

# Event Planning Guide

## 11<sup>th</sup> Annual *Lights On Afterschool* - October 21, 2010

Entire Guide is available for download at [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org)

# Table of Contents

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## The Basics (3-12)

- Planning an Afterschool Event (3)
- The Who, What, When & Where (4)
- Event Checklist (5-8)
- Light Bulb Art (9)
- Involving Youth (10-11)
- Become a National Supporting Organization for *Lights On Afterschool* (12)

## Event Ideas and Activities (13-34)

- Case Studies (13-27)
- Linking your event to *Afterschool For All* (28-29)
- *Afterschool for All* petition (30-31)
- *Afterschool for All* partner form (32)
- Going **Green** with *Lights On Afterschool* (33-34)
- Incorporate Literacy into your event with Reading In Fundamental(35)

## Reaching Out to Policy Makers (36-38)

- Invitation (36)
- Requesting a Proclamation (37)
- Sample Proclamations (37-38)

## Getting Press (39-46)

- Working with the Press: Ten Steps (39-43)
- Sample Media plan (44)
- Media Timeline (45-46)

## Lights On as a Fundraiser (47-50)

- Ten Tips for Sponsorship (47-48)
- 32 Methods of Sponsorship Exposure (49-50)

## Sample Materials (51-68)

- Sample Tools Table of Contents (51)
- Sample Cover Letter to Send with Light Bulb Artwork (52)
- Light Bulb Artwork (53-55)
- Sample Media Alert (56)
- Sample News Release (57-58)
- Sample Radio Announcer Copy (59)
- Sample Newsletter Text (60)
- Sample Calendar Announcement (61)
- Lights On Afterschool Fact Sheet (62)
- Afterschool Fact Sheet (63)
- Sample News Release for NSO's (64-65)
- Sample Electronic Invitation (66)
- *Lights On Afterschool* Order Form - Button, Awareness Bracelets and More! (67)
- *Lights On Afterschool* Color-On Promo item information (68)

## *The Basics*

### Planning Your *Lights On Afterschool* Event

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Join the Afterschool Alliance and afterschool programs across the country in rallying for afterschool programs. On October 21, more than 7,500 communities and 1 million Americans, will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. Together, we will demonstrate how afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning.

#### Planning Your Event

*Lights On Afterschool* events, like afterschool programs, come in all shapes and sizes. Just create a rally that your community can support.

- Get parents, community leaders, volunteers, kids, members of the press and others excited about afterschool.
- Showcase the achievements of your program and your students. Highlight your local partners and invite them to participate.
- Convey your message about afterschool - celebrate your afterschool accomplishments, and call for support to ensure that afterschool programs in your community and across the country thrive. Every child should have access to afterschool!

Think about whom can best deliver your afterschool message. For example:

- Youth can issue a challenge to the community to provide afterschool for all youth.
- Parents can speak about their need for safe, stimulating programs for their kids while they work.
- Program staff can describe the positive changes they have witnessed among youth.
- Youth can give testimonials to the impact afterschool has had on their lives.
- Policy makers or community leaders can be guest speakers about the status of afterschool.
- Community partners can illustrate how afterschool serves as a focal point in the community.
- Contests, performances, artwork, essays, and demonstrations can emphasize the message.

#### Helpful Tips:

Be creative! Grab attention with something out of the ordinary.

Involve as many participants in planning as possible, especially your students. Remember that people will support something they helped create.

Have a lively emcee - consider asking a local TV or radio host.

Give away goodies, like fun snacks with afterschool slogans attached.

Use signs and posters before and during the rally to attract and keep attention.

## The Who, What, When & Where

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### Who to Invite:

- kids!
- educators and school personnel
- parents, grandparents and extended family
- business and community leaders
- policy makers
- media
- youth organizations: sports teams, school bands, academic and service clubs, volunteers
- local celebrities: tv news anchor, radio host, athletes
- the community!

### What to Do:

- student-created and led activities like raps, skits, dance, music and poetry
- sell items to raise funds for your program (see [\*Lights On Afterschool\* Items page](#) - available for order, Page 68)
- student demonstrations of afterschool activities, for example yoga, basketball, karate, mural painting, chess, debate
- ask attendees to show their support for afterschool by signing onto *Afterschool for All* (see instructions at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/a4a.cfm>)
- contests and competitions (kids versus adults or kids versus kids)
- short dance and music performances
- special guest speakers: parents, local elected officials, the superintendent, mayor, a member of Congress, local celebrities, etc.
- presentations by youth about their afterschool experience
- a snack or pizza dinner
- light bulb art decoration by event guests

### When to hold it: Pick a time that best suits your event goals and plans, such as:

- during your regular afterschool program hours
- evening hours when parents can participate
- an early afternoon gathering at a museum, city hall, outdoor square or other public place
- a breakfast or lunch reception that elected officials and business leaders can attend

### Where to host It:

- your afterschool program facility, indoors or outdoors
- city hall
- public library, park or recreation center
- museum
- places of worship
- school gymnasium or auditorium

# Lights On Afterschool Event Checklist

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## 8 to 10 weeks out

- Form your event team. Assign leads for: Event Chair, Logistics; Media and Public Relations; VIPs and RSVPs. Ask partner organizations or other afterschool providers about working together on a joint event so you can maximize resources. Set a meeting or conference call schedule. Draw up a chart listing responsibilities and deadlines.
- Use the questions and ideas on our [Who What When & Where page to brainstorm](#) your event. Check out what others have done in the [Case Studies](#). Plan your event with media in mind. Some things to remember:
  - The media - particularly television reporters and newspaper photographers - look for good visuals. Make sure your event has lots of color, action, and signs or banners with your program name and *Lights On Afterschool* prominently placed.
  - Journalists need to file their stories during late afternoon hours, so plan the program for your *Lights On Afterschool* event as early as possible. If your event goes from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., for instance, hold the program at 3:15 or 3:30 p.m.
- Finalize the time and location. Outline the program. Invite guest speakers, including policy makers. (See [Reaching Out to Policy Makers](#) for tips and a sample Invitation)
- Find out if you need any permits if your event is off-site in a public venue. If it is a park, call the parks department. If a rally at the capitol, town hall or local government building is the plan, contact the building maintenance office or city manager's office. If you are asked for proof of insurance against property damage or personal injury, ask to apply for a waiver of this requirement.
- Set the budget.
- Create your invite list of community members, media, policy makers.
- Design [a print and/or email invitation](#) using [Lights On Afterschool graphics](#). Be sure to include: Date , Time, Location, RSVP instructions
- Arrange for catering, photographer, audio equipment, seating, greeters or ushers, restrooms, first aid, supplies, decorations and entertainment.
- Request a proclamation from your mayor or city council. (See [Sample Proclamation.](#))

### How to get a permit:

- ✓ Contact your local police department or the parks department if you are planning to have an event at a park.
- ✓ If a rally at a capitol or local government building is the plan, contact the maintenance office for the capitol or the city manager's office.
- ✓ Look on the Web for information. Some city websites allow you to apply for the permit online.
- ✓ The application will ask you to describe the event, including use of tables, tents, or other structures.
- ✓ If you are asked for proof that you are insured against property damage or personal injury, ask to apply for a waiver of this requirement.
- ✓ Be friendly and cooperative with the staff in the permit office, and assure them you will take careful use of the space. This may make it easier to repeat the process for *Lights On Afterschool* next year.

