



## AMERICA RALLIES FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

At more than 7,500 sites across the country and U.S. military bases around the world, a million people came together on Thursday, October 16, to rally for afterschool programs. At these *Lights On Afterschool* events, students conducted science experiments, showcased their academic skills, cleaned up neighborhoods, helped senior citizens, and discussed the importance of afterschool programs with Members of Congress, governors, mayors, business and community leaders, and others. The Empire State Building in New York City was lit in yellow that evening in honor of the event. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance.

The ninth annual *Lights On Afterschool* went “green” this year, with the Afterschool Alliance replacing its symbol – a standard incandescent light bulb symbol – with a compact fluorescent light bulb.

Actress Rhea Perlman of “Cheers” fame was a spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* again this year. We sent “the message that we must keep the lights on each afternoon for our children,” she said. “Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families.”

“During *Lights On Afterschool*, we celebrate the many ways that quality afterschool programs help children, families and communities,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “But at the same time, we recognize that more than 14 million kids in this country are unsupervised each afternoon after the school day ends, and the federal investment in afterschool

programs hasn’t nearly kept up with the need. We need to do much more to make afterschool programs available to all children.”

This year’s *Lights On Afterschool* concluded a year-long celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC), the chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs. It has helped make afterschool programs available to millions of children. For this anniversary and *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance launched America’s Afterschool Storybook to give afterschool alumni and students, business leaders, parents, and program staff and volunteers a place to share stories about the ways afterschool programs have affected their lives. *Individuals can still add their personal stories to the Storybook, and read others at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/storybook/gallery.cfm>.*

### Rallies Across the Country

San Francisco kicked off *Lights On Afterschool* this year with a *T-Mobile Huddle Up* event on October 2 at the Whitney Young Child Development Center. More than 150 T-Mobile employees spent the morning revitalizing the Center and then joined an afternoon rally to show support for afterschool programs. Celebrity Chef Joey Altman used science to show the students how to make – and eat – healthy Italian ice.

In Shawnee Mission, Kansas, the Johnson County Department of Parks and Recreation hosted 1,400 students from Shawnee Mission School District and Gardner-Edgerton USD231 at the Shawnee Mission Park Theatre to celebrate “*Lights On Across Rallies continued on page six...*”

## OUTREACH

With *Lights On Afterschool* activities winding down, now is the perfect time to follow up with lawmakers, community leaders and local partners who attended and supported events. A personal thank you goes a very long way in strengthening a relationship.

Event organizers can send traditional thank you cards and emails and, for greater impact, include light bulb art created by students or another token of thanks from children.

If lawmakers were invited but could not attend the event, providers can utilize post-*Lights On* correspondence to establish relationship. Send these lawmakers a packet, including student artwork, parent petitions, photographs and/or media coverage of the event along with an invitation to visit the program at a time that will be convenient for them.

Organizers also can share information about their events through the Afterschool Alliance's new Facebook page. Facebook members who become "fans" of the Afterschool Alliance can post program updates, photographs and videos of their events online. *To view the page and participate, go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Afterschool-Alliance/24777553348>. Organizers also can send photos to [lightson@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:lightson@afterschoolalliance.org) to be featured in the Lights On Afterschool gallery at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)*

### Afterschool for All

Thank you to all *Afterschool for All* partners for helping make the 2008 *Lights On Afterschool* celebration a huge success. Throughout the nation, afterschool advocates utilized the *Afterschool for All* petitions, sign-up forms, brochures and other advocacy materials at their *Lights On* events to get their communities engaged in the afterschool issue. As a result, more moms and dads, youth, teachers, business leaders and community volunteers have pledged their support for afterschool.

The Afterschool Alliance encourages everyone to fax or mail copies of completed *Afterschool for All* sign-up forms and petitions, in order to ensure that new partners are counted on the national list of *Afterschool for All* partners. Mail *Afterschool for All* forms to: Marie Coichy, 1440 Broadway, Floor 16, New York, NY 10018. Fax *Afterschool for All* forms to: 646/943-8664

Visit the Afterschool for All website to see which new partners have signed up in your state at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/a4a.cfm>. For more information, contact *Afterschool for All* Project Manager, Marie Coichy at [mcoichy@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:mcoichy@afterschoolalliance.org) or 646/943-8662.



## IN THEIR OWN WORDS AT LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL...

“We’ve tried to help with funding, tried to encourage meetings like this to show the importance of [afterschool programs]... It’s sometimes not available for the kids, and we should make the extra effort to reach out to them.”

-- Representative Mike Castle (R-DE) at the Warner Elementary School *Lights On Afterschool* event in Wilmington, Delaware, *News Journal*, October 17, 2008

“When we give our kids a safe place to be and a place to grow, this really gives the city an opportunity for less crime, better educated students and a better community for our children.”

