



NEWS RELEASE
September 26, 2019

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20th Annual *Lights On Afterschool* Set for Thursday, October 24; More Than a Million People Expected to Rally for Afterschool That Day

More than a million people across the nation and at U.S. military bases worldwide will turn the lights on for afterschool on and around Thursday, October 24th. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, the 20th annual [Lights On Afterschool](#) is expected to include some 8,000 events, including open houses, science fairs, fun runs, student showcases, academic contests, community service, sports competitions, and more at schools, 4-Hs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, parks, museums, community centers, state capitols and other places. *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool.

For the 13th consecutive year, the New York skyline will shine for afterschool that evening when the iconic Empire State Building is lit in yellow and blue to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. Afterschool supporters also will be lighting up local landmarks and buildings to show their support for afterschool programs.

The [Afterschool Alliance](#) organizes *Lights On Afterschool* to underscore the need to invest in afterschool programs, which provide homework help; mentors; healthy snacks and meals; computer programming; opportunities to think critically, collaborate and communicate with peers and adults; job and college readiness; sports and fitness activities; robotics; art, dance and music; and continuous opportunities for hands-on, team-based learning.

“Quality afterschool programs prepare children and youth to succeed in school and in life,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents the peace of mind that comes with knowing their children are safe and supervised after the school days ends. For *Lights On Afterschool*, programs across the country showcase the skills students gain and the talents they develop in their afterschool programs. We expect to have the biggest and best *Lights On Afterschool* ever next month, when we celebrate the event’s 20th anniversary. Getting the word out about the value of afterschool programs is essential, since there aren’t nearly enough programs to meet the need. Our goal is to increase support, so every child will have access to a quality afterschool program.”

The [America After 3PM](#) household survey of 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, found that participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide – but the unmet demand is great. For every child in an afterschool program today, two more are waiting to get in. Unmet demand is especially high in rural communities and communities of concentrated poverty. One in five students in the United States is unsupervised after the school day ends.

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 in its budget proposal. While the Senate and House of Representatives have rejected the call to eliminate afterschool funding, any cuts would mean that these essential programs are available to fewer students, more children and youth are unsupervised after the school day ends, and more working parents are without the assurance that their children are safe and supervised until they return home from their jobs.

On October 16, a new report from the more than 5,000 sheriffs, police chiefs, and prosecutors of the organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids will spotlight abundant, powerful research documenting positive outcomes for children and teens who participate in high quality afterschool programs. The report, being released in conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool*, shows that the hours immediately following school remain the “prime time for juvenile crime,” which is why afterschool programs are proving to be one of the nation's best crime prevention strategies and an effective way to guide young people toward success in school and readiness for productive careers.

A large and powerful body of evidence demonstrates improvements in attendance, behavior, academic achievement and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that afterschool programs encourage increased parental involvement – an important building block for student success.

KIND and Nickelodeon 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.