## 6 weeks out

- Compile a list of media to invite to the event. (See [Create a Media List](#))
- Draft and distribute a [short newsletter article](#) promoting the event for the websites and newsletters of allied organizations.

- Draft and distribute a [calendar announcement](#) to newspaper calendar sections, as well as local television and radio calendar editors, promoting the event.
- Update your guest list with more friends, media, local dignitaries and celebrities as well as business people and other potential sponsors.
- Remember to pick a backup date for outdoor events in case of inclement weather.

*For Advanced Media Outreach:*

- Draft the script for a [60-second public service announcement \(PSA\)](#) and distribute it to local radio stations. It should promote *Lights On Afterschool*, and should be written so that it can be read by stations' on-air talent.
- Draft and send [pitch letter to editorial page editor](#) of major daily newspaper requesting meeting with the newspaper's editorial board.

5 weeks out

- Send out invitations. Make follow-up phone calls to confirm all V.I.P. guests.
- Draft and distribute [a pitch letter to local television and radio](#) talk show producers, including local cable access.

*For Advanced Media Outreach:*

- Follow up pitch letter to editorial page editor with a phone call to "make sure the letter arrived," and to see if the editor has decided whether to meet with your group.

4 weeks out

- Post signs and posters in public places announcing the event.
- Update the RSVP list daily.
- Write a minute-by-minute agenda to be sure you have time for all the speakers and elements in your plans.
- Follow up pitch letter to radio and television (including cable access) talk shows with phone calls.

*For Advanced Media Outreach:*

- Distribute [editorial memorandum to newspapers](#) with which you're not able to schedule editorial board meetings. You might want to collaborate with other afterschool providers in the area.
- Meet with your "editorial board team" to prepare for the editorial board meeting.

3 weeks out

- Update the RSVP list daily.
- Confirm refreshments, audio equipment, seating, restrooms, first aid, photographer, supplies, flowers, decorations, entertainment, etc.
- Arrange transportation if necessary for dignitaries and guest speakers.
- If you do not have materials about your program, develop a program fact sheet.

*For Advanced Media Outreach:*

- Meet with editorial board (ideal time frame, but take what you can get!)

2 weeks out

- Follow-up on invitations. Reconfirm attendance by policy makers and other key speakers. Share the program agenda with speakers; offer to provide talking points.
- Update the agenda.
- Confirm greeters, ushers, drivers and the photographer.

- Get proclamation framed for presentation.
- Update the RSVP list.
- Distribute [media alert](#) telling reporters of the event to arrive 10 days before the event.
- Begin assembling components of [media kit](#), for distribution on the day of the event. The kit should include: a fact sheet about your program; a fact sheet about *Lights On Afterschool* and afterschool; your news release about your event; a copy of any proclamations from the governor, mayor, council or school board; a brochure or other promotional material about your program; copies of prepared remarks by your speakers; information on how to enroll students in the program; a list of upcoming afterschool events; and letters from parents, volunteers or students describing why they support the program.

*For Advanced Media Outreach:*

- Draft and submit an [opinion column to the major local newspaper](#) or to several community newspapers.

1 week out

- Get a weather report for outdoor events.
- Assign people to monitor local TV news shows on the day before, day of and day after the event. Tape any stories about your event. Keep those tapes to show at fundraisers, orientations or meetings you have in the future.
- Copy [Afterschool for All petition](#) or [sign up forms](#) for attendees to fill out and [light bulbs](#) to decorate.
- Have your [news release](#) ready to go.
- Update the RSVP list.
- Begin radio and television interviews, leading up to the event.

*For Advanced Media Outreach:*

- Draft and send unique [letters-to-the-editor to local newspapers](#), promoting the event (don't send to any paper considering printing an opinion column you submitted).

Two days before the event

- Distribute updated [media alert](#) to arrive today. Update with new information about who will attend or speak, and any other last-minute changes of consequence.
- Call local media to "pitch" them on attending the event.

*Lights On Afterschool Day*

- Distribute [news release](#) by fax or email to your media list.
- Have guests sign in. Set up a "press sign-in" table. See Working with the Press and give reporters news release and media kit. Have program or agenda available at sign in, along with materials about your program (see tips on creating a program fact sheet), Lights On and afterschool programs
- Assign people to look out for VIPs.
- Make sure someone is set to tape any television or radio news broadcasts covering your event.

*The Day After Lights On Afterschool*

- Gather your light bulb art to deliver to Congressional District Offices. Send the artwork with a personal note ([download sample](#)) and information on your program, or arrange to hand deliver it. Consider making it a field trip for students.

- Make copies of any articles or broadcast stories and circulate them to your board of directors, funders, parents, volunteers and policy makers at all levels. Keep tapes to show at fundraisers, orientations or meetings you have in the future.
- Stay in contact with reporters who attend your event or produce stories. Contact them in May or June to see if they'd be interested in doing an end-of-school-year follow-up on your afterschool program. Or have the students in your program create a thank-you card. Maintaining that relationship after the event will help you the next time you are looking for publicity.
- Celebrate! You mastered the fine arts of event planning, media relations and community outreach, and your afterschool program and the children you serve will benefit from your work.
- Congratulate yourself and your team on a job well done!

## Light Bulb Art (artwork on pages 52 thru 54)

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Use our reproducible light bulb (Page 52 thru 54) to create a vibrant visual at your event, and convey your afterschool message. Deliver your light bulbs to your local Congressional District Office as a follow-up to your event!

