



**NEWS RELEASE**  
September 6, 2016

**CONTACT:** [Luci Manning](#)  
202/371-1999

## **Across America, the Lights Will Be On for Afterschool on October 20<sup>th</sup>**

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual [Lights On Afterschool](#) has been set for October 20th – a day when more than a million people in communities across the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide will turn the lights on for afterschool. Organizers expect 8,000 afterschool programs to participate in the only national rally for afterschool this year by holding fun runs, science fairs, community service events, student music and dance performances, sports competitions, open houses and other events at schools, YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, museums, community centers, parks, state capitols, malls and other settings. All these events will showcase the skills students hone and talents they develop at their afterschool programs.

*Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#) to underscore the need to invest in afterschool programs, which provide homework help, healthy snacks, mentoring, physical activities, robotics, computer programming, art and music, job- and college-readiness, and myriad opportunities for hands-on learning.

“Quality afterschool programs help students discover their passions while keeping them safe, inspiring them to learn and helping working families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These programs prepare children and youth to succeed in school and in life. *Lights On Afterschool* is the one time each year when programs all across the country open their doors so community members can see the hands-on, fun, educational activities they offer to students. But there aren’t nearly enough afterschool programs to meet the need in this country, and students, families, schools, businesses and communities suffer as a result.”

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, up from 6.5 million in 2004. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs has increased as well. Today, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two more whose parents say they would participate, if a program were available. Unmet demand is especially high in rural communities and communities of concentrated poverty. One in five students in the United States today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

This fall brings new opportunities at the federal, state and local levels to better meet the demand for afterschool. Congress is working on the federal budget for Fiscal Year 2017, which could direct much-needed funding to 21st Century Community Learning Centers to support afterschool and summer programs. In addition, as state and local education agencies implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), they have the flexibility to use additional ESSA funds to keep kids safe and learning in school and after the school day ends.

A large and growing 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.

# # # #

*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).*