



NEWS RELEASE  
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## **A Million People are Rallying to Keep the Lights On After School Across the United States Today**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Community and business leaders, policy makers, students, parents, educators and others are rallying for afterschool programs today as part of the 16<sup>th</sup> annual [Lights On Afterschool](#). The only nationwide rally for afterschool programs includes more than 8,000 events in every corner of the country, and at U.S. military bases worldwide. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance to highlight the many ways quality afterschool programs support children, families, schools and communities. A million people are participating this year.

*Lights On Afterschool* kicked off in Alaska on Monday, October 12 at an event at Hunter Elementary School in Fairbanks that featured U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), a longtime afterschool champion. Events are taking place today and throughout October to send the message that millions more children and youth need quality afterschool programs. As part of the celebration, the Empire State Building will be lit up in yellow tonight for the ninth consecutive year.

“*Lights On Afterschool* events give students a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more children and youth need quality afterschool and summer learning programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These events spotlight the fun, educational, hands-on activities that quality afterschool programs offer and the ways these programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. But there aren’t nearly enough afterschool programs to meet the need. We need more support from government at all levels, philanthropy, business, higher education and other sectors if we are to make afterschool programs available to all students.”

Among the *Lights On Afterschool* events set for today:

**Santa Clara, California:** The Santa Clara County After School Collaborative is holding its ninth annual *Lights On Afterschool* “Breakfast of Champions.” It honors outstanding principals, teachers, administrators, volunteers, and businesses and city officials who have made important contributions to the field. San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo is the keynote speaker.

**Windham, Connecticut:** The Windham School District’s elementary afterschool programs are holding a Science Experiment Night, a Spanish Heritage Cultural Night, an Exploration of World Climate Night, a Positive Behavior Supports Interventions Night, and a Craft & Literacy Night at

district schools. Each afterschool program also is collaborating with local university students for a Walk for Warmth fundraiser to help those who need heating assistance this winter.

**Salem, Massachusetts:** For Kids Only Afterschool is holding a *Lights On Afterschool* rally at Revere City Hall. Revere Mayor Daniel Rizzo is reading a proclamation in support of afterschool programs. Children are enjoying lightbulb decorating, games from around the world and video making, while parents discuss afterschool issues with the mayor, State Senator Anthony Petrucci and State Representatives Robert DeLeo and RoseLee Vincent.

**Bemidji, Minnesota:** The Headwaters Science Center is partnering with the Boys & Girls Club of Bemidji to host “Project STEM.” This event includes five STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) activities: table top math games; Science on a Cart; hands-on animal demonstrations featuring a boa constrictor, tarantula and a blue-toned skink; a Build It Fest with construction and engineering projects; and a nano puppet theater.

**Calhoun, Missouri:** The Calhoun High School 21st Century Community Learning Center program is hosting a community *Lights On Afterschool* bonfire that features a petting zoo where students can interact with donkeys, horses, goats, sheep and a monkey. Older students are organizing a bean bag toss, tag, football and pumpkin bowling.

**Walla Walla, Washington:** Students in the FORWARD afterschool program at Walla Walla Public Schools are working on a digital media project, creating “light painted” photographs that are being digitally processed as a slideshow and shared through local news media. They are designed to encourage support for afterschool programs.

**Thermopolis, Wyoming:** Students from three afterschool sites are viewing a video about afterschool programs at Ralph Witters Elementary. Then families are working together to solve a mystery, using investigation kits. The school district has created a window display featuring large wooden letters spelling out STEAM, and each letter will be decorated with pictures of students involved in science, technology, engineering, art and math activities.

**Sasebo, Japan:** The Main Naval Base Youth Center is holding an open house featuring board games, chess, musical hula hoops, Lego building, reading and drawing. There are family art stations where students and parents are making iron-on print tote bags, mummy lights and design-your-own neck straps, and a technology station featuring eco car racing.

Young people from the Hicksville Boys & Girls Club in New York designed [the artwork that was printed on 50,000 posters](#) that are being displayed at *Lights On Afterschool* events across the country today.

The many [partners for Lights On Afterschool](#) this year include: After-School All-Stars, Association for Science-Technology Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Bright House Networks, Camp Fire, 4-H, Lego Education, Food Research and Action Center, Marriott, National Association of Police Athletic Leagues, National League of Cities, National Recreation & Park Association, New York Life Foundation, STEMfinity, Torani and YMCA.

Participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004, according to [the America After 3PM household survey](#) of 30,000 U.S. families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. 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. One in five students in the country today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

*Descriptions of several hundred Lights On Afterschool events are [available here](#). To find an event in your community, 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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*