



NEWS RELEASE
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Turning the *Lights On* from Coast-to-Coast *Cities Nationwide Gear Up for National Afterschool Rally*

From the steps of the State Capitol in Boise, to a motorcade in Philadelphia, to the beaches of Hawaii, afterschool programs are lining up fun and exciting venues for the seventh annual *Lights On Afterschool*. Each October, up to a million parents, children and community leaders in towns and cities across the country come together in diverse settings to rally for afterschool programs. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance. Events planned for this year include:

- A “Community Carnival” on the evening of October 12 in **Tucson, Arizona**, sponsored by the Flowing Wells School District’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers and featuring student-created booths and activities.
- A “Bar-b-que Pep Rally” at Harmon Park with races, games, and other outdoor activities in **Eureka Springs, Arkansas**, on October 12.
- A “Leadership and Policy Breakfast” with community leaders in **San Francisco, California**, on October 12, followed by a “Family Festival,” sponsored by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, on October 14 for local families.
- A “Game Day” in **Ewa Beach, Hawaii**, featuring a sports tournament on October 12.
- An event on the steps of the State Capitol in **Boise, Idaho**, on October 6, with Governor Jim Risch signing a proclamation in support of *Lights On Afterschool*. Children’s activities will take place at the Capitol, with 500 students from different afterschool programs participating.
- A “Dare to Dream” career fair on October 9, in **Waukegan, Illinois**, that will bring members of the community together to discuss and offer insights into their specific careers. About 500 children are expected.

- A news conference on October 12 in **Augusta, Maine**, with Governor John Baldacci, who will read a proclamation supporting *Lights On Afterschool*, followed by an awards ceremony honoring exemplary programs. State Legislators are expected.
- A “Kids Fall Festival” on October 7, in **Helena, Montana**, with activities and performances including Native American dances, book readings and face painting.
- A motorcade on October 12 through the streets of **Philadelphia** to City Hall featuring cars decorated with *Lights On Afterschool* paraphernalia. Upon its arrival, there will be a press conference announcing the newly planned partnership between the Leadership Network and the Philadelphia Department of Recreation.
- A “Reading and Literacy Night” on October 12 at 13 afterschool program sites in **Nashville, Tennessee**. Elected officials will read from books written by children. After the readings, prizes will be given to the student authors.

“It is exciting to see the tremendously creative and diverse events being planned, with so many communities participating in *Lights On Afterschool* again this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Our national rally does a tremendous amount to call attention to the need for more afterschool programs, which keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning.”

A web-based survey of 1,600 afterschool programs, released by the Afterschool Alliance this month, found that 75 percent of the nation’s afterschool programs operated at or above maximum capacity during the 2005/2006 school year. Nearly nine in ten respondents (86 percent) said there are children in their community who need afterschool programs and don’t have access to them. Despite a series of slow, steady increases authorized in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, federal funding for afterschool programs has been stagnant for several years.

This year’s *Lights On Afterschool* is expected to include 7,500 events in the United States and at military bases around the world. Information about other 2006 *Lights On Afterschool* events is available online at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/find.cfm.

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000 with 1,200 events across the country. Last year, a million people rallied at 7,500 events to show their support for afterschool programs.

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 by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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