crime, because the camps give the kids something to do and keep them off the street."

Nebraska - Thanks to a combined grant of \$2 million from the City of Omaha and a donation from Susie Buffett's Sherwood Foundation, more than 400 area public school students will benefit from four new afterschool programs. The programs at the Marrs, McMillan, Morton and Norris Schools will offer snacks, activities and a strong academic component. "This is a natural extension of the school day," Omaha Schools Superintendent John Mackiel told the Omaha World-Herald. But much remains to be done, according to a study by the University of Nebraska at Omaha which indicated that 11,000 disadvantaged children in the region could benefit from afterschool programs.

Texas – Arlington voters will soon decide whether or not to pass a crime tax measure. If adopted, it could contribute \$450,000 toward youth and family programs like tutoring, camp scholarships, youth sports programs and afterschool. Proponents of the measure say the tax increase will create positive activities to keep youth out of trouble. "How much should we invest in our youth? There are waiting lists in programs all over the city for kids to be in," Randle Meadows, Arlington Police Association President, told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

AFTERSCHOOL PROFILE:

MILES CITY, MONTANA'S 'ROCKS' PROGRAM

After seven years running an afterschool and summer program, "my patience level is so much better," says Joyce Vera, coordinator of Miles City, Montana's "Raising Our Community Kids Safely" (ROCKS) program. "The little things that used to bother me, just don't."

In fact, Vera's just too busy to let little things bother her. Her program serves 30 to 50 kindergarten through sixth grade children every weekday afternoon, and all day during the summer months. Vera's job includes everything from taking attendance each day from the aisle of a school bus, to administering the program, to soliciting donations and writing grant proposals. What's more, it isn't her only job. She teaches in the Custer County schools during the day, then hustles to the American Legion hall each afternoon for afterschool. She also teaches private voice lessons, directs a church choir and serves as the church organist. Not surprisingly, she says she hasn't been out of town without children in the seven years since she took the ROCKS job.

Miles City is a small town of 9,000 residents, surrounded by farms producing sugar beets, alfalfa, wheat and other crops. "It's a great community," she says, "but there's no question we fill a real gap for children. In the summers, for example, there's a swimming hole, there's baseball and there's the ROCKS program."

Vera makes sure that children who go to ROCKS get a full day's worth of activities. This past summer, Vera chose a theme for each week, then organized activities to support the theme. Jobs week included tours of worksites – a bank, a pizzeria, and a tire center. Range week included visits to a nearby livestock and a range research station, the Bureau of Land Management's offices, and a horse ranch. Other weeks focused on

water (swimming, fish hatcheries, the local water treatment plant), sports (golf, running, bowling), and health (drug abuse prevention, fire safety, nutrition).

During the school year, the afterschool program adds academics into the mix, but still brings community resources to bear. Students get a snack and homework help, and then participate in a variety of activities that include swimming and other sports; trips to local employers, the library or industry; and visits to the program by the police canine unit, fire department, highway patrol, and other guests popular with youngsters. Children also get technology instruction in the computer lab. The local school system often allows ROCKS students to place out of middle school keyboarding classes as a result of what they learn after school.

The program also draws on the resources of its sponsor, Miles Community College (MCC). The relationship began with the college serving chiefly as a fiscal agent for a federal grant awarded to the program. But it has grown into a true partnership over the years, Vera says. Faculty and students from athletic teams and student organizations regularly make presentations or lead activities. And the college continues to provide organizational support – extending its insurance policy to cover the program's school bus, for example, and providing substitute bus drivers in emergencies. The relationship works well for ROCKS and the college. ROCKS is able to tap a wealth of knowledge and volunteer resources, and the college is able to provide its students with hands-on experiences with children, a particularly valuable opportunity for college students considering a career in elementary education. Several years ago, the partnership received national recognition – an award for innovation from College Planning and Management magazine.

ROCKS has earned praise within the state, as well. At a 2004 Extra Learning Opportunities Summit hosted by then-Governor Judy Martz, ROCKS and two other

programs were recognized for outstanding work.