*NOTE: In years past, the Afterschool Alliance has collected this amazing display to deliver to Capitol Hill. Now that Lights On Afterschool is so big, we've outgrown our capacity to deliver these light bulbs for you.*

We ask that you send the art directly to the Congressional District Offices in your state. Use this opportunity to insert your own personal cover letter, or for a more powerful effect, arrange a meeting with the office to hand deliver the light bulbs. You'll get to see the great response that we've seen in years past when lawmakers and their staff see the creativity and energy of your students!

Remember, adults have an activity, too - ask them to support afterschool by signing on to *Afterschool for All* (<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/a4aJoin.cfm>), and join more than 23,000 prominent individuals and organizations in calling for more afterschool programs.

*Light Bulb Directions:* Copy the bulbs and let your community get creative. Turn the completed bulbs into a string of afterschool lights, use them to cover the walls of your hallway, or display them as a colorful backdrop for kids' presentations during *Lights On Afterschool*.

Find the contact info for the home offices of your Congressional members in the government of your phone book, or go to [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org) and enter your zip code in the Contact Congress box.



Turn to page 51 for a Sample Cover Letter to Send with Light Bulbs.

- 💡 *Think about delivering the art in person; see [Reaching Policy Makers](#) section in the [Program Toolbox](#) on [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org) for tips on *Meeting with Your Senators and Congressional Representatives*.*

## Involving Youth

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Make the most of the tremendous energy and enthusiasm young people have - engage them in planning and promoting your *Lights On Afterschool* activities. The youth in your program know first-hand why afterschool is important and what it gives them, so include them in designing and planning your *Lights On Afterschool* activities.

Tips for Youth Involvement:

- During your *Lights On Afterschool* program, give young people a time to speak publicly to policy makers about their views on afterschool, learning, education and other related issues. Invite your mayor, school board members or city council members to come to your afterschool program to listen to what kids have to say.
- Have youth decorate light bulbs (Page 52 thru 54). If you are near a Congressional District Office, arrange for them to deliver the artwork themselves and meet with the Member or staff. If the offices are far away, work with students to make a project out of sending the box of artwork. The Congressional office should respond with a letter back to your program. Use that as a second learning opportunity to discuss the role of elected officials.
- Work with the local newspaper to have them publish op-eds by kids that focus on kids views of afterschool and learning, how/when/where they have fun learning.
- Work with the local newspaper to feature stories by kid reporters that cover issues including why afterschool programs help kids, what makes a great afterschool program, and how to make learning fun.
- Organize an event at city hall or the state house in which young people speak publicly about their views on the issues in front of a large audience that includes policymakers - give the policy makers a chance to respond/acknowledge the young people's concerns.
- Organize a group of kids to go visit policy makers in your community. This could include the mayor, city council members, school board members, state legislators, the governor, and members of Congress. Work with the young people ahead of time to set up the meetings and develop a list of talking points for the meetings. Notify the press ahead of time so that they can cover the story of young people being their own best advocates on learning and education.
- Work with young people to request a hearing on afterschool and education in your state legislative body. Ask the education committee to hold a special hearing where kids testify about the benefits they receive from afterschool programs, and how afterschool helps engage them in learning.

You will need to consider:

- Ages of the students.
- Group size. Will students work in large or small groups or will individuals run their own activities?

- Leadership skills of your students. Could they entirely design and follow through with a project, or will they need a good bit of development and leadership from you?
- Students with disabilities. Special accommodations may need to be made to include students with physical and learning disabilities.
- Training. Would leadership development, planning, public speaking, working with the media, etc., be helpful to youth?
- Recruiting. What would entice youth to want to be involved? What incentives can you offer them, e.g., extra credit, behavior points, field trip privileges?

Be sure to set some goals and determine how you will measure success - that is, how you and they will know that your project made a difference. By taking these steps before you begin, you increase the likelihood that your event will be successful and that your students will have a sense of real accomplishment. A discussion of objectives, goals and measures can make an excellent preparation activity. Also important in preparation: creating a timeline, task list and budget. See the event planning checklist for ideas.

Evaluate the level of involvement that is appropriate for the youth in your program.

Level of Youth involvement	Examples of Tasks
Youth-Led Rally	Youth committee designs the rally, assigns roles to various youth and implements the plan with guidance from adults
Youth as Leaders	Youth work with adults to identify what roles they could fill and then plan out the steps and fulfill each role, such as tour guides for site tours of the program, publicity team to make posters and signs, donation team to ask local business for donated snacks and goodies
Youth Contributions	Youth volunteer to speak, help set up the event, write invitations, hang up posters, perform at the rally, decorate the rally location, etc.

Check out these web sites for more resources on engaging youth in service:

- Youth Service America at [ysa.org](http://ysa.org) or [servenet.org](http://servenet.org)
- Do Something at [dosomething.org](http://dosomething.org)
- Corporation for National and Community Service at [cns.gov](http://cns.gov)

# Become a National Supporting Organization for *Lights On Afterschool*

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The Afterschool Alliance invites all afterschool supporters to be part of *Lights On Afterschool*. National Supporting Organizations are listed on our website and in event materials. As a supporter, we ask that you help promote the event to your networks and affiliates, asking them to attend an event or hold a celebration locally. We've created web banners, calendar announcements and more to help you. See pages 51-68 or visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaSponsorFundraising.cfm> to download tools and to see a list of other partners.

National Supporting Organizations agree to:

- Be listed on public documents as a *Lights On Afterschool* supporter;
- As appropriate for your organization, promote *Lights On Afterschool* to members and networks (chapters, affiliates, programs), and encourage their participation as event hosts or attendees; and
- As appropriate for your organization, promote the event in communications (e.g., newsletters, in-house publications, intra-net, website).

To become a National Supporting Organization please send an email to [lightson@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:lightson@afterschoolalliance.org) or complete the information below and we will add your organization to the list of supporters for *Lights On Afterschool*.

Mail to: Shaun Gray  
*Lights On Afterschool*  
Afterschool Alliance  
1616 H Street, NW, Suite 820  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Or Fax to: 202-347-2092

Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Let us know what you plan to do to promote *Lights On Afterschool*. What tools would help you in this effort?

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# *Event Ideas and Activities*

## *Lights On Afterschool Case Studies*

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Provided below are case studies of successful events including tips from organizers on what worked; ideas for event activities and themes; and a short description of some past *Lights On Afterschool* events. We hope these are useful in your planning and help spark some ideas for your own event!

