



NEWS RELEASE  
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## **One Million Parents, Students, and Community, State and National Leaders Rally Today to Keep the Lights on After School**

### ***Fourteenth Annual Nationwide Rally for Afterschool Includes More than 8,000 Events***

In community centers, science labs, children's museums, parks, classrooms and other settings, more than one million people are coming together today to celebrate and support the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. [Lights On Afterschool](#) is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, the event is organized by the Afterschool Alliance and is an opportunity to highlight the myriad ways afterschool programs support children, families and communities.

At this year's events, students, their families and other guests are conducting science experiments, creating artwork, cooking healthy meals, participating in sports tournaments, creating computer animation, planting gardens, learning about the environment, and sending the message that millions more children need quality afterschool programs. As a part of the celebration, the Empire State Building in New York City will be lit up in yellow this evening for the seventh year in row. The governors of 48 states issued proclamations declaring today *Lights On Afterschool Day* and the United States Senate passed a bipartisan resolution supporting *Lights On Afterschool*.

"*Lights On Afterschool* is a wonderful time for afterschool programs to showcase the many ways they help students develop new skills, unearth new talents and interests, improve in school, and learn about exciting career opportunities," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Our many partners, including the Empire State Building, the Association of Science-Technology Centers, Bright House Networks and 4-H clubs – to name just a few – have turned out in full force this year to help us celebrate and support the afterschool programs that do so much for students, families, schools and communities."

Among the *Lights On Afterschool* events happening today are:

- In conjunction with Nickelodeon's Worldwide Day of Play, New Hope Community Learning Center in **New Hope, Alabama** will host a fun run and invite guests to participate in other physical fitness activities to promote healthy and active youth.

- CDC Be Cool After School in **Little Rock, Arkansas** is hosting a *Lights On Afterschool* open house featuring a pep rally and showcase. The showcase will include art, singing, and dancing by students in the program. All guests will wear a glow light necklace or bracelet that symbolizes the importance of keeping the lights on after school
- Students in the Roxy Theatre Group in **Miami, Florida** will create a Halloween Town and a Christmas Town from the Disney film, “Nightmare Before Christmas,” at the Theatre. Parents, family members, and community members will be able to walk through the towns and see students act out vignettes in each.
- Students in the Future Teen Entrepreneur program in **Chicago, Illinois** will showcase their product designs during a Teen Entrepreneur Market Day Event held for *Lights On Afterschool*. Youth interns will also teach students how to use art designs to promote business ideas.
- Students in the Parks & People Foundation’s KidsGrow Environmental Education Program in **Baltimore, Maryland** will showcase the nature projects they have been working on at Franklin Square Elementary. The program teaches students in grades K-8 to understand urban habitats and natural watersheds of the local Baltimore Franklin Square community.
- The Kingman Museum and Leila Arboretum Children’s Garden in **Battle Creek, Michigan** will hold an open house for students of the Battle Creek Public Schools’ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program and their parents. The event will feature a new Native American exhibit and a special presentation in the planetarium.
- The Museum of Innovation and Science in **Schenectady, New York** will offer free admission to afterschool programs and other community organizations today. Programming will include live demonstrations, planetarium shows and other activities. The event is intended to increase community awareness of the value of afterschool.
- Greater Enrichment Program, Inc. in **Charlotte, North Carolina** will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* for Fitness. The festival-style fitness day will be held at Bette Rae Thomas Recreational Center and will include tennis, basketball, healthy snacks, a chef, food pavilion, blood pressure checks, health info, fitness room tours, and entertainment for the family.
- The Labs at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**) will hold events at all three neighborhood locations. At the Allegheny Lab Makers Studio guests will be invited to design and program their own robots using the Hummingbird Robotics Kit created in Carnegie Mellon University’s CREATE Lab.

Several hundred event descriptions are at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaEvents2013.pdf>.

To find an event in your community, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

*Lights On Afterschool* events allow children to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more children deserve an equal chance to thrive in afterschool programs. This year, a million people will participate in some 8,000 events in communities nationwide and on U.S. military installations overseas, including student performances, runs and walks, open houses, art and essay contests, art displays, tree lightings, carnivals, and much more.

The Afterschool Alliance organizes *Lights On Afterschool* to draw attention to the many ways afterschool programs support students by offering them opportunities to learn new things – such as science, community service, robotics, Tae Kwon Do and poetry – and discover new skills. The events send a powerful message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs.

Afterschool programs are struggling for resources. According to a 2012 study conducted by the Afterschool Alliance, nearly two in five afterschool programs (39 percent) report that their budgets are in worse shape today than at the height of the recession in 2008, and more than three in five (62 percent) report that their funding is down “a little or a lot” from three years ago.

Many more students across the country need access to afterschool programs. 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.

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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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*