



NEWS RELEASE

October 24, 2019

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**Today Is the 20th Anniversary of *Lights On Afterschool*.
Across U.S., Landmarks Are Being Lit Up, Events Held for Afterschool.**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The lights will be on for afterschool programs today as students, parents, educators, business and faith leaders, policy makers, community members and others come to schools, parks, campuses, state capitols, city halls, museums, malls, and other venues to show their support for afterschool programs. The 20th annual [Lights On Afterschool](#) will involve more than a million people at 10,000 events, with most taking place today.

The [Afterschool Alliance](#) organizes *Lights On Afterschool* to underscore the need to invest in afterschool programs, which give students homework help, mentors, robotics, computer programming, arts and music, sports and fitness activities, college- and job-readiness, critical thinking skills, healthy snacks, and team-based, hands-on learning. The 20th *Lights On Afterschool* includes roundtable discussions with mayors and police chiefs, and events focused on conservation and the environment, growing and cooking healthy food, space exploration, child safety, technology arts, public policy, literacy, community service, pumpkin carving, painting and smashing, and more.

From the Empire State Building in New York to the Orlando Eye in Florida to the State Capitol in Pennsylvania to the Superdome in New Orleans to the Spirit of Detroit in Michigan to City Halls in Houston, Hampton and San Francisco, [landmarks across the country](#) are being lit in yellow and blue this evening to support afterschool programs. Clear Channel Outdoor is running afterschool billboards across the nation all month, and donating some of its most prominent space to illuminate *Lights On Afterschool*, including digital billboards in New York City's Times Square and the lights of Boston's South Station. Organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#), *Lights On Afterschool* is America's only national rally for afterschool.

"*Lights On Afterschool 2019* is a spectacular success," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "We are thrilled at the support for our 20th anniversary. People are coming out to see the skills students hone and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and the many ways these programs help students succeed in school and in life. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind that their children are safe and supervised after the school day ends and while parents are still at work. But there aren't nearly enough afterschool programs to meet the need, and one in five students in our country today is unsupervised in the afternoons. We must do better."

The [America After 3PM](#) household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, found that participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2

million students nationwide – but for every child in an afterschool program, two more are waiting to get in.

Last week, the more than 5,000 sheriffs, police chiefs, and prosecutors of the organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids – a part of the Council for a Strong America – released a report documenting positive outcomes for children and teens who participate in high-quality afterschool programs. “[From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe](#)” shows that the hours immediately following school remain the prime time for juvenile crime. FBI data from 36 states shows that most suffer spikes in crime from 2:00 to 6:00 PM. The new report describes afterschool programs as one of the best crime prevention strategies, an effective way to guide young people toward success in school and readiness for productive careers.

Governments, parents, philanthropies, businesses and others support afterschool and summer learning programs, but investments are under threat. For the third year in a row, the Trump administration recommended eliminating federal funding for afterschool and summer learning programs, this year in its FY20 budget proposal. While Congress has rejected the call to eliminate afterschool funding, any cuts would mean that more children and youth are unsupervised in the afternoons and more working parents are without the assurance that their children are safe and supervised until they return home from their jobs.

Programs are also a lifeline for low-income children who may otherwise go hungry. According to a [report](#) released yesterday by the Food Research & Action Center, more than 1.3 million children benefited from afterschool suppers at school- and community-based programs on an average weekday in October 2018. That is a 10.4 percent increase from the year before but, still, just one child received an afterschool supper for every 16 low-income children in the National School Lunch Program that month. “The combination of afterschool programs and suppers is a win-win,” Grant said. “Healthy afterschool suppers ensure that children get the nutrition they need to participate in programs that offer them the opportunity to discover new skills and learn and experience new things, such as science, poetry, and community service.”

A list of *Lights On Afterschool* events is [available here](#). To find other events in your area, [see this map](#).

Nickelodeon, KIND and Clear Channel are generous sponsors of *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

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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.