### Case Studies

Cultural Event Opens Door to New Contribution (pages 14-15)

Strengthening Ties to Stakeholders (pages 16-17)

Achieving Bigger, Higher-Profile through Collaboration (page 18)

Celebration Led by Youth Honors a Friend of Afterschool (pages 19-20)

Battle of the Bands Draws Media, Local Officials (page 21)

Open House at a Faith-Based Program Impresses Local Leaders, Boosts Staff (page 22-23)

Creative Program Inspires Policy Maker Support (pages 24-25)

Community Comes Together to Light Up the Sky (pages 26-27)

## Case Studies

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### Cultural Event Opens Door to New Contribution

Where: Camdenton, Missouri

Who: 550 participants: 350 students and 200 family members, school officials, political leaders, local residents

Highlights: Media coverage of the event caught the eye of a local business executive, leading to a gift of \$20,000 in computer equipment. Missouri's First Lady, Lori Hauser Holden was the featured guest speaker.

Camdenton R-III's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program hosted a *Lights On Afterschool* celebration for the entire community at the Camdenton High School Little Theatre. Its primary focus was a multicultural presentation by Cultural Kaleidoscope that enabled students to learn about Russia and its culture. Funding for the program was made possible through a grant from the Missouri Arts Council.

"What made the event a success was the fact that students, parents and community members were introduced to the arts in a way that would never be possible for most of our students," explained Project Pass Director Sherry Comer, an Afterschool Ambassador. "Many of our youth will never travel outside of the United States or even out of the state of Missouri. To see what the culture of Russia is like through dance, music and numerous Russian artists was a phenomenal opportunity for our community. It was a great way to draw a crowd to share the importance of afterschool issues and demonstrate what programs do for the youth of our state and nation."

#### THE PROGRAM:

Missouri's First Lady, Lori Hauser Holden was the featured guest speaker at the event. A Resolution was signed and presented to Comer on behalf of the Missouri House of Representatives and Mayor Kerry Shannon presented a Proclamation declaring October 9, 2003 *Lights On Afterschool* Day in Camdenton.

Other distinguished guests at the celebration included: State Representative Daniel Moore, Chair of the Joint Committee on Out of School Time; Camdenton Mayor Kerry Shannon; State Department of Education Officials Jay Acock and Cindy Waibel; and numerous community and school leaders. On behalf of Project PASS, students Jacob Fordyce and Doug McDonald proudly presented "keys" to these officials to symbolize PASS's theme that "Afterschool is key to a students' success."

The event generated numerous local newspaper articles, one of which spurred the interest of an executive at the G-TECH Corporation. In the spring of 2004, the G-TECH Corporation established an office in Missouri and agreed to donate \$20,000 worth of

computer equipment to the afterschool program - all because of the media coverage from the *Lights On Afterschool* event.

Leading up to the event, the afterschool programs built support and excitement among the student through activities and studies that focused on Russia.

#### KEYS TO SUCCESS:

Reach Out to Elected Officials, and Do it Early in Your Planning. Comer began outreach to elected officials well in advance, encouraging them to participate in the event either in person or by issuing proclamations in support of *Lights On Afterschool*.

#### Advice for coordinators:

Start planning early

If possible, send invitation letters to key legislators, mayors and/or the Governor the year before

Send several follow up letters.

Tip: Pictures and personal notes from students work best.

Hold the Event at One Key Site. "The year before, I had a celebration at each site and it was impossible to get the legislators, Mayor, other dignitaries and media to each location on time to read proclamations and participate in the activities."

Comer also notes that it is important that speakers recognize that most of the audience members are young students and the speeches need to be short and engaging.

## Strengthening Ties to Stakeholders

Where: Fort Worth, Texas

Who: 700 attendees, highlighting 45 programs district-wide

Highlights: Speakers included the Mayor Pro Tem, a staff member to a local Member of Congress, and several school superintendents

The Fort Worth Independent School District's (ISD's) 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs' primary *Lights On Afterschool* event in 2003 was a rally in front of JCPenney store in Fort Worth's Ridgmar Mall. Event organizer and Afterschool Ambassador Sue Matkin said the event, which drew more than 700 attendees, has helped cement relationships with key policy makers and stakeholders.

### THE PROGRAM:

The event drew on the talents of children from 21st Century programs across the school district, featuring singing, cheers, ballet folklorico, poetry, hip-hop dance, steppers, Tae Kwon Do, a band performance, a fashion show and a Kung Fu presentation. Displays on various afterschool learning opportunities filled the mall walkways on two floors in front of the store, giving parents, the media and policy makers the chance to sample the programs' rich and diverse curriculum. In all, groups from 45 schools participated in the performances and displays.

Speakers included the Mayor Pro Tem, a staff member to a local Member of Congress, and several school superintendents. Several local afterschool leaders and supporters received plaques, including an executive of Lockheed Martin for the company's ongoing support of Fort Worth afterschool programs.

The Lights On theme was emphasized with a five-foot light bulb, a number of smaller paper maché light bulbs, and hundreds of paper light bulbs for students to decorate. A large "What I Like about Afterschool" banner was also on hand for students to sign.

**KEYS TO SUCCESS:** Matkin points to a number of keys to the program's success:

**Partners:** First, she says, "We tried to bring together various afterschool providers, because we felt very strongly that it shouldn't be just the Fort Worth ISD's programs that were recognized. We're just one piece of the provider community, so we had YMCA and others."

**Get Buy-In:** Second, she says, "at our first meeting, we brought the decision makers of the various organizations together, and once they'd bought in to the program, we brought in site coordinators and people who work with the kids for a second meeting to get their ideas. The process was so democratic that my idea didn't get adopted!" Matkin says the planning committee met monthly for five months, and three times in

the final month. One meeting was at a conference room at the JCPenney store that was the site of the event, Matkin says, to give participating organizations tangible evidence of the store's commitment.

**Recognize Local Supporters:** Third, Matkin says, recognizing policy makers and corporate leaders who support afterschool in the community helped to solidify their long-term buy-in, and also to strengthen community members' personal relationships with key leaders.

**Incorporate Fun & Substance:** Finally, one lesson she learned for the coming year is that, in addition to children's performances and fun activities, it's important to make sure that the substance of afterschool programs and the breadth of activities they provide is reflected in the event. That way, the audience will get a richer understanding of what kids are doing every afternoon, and how valuable afterschool is on several fronts.

## Achieving Bigger, Higher-Profile through Collaboration

Where: Columbus, Ohio

Who: Museum opens doors to 1,500 afterschool students

Highlights: Dynamic partnerships allowed organizers to put together a large-scale event and attract speakers such as Mayor Michael Coleman and former Ohio State University and Miami Dolphin football star Demetrius Stanley.