-- Joyce Tanner, senior recreation supervisor of Montclair Community Collaborative at the Collaborative’s *Lights On Afterschool* event in Montclair, California, *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*, October 17, 2008

“I think it’s great... This is what we need for our young people, something of this caliber.”

-- State Senator Billy O’Dell at the Greenwood Family YMCA *Lights On Afterschool* event in Greenwood, South Carolina, *Index Journal*, October 17, 2008

“Happy *Lights On Afterschool* day... [Afterschool programs] are more than just bricks and mortar. They make our communities better... We place a priority on the education, development and well-being of our children here in Maryland... We’re making a better tomorrow for our young people.”

-- Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley at *Lights On Afterschool* celebration in North Beach, Maryland, October 16, 2008

“When you look at the statistics and the number of kids that are involved – whether it’s juvenile crime or other delinquency problems, they are substantially reduced by

kids that are involved in afterschool programs so that they don’t become latchkey kids. And, as our economy is such that it is, that we now have two parents working, the abilities to have these types of programs that keep the kids engaged is very important.”

-- Representative Mike Simpson (R-ID) at the Greenacres Elementary in Pocatello, Idaho, *Lights On Afterschool* celebration, *Local News 8*, October 16, 2008



## STUDY DOCUMENTS LONG-TERM INCREASE IN NYC AFTERSCHOOL FUNDING

A new policy brief from the Institute for Education and Social Policy (IESP) at the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development documents a dramatic increase in public funding for afterschool programs in New York City over the last decade. By the researchers’ tally, total funding from local, state and federal sources has gone from about \$23 million in 1998 to nearly \$300 million this year.

IESP conducts nonpartisan scientific research on education and social issues. Its researchers analyzed an array of data measuring city, state and federal spending on afterschool programs, and found that since 1998, every level of government established initiatives to expand the availability and quality of programs that children can attend every school day, generally for three hours a day, while their parents work. By comparison to 1998, eight times more New York City K-12 students now attend daily, comprehensive programs offering educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.

“The data shows that all levels of government have provided increased public dollars for afterschool programs, not only keeping pace with the increasing number of New York City children participating in these

programs, but also increasing the amount of money available for each participant,” said Meryle Weinstein, the Institute’s assistant director. The policy brief concludes that about 160,000 of New York’s 1.1 million public school students attend comprehensive afterschool programs.

The growth of afterschool in New York City is due in considerable part to The After-School Corporation (TASC), which received a \$125 million challenge grant from the Open Society Institute in 1998 to provide afterschool programming, as well as to advocate for more support for afterschool. “This policy brief provides independent confirmation that the creation of an afterschool system is one of the most successful private-public initiatives ever to benefit New York City kids,” said TASC President Lucy N. Friedman. “It is a testament both to the vision of the Open Society Institute – which provided the challenge grant to establish TASC and to advocate for afterschool to become a responsibility – and to the power of government and private institutions working together to achieve transformative public policy change on behalf of the kids and families in New York City.”

New York City now provides about two-thirds of all public funding for afterschool programs in the city. Programs are administered by the city’s Department of Youth and Community Development. The federal government provides approximately a quarter of the funding for programs in the city, and state government provides approximately eight percent.

*The IESP policy brief, “Public Funding for Comprehensive Afterschool Programs, 1998-2008,” is available at [http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/002/451/IESPBrief\\_afterschoolprograms\\_10\\_6\\_08.pdf](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/002/451/IESPBrief_afterschoolprograms_10_6_08.pdf).*



## NEW ISSUE BRIEF ON AFTERSCHOOL AND SPECIAL NEEDS

The Afterschool Alliance has just released a new Issue Brief, “Afterschool and Students with Special Needs,” examining the role of afterschool programs in reaching out to and providing enrichment opportunities for special needs students. It includes examples from programs and promising practices for others interested in learning more, implementing, or incorporating successful strategies into their own special needs programs.

The Brief finds that “While all children benefit from high quality afterschool programs, afterschool gives children with special needs the chance to experience meaningful and authentic belonging. Beyond the benefits of providing learning and enrichment activities, afterschool offers children with special needs the chance to engage with their non-disabled peers in a way often not possible during the regular school day. Afterschool provides a safe haven where children with special needs can learn, play and succeed side-by-side with children of all abilities.”

To view the brief, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/publications.cfm>.



## AFTERSCHOOL PROFILE: HARLEM RBI & CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

For at least one young girl, a unique baseball-based afterschool program in Harlem, New York has been a life-changer. “Renell” (not her real name) is now an eighth-grade success story. But when she first came to the Harlem RBI afterschool program two years ago, things were different.

