



Afterschool Alliance

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Traveling Light Bulb and Children's Art Displays To Headline Largest-Ever Rally for Afterschool

Thursday, October 20 is *Lights On Afterschool 2005*

WASHINGTON, DC – Afterschool program directors, parents, kids and community leaders across the nation are gearing up for the sixth annual *Lights On Afterschool*, to be held on October 20 this year. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, and National Presenting Sponsor the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, this year's *Lights On Afterschool* is expected to include more than 7,000 events around the country and at military bases around the world. A giant traveling light bulb and art display will crisscross the United States in the weeks leading up to October 20, with children in select cities contributing artwork, essays, poetry and other materials to the traveling display.

The traveling light bulb tour will culminate with a *Lights On Afterschool* event in Washington, DC on October 20, with children testifying about the importance of afterschool programs before Members of Congress. On the same day, thousands of rallies will be held all over the country. The tour and rallies will bring together educators, community leaders, lawmakers, parents, business and religious leaders, and youth to call attention to afterschool programs and the resources needed to keep their lights on and their doors open.

“This year we expect to see more lights on for afterschool than ever before,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The tremendous growth of this event highlights both the national support for existing afterschool programs and the need for more programs, which keep kids safe, help working families and inspire students to learn.”

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000 with 1,200 events across the country. Last year, more than half a million people rallied at 7,000 events to show their support for afterschool programs. Organizers expect this year's event to be even larger. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is National Chair of *Lights On Afterschool*, a position he has held since 2001.

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 have access to afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports programs designed to keep kids safely and constructively engaged during out-of-school time. The Fund's contributions allow for the creation and continuance of afterschool programs aimed at the academic, physical, and social development of children throughout the U.S. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund also works to raise awareness of the benefits of afterschool programming, and is committed to ensuring that every child has access to the world of opportunities that awaits them after school.

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