



NEWS RELEASE
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More than 5,000 Students Expected As Los Angeles Kicks Off *Lights On Afterschool 2007*

More than 5,000 afterschool students from agencies and providers across Los Angeles kicked off the eighth annual *Lights On Afterschool* at Birmingham High School in Van Nuys today. The event was sponsored by the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Beyond the Bell Branch. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* is held each October to shine a spotlight on the need for more afterschool programs. It is the only nationwide rally for afterschool.

Students participated in a variety of fun, engaging and educational afterschool activities, similar to those provided each day at Beyond the Bell. Several also showcased the skills and talents they have developed through their afterschool programs. The Carney Drill Dance Team, the Woodcraft Drum Core and the A World Fit for Kids Dance Team all performed for the crowd.

Speakers at the event included City Councilman Dennis Zine, LAUSD School Board President Monica Garcia, Assistant Superintendent for Extended Day Programs Al Cortes, Associate Superintendent for the Division of Special Education Donnalyn Jaque-Antón, City Councilwoman and President Pro Tempore of the Los Angeles City Council Wendy Greuel.

"California leads the nation in providing afterschool programs for kids, so it's fitting that the Golden State is helping to kick off *Lights On Afterschool 2007*," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "We are urging the federal government and other states to follow California's lead and do more to give all children access to the quality afterschool programs that can keep them safe, inspire them to learn and help working families."

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000 with 1,200 events. A million people are expected to rally at 7,500 events this year to show their support for afterschool programs and to encourage lawmakers and others to make afterschool programs available to all students who need them. 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. For the first time ever, the Empire State Building in New York City will be lit with yellow floodlights on October 18 in recognition of *Lights On Afterschool*.

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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