

NEWS RELEASE
September 28, 2009

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Historic Landmarks in New York City, Los Angeles Will Light Up for Afterschool on October 22nd

Empire State Building, L.A. City Hall's Lindbergh Beacon To Be Lit for 10th Annual Lights On Afterschool

On October 22, the top of the Empire State Building will be bathed in yellow light as part of *Lights On Afterschool*, the only national rally for afterschool programs. This is the third year that the Empire State Building will be lit up for the event, which is organized by the Afterschool Alliance. But this year, for the first time, city officials in Los Angeles will light the historic Lindbergh Beacon atop City Hall that evening, so that national landmarks on both coasts will be lit up in celebration of afterschool.

Each year, *Lights On Afterschool* brings together students, parents, educators, afterschool program directors, and community and business leaders from across the country to show their support for afterschool programs. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the rally, which will include 7,500 events throughout the nation and at United States military bases around the world. In all, a million people are expected to participate to urge leaders to support the afterschool programs that keep children safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

Rarely lit up for events, the Lindbergh Beacon will be turned on to commemorate *Lights On Afterschool* thanks to the efforts of Los Angeles' Woodcraft Rangers afterschool program and City Councilwoman Jan Perry, who requested the lighting. The City of Los Angeles will issue a resolution regarding the Beacon, saying in part:

Woodcraft Rangers, on behalf of the Afterschool Alliance's 2009 Lights On Afterschool celebration, has linked the lighting of Los Angeles City Hall's historic Lindbergh Beacon on October 22, 2009 with the lighting of New York City's iconic Empire State Building to help focus national attention on the afterschool programs from coast to coast that keep our kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

“The lighting of these well-known landmarks – one on each coast – is a wonderful way to celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Lights On Afterschool*,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “We are deeply grateful to the Empire State Building for being the first landmark to light up in recognition of this nationwide rally, and for inspiring the City of Los Angeles to light the Lindbergh Beacon for afterschool this year. It is our hope that these efforts will help to highlight the importance of keeping the lights on and the doors open for our children each afternoon, so they will all have the opportunity to learn and grow in safe, supervised and educational environments after the school day ends.”

At *Lights On Afterschool* rallies throughout the country on and around October 22nd, Americans will urge leaders to increase support for the afterschool programs that children and families need. The events give youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs. Actress Rhea Perlman is a spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance will release the second *America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America's children spend their afternoons. Funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, a charitable organization committed to inspiring children to be smart, strong and socially responsible, the original study was released in 2004. It found that 14.3 million kindergarten through 12th graders took care of themselves after the school day ended. At the time, just 6.5 million children were in afterschool programs – but the parents of another 15.3 million children said their children would participate if an afterschool program were available.

The 2009 study, designed to measure progress over the last five years, is also funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund and includes updated information on afterschool participation nationally and in all 50 states. The Afterschool Alliance and JCPenney Afterschool Fund will release it on October 6 at an event at the U.S. Department of Education. State data will be featured a few weeks later at *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country.

As part of this year's *Lights On Afterschool* celebration, Bright House Networks will air a new documentary on the benefits of afterschool, featuring the personal stories of youth and families across the country.

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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.