"Our event was very successful because it was truly a community event. Many organizations worked together to make it happen," said Karen Jackson, former state coordinator for Ohio's Out-of-School Time Project, Action for Children and a 2003/2004 Afterschool Ambassador. "The most important thing is to be inclusive of all organizations - regardless of how much or how little they contribute. Also, have a firm budget and provide transportation."

### THE PROGRAM:

COSI Columbus - a popular science museum - opened its doors to more than 1,500 students and adults from more than 40 programs for a fun-filled afternoon. Collaborative partners for the event included COSI, Communities in Schools, Cap City Kids, the Mayor's Office of Education, Action for Children, Children's Hunger Alliance and the YMCA of Central Ohio.

Mayor Michael Coleman and former Ohio State University and Miami Dolphin football star Demetrius Stanley spoke at the event.

Information booths highlighted activities at local programs. Guests were able to tour the entire center.

Step teams and other performing artists entertained guests, as did mascots from the local professional teams.

In addition to the large event at COSI Columbus, Jackson hosted a highly successful *Lights On Ohio Afterschool* kickoff on October 3. It was part of Ohio's two-day statewide Out-of-School Time professional development conference, "Building a Brighter Future."

Keynote speakers included Ohio First Lady Hope Taft, Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Judy Y. Samelson, Ohio State Senator Ray Miller and U.S. Senator Michael DeWine. Each dignitary received an "Ohio Educational Opportunities Advocate" recognition plaque on behalf Ohio's Out-of-School Time Project and the Afterschool Alliance.

The conference energized the afterschool community and helped convinced many providers to host their own *Lights On Afterschool* events.

## Celebration Led by Youth Honors a Friend of Afterschool

Where: Las Vegas, Nevada

Who: Numerous state officials, including a Congresswoman; 1,200 participants; and 35 event co-hosts.

Highlights: A rally emceed by a high school youth featured student performances and comments on afterschool by youth and local leaders. An "Afterschool Hero" award was present to the family of an afterschool staff person. Event co-hosts provided information and fun activities for participants.

The Southern Nevada Afterschool Collaborative hosted a community-wide *Lights On Afterschool* event at Freedom Park in October of 2003. More than 1,200 people participated in the rally, organized by Afterschool Ambassador Susan Waters, who brought together more than 35 afterschool and community-based organizations to serve as co-hosts.

"The support from lawmakers was incredible, but there is no doubt that the stars of the program were the kids," Waters said. "A remarkable high school student served as the emcee. The closing act was a rap group of young people who called themselves The Academics. They turned the message of being successful in school into a rap. The crowd was on its feet!"

"For me, the most compelling statement of the evening came as the crowd was going home and I was packing things up," she continued. "A middle school boy came to me and said, 'Why can't we have afterschool programs at my school?' I can only hope that events like this one will help to make his request a reality."

### THE PROGRAM

For the rally, each co-host group provided information and fun activities, including face painting, balloons, a jump house, a table for decorating *Lights On Afterschool* light bulbs, a roving juggler, local mascots and more. Student performances included dancers, mariachi bands, singers and tumblers. Youth talked about what afterschool meant to them.

Congresswoman Shelley Berkley spoke to participants about the importance of supporting afterschool programs, staying for more than an hour. Aides to Governor Kenny Guinn and Senators John Ensign and Harry Reid addressed the crowd, as did Las Vegas City Councilman Gary Reese. Senator Reid himself was on his way to the event when he was delayed by a traffic jam caused by a freeway accident. Officials from the State of Nevada and the Cities of Henderson, North Las Vegas and Las Vegas presented proclamations. Congressman Jon C. Porter sent formal Congressional Congratulations.

The first annual "Afterschool Hero" award was presented to the family of Robbie Stroh, a City of Las Vegas employee who was a longtime afterschool staff member. Stroh was killed in an automobile accident just two weeks before the event.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

"This event and the planning process did a great deal to bring together organizations that historically have not worked well together," Waters said. "The key was pulling together a great organizing committee."

Waters' recommendation: "Bring together as many stakeholders as possible to plan an event that is both youth-focused and showcases the benefits of afterschool programs. Invite national, state and local officials. Try to get them or staff involved as participants in the event. Cultivate local media and plan events that have a unique story or photo opportunity. Plan for success, do a good job and make sure that as many people as possible hear your message."

Business support was strong. JCPenney store employees passed out flyers and wore "Afterschool for All" stickers in the week leading up to *Lights On Afterschool*.

"As soon as the event was over," she reports, "organizing committee members began talking about bigger and better plans for next year."

## Battle of the Bands Draws Media, Local Officials

Where: Scranton, Pennsylvania

Who: Lt. Gov. Catherine Baker Knoll, the mayor, school board members and 1,000 parents and students

Highlights: A "Battle of the Bands" event, built around the mayor's city pride initiative, attracted media attention and local policymakers, creating visibility for the program and strengthening relationships with officials.

Molly Quinn Philbin's BEST (Building Educational Success Together) afterschool program in Scranton, Pennsylvania hosted a musical *Lights On Afterschool* event in 2003. Philbin organized a "Battle of the Bands" at a newly opened high school, and invited students from neighboring middle school afterschool programs to listen and dance.

The visibility the event gave the program and afterschool in general was invaluable. "I think it was memorable for the officials who were there, and that it helped make the point about how important afterschool is in the lives of our children," she says. "And that's going to stick with them, I know."

### THE PROGRAM

Each band performed its own arrangement of an original song called "Scranton, Come Back," commissioned by the BEST program to support the mayor of Scranton's "Restore the Pride" initiative.

Lt. Gov. Catherine Baker Knoll joined the mayor and several school board members at the event, along with representatives from the local JCPenney store, Junior Achievement, and Good Schools Pennsylvania. Approximately 1,000 parents and students participated. The lieutenant governor's and the mayor's participation helped generate widespread media coverage.

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

Philbin's advice for staging such events: Beware the volatile combination of different age groups, different schools, and loud music. "I wasn't familiar with 'moshing,'" she says, referring to a dancing trend that involves dancers jumping onto other dancers. "We had to keep that contained - and that made me feel a little old! I ended up dividing the dancing time by age group, and pressing teachers and afterschool providers into service to keep things from getting out of hand."

On the other hand, she says, "It was great that the bands took the message of the city and put together their own arrangements. I think that was a powerful message. And I appreciated that the bands were all respectful of one another, and that the middle school students had a chance to see that behavior modeled."

## Open House at a Faith-Based Program Impresses Local Leaders, Boosts Staff

Where: Baltimore, Maryland

Who: Maryland's State Superintendent of Schools, the Baltimore City Council president, and more than 300 students, parents and community members.

