



NEWS RELEASE
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Hundreds of *Lights On Afterschool* Events This Week Will Promote Healthy Behaviors

On Thursday and over the course of the next few weeks, [Lights On Afterschool](#) events will be held at schools, community centers, parks, recreation centers, state capitols and other venues to demonstrate the many ways afterschool programs keep kids safe and healthy, inspire them to learn and give parents peace of mind that their children are safe, supervised and learning after the school day ends.

Organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#), this year's *Lights On Afterschool* will include more than 8,000 events in communities across the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide. A million people are expected to participate in the 18th annual nationwide rally for afterschool.

Many of this year's *Lights On Afterschool* events will spotlight the many ways afterschool programs teach healthy eating and offer opportunities for students to get and stay active. Among the health-focused events being planned for this year's *Lights On Afterschool*:

Little Rock, Arkansas: On October 19th, Our House Shelter hosted a family fun night for *Lights On Afterschool*. The theme of the event was "Family Arcade Night" and families played life-size versions of Pac Man, Angry Birds, Tetris and Mario Kart. Winners received prizes and everyone enjoyed a group dinner. Some 100 people participated.

Perry, Iowa: PACES afterschool students will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with events on October 25th and 26th. Events will kick off with a "Pledges for PACES" fundraising walk at the Kaufman High School track. The next day, more than 250 students and their families will gather for an open house, awards ceremony, talent show and community dinner at Perry Elementary School. Perry Mayor Jay Pattee will read a proclamation. Other distinguished guests will include Superintendent Clark Wicks; Julia Richards Krapfl from Blank Children's Hospital, who will discuss healthy behaviors; and Iowa Public Television's Trista Peitzman. PACES has celebrated *Lights On Afterschool* each year since it began 18 years ago.

Baltimore, Maryland: On October 13th, the St. Francis Neighborhood Center hosted an open house and stoop night to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. Students led guided tours of the afterschool program, as well as played games and served refreshments. There was a "Community Safety Walk" around the neighborhood that ended in German Park. Baltimore City Councilman Leon Pinkett III and State Senator Barbra Robinson joined 50 community members at the event.

New York, New York: For *Lights On Afterschool*, the Children's Aid Society will host a rally on October 26th. Students will advocate for afterschool programs in their community with a ten-block march around their afterschool program. Tables will display the various activities offered after school. After the march, the students will take a group picture in the shape of a lightbulb. As many as 200 people are expected.

Allentown, Pennsylvania: On October 26th, the Allentown School District will host an involvement fair and showcase for *Lights On Afterschool*. There will be information tables describing school events and afterschool programs and resources, including "Mission Possible," offerings from Girls on the Run, and the LEGO and games club. The dance, step and cheerleading team and the guitar club will perform. Afterschool students in the video production crew will show the video they created and directed, which describes why afterschool programming is important.

Cranston, Rhode Island: The Kidventure, Bain+2 and Camp XL Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with the third annual Cranston Cancer Survivors Walk on October 26th. The walk will have an "Amazing Race" theme, and students and family members will learn about careers, higher education and topics related to curing cancer. The walk will also celebrate career and college readiness with a "Wall of Careers" that showcases students and their families. District Administrator Joseph Rotz and a representative from U.S. Rep. Jim Langevin's office will attend, along with more than 200 others.

Watertown, South Dakota: For *Lights On Afterschool*, the Boys & Girls Club of Watertown will host a week-long fitness competition from October 23rd to the 27th to promote afterschool programs and healthy habits. Each day, students will participate in activities such as obstacle courses, long jumps, 40-yard dashes and other track and field events to encourage them to be active and healthy. Students will also receive healthy snacks each day. Some 100 students are expected to attend the competitions.

Cheyenne, Wyoming: The Boys & Girls Club of Cheyenne will host an active night at the club to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. The event will highlight its Girls on the Run program with a short run in the gym for boys and girls in the club. Teachers will also organize a flag football game and competitions in pool, foosball, air hockey and more. Participants will also work on lightbulb-themed art projects. Some 250 students, parents and community members will attend the October 26th event.

"The healthy habits afterschool programs instill in children and youth can last a lifetime," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "This week and for the rest of October, *Lights On Afterschool* events across the country are showcasing how afterschool programs are promoting wellness, from serving nutritious snacks to inspiring students to move and get fit." Many programs have implemented the National AfterSchool Association's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards, which provide evidence-based, healthy eating and physical activity (HEPA) standards that foster the best possible nutrition and physical activity outcomes for kids attending out-of-school time programs.

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. One in five students in the United States today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

Governments, parents, philanthropies, businesses and others support afterschool programs, but investments are frequently under threat; this year, the President proposed a budget that would have eliminated federal funding for afterschool and summer learning programs. While Congress has rejected the call to eliminate afterschool funding, there is still a threat of cuts that could affect 100,000 students.

The New York skyline will again shine for afterschool on October 26th when, for the 11th consecutive year, the iconic Empire State Building is lit up in yellow and blue for afterschool.

Among the more than 100 other *Lights On Afterschool* 2017 partners are 4-H Afterschool, After-School All-Stars, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the Association of Science Technology Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Camp Fire, the Food Research & Action Center, the National Recreation & Park Association, Voices for Healthy Kids, and the Y. For a complete list of national *Lights On Afterschool* partners, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaNatPartners.cfm>.

To find an event in your area, please 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.