



NEWS RELEASE
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Seniors, Hip-Hop Artists, Law Enforcement, Others Join Nation's Top Afterschool Providers in National Rally October 20

Afterschool programs create the most unexpected partnerships. AARP and the Older Women's League are partnering with H2A – HIP HOP ASSOCIATION, Fight Crime: Invest In Kids and more than 150 other organizations to support the Afterschool Alliance's *Lights On Afterschool* rally on October 20. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is the National Presenting Sponsor of the event, which will include a "traveling light bulb" – an inflatable light bulb and children's mural that will crisscross the nation in October, arriving in Washington, D.C. on October 20th.

Their efforts are supporting the work of afterschool programs across the country. Programs affiliated with the nation's leading afterschool providers – Boys & Girls Clubs of America, YMCA of the USA, Junior Achievement, 4H Afterschool and Afterschool All-Stars – are organizing thousands of *Lights On Afterschool* events, including several that will feature the traveling light bulb.

"Afterschool programs are key to strong families and communities," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "They not only keep kids safe in the hours after school, but they help working families and inspire students to learn. The diversity of *Lights On Afterschool* partner organizations demonstrates that people throughout our communities recognize that these benefits are significant and lasting."

"We are proud to play a leading role in our nation's largest rally for afterschool," said Wynn Watkins, Chairman of the Board of the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. "Each year more and more of America's families turn to quality afterschool programming to keep their children safe and constructively engaged during out-of-school hours. Consequently, the *Lights On Afterschool* annual events continue to build in terms of participation and impact. Our organization is honored to support *Lights On* and pleased to see the growing attention it brings to this very important issue."

Lights On Afterschool was launched 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. A list of 2005 partner organizations is available online at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/sup_orgs.cfm#B.

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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