



NEWS RELEASE
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Coming to a Town Near You – Lights On Afterschool 2007

Annual Rally for Afterschool Will Launch Tenth Anniversary Celebration of Federal Afterschool Initiative

The eighth annual national rally for afterschool, *Lights On Afterschool*, will do more than bring students, parents, educators, afterschool program directors, and community and business leaders together to show support for afterschool programs. This year's *Lights On Afterschool* events on October 18 will also kick-off a year-long celebration of the 10th anniversary of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the chief federal funding stream for afterschool programs.

Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* 2007 will include some 7,500 events throughout the nation and at military bases around the world. At these events, a million Americans will urge leaders to support the afterschool programs that keep children safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. More than 14 million children have no place to go after the school day ends.

Lights On Afterschool rallies 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 of kids need afterschool programs. "For nearly a decade, the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative has helped keep the lights on for children after school," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "These programs provide myriad benefits to children, families and communities. This year, for the first time in five years we have a real opportunity to grow this funding stream and make quality afterschool programs available to many more children. We urgently need lawmakers at every level, and private funders, to do so."

The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for afterschool in FY07, but funding is stalled at less than \$1 billion. This year, the House of Representatives voted to increase it by \$125 million this year, which would provide programs for 125,000 more children. Afterschool leaders are encouraging the Senate to adopt the same increase.

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000. Last year, a million people rallied at 7,500 events to show their support for afterschool programs. Organizers expect this year's event to be even larger. Actress Rhea Perlman is the spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is National Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

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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