



NEWS RELEASE
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New York Is Turning the “Lights On” for Afterschool

All across New York state, afterschool programs are preparing for the seventh annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* is held each October to shine a spotlight on the need for more afterschool programs. Afterschool leaders across the state of New York – including the New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN), The After-School Corporation, the Coalition for After-School Funding, New York City’s Out-of-School Time initiative, and the Afterschool Alliance’s New York Afterschool Ambassadors – are taking part.

“Afterschool programs play a key role in helping children and communities throughout New York grow and thrive,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “This year, thousands of communities nationwide – and hundreds in New York state – will participate in *Lights On Afterschool* to send the message that we need more afterschool programs to keep children safe, help working families, and inspire students to learn.”

Parents, children, teachers, community leaders and others in big cities and small towns across New York will participate in diverse events that showcase the benefits of afterschool programs and encourage policy makers, businesses and foundations to provide more support for them. Among the events planned in New York this year are:

Albany: The Albany YMCA is sponsoring several *Lights On Afterschool* events with a health and nutrition theme. Activities include a “Lights-On Work-Out Session” that has involved students and their families for the three weeks leading up to October 12th; “Chew Sensibly” where students of different ages will design programs explaining why it is sensible to eat healthy and proper foods; a potluck dinner for families and community leaders; and “Bring Your Parent to Snack and Exercise Day” where families engage in a food pyramid quiz, share a healthy snack and sing songs about nutrition. On October 12th, students will create papier-mâché light bulbs that will decorate the facilities, and organizers will host a “Coffee Hour” to share information with family members. For more information, contact Beth Doris, Albany YMCA, 518-449-7196, or Jessica Paglica, Albany YMCA, 518-449-7196.

Gloversville: The Advantage After School Program at Fonda-Fulton Middle School will host a *Lights On Afterschool* celebration on October 12th. Students who won a writing contest by answering the question, “Why Are Afterschool Programs Important?” will be awarded cash

prizes. Students will present skits and prepare refreshments. Student-made invitations were sent to community leaders, including Mayor Frank LaPorta, School Board members, the School Superintendent, the Mental Health Association's Board of Directors, and the County Supervisor. For more information, contact Joan Draus, Advantage After-School Program, 518-853-4747.

New York: In recognition of *Lights On Afterschool* and the first anniversary of New York City Out-of-School-Time Programs, the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development will host "A Celebration of Arts and Culture" at the Boys and Girls Harbor on October 12th from 4:00 – 5:30 PM. The event will be open to the public and will feature performances by the Boys and Girls Harbor of East Harlem. For more information, contact Kenneth Scott, New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, 212-442-3136.

New York: On the evening of October 12th, the Abyssinian Development Corporation will hold Open Houses at two locations highlighting several afterschool programs. More than 300 students will participate in the two events. For more information, contact Afterschool Ambassador Kima Reed, Abyssinian Development Corporation, 646-442-6543.

New York: Youth from five program sites will visit the Henry Street Settlement House afterschool program site at P.S. 134 in lower Manhattan on October 12th to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. The programs will host a joint open house for family and community members with the theme, "If we are not in our seats, we are in the streets." Elected officials representing the area are expected to attend. The event is being coordinated with support from Henry Street Settlement, University Settlement, The Coalition for After-School Funding and The After-School Corporation. For more information, contact Katha Cato, Henry Street Settlement House, 212-766-9200.

Newburgh: On October 12th, all eight Newburgh Family YMCA Y-Scoop afterschool programs will hold individual events during normal operating hours to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. Local dignitaries and community leaders are expected to attend the celebration at Temple Hill Elementary School from 3:00 – 6:00 PM. The group will then move to the Glenn Himes Boys & Girls Club building for a rally involving students from every site. For more information, contact Nancy Moore, Newburgh Family YMCA Y-Scoop, 854-562-1088.

Saint Johnsville: The Saint Johnsville Junior/Senior High School afterschool program will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with an Open House from 4:00 – 5:00 PM on October 12th. School Board members, Mayor Wilfred Kraft, families and school staff will observe program activities and are invited to join a kids-parents kick ball game. Organizers will announce essay contest winners who wrote about the importance of afterschool programs, and distribute prizes. The program's facilities will be decorated with a three-foot tall wooden light bulb, and light bulb "bouquets." For more information, contact Wendy Chirieleison, Saint Johnsville Junior/Senior High, 518-568-2011.

Syracuse: On October 12th the Dunbar-Hughes 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool program will host a "Meet, Greet and Pledge to 2010" at 6:00 PM for families, community members, school and elected officials. The program will feature parents and

children discussing the benefits of the afterschool program. Symbolic *Lights On* lighting effects will accompany their presentation. State Senate candidate David J. Valesky and University College of Syracuse Interim Dean Bethaida (Bea) Gonzalez will be among the speakers. Mayor Matthew Driscoll, School Superintendent Daniel G. Lowengard, members of the Board, fraternal organizations, and local businesspersons may attend. All participants will be asked to sign an ‘Afterschool for All’ pledge. For more information, contact Afterschool Ambassador Frances Howard, Dunbar-Hughes 21st Century Learning Center Afterschool Program, 315-476-4269 ext.232.

White Plains: On October 12th the Lois Bronz Children’s Center will hold a *Lights On Afterschool* celebration from 4:30 – 6:30 PM. The event will feature a giant light bulb collage composed of cards decorated by guests at the event, as well as student presentations and performances. The program’s “Stepping and Stomping” group will give an interactive performance, inviting guests to join them on stage. Members of the Knitter’s Circle will display their work, and youth involved in the program’s Nature Center will give a presentation. Lois Bronz, vice chair of the Westchester County Board of Legislators, may attend. The event is open to the public. For more information, contact Tanya Johnson, Lois Bronz Children’s Center, 914-761-6134 ext.245.

Yonkers: On October 12th, from 4:30 – 6:00 PM, Youth Theater Interactions will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with a speaking program from Dinah Lenney, author of the book *Acting for Young Actors: The Ultimate Teen Guide*. Students who participate in the program, their families, and members of the community are invited. For more information, contact Mamie Duncan-Gibbs, Youth Theater Interactions, 914-963-3040.

“The huge number of *Lights On Afterschool* events all across New York is evidence of the state’s growing commitment to afterschool programs,” added Grant. “We are thrilled with the high level of participation in New York state and around the country, and delighted that communities everywhere are joining the national effort to make ‘afterschool for all’ a reality.”

According to a national research study conducted for the Afterschool Alliance, 27 percent of New York children are alone and unsupervised after school.

This year’s *Lights On Afterschool* will be celebrated at 7,500 events in the United States and at military bases around the world. Information about other 2006 *Lights On Afterschool* events is available online at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/find.cfm.

Lights On Afterschool was launched in October 2000 with 1,200 events across the country. Last year, a million people participated to show their support for afterschool programs.

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 by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) is a statewide public-private partnership dedicated to increasing the quality and availability of programs that promote young people's safety, learning and healthy development during non-school hours.

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