

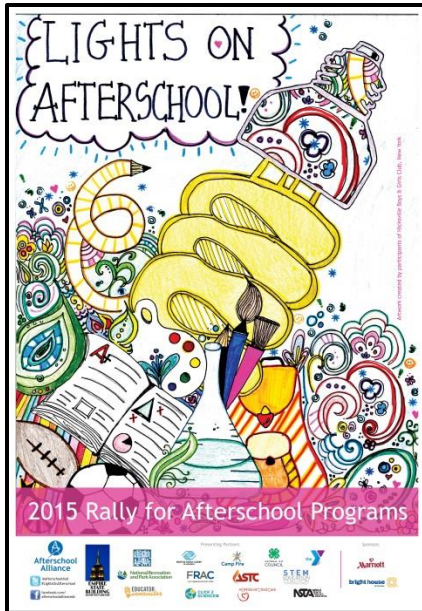


NEWS RELEASE
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Team of Students from Long Island Wins National Art Contest

Hicksville Boys & Girls Club Youth Designed This Year's Lights On Afterschool Poster



A team of 20 young people from the Hicksville Boys & Girls Club in New York, led by 15-year-old Zainab Ansari and 11-year-old Berlyn Tirbaniesingh, designed the artwork that will be printed on 50,000 [posters](#) that will be displayed at thousands of [Lights On Afterschool](#) events across the country next month. The young people created a colorful, vibrant design depicting a few of the afterschool activities they participate in each afternoon. Their artwork won the Afterschool Alliance's annual student *Lights On Afterschool* poster contest.

Lights On Afterschool is the only national rally for afterschool. It is organized by the Afterschool Alliance to underscore the need to invest in these programs. More than 8,000 afterschool programs across the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide are expected to participate in the 16th annual *Lights On Afterschool*, to be held on October 22 this year.

Ansari and Tirbaniesingh are both art lovers who are new to the Hicksville Boys & Girls Club, having joined this past summer. The two immediately immersed themselves in the creative outlets the Club offers, such as designing animals crafted from beads and string and helping paint a mural. One project, Wise Guys STEM, helped the young people blend their artistic talents with science, technology, engineering and math to create rockets and kaleidoscopes, which ultimately inspired their submission. "We incorporated all of the different projects we worked on and put them into one big picture, like the kaleidoscope we built earlier this summer," Ansari explained.

"We were so excited and happy when we found out we won and that our poster is going to be seen by millions of people around the world," Tirbaniesingh said. "Now we can't wait to celebrate with our friends." The entire Hicksville Boys & Girls Club will celebrate during the Club's *Lights On Afterschool* event with a [Torani](#) syrup party on October 22.

The other artists who contributed to the winning poster are: Blake Blakewell (age 11), Jasmin Campos (15), Jonathan Campos (12), Tyler Delgado (14), Danny Joyce (12), Sean Joyce (14), Ryan Khan (12), Raghav Khurrana (15), Ryan Kingdon (14), Samantha Melish (15), Andres

Rivera (16), Cassandra Russo (17), Christopher Russo (13), Kimberly Russo (11), Andrew Scarpaci (14), Jordan Schroeder (13), Brianna Squilace (12), and Kobe Thomas (13).

“We are so proud that an entire team of our students won,” said Hicksville Boys & Girls Club Executive Director Tom Bruno. “Not only is it incredibly inspiring to see young people working and creating projects together, but the fact that they were inspired to design their poster from the hands-on, learning opportunities we offer blows me away. We are so pleased that we can give each of these young people a chance to showcase their passions.”

“This year’s poster is a creative way to illustrate not only the wonderful arts activities afterschool programs offer, but also the ways afterschool programs weave arts and science together,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The learning that happens after the school day ends is so important. We must make the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families available to every child and family. We congratulate Zainab, Berlyn and all the artists who won this contest and thank them for sharing their beautiful work with us so that we, in turn, can share it with students, parents, educators, community leaders and others.”

The New York skyline will shine for afterschool on October 22nd when, for the ninth consecutive year, the iconic Empire State Building is lit up in yellow to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*.

A large and growing body of evidence demonstrates improvements in attendance, behavior, academic achievement and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that afterschool programs encourage increased parental involvement – an important building block for student success.

The 2014 “[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. One in five students in the United States today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

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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.