

NEWS RELEASE
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A Million People Rally to Keep the Lights On After School

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Community and business leaders, policy makers, students, parents, educators and others are coming together at schools, carnivals, state capitals, science museums, parks and other venues today to show their support for afterschool programs as part of the 17th 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 underscore the need to invest in afterschool programs, which provide homework help, healthy snacks, mentoring, physical activities, robotics, computer programming, art and music, job- and college-readiness, and myriad opportunities for hands-on learning. One in five students in the United States is unsupervised after the school day ends.

This year's kick-off of *Lights On Afterschool* was in San Jose on Thursday, October 6, when [Learn Fresh](#), the [Golden State Warriors](#) and the [Sacramento Kings](#) held a NBA Math Hoops tournament at a pre-season game. Events today and throughout October are sending the message that millions more children and youth need quality afterschool programs. This evening, for the tenth consecutive year, the iconic Empire State Building will be lit up in yellow for afterschool.

“We are thrilled that so many people are raising their voices for afterschool programs in every part of the country,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “They will get to see firsthand the many ways afterschool programs help students succeed in school and in life. Afterschool programs keep kids safe and healthy and inspire them to learn by helping them discover their passions through fun, educational, hands-on activities. Unfortunately, however, there aren't nearly enough afterschool programs to meet the need. Our goal is to give every student a safe, enriching place to go after the school day ends.”

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

Alabama, Gadsden: The Donahue Elementary Edge afterschool program is holding a coat drive, with classes competing to collect the most coats.

Arizona, Tempe: The City of Tempe's Kid Zone Enrichment program is holding a “Glow Party” at 16 afterschool sites. At each site, students will light up a glow stick, create mini hovercrafts, play literacy games and join cooking demonstrations.

California, San Francisco: FACES SF will hold a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fair that includes Lego robotics, math bingo, math jeopardy, an Imagination Playground building station, science projects and a vintage video game challenge.

Florida, Leesburg: The Rimes Extended Learning Center is holding a healthy foods-themed open house with activities focused on healthy habits, portion control and label reading as well as rainbow egg races, a food group parachute game, apple puppets and a nutrition toss.

Michigan, Lansing: Michigan State University and the Boys & Girls Club of Lansing are holding a Maker Carnival to promote STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) learning. Students will use electric art, design personalized light-up bracelets and more.

New York, New York: At an event organized by After-School All-Stars New York/New Jersey, some 250 students, families and community members area will climb 68 stories – 1,632 steps – to the top of 4 World Trade Center as part of the All-Star Climb 4 Kids challenge.

North Dakota, Fargo: The YMCA of Class and Clay Counties is holding a 1K fun run. As many as 1,500 children and staff members will join, with planning committee members dressed as characters from Toy Story.

In a unanimous vote, the United States Senate passed a resolution that recognizes October 20 as a day to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia have issued proclamations or letters of support for *Lights On Afterschool*.

[Artwork by three talented teens](#) from Baldwin County High School's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program in Bay Minette, Ala., is featured on this year's [Lights On Afterschool poster](#).

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.

There are more than 100 *Lights On Afterschool* supporters and partners, including: YMCA of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H, After-School All-Stars and Camp Fire. A complete list of national *Lights On Afterschool* partners is available [online](#).

A list of *Lights On Afterschool* events is available [here](#). To find other events in your area, visit the map [here](#).

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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.