"We're very grateful for all the support we receive from the college and the community," Vera says. "The community has really embraced us, including the business community. They know a lot of these children are going to be their employees in a few years." She adds, "It's really the children who make it worthwhile for me. They will yell at me from across the store or parking lot in a way they never did when I was just teaching elementary school. It's different somehow. They trust you, and you have a great chance to make a real difference in their lives. The more successful we are, the more work there is, and the more time I spend doing the bills, making calendars, planning and so on. But I make sure I pay attention to those moments where you see how much the children enjoy it, and what a difference it's making for them. That's what's really important."



PARENTS SAY AFTERSCHOOL PROVIDES HOPE FOR FUTURE

A new study by the Black Alliance for Educational Options, *Afterschool Programs as an Oasis of Hope for Black Parents in Four Cities*, finds that low-income and working-class African American parents express a strong need for afterschool programs and feel hopeful that these programs will improve their children's life chances.

The year-long independent study funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation analyzed the opinions of 407 African American parents, grandparents and caregivers regarding the quality and importance of public school and community based afterschool programs, and the factors which lead parents to enroll their students in them. The study was conducted through 46

focus groups conducted in Detroit, Michigan, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"Overall, parents hoped to see the program improve their child's academic motivation, school engagement and bonding, and achievement," the study says. "For example, parents wanted their children to earn better grades and improve their behavior (in and outside of school) as a result of participating in an after school program. According to one parent, the 'afterschool program gives them not only the academic help they need, it gives them the social skills that they need. It gives them something to look forward to. They have a positive reason to come to school."

The study also found that parents considered the best afterschool programs those that provide family support, encourage homework completion, participate in creative activities, and increase children's social competence.

To view it, visit http://scoter.baeo.org/news_multi_media/mott Summary.pdf.



RESOURCE

Culturally Appropriate Parenting Guide

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), which conducts and supports research on effective parenting strategies and healthy child development, recently released a Spanishlanguage booklet that highlights some of the challenges facing parents/guardians and outlines effective strategies for dealing with those challenges. The booklet, ¿Qué Significa ser Padres?, is designed for parents with children of all ages and includes culturally appropriate information about how to incorporate these valuable strategies into daily parenting activities. The tools in this booklet will enable parents and guardians to put research-based parenting techniques into

practice. The booklet is available for free through the NICHD Information Resource Center, at 1-800-370-2943, or at http://www.nichd.nih.gov/significapadres.



Lights On continued from page one...

and community and business leaders participated in the event, which included student performances of drumming, step and jazz. It was sponsored by the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, along with the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council, After-School All-Stars, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

In Augusta, Maine, the Maine Afterschool Network sponsored an event in the Hall of Flags at the Augusta State Capitol. The Chair of the Governor's Children's Cabinet and the state's First Lady, Karen Baldacci attended. Attorney General Steven Rowe shared emcee duties with a student and Commissioner of Labor Laura Fortman, who discussed the importance of afterschool. Parents wrote letters, which organizers plan to present to policy makers in bound books.

In New York City, Mayor Michael Bloomberg used Lights On Afterschool to announce new funding for afterschool through the Out-of-School-Time (OST) initiative. The funds will provide 14,000 additional slots for youth in 112 new programs. "Announcing the expansion of the OST system is the perfect way to celebrate Lights On Afterschool," said Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Jeanne Mullgrav. "Every dollar invested in the initiative benefits not only young people, who can take advantage of tutoring, cultural enrichment programming, and mentoring opportunities, but also working parents, who report that they are more comfortable and productive at work knowing that their children are enrolled in an OST program."

In Cincinnati, Ohio, some 800 students attended a region-wide event at the Music Hall downtown featuring comedian and television personality Wayne Brady. He told

the crowd that, as a child, he did not have an afterschool program, joking that his mother was his afterschool program and she never let him out of the house. Also at the event, Mayor Mark Mallory presented a Lights On Afterschool Proclamation, and students participated in a bicycle give away, resource fair, face painting, MadCap puppets, doubledutch, and more. It was hosted by the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati.

Highlights

Also this year, for the first time ever, the Empire State Building in New York City was lit with yellow lights the evening of October 18 in honor of *Lights On Afterschool*, and the PECO Tower in Center City, Philadelphia displayed a special message.

State first ladies also participated in *Lights On Afterschool* events in Montana and Ohio, as well as Maine.

