



NEWS RELEASE
October 21, 2019

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***Lights On Afterschool* Events Across the Country This Week are Showcasing the Many Ways Afterschool Programs Educate Students About Healthy Eating, Stress Management and Active Lifestyles**

As the nation holds the 20th annual [Lights On Afterschool](#) rally this week, many of the more than 8,000 events in cities and town across the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide will focus on instilling healthy habits in children and youth. More than a million people are expected to participate in *Lights On Afterschool* rallies, open houses, fun runs and other celebrations, many of which are being held this Thursday, October 24th. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#).

“Afterschool programs support children’s learning as well as their well-being, from helping address challenges such as hunger and food insecurity to managing stress and avoiding alcohol and drugs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Many *Lights On Afterschool* events this year are showcasing how afterschool programs promote health and wellness, from serving nutritious snacks and meals to inspiring students to be active to helping them manage stress and pressure in healthy ways. The healthy habits afterschool programs instill in children and youth can last a lifetime.”

The many health-focused activities to be featured at *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country this Thursday, October 24 include:

Kenai, Alaska: The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula will host “Medicine, Me & Responsibility” for *Lights On Afterschool*. Police officers will speak with students about why it is important not to take medicine they have not been prescribed, and what students can do if they find medicine that is not theirs. Families will tour the facility.

Brandon, Florida: For *Lights On Afterschool* and National Emotional Wellness Month, the Carey Family Brandon Boys & Girls Club will host ‘WISH YOU WELLness’ to educate, empower and encourage students to acknowledge and handle their feelings in a positive way. Various rooms at the Club facility will represent outlets students can turn to in times of emotional distress. Instructors lead students in yoga and kickboxing, police deputies will teach self-defense and healthy aerobics, and students will engage in painting, music, and writing. Parents will receive information about resources that help children cope with emotional stress.

Tampa, Florida: Crestwood Elementary HOST will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* by teaching students to cope with stress and anxiety through movement. At the event, students will rotate through stations that teach techniques to help them calm down when feeling stressed, including

yoga, Zumba, and GoNoodle. Students will then celebrate with a dance party. More than 200 students, family members and community members are expected.

Gwinnett County, Georgia: Live Healthy Gwinnett will host a *Lights On Afterschool* family night out titled “Walk Among the Stars” at Collins Hill Park in Lawrenceville. Participants will travel to Neverland, take part in fitness games, and connect with community partners. Sponsored by Aetna, Walk Among the Stars will feature materials and information from Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta-Strong4Life, GUIDE, Inc., Gwinnett 4-H, Discovery Point, Gwinnett County Public Library, i9 Sports, Northside Hospital Gwinnett, Positive Impact, Gwinnett Health Department and other government divisions.

Covington, Kentucky: The Sixth District Elementary Community Learning Center will hold a family fitness and wellness night for *Lights On Afterschool*. The Kenton County Extension Office will offer a healthy cooking demonstration, and students and their families will enjoy an inflatable obstacle course, jump rope competitions, a make-your-own trail mix activity, and a bike giveaway.

Bowling Green, Missouri: The YMCA 21st CCLC will hold a parent’s education night at Bowling Green Elementary School for *Light On Afterschool*. The event will feature guest speakers from the Bowling Green Library and the Pike County Health Department demonstrating first aid. Older students will read storybooks to younger children. Families will participate in an activity with the Pike County Sheriff’s Department DARE Officer.

Bronx, New York: To celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*, New York Junior Tennis & Learning will hold a tennis clinic for students and parents. The event will include a Zumba class and smoothie-making activity.

Alexandria, Virginia: Patrick Henry Elementary School will host a fitness event for *Lights On Afterschool*. Staff, students, and parents will walk 10 laps around the gym and receive a gold medal. The event is called “GO GREEN – Walk it out!” and more than 200 people will attend. The event will be at Patrick Henry Elementary School.

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 – but the unmet demand is great. For every child in an afterschool program today, two more are waiting to get in. Unmet demand is especially high in rural communities and communities of concentrated poverty. One in five students in the United States is unsupervised after the school day ends. Governments, parents, philanthropies, businesses and others support afterschool programs, but investments are frequently under threat.

The New York skyline will again shine for afterschool on October 24th when, for the 13th consecutive year, the iconic Empire State Building is lit up in yellow and blue for afterschool. Afterschool supporters also will light up landmarks and buildings around the country to show their support for afterschool programs.

Last week, the more than 5,000 sheriffs, police chiefs, and prosecutors of the organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids released a new report, [From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe](#) spotlighted abundant, powerful research documenting positive outcomes for children and teens who participate in high quality afterschool programs. Released in conjunction

with *Lights On Afterschool*, the report shows that the hours immediately following school remain the “prime time for juvenile crime,” which is why afterschool programs are proving to be one of the nation's best crime prevention strategies and an effective way to guide young people toward success in school and readiness for productive careers.

“Quality afterschool programs also 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,” the Afterschool Alliance’s Jodi Grant added. Afterschool programs provide homework help; mentors; healthy snacks and meals; computer programming; opportunities to think critically, collaborate and communicate with peers and adults; job and college readiness; sports and fitness activities; robotics; art, dance and music; and continuous opportunities for hands-on, team-based learning.

Nickelodeon, KIND and Clear Channel are generous sponsors of *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

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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.