

NEWS RELEASE  
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## Nation's Mayors Join Nationwide Rally To Keep the Lights On Afterschool

Mayors in towns and cities all across the United States will participate in the fifth annual *Lights On Afterschool* next month. Mayors will issue proclamations, speak at news conferences and rallies, present awards and kick-off events that call attention to the need for afterschool programs.

“We are delighted to see our elected officials joining *Lights On Afterschool* rallies in towns and cities all across the United States,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson. “Their participation underscores their support for the afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working parents and inspire children to learn. The mayors and other officeholders who are joining us for *Lights On* understand the needs of our nation’s kids and our nation’s families.”

Below are some of the ways in which mayors are participating in *Lights On Afterschool*.

**Opelika, Alabama Mayor Barbara H. Patton** will issue a proclamation stressing the importance of afterschool programs to kick off *Lights On Afterschool* in Opelika. The event will take place on October 21, in connection with the town’s sesquicentennial.

**Los Angeles Mayor James K. Hahn** will join California Governor and *Lights On Afterschool* Chair Arnold Schwarzenegger at an October 3 rally organized by the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Beyond the Bell program, LA’s BEST and After School All-Stars.

**Nine mayors** representing cities in Stanislaus County will participate in a two-day county-wide *Lights On Afterschool* in California. The event will culminate with a street fair on October 15.

**Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera** will join the Police Chief Luis Velez and USA Swimming Representative Rowdy Gaines in signing a proclamation supporting afterschool programs at a rally at the USA Swimming national headquarters at the U.S. Olympic Training Center.

**Evansville, Indiana Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel** will open *Lights On Afterschool* at Bosse Field by reading a proclamation. The rally will feature performances, games and fireworks and will kick-off a week of Red-Ribbon activities.

**Natchez, Mississippi Mayor Phillip West** will be the keynote speaker at the *Lights On Afterschool* event in that city. The event is part of a statewide rally, that will include Jackson, Mississippi, where U.S. Representative Bennie Thompson will speak.

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**Superior, Montana Mayor Gordon Hendrick** will join parents, students, principals and the school superintendent at a *Lights On Afterschool* rally there.

**Providence, Rhode Island Mayor David Cicilline** will speak at a rally at the State House that will be the culminating event in a four-day *Lights On Afterschool* celebration in the state.

**Columbia, South Carolina Mayor Bob Coble** will issue a proclamation in support of afterschool program on October 7 to kick off statewide rallies being held on October 7 and 14.

**Austin, Texas Mayor Will Wynn** will read a proclamation in support of afterschool at a morning *Lights On Afterschool* news conference on October 14. The Mayor is a co-chair of Austin's *Lights On Afterschool* celebration.

In May, the Afterschool Alliance released *America After 3 PM*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America's children spend their afternoons. It found that 14.3 million kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> graders care for themselves after the school day ends. The parents of more than 15 million children say their children would participate if an afterschool program were available. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund supported *America After 3 PM*.

*Lights On Afterschool* was launched in October 2000. That year more than 1,200 events were held across the country. By last year, more than half a million people rallied at more than 5,000 events in all 50 states as well as Guam, Japan and South Korea to show their support for afterschool programs. Organizers expect this year's event to be even larger. A listing of 2004 *Lights On Afterschool* events is online at [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa\\_2004/find.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa_2004/find.cfm).

The 2004 National Presenting Sponsor of *Lights On Afterschool* is the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a National Sponsor of the event. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Open Society Institute are providing additional support.

*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by the year 2010. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

*The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, established in 1926 in Flint, Michigan, by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. More information is available at [www.mott.org](http://www.mott.org)*

*JCPenney Afterschool is committed to helping provide children with high-quality, affordable after-school programs to help them reach the "power of their potential." The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization. JCPenney Afterschool has contributed more than \$34 million during the past five years to five of America's leading after-school advocates. JCPenney Afterschool's support helps provide safe, fun and educational after-school programs and raise awareness of the need for more such programs across the country.*

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