



NEWS RELEASE  
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## **Afterschool Is What You Make of It**

### ***First DC Metro Maker Faire to be Held in Support of Nationwide Rally for Afterschool***

Kids in afterschool programs have opportunities to engage in hands-on projects like building robots, growing gardens, cooking meals, making collages and much, much more. Those are some of the same kinds of activities involved in Maker Faires, which feature hands on activities and innovative projects created by inventors, crafters, artists and others.

On Sunday, September 29, the overlap between a Maker Faire and afterschool programs will be even more apparent at the D.C. area's first official Maker Faire, hosted by KID Museum, a state-of-the-art interactive children's museum in Montgomery County. The event, intended for families, will be held at the Silver Spring Civic Building, and will feature a variety of hands-on activities including 3-D printing, wearable art, Robot Tic Tac Toe, and kinetic art, as well as a series of short talks by inventors. Several local afterschool programs will bring their students to the Mini Maker Faire, which will be a part of the 14<sup>th</sup> annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs.

The Afterschool Alliance organized *Lights On Afterschool* to draw attention to the many ways afterschool programs support students by offering them opportunities to learn new things and discover new skills – such as growing community gardens, studying Tae Kwon Do and making music. The events 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 more kids need quality afterschool programs.

“Maker Faires, just like afterschool programs, can play a big part in helping increase children's interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and their STEM literacy,” said Cara Lesser, founder and CEO of KID Museum. “The Maker movement encourages adults and kids to make things – inventions, tools or gadgets – using reusable materials or recycled items. Makers model and test their creations to see what works and modify as they go. It's about the creative process and learning – and scientific inquiry.”

The Mini Maker Faire is one of more than 8,000 *Lights On Afterschool* events being held across the country to celebrate the afterschool programs that inspire children to learn, keep kids safe, and help working families. More than a million people are expected to participate in communities nationwide and at U.S. military bases overseas.

“Hands-on learning activities are a hallmark of afterschool programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “There is no substitute for the opportunity to build your own robot, rocket or flying machine, to learn what works and what doesn’t, to figure out how to improve your design, and experience the thrill of success. That is also the premise of the Maker movement and why we are so excited to have the Mini Maker Faire be a part of *Lights On Afterschool* this year. All kids need more learning opportunities like these.”

According to a 2012 study conducted by the Afterschool Alliance, nearly two in five afterschool programs (39 percent) report that their budgets are in worse shape today than at the height of the recession in 2008, and more than three in five (62 percent) report that their funding is down “a little or a lot” from three years ago.

Many more students across the country need access to afterschool programs. More than 15 million school-age children – more than one in four kids in the United States – are unsupervised after the school day ends. The parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs – if programs were available.

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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).*