In the summer after fifth grade, “Renell” was already taking an oversized role raising her little sister, while their foster mother was working nights at a local hospital to put food on the table. Accustomed to being in charge at home, “Renell” didn’t take well to authority, and argued with umpires on the softball field, made incendiary remarks during reading sessions, and picked fights with her teammates. After arranging to fight one of her teammates for striking out during a softball game, she was dismissed from Harlem RBI’s summer program – an outcome even she agreed was fair under the circumstances.

That autumn, when Harlem RBI staff began recruiting students for the afterschool program, “Renell” got a second chance and took advantage of it. Director of Organizational Excellence Megan Demarkis reports that “Renell” became a team leader, cheering on teammates, explaining program expectations to new participants, and putting a quick stop to teasing and trash-talking by inexperienced teammates. “Look,” “Renell” said, “we don’t do that here. They’re serious. Just ask me.” For the rest of the year and into the summer program, “Renell” excelled, compiling an outstanding attendance record and showing all the signs of a young girl who had found her way.

“Renell”’s story is similar to those of many of the youth with special needs who come to Harlem RBI. “We don’t usually know much about our youth at enrollment,” Demarkis says. “If we’re lucky, we might find out more from the teachers who work with our youth during the regular school day. Generally, we think we’re prepared to address all needs by using solid teaching and learning strategies that engage everyone.”

Harlem RBI is a unique baseball/softball-oriented program, with a focus on physical health, active citizenship, academics, work-readiness, teamwork, and more. “We want all our graduates to reach those objectives, and all our programs, from third through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, are designed with these objectives as

guideposts. Implementation is different at the various age levels, of course, but the objectives are constant.”

At the elementary levels, a typical day for a student involves activities ranging from improving reading skills, to sports and teamwork, to conflict-resolution and problem-solving – all designed to be “fun and different from your traditional school activity,” says Demarkis. As children get older, their programs reflect their growing capacity – and demand – to choose their activities. Working as a team, seventh- and eighth-grade students design a service project, for example.

Baseball and softball are a constant throughout and, from it, the program draws lessons in cooperation, teamwork, leadership, fitness and more. In addition, participation on the program’s teams can be a powerful motivator for participation, as it was for “Renell”.

“We partner with Ramapo for Children to develop a training program that helps all levels of staff use a series of interventions that call youths’ attention to behaviors, and give them good choices for changing it. The techniques work with any child,” she says, “but we work to apply them consciously and consistently, particularly for our youth with special needs.”

With children with cognitive or academic delays, Demarkis says, “we try to give as much support as we can. We’ll set them up with reading buddies, for example, so they can be full participants. And we’ve got a very good ratio of adults to children, which helps a lot.”

The program’s heavy reliance on sports and physical activity is helpful, as well, she points out. “Also, the youth aren’t stigmatized from the jump, as they sometimes are in the regular school day. We work to give them a sense of belonging, and help them explore their talents. We do that for all our youth, but for special needs youth, it’s a real opportunity to be successful.”

*For more information on Harlem RBI, visit [www.harlemrbi.org](http://www.harlemrbi.org). To view the new*

*Afterschool Alliance Issue Brief, "Afterschool and Students with Special Needs," visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/publications.cfm>.*



## VERIZON LAUNCHES AFTERSCHOOL INITIATIVE

The Verizon Foundation is providing \$2.2 million in grants to the National Council of La Raza and the National Urban League to fund the creation of an innovative, formalized afterschool program using resources from Verizon's Thinkfinity.org. The initiative is designed to improve achievement and graduation rates among minority students, using culturally sensitive educational resources with an emphasis on literacy, math and science.

Through this initiative, education experts from the two organizations will work with Verizon's Thinkfinity.org content-providers to create unique, culturally sensitive, multi-media educational resources. They will be pilot-tested at approximately 12 afterschool locations affiliated with the organizations.

After a review to determine which resources have produced the strongest educational gains, the information also will be made available to the public at no cost through Verizon's Thinkfinity.org Web site.

"For today's students to gain the valuable educational base they need to succeed, learning cannot end when the school day ends," said Verizon Foundation President Patrick Gaston. "Every moment presents a learning opportunity, and afterschool programs must capitalize their time with students to engage, educate, and inspire them to excel."



