



NEWS RELEASE  
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## The Story of Afterschool!

### *New Online Storybook Highlights the Many Ways Afterschool Programs Have Transformed Lives, Improved Communities*

*“At school, I felt rushed and pressured to finish my math work, but my [afterschool program] tutor always made time to help me. She let me know that she cared about me and not just my grades.”*

*“Much of my family’s success is thanks to the constant support of the...afterschool program.”*

*“The After-School All-Stars has changed my life. With my success, I hope to not just represent the program, but to show kids that anything is possible if you only set your mind to it.”*

*“I wanted to give back to a program like the one I had attended as a middle schooler. Without that program... I don't want to think about the kind of trouble I might have gotten into.”*

These are some of the ways afterschool students, graduates and staff members are describing the impact of their afterschool programs in “America’s Afterschool Storybook,” launched today by the Afterschool Alliance. The Storybook is being unveiled as the nation prepares to celebrate the 9<sup>th</sup> annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. A million people are expected to participate in 7,500 events around the U.S. and at military bases worldwide next Thursday, October 16.

The Storybook was created to help commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC), the chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs. Over the last decade, it has helped make afterschool programs available to hundreds of thousands of children nationwide. For this anniversary, the Afterschool Alliance invited people to share their afterschool stories for inclusion in the unique and compelling Storybook at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/storybook/gallery.cfm>. Several dozen stories, from afterschool alumni and students, business leaders, parents and program staff and volunteers, were selected for the launch. Many more people will share the stories of how their lives have been touched and enriched by afterschool programs at *Lights On Afterschool* events next week, and afterward.

“The story of afterschool is as diverse and inspiring as afterschool programs themselves,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families, but they also do much more. They change lives, open up new worlds, and encourage youth to try things they’ve never tried before. Whether they help children demystify math, discover a passion for acting or develop a future

career path, the stories we are sharing in America's Afterschool Storybook are stories of hope, possibility and achievement. We hope and expect that many more people will add stories and share the ways that afterschool programs have transformed their lives."

Among the individuals who are sharing their afterschool experiences to launch America's Afterschool Storybook are:

- Shaneadra Graham of the BRIDGES 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center in Sylacauga, **Alabama**.
- Chelsea Starr of the Anaheim Achievers in Anaheim, **California**.
- Gloria Hernandez of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center in Modesto, **California**.
- Lisette Abad of the After-School All-Stars in San Jose, **California**.
- Tyra Bell of the Higher Achievement program in **Washington, DC**.
- Ivory Sarceno of Brain Food in **Washington, DC**.
- Theresa West of the Boys and Girls Club in Lakeland, **Florida**.
- Reinaldo Llano of Bright House Networks in Orlando, **Florida**.
- Amy Griffin of the YMCA of Suncoast in Clearwater, **Florida**.
- Chondalaya Hurt of BUILD in Chicago, **Illinois**.
- Sheri Clark of ASPIRE Afterschool Program in Afton, **Iowa**.
- Lori Hopp of the Reno Valley Middle School 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center in Hutchinson, **Kansas**.
- Emileigh Burns of the Cumberland County Middle School 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center in Burkesville, **Kentucky**.
- Amy Princiotta of the Boys and Girls Club in Gardner, **Maine**.
- Marc Dohan of the Memorial 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center in Fitchburg, **Massachusetts**.
- Ivory Duncan of the 4-H Club in Kansas City, **Missouri**.
- Shanna Martin of the Kornerstone Afterschool Program in Shell Knob, **Missouri**.
- John Higbee of the Ventnor 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center in Ventnor, **New Jersey**.
- Lanny Leyba of the South Valley Community Center in Albuquerque, **New Mexico**.
- Mery Del Rosario of the Children's Aid Society in New York, **New York**.
- Yaihara Rivera of the Committee for Hispanic children and Families in Bronx, **New York**.
- Dakia Davis of the YWCA-Wade Edwards Learning Lab (WELL) in Raleigh, **North Carolina**.
- Kara Simpson of the Boys and Girls Club in Gastonia, **North Carolina**.
- Stephon Reed of YouthAlive in Pittsburgh, **Pennsylvania**.
- Chace Baptista of Young Voices in Providence, **Rhode Island**.
- Preston Williams of Teen After School (TASC) in Columbia, **South Carolina**.
- Philmon Haile of OneWorldNow! in Seattle, **Washington**.
- Marissa Griffin of DOIT in Seattle, **Washington**.
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Communities that have been transformed by 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center grants, from the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota to South Carolina's Richland One School District, are also featured in the Storybook.

*Lights On Afterschool* events this year range from a carnival in Anaheim to a citywide celebration in Seattle, to a rally and neighborhood walk in Chicago, to a recognition ceremony at a Children's Museum in Fitchburg. To find an event in your city, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC began in 1999, providing \$40 million in grants. In 2008, the initiative provided \$1.1 billion in funding for afterschool programs. Even at this level, 14 million children have nowhere to go after school where they are safe and supervised. The Afterschool Alliance is working to give all children access to afterschool programs.

*Lights On Afterschool* was launched in October 2000. Actress Rhea Perlman is the spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is National Chair, a position he has held since 2001. For the second year in a row, the Empire State Building in New York City will be lit up for *Lights On Afterschool*.

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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).*

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