



NEWS RELEASE

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California Helps Kick Off *Lights On Afterschool 2005*

Some 7,000 Events to Follow in Every Corner of Nation

LOS ANGELES, CA – Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, actor Kevin Sorbo, numerous city and school district officials, JCPenney representatives, and others were scheduled to help more than 4,000 Los Angeles children rally for more afterschool programs here today, as part of *Lights On Afterschool 2005* kick-off. Sorbo is a spokesperson for the Afterschool Alliance and played the title role in the hit television series, “Hercules: The Legendary Journeys.” The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is National Presenting Sponsor of *Lights On Afterschool 2005*.

Today’s event, at Birmingham High School in Van Nuys, was organized by the Los Angeles Unified School District’s (LAUSD) Beyond the Bell Branch, with LA’s BEST and dozens of other afterschool agencies. It featured student activities, performances, displays, and a *Traveling Light Bulb* that launched in Dallas on Friday. The *Traveling Light Bulb* is making its way across the country and collecting murals featuring children’s art that will be displayed, along with the inflatable bulb, on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on October 20, *Lights On Afterschool Day*.

Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* is the nation’s largest rally for afterschool. More than 7,000 events will take place this month in every corner of the country, with most set for Thursday, October 20. “We expect this year’s *Lights On Afterschool* to be the biggest and most exciting national rally for afterschool yet,” Grant said. “Hundreds of thousands of Americans are coming out to show their support for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, help working families and inspire children to learn.”

Research shows that 14.3 million kindergarten through 12th graders care for themselves after the school day ends. In California, 22 percent of kindergarten through 12th graders care for themselves. The parents of more than 15 million children nationwide say their children would participate in an afterschool program if one were available.

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Lights On Afterschool began in October 2000 with 1,200 events across the country. Last year, more than half a million people rallied at 7,000 events to show their support for afterschool programs. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is National Chair of *Lights On Afterschool*, a position he has held since 2001.

Among other stops, the National *Lights On* Tour will visit Albuquerque, Tucson, Chicago, Charlotte, Albany and Miami, before reaching D.C.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children have access to afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports programs designed to keep kids safely and constructively engaged during out-of-school time. The Fund's contributions allow for the creation and continuance of afterschool programs aimed at the academic, physical, and social development of children throughout the U.S. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund also works to raise awareness of the benefits of afterschool programming, and is committed to ensuring that every child has access to the world of opportunities that awaits them after school.

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