Highlights: An open house that featured activities from local afterschool programs impressed local leaders and gave afterschool staffers a well-deserved celebration.

### THE PROGRAM

The Door in Baltimore, Maryland hosted an open house that featured activities from local afterschool programs in the city. The Door is the first faith-based afterschool program to receive a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant in the state. Guest speakers included the Maryland State Superintendent of Schools and the Baltimore City Council president.

More than 300 students, parents and other community members were able to see firsthand the creative and diverse activities students participated in daily at their programs - from science experiments to computer programs to arts and crafts. Students from The Door, YMCA, Junior Achievement, Boys and Girls Club Living Classrooms, Chesapeake Center and the Afterschool Marching Band participated in the event.

"One of the greatest outcomes of our *Lights On Afterschool* event is that local, state and federal elected officials and their staff members who attended our event were so impressed by all that the programs offer that they are now more willing to support afterschool programs," said Kacy Conley, Director of Urban Services at the YMCA of Central Maryland and an Afterschool Ambassador. "It was a wonderful way to celebrate the great things afterschool accomplish while also giving a boost to those who toil every day to help sustain the programs for students and their families in our community."

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Involve a variety of stakeholders in the planning and execution to build greater ownership.
- Develop a media plan.
- Make the event visually attractive.
- Secure a variety of afterschool programs to showcase their activities.
- Include several hands-on activities for youth during the event.
- Keep the program portion of the event short as the kids should be the focus.

- Employ afterschool students as hosts/hostesses tour guides for the event. Many of the dignitaries at Conley's event remarked that they appreciated having youth tour guides with whom to share their experiences.
- Recruit partners with reach into the community to help promote your event. At least nine JCPenney stores in Maryland promoted *Lights On Afterschool* events by setting up afterschool info booths, encouraging shoppers to participate and wearing "Afterschool for All" stickers during the week of *Lights On Afterschool*.

## Creative Program Inspires Policy Maker Support

Where: Austin, Texas

Who: 160 afterschool programs held events in the Austin area that involved state leaders and special recognition for a Member of Congress.

Highlights: A main kick off event with a student torch race to the state capitol. Students passed the torches on to legislators to call attention to the thousands of area children without afterschool. The creative event inspired a state policymaker to help find needed funding for afterschool.

Former Afterschool Ambassador Anna Land's 2003 *Lights On Afterschool* event in Austin, Texas was a week-long affair, drawing on a broad coalition of afterschool organizations in the community.

Land says she can see the long-term impact, citing local politicians who participated who are now stronger advocates for afterschool. "We have one county commissioner who made a particularly fiery speech about how we have to do more for our kids. So after the event, we went back to him to ask for help, and in a time of stretched budgets, they've put aside important funding for afterschool."

### THE PROGRAM

Festivities began on October 5, the Saturday before the Thursday October 10 celebration, with the official state kick-off event for *Lights On Afterschool* - a torch race to the state capitol aimed at raising awareness of the estimated 34,000 children in the greater Austin area without access to afterschool programs. Student carrying the torches were all winners of an essay contest on the importance of afterschool. Local athletes and dignitaries joined the students along the way. At the end of the run, students handed their torches to state legislators, who joined in a rally in support of afterschool. A local "afterschool hero"—a Member of Congress with a strong record of support for afterschool—was presented with an award.

Later that week, 160 afterschool programs held smaller *Lights On Afterschool* events at their facilities around the Austin area. The events included open houses, rallies, celebrations, student performances and demonstrations, and more. Land's own program, Heart House, a fixture in other communities in the state, used the occasion to celebrate the grand opening of its new Austin site.

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

Recruit A Hero. Secure a hero, like the awardee Member of Congress. "Look for someone with pull whose participation will make others in the community want to be involved."

Get Organized. "We had a detailed project plan which we could show people and it helped bring them on board."

Get Early Buy-In from Partners. Determine which afterschool programs and organizations are most likely to participate, and invest them in the plan first. A number of community based organizations, including Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, 4-H, and Boys and Girls Scouts, were particularly eager to join in, and their early participation helped generate enthusiasm that attracted other organizations to the effort.

## Community Comes Together to Light Up the Sky

Where: Evansville, Indiana

Who: More than 2,000 participants, and 30 community agencies

**Highlights:** A unique coming together of the entire community—local businesses, community programs, area leaders, parents, and youth—to organize, fund, and celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. The spirit of the event was captured in a 20 minute firework display.

"Afterschool is about opportunities, and *Lights On Afterschool* is a tremendous opportunity for youth, families and communities to come together in celebration," says Evansville event co-chair Dan Diehl. The Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (E-VSC) and Evansville community *Lights On Afterschool* event in 2003 was a rally at Bosse Field, a historic baseball stadium in Evansville. The event highlighted the importance of afterschool programs in the lives of children, youth, families and communities, and served as the kick-off to Red Ribbon week activities. It drew more than 2,000 people.

### THE PROGRAM

Children and youth from area afterschool programs performed, more than 30 community agencies set up booths and provided games, food, entertainment, and *Lights On Afterschool* t-shirts were provided free to everyone. The event culminated with a huge, exciting 20-minute fireworks display.

Opening ceremonies featured the Girl Scouts, Central High School Junior ROTC, and Joshua Academy singing the National Anthem. Dr. McCandless, the E-VSC Superintendent, read a Mayoral proclamation announcing *Lights On Afterschool* Day. Youth performances followed, including: Evans' Spirit Squad, Glenwood's and Harwood's African Drumming Ensemble, Delaware's Orff Ensemble, Carver's Touring Strings, Cedar Hall's Players with Pat Coslett, Dexter's Sign Language Choir, Howard Roosa's Spanish Club, Culver's Steppers, the African Elementary Choral Ensemble, and Lodge's Choir. Johnny Kincaid of Smokefree Communities, provided a kick-off for Red Ribbon Week activities, and Deputy Williams of the Sheriff's Department and Mary Dunham of Newspaper in Education announced the drug-free slogan award winner. The Boy Scouts were featured in closing ceremonies.

The event was funded entirely through community donations, including those from: The Evansville Courier and Press: Newspaper in Education; Vectren; Old National Bank; and the Evansville Otters. Area businesses donated door prizes that were given out throughout the event. Youth and parents signed a drug- and alcohol-free pledge written on a paper light bulb, and attached the light bulbs to railings at the baseball stadium. The *Lights On Afterschool* theme was emphasized with a banner, paper light bulbs throughout the stadium, t-shirts with the *Lights On Afterschool* logo,

performances by students from afterschool programs, and spotlights on kids sharing, "What afterschool means to me?"

