



NEWS RELEASE
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New Poster Celebrates Ten Years of *Lights On Afterschool*

Georgia Third, Fourth & Fifth Graders Designed Poster For Nationwide Rally for Afterschool Programs

“Light up our world with afterschool” is the theme of the 10th anniversary *Lights On Afterschool* poster, designed by six budding artists who are elementary school students participating in the Henry County Schools Afterschool Enrichment Program at New Hope Elementary School in McDonough, Georgia. The only nationwide rally for afterschool programs, *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance. It will be held on October 22 this year with 7,500 events and rallies around the United States and at military bases worldwide.

“Afterschool programs are all about inspiring children and helping them succeed in life,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “This year’s beautiful poster is a testament to how well programs do that work. But there aren’t nearly enough afterschool programs to meet the need. At *Lights On Afterschool* rallies next month, we will raise raising our voices to say that we want every child in this country to have access to a quality afterschool program. These programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.”

The Afterschool Alliance held a contest earlier this year to select the 2009 *Lights On Afterschool* poster. The four girls and two boys, ranging in age from nine to eleven, worked together to design the winning poster, which was chosen over hundreds of other entries. It features a child holding a CFL (compact fluorescent light) bulb standing below an “earth” that has “continents” labeled with afterschool activities. The words “Light Up Our World” are across the top. Afterschool providers, leaders, parents, students and others who attended the Afterschool Alliance’s annual Washington, DC meeting this April voted for the artwork they thought would make the best poster. The new poster is displayed at www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm.

“We’re especially delighted that our students’ poster will be helping to promote the tenth annual *Lights On Afterschool*,” said Debra Delaine, Afterschool Coordinator for Henry Country Schools in McDonough. “These six children worked diligently on creating the winning design and we are proud to be a special and very visible part of this important rally.”

Lights On Afterschool rallies this year are expected to involve more than a million Americans, who will urge leaders to increase support for the afterschool programs that children and families need. 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. 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.

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance will release the second *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. Funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, a charitable organization committed to inspiring children to be smart, strong and socially responsible, the original study was released in 2004. It found that 14.3 million kindergarten through 12th graders took care of themselves after the school day ended. At the time, just 6.5 million children were in afterschool programs – but the parents of another 15.3 million children said their children would participate if an afterschool program were available.

The 2009 study, designed to measure progress over the last five years, is also funded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund and includes updated information on afterschool participation nationally and in all 50 states. The Afterschool Alliance and JCPenney Afterschool Fund will release it on October 6 at an event at the U.S. Department of Education. State data will be featured a few weeks later at *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country.

As part of this year's *Lights On Afterschool* celebration, Bright House Networks will air a new documentary on the benefits of afterschool, featuring the personal stories of youth and families across the country.

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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.