



NEWS RELEASE
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Afterschool Programs Across Country to Celebrate 4-H National Youth Science Day as Part of *Lights On Afterschool!*

Afterschool programs can engage children in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through robotics, computer programming, CSI activities and much more. To highlight the many ways afterschool programs support science and math education, the Afterschool Alliance is partnering with 4-H Clubs to link the only nationwide rally for afterschool with [4-H National Youth Science Day](#) this year.

The Afterschool Alliance is encouraging afterschool programs to make 4-H National Youth Science Day a part of their *Lights On Afterschool* events on October 17. 4-H National Youth Science Day seeks to spark an early youth interest and leadership in STEM careers to keep the United States competitive in those fields. So in October, when more than a million people celebrate the 14th annual *Lights On Afterschool* at 8,000 events in communities nationwide and on U.S. military installations overseas, many of them will engage in 4-H National Youth Science Day Experiment activities.

“Young people who grow an appreciation for math and the sciences when they are young are more likely to pursue higher education and careers in those fields,” said Donald T. Floyd, Jr., president and CEO of National 4-H Council. “We’re delighted to partner with the Afterschool Alliance this year to celebrate the sciences and encourage youth to engage in experiments that will improve their STEM skills while they celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*.”

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 – such as robotics, Tae Kwon Do and art – and discover new skills. 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.

“We are thrilled to have the chance to encourage more afterschool programs to make 4-H National Youth Science Day a part of their *Lights On Afterschool* events this year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Encouraging STEM learning is an important part of afterschool programming and this year’s partnership with 4-H will help expose more children to the wonder and fun of science, while highlighting the ways afterschool programs not only keep kids safe and help working families, but also inspire students to learn.”

Evaluations of STEM afterschool programs show that students who participate develop better attitudes toward STEM fields and careers, have increased STEM skills, and are more likely to

graduate and to pursue a STEM career. However, many of the afterschool programs that offer engaging STEM activities are struggling with inadequate budgets. 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.

About 4-H National Youth Science Day

For more than 100 years, 4-H has been at the forefront of teaching youth about science, engineering and technology. Created to combat a shortage of American young people pursuing science college majors and careers, *4-H National Youth Science Day* seeks to spark an early youth interest and leadership in science. For more information on *4-H NYSD*, visit www.4-H.org/NYSD.