



NEWS RELEASE  
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## **Keeping the Lights On for Afterschool**

### ***Nationwide Rally for Afterschool Draws One Million Parents, Educators, Students, Policy Makers and Others Who Call on Congress to Save Afterschool Funds***

More than one million people will gather today at some 7,500 sites across the country and U.S. military bases worldwide to rally for the afterschool programs that help working families, keep kids safe and inspire them to learn. At *Lights On Afterschool* rallies and celebrations, students are conducting science experiments, holding poetry slams, learning about healthy eating, engaging in sports tournaments, sprucing up parks and nature trails, and discussing the importance of afterschool programs with lawmakers, business and community leaders, and others. For the fourth year in a row, the Empire State Building in New York City will be lit up this evening in honor of the event. As part of the kick-off for *Lights On Afterschool*, Mount Rushmore was lit up on October 16. On Friday, Los Angeles' Lindbergh Beacon will be lit for *Lights On Afterschool*.

All 50 governors issued proclamations for *Lights On Afterschool* this year, and the United States House passed – by unanimous consent – a bipartisan resolution introduced by Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) supporting *Lights On Afterschool*.

Participants at this year's *Lights On Afterschool* events are signing a national petition to save afterschool funds. The petition, which is also available [online](#), urges Congress not to divert already limited 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) dollars to other programs. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is the chief federal funding stream for afterschool, providing grants to local programs that serve more than one million children nationwide.

“Our nation’s children and families depend on afterschool programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “*Lights On Afterschool* provides a fantastic opportunity to celebrate these programs and to increase awareness about how important they are to children, parents and communities. Now more than ever, we need to safeguard afterschool funding. There are still more than 15 million kids who are unsupervised after school and that is 15 million too many. We need to make quality afterschool programs available to every child, instead of diverting or denying federal funds for these essential programs.”

Among the *Lights On Afterschool* events happening today are:

 Eleven Anchorage 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers sites in **Alaska** are celebrating *Lights On Afterschool*, welcoming afterschool students and their families as well as

community leaders. At the Muldoon site, students are drawing themselves as superheroes, reading comic books and learning safety tips. At the Ptarmigan site, students are enjoying a “Jam into Reading” event with slam poetry, mad-libs and student created comic strips. At the Williawaw site, families are bringing dishes to a “We Are Family” potluck dinner. Other sites that hosting *Lights On Afterschool* events include Fairview, Mountain View, North Star, Northwood, Russian Jack, Taku, William Crest and Wonder Park.

 “Tomorrow’s Leaders STEM from Today’s Learners” is the theme of the *Lights On Afterschool* event hosted by Prime Time Palm Beach County, Inc. at the City Center Plaza courtyard at City Hall in West Palm Beach, **Florida**. The event highlights the role of afterschool programs in sparking interest in and reinforcing students’ understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Mistress of Ceremonies AnEta Sewell is emphasizing the importance of STEM education to her colleagues’ work at the South Florida Water Management District. Other speakers include Mayor Lois J. Frankel, Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County CEO Tana Ebbole, Secondary Science Administrator Edmund Capitano and Fox 29 WXLX TV Anchorman Ric Blackwell.

 An afternoon of free horseback riding, led by a certified American Riding Instructor Association instructor, is the centerpiece of *Lights On Afterschool* at the Lio Lapa’au Healing Horses program in Hawi, **Hawaii**. Children and teens are grooming, interacting with and riding the program’s horses.

 To raise awareness of the importance of afterschool and celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*, BUILD, Inc. in Chicago, **Illinois** is hosting a community march from San Lucas church to St. Mary’s church. Students are decorating posters, signs and t-shirts for the march. Afterward, they will engage in face painting, creating iron-ons, painting murals and music.

 Louisville Central Community Center, in collaboration with the Louisville Metro Board of Health and the Teen Leadership Council, is hosting a Kids Care Fair at Central High School in Louisville, **Kentucky**. The community festival promotes the importance of a healthy lifestyle and features booths, representatives and literature from local health organizations.

 The Big Buddy Program, the YWCA and other groups in Baton Rouge, **Louisiana** are co-sponsoring a *Lights On Rally, Expo and Talent Show* that includes workshops for parents and students, a Battle of the Bands featuring two local high schools, a vendor expo and a “*Lights On, So Bring It On!*” talent competition. Talents to be showcased includes dance, choir, theatre, step, rhythm and phrase, art and cooking.

 Project PASS at Camdenton Middle School in Camdenton, **Missouri** is holding a poem safari at which students use their life science skills to research an animal of their choice, and then write a poem about it. Using math skills they have learned, students are enlarging a scale drawing of their chosen animal.

 The YMCA of Greater Manchester in **New Hampshire**, through the Support Through Academics, Recreation, and Teamwork (S.T.A.R.T) program, is hosting a “green” open house featuring students’ “My Green House” project – drawings depicting each student’s ideal, green living space. The event showcases the work of students from kindergarten through fifth grade.

 Participants at *Lights On Afterschool* at Central School in **Haddonfield**, New Jersey are challenging students to games of chess at a special chess tournament. Tatem School and the Extended Day Kindergarten program are premiering videos they made of their afterschool activities, and guests at the Elizabeth Haddon School program are hearing children read essays to parents and staff on what their afterschool program means to them

 At a “Power Saver Program” at the McCurtain County Boys & Girls Club in Broken Arrow, **Oklahoma**, students are learning power saving tips and receiving goody bags. A local electrician is discussing the importance of energy conservation and other power saving habits.

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance released a new special report from *America After 3PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America’s children spend their afternoons. This special report, *America After 3PM: From Big Cities to Small Towns*, examines the differences in afterschool participation, satisfaction and demand across rural, suburban and urban communities. Both the *America After 3PM* full report and this new special report are sponsored by JCPenney Afterschool, a charitable organization committed to making life-enriching afterschool programs available to more students and families.

The Afterschool Alliance and JCPenney Afterschool released the rural, urban and suburban findings in Des Moines, Iowa on October 12, and released city-level data for Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and New York yesterday.

Actress Rhea Perlman is a spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

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*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](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*