



NEWS RELEASE
September 23, 2011

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Lights On Afterschool 2011 Partners are as Diverse As Afterschool Activities & Student Interests

In afterschool programs, kids have opportunities to learn about science and math, play sports, build their reading skills, work with mentors, and have other experiences that can change and shape their lives forever. This year, many of the organizations partnering with the Afterschool Alliance to support *Lights On Afterschool* – the 12th annual nationwide rally for afterschool programs, set for October 20th – promote physical fitness, science, math, reading and other activities important for children of all ages.

The 2011 *Lights On Afterschool* partners include organizations that support the healthy development of children and youth in a variety of ways. Afterschool program providers including 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, YMCA of the USA, 4-H, Police Athletic Leagues, After-School All-Stars and many more are celebrating, as well as organizations as diverse as the National League of Cities and the NASA Astrobiology Institute.

Lights On Afterschool is organized by the Afterschool Alliance. More than one million people are expected to participate in more than 7, 500 events which will take place in cities and towns across the U.S. and on military bases overseas. The events give youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs.

“Whether they’re learning about the science of computer programming, discovering the importance of teamwork through soccer, or expanding their imaginations by reading books, children in afterschool programs are learning and growing in ways that can change their lives,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The impact of afterschool programs is often unique and invaluable, which is why it’s so important that every child has access to the opportunities that afterschool programs provide.”

The children, parents, grandparents, educators, community leaders, policy makers, celebrities and others expected to participate in the 12th annual *Lights On Afterschool* will be urging Congress not to divert or deny federal funding for afterschool. For years, the federal investment in afterschool has lagged far behind the need. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (the chief federal funding stream for afterschool) in 2007, yet funding stands at less than half that today. Congress is currently

considering legislation that would allow other programs to compete for the already limited 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds.

During *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance, in conjunction with jcpenny, will release 50 state progress reports that examine how each state is helping keep the lights on for kids and families after school. The progress reports review state policies, funding and other activities that affect afterschool programs, examine the need in each state for these programs, offer tips to parents seeking afterschool programs for their children and suggest ways that all state residents can support afterschool.

A significant body of research demonstrates that students who attend 21st CCLC afterschool programs regularly are more likely to improve their grades, tests scores and overall academic behavior. More than 15 million school-age children – more than one in four kids in the United States – are unsupervised after the school day ends. The parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs – if programs were available.

For the fifth year in a row, the Empire State Building will be bathed in yellow light in support of the nationwide rally. This year, the Afterschool Alliance and jcpenny are holding a contest to encourage officials in other cities, towns and villages across the country to “Light Up a Landmark” as part of their *Lights On Afterschool* events.

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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.