



NEWS RELEASE
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Libraries Across the Country Will Help Turn the Lights On for Afterschool on October 26th

Since the very first *Lights On Afterschool* events were held 18 years ago, libraries across the country have been a vital part of the national rally for afterschool. This year will be no different, with libraries from coast to coast hosting and cohosting events that showcase the skills students gain and the talents they develop at their afterschool programs. More than a million people across the nation and at U.S. military bases worldwide are expected to participate in some 8,000 *Lights On Afterschool* events this year, on and around October 26th.

The [Afterschool Alliance](#) organizes *Lights On Afterschool* to shine a spotlight on the need to invest in afterschool programs, which provide homework help, mentors, healthy snacks, opportunities for sports and fitness, robotics, computer programming, art, dance, music, job and college readiness, and countless opportunities for team-based learning. For the 11th consecutive year, the iconic Empire State Building will be lit in yellow and blue on October 26th to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*.

Among the 200 national *Lights On Afterschool* partners this year are the Young Adult Library Services Association and the Science-Technology Activities & Resources for Libraries (STAR_Net), a project of the Space Science Institute's National Center for Interactive Learning that connects libraries and afterschool programs to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning through their library exhibits.

According to a [2017 survey](#), nearly three-quarters of afterschool programs work with local public libraries to provide engaging learning activities for kids, from literacy and book lending programs to STEM activities. These creative collaborations are being celebrated during this year's *Lights On Afterschool*.

Flo Trujillo, an Afterschool Ambassador and the Youth Services Coordinator at the Farmington Public Library in New Mexico, has celebrated *Lights On Afterschool* at the library every year since 2000. She says the *Lights On Afterschool* Tailgate Party and Glow.in.the.Dark celebrations inspired [Kidfest](#), which is now the biggest summer learning annual event with partners and collaborations for kids in the state. Due to *Lights On Afterschool*, Trujillo says, "the library has developed partnerships with the arts council, downtown association, museums, schools, community centers, daycare providers, and homeschool and youth organizations to promote reading during the summer months and develop lifelong library users."

Jody DuRand, community engagement manager at the Omaha Public Library, runs middle school afterschool programs at eight sites in the city. Her library has partnered with Collective

for Youth on *Lights On Afterschool* events for the past four years. “Having an afterschool program run by the Omaha Public Library at eight middle schools in Omaha is creating lifelong library users,” DuRand said. “Young people are growing up more literate and some students who may not have owned a book before coming to our afterschool program are heading off to high school as engaged readers. *Lights On Afterschool* is a great way for us to show parents and the community how libraries are places where young people develop positive relationships with caring adults and mentors, and learn that libraries are places where they are always welcome.”

Among the library-based *Lights On Afterschool* events scheduled for this year:

- The Anoka County Library in Fridley, Minnesota will hold its *Lights On Afterschool* event on October 26th, hosting seven programs for school-age children. The program is titled “Space Shuttle: Explore Space Through Art” and will include an arts-and-crafts station that teaches students about space while they use special paper, pencils and liquid watercolor paint to create their own special space shuttles. The program is supported by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.
- The Farmington, New Mexico Public Library will host *Lights On Afterschool* from October 20th through October 26th. Events will include a Halloween Puppet Show and Storytime during the afterschool hours, followed by Cubelets® Robot Blocks and Code-a-pillar in the library laboratory. The Teen Zone will offer Minecraft on October 20th. Library staff will offer tours of the facility, and there will be a “Tippie Toe Parade” during which students pick up a *Lights On Afterschool* bell, jump rope, blinking light, glow-in-the-dark pencils, stickers and more.
- The Tangipahoa Parish Library in Hammond, Louisiana will host a *Lights On Afterschool* event on October 26th, at the Hammond Branch. The theme is “Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry” and events will include “house sorting,” games, snacks and trivia that are all Harry Potter-themed.

“Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and give parents peace of mind that their children are safe and learning until they get home from work – and libraries are major contributors to quality afterschool programming,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “We are very proud that so many libraries participate in *Lights On Afterschool*, giving community members the chance to see the hands-on, fun, educational activities they offer students.”

The [America After 3PM](#) household survey of 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, found that for every child in an afterschool program, 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.

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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.