



NEWS RELEASE
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Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rhea Perlman, Athletes, Lawmakers Join Parents, Children, Educators for Largest Afterschool Rally Ever

“Afterschool is key to kids’ success” was the rallying cry from Fairbanks to Fort Lauderdale as supporters of afterschool from all walks of life joined the fifth annual *Lights On Afterschool* today. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger kicked-off the event with a rally Sunday, October 3, in Los Angeles. Schwarzenegger is National Chair of *Lights On Afterschool* again this year. Actress and longtime afterschool supporter Rhea Perlman was the national spokesperson for the event, organized by the Afterschool Alliance, which included more than 7,000 rallies across the country. Both houses of Congress issued resolutions in support of *Lights On Afterschool*, for the first time ever this year.

The 2004 National Presenting Sponsor of *Lights On Afterschool* is the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a National Sponsor of the event. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Open Society Institute are providing additional support.

From a naval base on the island of Oahu to the University of Nebraska's new baseball stadium to the State House in Maine, lawmakers, community and business leaders, athletes, creative artists and religious leaders voiced their support for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, help working families and inspire children to learn. The fifth annual *Lights On Afterschool* included events in all 50 states as well as in Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom.

“It is encouraging to see hundreds of thousands of people across the country encourage lawmakers to put children first and provide more afterschool programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson, who attended *Lights On Afterschool* rallies in California, New Hampshire and New Mexico. “With support like this, we will meet our goal of making afterschool programs available to all by the year 2010. We are grateful to the Mott Foundation for its support, and to the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, which has supported this event for five years and encouraged hundreds of JCPenney store managers to participate.”

A diverse group of more than 150 education, civic, arts, government and other groups are supporting *Lights On Afterschool* this year. Among them are the Association of Children's Museums, General Federation of Women's Clubs, National Council of La Raza and National Inventors Hall of Fame, as well as the nation’s leading afterschool providers – After-School All-Stars, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H Afterschool, Junior Achievement, and YMCA of the USA.

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In conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool*, Junior Achievement and Harris Interactive released a new poll of 1,142 youths between the ages of eight and 18 today. It found that only 14 percent say they participate in organized afterschool programs. The afterschool activities that interested young people included sports, art or music, working with computers, learning how to run a business, spending time with mentors, and learning about various careers.

In May, the Afterschool Alliance released *America After 3 PM*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America's children spend their afternoons. It found that 14.3 million kindergarten through 12th graders care for themselves after the school day ends. The parents of more than 15 million children say their children would participate if an afterschool program were available. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund supported *America After 3 PM*.

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000. That year more than 1,200 events were held across the country. By last year, more than half a million people rallied at more than 5,000 events in all 50 states as well as Guam, Japan and South Korea to show their support for afterschool programs. A listing of 2004 *Lights On Afterschool* events is online at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa_2004/find.cfm.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by the year 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, established in 1926 in Flint, Michigan, by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. More information is available at www.mott.org

JCPenney Afterschool is committed to helping provide children with high-quality, affordable after-school programs to help them reach the "power of their potential." The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. JCPenney has contributed millions of dollars to five of America's leading after-school providers. JCPenney Afterschool's support helps provide safe, fun and educational after-school programs and raises awareness of the need for more such programs across the country.

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