

**NEWS RELEASE**

October 9, 2007

CONTACT: Gretchen Wright
202/371-1999**For the First Time Ever, the Empire State Building
Will Light Up for *Lights On Afterschool***

***Yellow Lights Will Shine on New York City Landmark
October 18th in Support of Afterschool Programs***

The yellow lights shining at the top of the Empire State Building on October 18th will be in support of *Lights On Afterschool*, the only national rally for afterschool programs. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* brings together students, parents, educators, afterschool program directors, and community and business leaders from across the country to show their support for afterschool programs. This year, *Lights On Afterschool* also kicks off a year-long celebration of the 10th anniversary of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs.

In addition to the Empire State Building, *Lights On Afterschool* 2007 will include 7,500 events throughout the nation and at military bases around the world. While most events will be held on October 18th, *Lights On Afterschool* kicked off last weekend with rallies in Los Angeles and Columbia, South Carolina. In all, a million people are expected to participate and to urge leaders to support the afterschool programs that keep children safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. More than 14 million children have no place to go after the school day ends.

Local *Lights On Afterschool* events give youth a chance to showcase the skills and talents acquired at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more children need afterschool programs.

“We are absolutely delighted that the Empire State Building is part of *Lights On Afterschool* this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “It seems fitting that such an important national symbol is supporting afterschool programs, which do so much to help children, families, businesses and communities.”

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000. Actress Rhea Perlman is the spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is National Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

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.

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