



NEWS RELEASE
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CONTACT: Gretchen Wright
202/371-1999

**A Million Americans Join City, State & Federal Lawmakers,
Business & Community Leaders Around Nation
In Rallying for Afterschool Today**

Empire State Building to be Lit in Yellow for *Lights On Afterschool* Tonight

People from all walks of life, all ages and occupations, and all corners of the country will be participating today in the eighth annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Actress Rhea Perlman is national spokesperson for the event, which includes more than 7,500 events around the nation and at U.S. military bases around the world. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance.

For the first time ever, the Empire State Building in New York City will be lit with yellow lights this evening in honor of *Lights On Afterschool*, and the PECO Tower in Center City, Philadelphia will display a special message.

“In big cities and small towns, people are standing up today for children and families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “We are sending the message that we know afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families – and we want to make quality afterschool programs available to all children. With more than 14 million kids unsupervised after school in the U.S. today, we have a lot of work still to do. ”

Among the thousands of events scheduled for today:

 **Eureka Springs, Arkansas:** Eureka Kids will give away 100 laptops and desktops to school-aged youth from throughout Carroll County. The event will include barbecue, a pie eating contest, and clothing and school supply giveaways. The Mayor will attend along with the County Judge, School Superintendents and City Council members.

 **Fresno, California:** The Central Valley Afterschool Foundation (CVAF) will hold a news conference and carnival at Birney Elementary School, releasing a new report “Afterschool Programs in the Central Valley Addressing the Needs of Our Youth” which details the need for adequate funding for afterschool programs.

 **Colorado Springs, Colorado:** KLC School Partnership will celebrate literacy with *Lights On Rural Afterschool*. Students will participate in a dictionary scavenger hunt, and write essays on the importance of afterschool. Other activities will include a life-size Scrabble game.

 **Kissimmee, Florida:** The School District of Osceola/SPIRIT will hold a Block Party featuring a flashback to the 70's, rekindling the sense of community and neighborhood pride. 1,400 guests are expected, including local and state officials, business owners, school partners, school board members and SPIRIT program attendees and their families. There will be a cook off, student performances, games, hula-hoop contest, kickball and a balloon toss.

 **Atlanta, Georgia:** The United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, along with Georgia Afterschool Investment Council, After-School All-Stars, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation will host an event featuring Mayor Shirley Franklin and community and business leaders. Singer Johnta Austin will perform, and students will do drum and dance, step and jazz.

 **Chicago, Illinois:** The Little Village Community Development Corporation will host Noche De Las Luminarias for *Lights On Afterschool* at the Manuel Perez Plaza. Families will walk from each community school to a central plaza, carrying lanterns. The event will celebrate Latino cultural food and traditions, and will include student performances and a recognition ceremony. There will be face painting, bingo, a photo booth and balloons.

 **Afton, Iowa:** The East Union and Murray Afterschool Program will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with a family pancake supper. The event will have a nighttime theme and students will dress in pajamas. Partners will set up booths with a variety of family-oriented activities that focus on nocturnal animals and stargazing. The event will also include a fire safety display from the fire department, story time with the principal, and door prizes.

 **Reno, Nevada:** The Washoe County Public School will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* at an event that includes a Proclamation from the Governor, enrichment classes for students and performances and remarks from the District Superintendent. All students will receive t-shirts. The Food Bank of Northern Nevada will provide dinner. More than 1,500 people are expected.

 **New York, New York:** The Henry Street Settlement will hold a letter-writing campaign at five afterschool sites. Children, parents, staff and community members will draw or write messages about afterschool. Parents will sign letters and postcards about the need for more programs. The messages will be sent to elected officials.

 **Cincinnati, Ohio:** A region-wide event at the Music Hall downtown will feature Mayor Mark Mallory presenting a *Lights On Afterschool* Proclamation, a bicycle give away, resource fair, face painting, MadCap puppets, double-dutch, ArtWheels, Discover Health and D.A.R.E. Comedian and television personality Wayne Brady will appear. A JCPenney official will present a check. One thousand children are expected.

 **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:** Representative Jake Wheatley, Wireless Neighborhoods, Mayor Luck Ravenstahl and Pittsburgh Public Schools will host *Lights On Afterschool Pittsburgh* at Peabody High School. It will include performances from the step team and musical groups, and a showcase of afterschool programs. More than 600 people are expected.

 **Seattle, Washington:** School's Out Washington, the Pacific Science Center, T-Mobile USA and the Afterschool Alliance will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* at the Pacific Science Center with more than 400 afterschool youth and local leaders. Afterschool Hall of Fame Awards will be given to the Medina Foundation, T-Mobile USA, and Spokane Mayor Dennis Hession, among others. Students will perform, and presenters include Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske and State Senator Rosemary McAuliffe. The Pacific Science Center will give afterschool youth free access to tour the museum in honor of *Lights On Afterschool*.

 **Misawa, Japan:** Youth Programs at Misawa Air force Base will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with an outdoor festival. 35 SVS Commander Major Patrick Sollami will issue a Proclamation and Edgren High School Principal Michael Johnson will speak. The event will include a bounce castle, carnival style games, prizes and food. It is open to the Misawa Air Force Base.

Forty-nine governors issued proclamations for *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

Lights On Afterschool 2007 marks the kick-off of a year-long celebration of the 10th anniversary of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs.

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000 with 1,200 events across the country. This year, a million people are expected to participate. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is National Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

For descriptions of several hundred *Lights On Afterschool* events, please visit http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/events.cfm. A full list of the 7,500 events is available at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/find.cfm.

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.

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