



**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Health and Fitness Take Center Stage At Many *Lights On Afterschool* Events This Year**

Afterschool programs not only keep kids safe, help working parents and inspire students to learn, they can also improve children's physical fitness and well-being. That is why many afterschool programs across the country will showcase their sports, fitness, health and nutrition activities during the only nationwide rally for afterschool this month. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance, and most events will be held on or around October 18. Many will feature afterschool activities that encourage health and physical fitness. A few examples:

- Physical education activities and wellness programs will be on display at *Lights On Afterschool* at Avondale Elementary and Glen Iris Elementary in **Birmingham, Alabama** on October 19. Organizers will offer free glucose and blood pressure testing to participants. The event is being hosted by Community Education South.
- An autograph session with the Jacksonville Jaguars will be among the highlights of *Lights On Afterschool* in **Jacksonville, Florida** on October 18. Other activities will include storytelling and arts and crafts. The event is being sponsored by the Police Athletic League and several community partners.
- Radio personality and former Chicago Bull Bill Wennington and former Chicago Bear Revie Sorey will be featured speakers at the *Lights On Afterschool* Breakfast of Champions in **Chicago, Illinois** on October 18. The event is sponsored by Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development (BUILD), After-School All-Stars Chicago, and the Office of Extended Learning Opportunities at Chicago Public Schools.
- Harlem RBI's Real Kids Program and Nike will co-host a *Lights On Afterschool* event at Roberto Clemente Elementary School in **New York City, New York** on October 17<sup>th</sup>. A celebrity athlete, community leader and parent will receive Roberto Clemente Afterschool Hero Awards, and students will discuss why afterschool is important to them.
- Students will participate in health and wellness activities and showcase their talents at the *Lights On Afterschool* rally sponsored by Rhode Island Afterschool Plus in **Providence, Rhode Island** on October 18.

“Childhood obesity is a tremendous problem in this country, in part because not enough children participate in organized physical activity on a regular basis,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Many afterschool programs offer the kind of sports and recreational activities that are no longer available during the school day, and in doing so help to promote healthy habits that can last a lifetime. We’re very happy that so many programs are showcasing this work at their *Lights On Afterschool* events this year.”

“Afterschool programs support the whole child,” said After-School All-Stars President and CEO Ben Paul. “We were founded by everyone’s favorite health & fitness role model, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and we’ve been doing all we can over the last 15 years to ensure that students are safe and have opportunities to learn after school, while at the same time giving them opportunities to be active and become more fit. *Lights On Afterschool* is a critical day for us and for our nation, to bring attention to this issue; many of our programs across the country will spend the day showing parents and members of the community the importance of education, independent learning, homework support, service learning as well as life skills, sports and physical fitness activities.”

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*.

*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.

*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).*

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