



NEWS RELEASE
October 7, 2010

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Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Are Highlights of 2010 Rally for Afterschool

Afterschool programs nationwide are getting children and youth excited about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). By providing opportunities for hands-on experiences building robots, programming computers, conducting science experiments, creating sturdy structures and more, afterschool programs are engaging children in the sciences and math and helping them obtain the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century workplace.

To showcase the work being done in afterschool programs to provide STEM learning opportunities, the Afterschool Alliance is highlighting those efforts during the eleventh annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. The Afterschool Alliance is partnering with two STEM initiatives: 4-H National Science Day and the U.S.A. Science and Engineering Festival to encourage afterschool programs to showcase their STEM work.

Afterschool students in Pennsylvania are creating a rainforest for the guests at their *Lights On Afterschool* event. Project Exploration, a science-based afterschool program, will host a Junior Paleontologist reunion, taking students to study archeological artifacts at the Oriental Museum in Chicago.

Dozens of programs will participate in the 4-H National Youth Science Day Experiment, downloading guides from the [web site](#) that can be used at *Lights On Afterschool* events to conduct experiments that answer the question “Why is water quality important and why is it important to understand it now?” All programs holding *Lights On Afterschool* events highlighting STEM are also being invited to participate in the first national [USA Science and Engineering Festival](#) which aims to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers. The Afterschool Alliance will be part of the Festival’s two-day expo on the National Mall, where a number of afterschool providers will demonstrate the kinds of exciting, hands-on STEM activities that take place every day in afterschool programs.

“Afterschool programs are doing wonderful work helping to prepare children and youth to understand and master science, technology, engineering and math,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “This year, we are making a special point of showcasing those programs and encouraging them to participate in national events that are helping to shine a spotlight on the excitement and the opportunities that science, technology, engineering and math can provide.

The Afterschool Alliance has just released a MetLife Foundation [Issue Brief](#) that highlights afterschool programs that provide STEM activities and describing the ways in which afterschool programs can promote STEM literacy.

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 that keep them safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. In addition to STEM activities, this year's events will include student performances, runs and walks, open houses, poetry slams, essay contests, art displays, tree lightings, carnivals, and much more. (A growing list of rallies is available online at www.AfterschoolAlliance.org.)

This year, more than a million people are expected to participate in more than 7,500 *Lights On Afterschool* events across the country.

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.

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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.