**KEYS TO SUCCESS:** Organizer Dan Diehl offers several keys to the program's success:

**Celebrating the Community.** "We have broad community involvement. This is not a school event. It is a community event. We have made it a celebration of community."

**Everyone Has A Role.** "Because it is a community event, there is a great deal of ownership in the process. Various youth serving organizations make up the planning committee and help with volunteer recruitment, marketing, performance planning, and overall organization."

**Youth Are Front and Center.** "The absolute, number one key to success is the youth performances. This is the very essence of why afterschool programs are important. The event gives our youth an opportunity to perform in front of thousands of people. This is an opportunity that they would never have without the event."

## Linking Your *Lights On Afterschool* event to *Afterschool for All*

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Use your *Lights On Afterschool* event to announce your partnership in *Afterschool for All* - and to encourage local leaders and partners to sign on. Signing on to *Afterschool for All* means that you support the goal of afterschool for all, and join the voices of thousands nationwide in calling for more programs. There are currently more than 23,000 partners. Partners include governors, educators, business leaders, youth advocates, parents, mayors, police and faith based leaders among many others. Visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/a4a.cfm> to view the most recent list of *Afterschool for All* partners.

Ways to make *Afterschool for All* part of your event:

- Recruit the support of your local mayor, superintendent, principal, corporate partners or others. Ask them to agree to sign on to the Project at your event as a public demonstration of their support for afterschool. Make the act a visual one by creating a paper or certificate for the leader to sign.
- Hold an *Afterschool for All* community signing ceremony. If your program has not yet signed on, this would be a great time to do so. Ask guests—community leaders, parents, school faculty—to join you in signing on at the event; collect their names and send them to the Afterschool Alliance or enter them via our on-line form at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/a4a.cfm>. This is a simple way to engage your community, and make them part of the nationwide afterschool movement. Partners will be listed on the website and will receive a short newsletter every other month.
- Create a *Lights On Afterschool* petition to rally members of your community to ask city and state leaders to support Afterschool for All. Simply copy the sample petition of support for Afterschool for All (page 30 and 31) that members of your community can sign and that you can send to your community leaders. Signers will be recognized on the partner list at [afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org). Be sure to send a copy of the list to the Afterschool Alliance at: [mdauphin@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:mdauphin@afterschoolalliance.org) so that we include all signers on the *Afterschool for All* List of Partners.
- Insert a dose of *Afterschool for All* in the promotional materials for your *Lights On Afterschool* event. For example, include recruitment forms with registration materials.
- Use your *Lights On Afterschool* event to set an *Afterschool for All* community challenge! For example, set a goal to recruit partners throughout the year to strengthen the afterschool coalitions in your community.

The list of *Afterschool for All* partners is shared with the public, media and decision-makers to demonstrate the broad support that exists for afterschool. Use it in your community to build coalitions and form partnerships.

Here is the statement that more than 23,000 organizations and individuals have already signed onto:

*"Afterschool for All supports the vision that all children and youth deserve access to quality, affordable afterschool programs. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning. It is time to come together around this important issue to deliver a united, powerful message about afterschool programs. Afterschool for All will help shape the future of afterschool - and our youth. My organization supports the goal of making afterschool programs available to all young people and would like to be a partner in Afterschool for All!"*

\*\*\*

*Afterschool for All is being organized by the Afterschool Alliance to show how many Americans think afterschool programs are vital for our communities, families and young people today. There are no requirements to be a Partner. Your information will not be shared or sold. You will receive periodic emails, approximately ten a year, regarding the state of afterschool programs in America.*



## *Keep the Lights On After School* Petition in Support of Afterschool Programs

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_: [insert name of elected official or candidate]:

In recognition of *Lights On Afterschool*, the nation's only annual celebration of afterschool programs, we are asking for your help in making sure that youth and families in [insert city/district/county] have access to quality afterschool programs. Afterschool programs combat juvenile crime, help working families and provide our youth with enriching opportunities to help them grow into successful adults. Kids in afterschool programs do better in school, and are less likely to get in trouble. However, there are not nearly enough afterschool programs in our community to serve all of the youth and families who need them.

On this eleventh annual *Lights On Afterschool*, we are shining a light on afterschool programs and the benefits they provide our youth and families. We are not alone in supporting afterschool programs. More than 7,500 communities nationwide are celebrating *Lights On Afterschool* today. We are also proud partners of *Afterschool for All*, a national group of more than 23,000 individuals and organizations who support the goal of afterschool for all. Among the *Afterschool for All* partners are governors, mayors, police chiefs, parents, educators and youth, in addition to respected organizations and businesses including the YMCA of the USA, the National PTA, the National League of Cities, AARP, Time Warner, IBM and the NBA, NFL, NHL and MLB sports leagues.

Please support afterschool programs here in [insert city/district/county].

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Name (print)      Age      School/City      Signature

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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23. \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Signers of this letter signal their support of the goal of afterschool and become partners of *Afterschool for All*, a project of the Afterschool Alliance. There are no requirements for being a partner in *Afterschool for All* and partner information is NEVER shared nor sold. The list of *Afterschool for All* Partners is used only in project materials. A list of partners is available at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/a4a.cfm>. The breadth and diversity of partners helps illustrate the strong support that exists for afterschool programs.**

# Afterschool for All Partner Form

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(on your letterhead)

In America today, 15.1 million children are alone and unsupervised in the hours after school. *Afterschool for All* brings together individuals and organizations from across the nation who support the vision that all children deserve access to quality, affordable afterschool programs.

There are thousands of *Afterschool for All* partners including governors, mayors, police chiefs, prosecutors, parents, educators, colleges and universities, and organizations representing a broad array of sectors including the YMCA of the USA, the NAACP, the National Council of La Raza, the National PTA, the National League of Cities, AARP, 100 Women in Hedge Funds, Time Warner, IBM, the NBA, NFL, MLB, NHL, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/a4a.cfm> for more information.



YES please recognize me as a voice of supporting afterschool programs by signing me up as an *Afterschool for All* partner!

