



NEWS RELEASE
September 8, 2010

CONTACT: Gretchen Wright
202/371-1999

Afterschool Programs Nationwide and Overseas Gear Up to Celebrate Eleventh Year of *Lights On Afterschool!*

***Parents, Kids and Others to Urge Congress
Not to Divert or Deny Funds for Afterschool***

Children, parents, grandparents, educators, community leaders, policy makers, celebrities and others across the country will come together at schools, community centers, parks, malls, state capitols and elsewhere on October 21 to participate in the 11th annual nationwide rally for afterschool. Since the Afterschool Alliance organized the first *Lights On Afterschool* in 2000, it has grown to include more than 7,500 events across the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide. *Lights On Afterschool* is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs.

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance will release a new special report from *America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America's children spend their afternoons. This special report, *America After 3PM: From Big Cities to Small Towns*, will examine the differences in afterschool participation, satisfaction and demand across rural, suburban and urban communities. Both the *America After 3PM* full report and this new special report are sponsored by JCPenney Afterschool, a charitable organization committed to making life-enriching afterschool programs available to more students and families.

The Afterschool Alliance and JCPenney Afterschool will release the latest findings at an event in Des Moines, Iowa on October 12. The report will also reveal city-level data on Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and New York that will be featured at *Lights On* events in those cities.

More than a million people are expected to participate in the 2010 *Lights On Afterschool* rallies. This year, participants will be calling on Congress not to deny or divert federal funding from the afterschool programs that help working families, keep children safe and inspire them to learn. 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. (A growing list of rallies is available online at www.AfterschoolAlliance.org.)

"Each year, *Lights On Afterschool* provides an opportunity for people in small towns, large cities, suburban areas and everywhere in between to come together to show their support for afterschool programs," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Our new report will underscore how critical quality afterschool programs are to families. In this economy,

it's more important than ever for kids to have a safe, engaging and educational place to be after the school day ends. That's why we are urging Congress increase funding for afterschool programs and not make any changes that divert or deny federal afterschool funds.”

For years, the federal investment in afterschool has lagged far behind the need. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (the chief federal funding stream for afterschool) in FY2007, and funding stands at less than half that today. Congress is currently considering legislation that would allow other programs to compete for the already limited 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds.

Actress Rhea Perlman is a spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

#

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.