All 50 governors issued proclamations for *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

Businesses – from T-Mobile USA to Feit Electric to Torani to JCPenney – stepped up to sponsor and support events.

Congressional Support

On the federal front, the Senate passed a resolution declaring October 18 "Lights On Afterschool Day." It highlights the role that afterschool programs play in providing safe places for children after school.

Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and John Ensign (R-NV) introduced it in the Senate, and Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), Joseph Biden (D-DE), Barbara Boxer (D-NY), Richard Burr (R-NC), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Susan Collins (R-ME), John Cornyn (R-TX), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Herb Kohl (D-WI), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Joe Lieberman (D-CT), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Patty Murray (D-WA), Ben Nelson (D-NE), Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) were co-sponsors.

In the House of Representatives, a similar resolution was introduced by Representatives Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Ralph Regula (R-OH). It is co-sponsored by Michael Arcuri (D-NY), Joe Courtney (D-CT), John J. Hall (D-NY), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Betty McCollum (D-MN), Gwen Moore (D-WI), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) and Steven Rothman (D-NJ). Passage is likely next week.

"Thanks to the enthusiasm, energy and creativity of afterschool supporters everywhere, *Lights On Afterschool 2007* was an unprecedented success," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Afterschool champions have done a superb job in raising awareness of the critical role afterschool programs play in our communities – but with more than 14 million kids unsupervised after school in this country today, we still have a lot of work to do."

Lights On Afterschool 2007 also marked the kick-off of a year-long celebration of the 10th anniversary of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs.

Lights On Afterschool is organized by the Afterschool Alliance. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is National Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

For descriptions of hundreds of Lights On Afterschool events, please visit http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/events.cfm. A full list of events, photo gallery and more is available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/index.cfm. The ninth annual Lights On Afterschool will be held on October 16, 2008.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

October 29 - 30, 2007; November 5 –6, 2007

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute; the National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases; the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; and

the National Cancer Institute are sponsoring regional trainings focusing on the Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition (We Can!) agenda. The training on October 29 and 30 will take place in Carson City, Nevada, and another will be held on November 5 to 6 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Participants will be trained on We Can! curriculum for parents and youth, and will share ideas and network about how to prevent childhood obesity. *For more information*, *visit*

http://www.wecantrainings.org/events/index.c fm?fuseaction=registration.viewEvent&cntEv ent=6.

November 1 - 3, 2007

The Harvard Family Research Project will host a professional development institute, Closing the Achievement Gap: Linking Families, Schools and Communities, at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The institute will examine how schools, families, out-of-school-time programs and other organizations and agencies can forge connections and build systems of support for children and youth. For more information and to register, go to http://www.gse.harvard.edu/%7Eppe/k12/pro grams/cag.html.

November 2 - 3, 2007

The New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition will host its annual conference for afterschool, The Creative Spirit of Afterschool, in Princeton, New Jersey. For more information and to register, visit http://www.njsacc.org/news.html#conferences.

November 7 - 10, 2007

The National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts will host the 2007 Conference for Arts Education in Los Angeles, California. Workshops address: integrating arts and academics; planning effective and sustainable partnerships; effective grant writing; community arts education in small towns and rural communities; and more. For more information and to register, visit http://www.communityartsed.org/.

November 15 - 17, 2007

The Children's Forum will host the After-School Solutions State Conference in Orlando, Florida. The conference will offer a wide range of workshops and trainings for afterschool professionals. For more information, visit http://www.thechildrensforum.com/training.ht ml#e2007-11-16.

February 14 - 17, 2007

Foundations Inc. will host the Beyond School Hours XI: Bringing Learning to Life national conference in Jacksonville, Florida. The keynote speaker is actor James Earl Jones. The conference will touch on a wide variety of issues affecting afterschool, including: technology; staff support; summer learning; rural resources; engaging parents, communities and stakeholders; program quality; funding; and more. For more information, visit http://www.foundationsinc.org/events/conference/beyond11/default.asp.

** And mark your calendars now for the 2008 "Afterschool for All Challenge," May 13th and 14th in Washington, D.C.!

More information on upcoming conferences and events is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org/states/calendar_main.cfm.

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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