*Rallies continued from page one... America." Students gathered for a picnic lunch, and sang with U.S. Representative Dennis Moore who played the guitar and led them in, "This Land is Your Land." Other activities included areas of fun targeted at different regions of the United States. There was: *West Coast*, volleyball and dance; *East Coast*, "Boston Marathon" ½ mile run; *Voting America*, *Southwest*, snacks of chips and salsa; and a *Midwest* hayride.*

In Wilmington, Delaware, students at the East Side Charter School 4-H afterschool program celebrated the theme of *Lights On Afterschool* "Going Green" with a host of environmentally themed activities. Older students calculated their carbon footprints and learned about the environmental impact of their actions while students in the pre-K program colored using environmentally themed illustrations. Students participated in "recycle" relay races, where teams raced to complete an obstacle course that required them to classify paper, plastic and other recyclable materials. The local branch of Barclays Bank was the event sponsor and community partner, and dozens of bank employees spent the afternoon connecting with the students and staffing events. The program is run by the University of Delaware's College of Agriculture & Natural Resources Cooperative Extension.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maryland dedicated a new building in North Beach, for *Lights On Afterschool*, with Governor Martin O'Malley and Mayor Michael Bojokles delivering remarks.

Children enrolled in the Barnard After Care Program in Tulsa, Oklahoma walked to Veterans Park to meet parents, and participate in activities including daffodil planting, face painting and light bulb cookie decorating. Following the reading of a *Lights On Afterschool* proclamation, students created Tulsa's largest light bulb on the soccer field, with students forming an outline with white lights that was then filled in by other students.

The DeKalb County School System in Georgia is celebrating *Lights On Afterschool* during the entire month of October with a focus on cyber safety, with the theme “Lights On, Logged On.” The county is using afterschool programs as the primary avenue to teach students, staff members, parents and the community about cyber safety. The DeKalb County School System partnered with Georgia Tech Research Institute, Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security, Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and the Public Schools Foundation to develop the safety trainings. The partnership hopes to train all 40,000 middle and high school students, staff, parents and elementary schools PTAs, staff and community partners.

### **After the School Bell Rings...**

The Afterschool Alliance and the Florida Afterschool Network joined forces with Bright House Networks and the Florida Cable Telecommunications Association to produce a 30-minute cable television program that educates viewers about the benefits of afterschool programs, and describes what is happening around the country and in Florida.

It features more than 20 interviews with high-profile leaders and afterschool champions from different segments of society, including kids who are in programs now. The program also includes the latest facts and figures on afterschool needs, benefits and challenges. It focuses on Florida, with statewide leaders discussing the supports they believe Florida children need after school, and how best to provide those supports.

The cable program aired on October 16 and will air several more times through the end of the year in the state. It was recognized at a *Lights On Afterschool* event in Tampa at which more than 250 youth at Sam Rampello Downtown Partnership School celebrated *Lights On Afterschool* with parents, policy makers and community leaders. Students

dazzled the crowd with their dance performances of the Blues Brothers, and the student band energized the crowd. Bright House Networks also sponsored a youth essay contest.

“The Afterschool Alliance is thrilled that Bright House Networks led efforts to develop this landmark show, which provides Floridians with important information about the impact of quality afterschool programs on our children, families and communities,” the Afterschool Alliance’s Grant said. “But a lack of resources means that most children are missing out on afterschool opportunities. We applaud Bright House Networks, and the cable industry, for taking on this important issue.”

### ***Lights On Afterschool Online***

*Lights On Afterschool 2008* included an online rally that gave those with busy schedules a way to participate – no matter where they were located. Celebrity Chef Tyler Florence and *Time Magazine* columnist Joel Stein were among those “attending” the online rally. *People with Facebook profiles can still show their support of the Afterschool Alliance and afterschool at* <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Afterschool-Alliance/24777553348>.

*A list of 2008 Lights On Afterschool events is available at* <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

And mark your calendars now for *Lights On Afterschool 2009*, to be held on October 22, 2009.



## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS...**

### **November 5 - 6, 2008**

The Best Out-of-School Time Conference will host a High School Summit in San Diego, California. The conference will focus on high school afterschool programming. Proposals for sessions are now being accepted. *For*

*more information, visit  
<http://www.boostconference.org/booster/>.*

 **November 14 - 15, 2008**

The New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition will sponsor the annual state afterschool conference, “Outdoors in the Garden State,” in Princeton, New Jersey. The focus of the conference will be creating linkages between children and youth in afterschool programs and nature and the outdoors. There will be 70 workshops, one-third of which will focus on nature and the outdoors. *For more information, visit  
<http://www.njsacc.org/index.php>.*

 **February 11 - 14, 2008**

Foundations Inc. will host Beyond School Hours XII National Conference: The Winter Institute, in Burlingame, California. *For more information, visit  
[www.foundationsinc.org/events](http://www.foundationsinc.org/events).*

**\*\*\* And mark your calendars now for the *Afterschool for All Challenge* to be held April 27 and 28, 2009, in Washington, D.C. – as well as *Lights On Afterschool 2009* on October 22, 2009! \*\*\***

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://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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Phone: 202/371-1999; Fax: 202/371-9142; E-mail: [advocate@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:advocate@afterschoolalliance.org).

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