



NEWS RELEASE
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Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Activities to be Focus of *Lights On Afterschool* Events Across Country This Week

Job-shadowing female STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) professionals. Making volcanos. Flying drones. Building robots. Using infra-red cameras to track how animals move in the dark. These are some of the fun, educational STEM activities taking place at [Lights On Afterschool](#) events across the country this week.

Organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#), *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool programs. The 19th annual *Lights On Afterschool* is Thursday, October 25th. More than a million people are expected to participate at more than 8,000 events.

“Afterschool programs provide opportunities for students of all ages to engage in team-based, hands-on STEM learning,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “They have fun while gaining skills that can help them reach their full potential and ready them for the jobs of tomorrow. We’re delighted that so many *Lights On Afterschool* events this year are showcasing the ways afterschool programs engage children and youth in STEM activities. Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help give working parents peace of mind that their children are safe and learning during the sometimes-perilous hours after the school day ends and before parents get home from work.”

At more than 1,500 *Lights On Afterschool* events, afterschool students will learn computer science through hands-on, fun activities provided by 4-H’s National Science Day. Additional STEM-focused activities to be featured at *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country on October 25th include:

Tempe, Arizona: Organized by Afterschool Ambassador Jeremy King, Kid Zone Enrichment Program will host events at all 14 of its afterschool sites. Each event will feature a glow party at which students will crack glow sticks to shine a light on afterschool and participate in hands-on learning activities. Activities include Elephant Toothpaste STEM, Make-Your-Own Apple Graham Cheesecake, Catch® Active Games and Life-Sized Literacy. Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell, Tempe city council members, and school district representatives will attend the event at Ward Traditional Academy.

Denver, Colorado: STEM for Change will hold a community open house that will include STEM family fun creations such as paper circuits, paper robots and scribbling machines. Students will participate in a “Pumpkin Quest” and engage in educated conversations about diversity and equity in STEM careers.

Miami, Florida: After-School All-Stars in Miami will host a Spectacular STEM Showcase. The event will begin with a welcome and STEM Program highlights. There will be hands-on demo stations with drones, robotics, virtual reality and an interactive STEM truck. Participants will form a giant human Lights On lightbulb on the field, which will be filmed from the air with a drone. Crown Castle, Florida Power & Light, Fox Sports and T-Mobile are sponsoring the event.

Columbus, Georgia: Afterschool Ambassador Chris Bass and Samantha Jackson of Columbus Parks and Recreation Department's Community Schools Division organized this event, taking place at the Reese Road Leadership Academy's Afterschool Program with a STEM-focused event. The Spookapalooza program will include science and technology projects featuring pumpkins, lights, volcanic explosions and gooey slime. Afterschool students will discuss the importance of afterschool in their lives.

Newark, New Jersey: The USVO Teen Center will host an open house. New recreational equipment and program activities will be showcased, including free classes presented by the New Jersey Audubon Society that help students learn STEM through nature. Infra-red cameras on program premises will capture animals' movements overnight for the students to study, and students will create their own comic book heroes using the "12 Comics" program. Students will then attend a New Jersey Devils hockey game.

Charlotte, North Carolina: Charlotte NEXT will host a celebration at James Martin Middle School. MeckEd will host a virtual field trip to increase girls' exposure to STEM. It will consist of a 45-minute job shadow of a female STEM professional, during which students can ask questions about her career.

Henderson, North Carolina: For *Lights On Afterschool*, Gang Free Inc. will host a STEM Expo. Students will facilitate stations showcasing activities including drones, slime, propelling, building, chess, math, STEM literacy and more.

Mandan, North Dakota: Bismarck's Gateway to Science will celebrate at a STEMzone event at Lewis and Clark Elementary School. It will feature hands-on STEM activity stations including parachute drops, catapults, roller coasters, drawing machines, a "float your boat" activity and more.

Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Tinker Youth Programs will host a family STEM night. Staff and youth will facilitate booths with hands-on STEM activities, including mini-volcanoes, surface tension experiments, catapults and more.

White Swan, Washington: Mt. Adams School District 21st Century Community Learning Center will hold an open house. This event will showcase to parents and families the activities offered in the afterschool program. There will be a guest from First Nations MESA (mathematics, engineering, science, achievement) to facilitate a STEM activity with circuits.

The [America After 3PM](#) household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, found that participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs has increased as well. Today, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two

more whose parents say they would participate, if a program were available. Unmet demand is especially high in rural communities and communities of concentrated poverty. One in five students in the country is unsupervised after the school day ends.

Governments, parents, philanthropies, businesses and others support afterschool programs, but investments are frequently under threat. Two years in a row, President Trump has proposed a budget that would have eliminated federal funding for afterschool and summer learning programs. While Congress has rejected the call to eliminate afterschool funding and included modest increases in FY2018 and FY2019, threats of cuts continue to loom.

The New York skyline will again shine for afterschool on October 25th when, for the 12th consecutive year, the iconic Empire State Building is lit up in yellow and blue for afterschool.

[Peachjar](#) helps afterschool programs connect with families and is a generous sponsor of *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

KIND snacks joined forces with the Afterschool Alliance and Nickelodeon's Worldwide Day of Play to support *Lights On Afterschool* this year by feeding healthy appetites. KIND has provided more than 400,000 KIND Kids™ bars as complimentary snacks for guests at *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country.

Among the more than 200 diverse national, state and local *Lights On Afterschool 2018* partners are 4-H Afterschool, After-School All-Stars, Association for Science-Technology Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Camp Fire, Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), Girls Inc., National Association of Police Athletics/Activities Leagues (PAL), National League of Cities, National Recreation & Park Association, Think Together, the YMCA of the USA and others.

For a complete list of national *Lights On Afterschool* partners, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaNatPartners.cfm>. To find an event in your area, please visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

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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.