



NEWS RELEASE
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Support for Nationwide Rally for Afterschool Comes from All Quarters

Afterschool programs help children develop confidence, learn new things, discover hidden talents, participate in physical activity and explore new interests. They also support the communities in which children live and our society as a whole. Recognizing the myriad benefits afterschool programs provide to children and communities, a variety of national, state and local organizations have signed on to be national partners in the only nationwide rally for afterschool. More than 200 foundations, corporations and nonprofit organizations are among those *Lights On Afterschool* partners, many for the eleventh year in a row. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance.

This year's partners include organizations as diverse as the Akron Police Department, America's Promise, Earth Force, Fitness3.com, Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options, the Lumina Foundation, Marriott, National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, Reading Is Fundamental, SupportMusic.com, the U.S. Department of Education and Verizon Foundation, which offers a free educational web site, Thinkfinity.org, containing engaging learning resources developed by leading US educational organizations.

“By supporting *Lights On Afterschool*, our national partners are demonstrating their commitment to our nation's youth and to the afterschool programs that help working families, keep kids safe and inspire them to learn,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Every child should have the opportunities that quality afterschool programs afford—opportunities to build robots, act in theater productions, conduct science experiments and play sports. We, and our partners, are working toward a day when every child has access to an afterschool program and the benefits and experiences they offer.”

Across the nation, *Lights On Afterschool* 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. This year's events will include student performances, runs and walks, open houses, art and essay contests, art displays, tree lightings, carnivals, and much more. (A growing list of rallies is available online at www.AfterschoolAlliance.org.)

Since the Afterschool Alliance organized the first *Lights On Afterschool* in 2000, it has grown to include more than 7,500 events across the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide. This year, more than a million people are expected to participate.

In support of the event, the Empire State Building will be lit up for the fourth year in a row and this year, for the first time, Mount Rushmore will also be lit up for a special *Lights On Afterschool* celebration.

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance will release a new special report from *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. This special report, *America After 3PM: From Big Cities to Small Towns*, will examine the differences in afterschool participation, satisfaction and demand across rural, suburban and urban communities. Both the *America After 3PM* full report and this new special report are sponsored by JCPenney Afterschool, a charitable organization committed to making life-enriching afterschool programs available to more students and families.

The Afterschool Alliance and JCPenney Afterschool will release the latest findings at an event in Des Moines, Iowa on October 12. The report will also reveal city-level data on Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and New York that will be featured at *Lights On* events in those cities.

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.

A complete list of 2010 partner organizations is available online at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaNatPartners.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.