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Name (print)

---

Signature

---

Address

---

City

State

Zip

---

Phone Number

Email

<p><b>I am a:</b> (circle one) Youth (under 18) Parent/Guardian Afterschool Program Staff Educator Community Leader Business Leader Civic Leader Elected Official Law Enforcement Official Concerned Citizen</p>
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\*\*There are no requirements for being a partner in *Afterschool for All*. Individuals and organizations are invited to join the Project based upon a commitment to and belief in afterschool programs. A list of Afterschool for All partners will be used in outreach materials, press releases and posted on the Afterschool Alliance and the Afterschool for All websites. This partner list illustrates the broad range of individuals and organizations who believe afterschool is critical to children and their families. For more information, please visit [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org) or call (646) 943-8660\*\*

## Going Green with *Lights On Afterschool*

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Consider these tips to make your *Lights On Afterschool* earth friendly by going Green. Incorporate into your *Lights On Afterschool* event and everyday after to ensure that your afterschool program makes great strides with a smaller carbon footprint.

### *For Program Providers*

- ✓ Go paperless - Register your *Lights On Afterschool* event online rather than mailing or faxing your registration form (<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaHostEvent.cfm>).
- ✓ Recycle your paper, plastic and aluminum items by contacting your local recycling agency. Have them bring you recycle bins to sort your items. Find your local recycling center by visiting [www.recyclingcenters.org](http://www.recyclingcenters.org).
- ✓ Email invitations to your *Lights On Afterschool* participants by using E-Vite.com (instructions on page 64)
- ✓ Offer finger foods or serve fruit and veggies on a stick to help reduce the use of paper and plastic products. Serve ice cream sandwiches or popsicles to eliminate the use of plastic spoons and bowls.
- ✓ Take a class field trip to your local recycling center and learn about the different types of ways to recycle, reuse and reduce waste.
- ✓ Post a 'Green Activity of the Day' and have students perform that activity during regular- and after- school hours.
- ✓ Consider becoming a Go Green Afterschool Program/School. Visit <http://gogreeninitiative.org/index.php> to register your program/school
- ✓ Use the energy efficient light bulb artwork to show that your program is going Green for *Lights On Afterschool*. But don't throw them out after your event! Instead mail a bunch to your congressional, state or local representative (page 9) and use the rest as decoration for your classroom. Have youth take artwork home to post on refrigerators or in your office.
- ✓ If you school is multi-leveled, try taking the stairs to reduce the amount of energy used when taking the elevator. This saves energy and promotes a healthy body!
- ✓ Print using the draft option on your copier and use both sides of the paper.
- ✓ Recycle your toner and inkjet cartridges! Purchase returnable or refillable toner cartridges.

### *For Community Participants*

- ✓ Walk, ride a bike or use public transportation to your local *Lights On Afterschool* event.
- ✓ Go Paperless - sign up for *Afterschool for All* online <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/a4aJoin.cfm>. Encourage others to do the same!
- ✓ Bring your own mug or glass to refill your refreshments while attending a *Lights On Afterschool* event.

- ✓ Map your Carbon Footprint (<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/>) to find out how your daily activities effect the environment in terms of green house gases. Seek ways to lower your carbon dioxide output.
- ✓ Before you toss that glass bottle into the trash can consider this: the energy savings from recycling one glass bottle can power a laptop computer for 25 minutes!
- ✓ While helping wee ones color the energy efficient light bulb for *Lights On Afterschool*, consider stopping by your local drug store and replacing your home light bulbs with energy efficient ones.
- ✓ Recycle your toner and inkjet cartridges as well as old cell phones!
- ✓ Turn off the water!

**Fact:** The United States uses about 346,000 million gallons of fresh water every day. The average person in the United States uses anywhere from 100-150 gallons of water per day and much of this consumption is from just flushing the toilet.

- ✓ Turn off equipment and lights when they are not in use.



# Fun For Kids and Families! Free Literacy Activities



Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) is excited to partner with The Afterschool Alliance to promote family literacy in afterschool programs and at home. As the nation's oldest and largest children and families' nonprofit literacy organization, RIF works with schools, libraries, community centers, and other venues to encourage kids to discover the joy of reading.

As you enjoy spending time with friends and family, here are a few ways that you can incorporate literacy into your time together:

- **Story Builders.** Write a short paragraph that begins a story. Have each family member add to it until the story is complete.
- **Game Time.** Whether it's hangman, a crossword puzzle, or a word search, have fun with letters and words by playing games that the whole family can enjoy.
- **Declare "Letter Day."** Pick a letter and challenge each family member to find as many objects as possible that begin with that letter. At the end of the day, see who has found the most objects.
- **Rhymin' Simon.** Start a "rhyme chain" by selecting a simple word with multiple rhymes, such as "boy" or "tree." Have each family member take turns to call out a word that rhymes. Start a new chain as needed.



RIF's website—[www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org)—offers a host of resources for parents, educators, and kids, such as:

- Fun literacy-based activities and children's book lists
- Tips and articles for parents about the importance of reading
- Information about incorporating books into the classroom
- Calendars with daily literacy activities for children and families
- Interviews with popular authors and illustrators

For more activities and information about RIF, visit [www.RIF.org](http://www.RIF.org) today.



# *Reaching Out to Policy Makers*

## Inviting Policy Makers to Your *Lights On Afterschool* event

Policy makers are critical allies in expanding the resources available to support afterschool programs. Not only do policy makers need to understand that afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and improve students' academic achievement, but also they can help identify additional resources for expanding available afterschool programs. Use the sample invitation letter to invite policy makers to join your *Lights On Afterschool* event. Whether or not they can attend, ask your policy maker to issue a proclamation in support of *Lights On Afterschool*. A sample and tips are included here.

*(on your letterhead)*

Dear *[Policy Maker]*:

On October 21, 2010, our afterschool program will be participating in the eighth annual *Lights On Afterschool*, a nationwide celebration of afterschool programs. We will be one of more than 7,500 sites across the nation sending the message that afterschool is key to children's success, and that we must keep the lights on and doors open after school. Parents, media, employers, neighbors, school officials and others have been invited to help us rally support for safe, stimulating afterschool programs.

We would like you to be part of our local celebration scheduled:

- *[Date and time]*
- *[Place]*
- *[Address]*

Our program is going to include a half hour ceremony and we would be honored to have you as our keynote presenter. Your role would include:

- A 15-minute statement of the benefits of afterschool and
- Presentation of the proclamation to the Director

The benefits of quality afterschool programs are clear. They support working families by ensuring that children are safe and productive when the school day ends. Quality afterschool programs make our communities stronger by involving students, parents, business leaders and volunteers. Quality afterschool programs give children the opportunity to discover hidden talents as they grow academically and socially.

I look forward to having you join us for *Lights On Afterschool*. I will call you next week to confirm your availability. We hope that you will help us keep the lights on after school, and give our children a brighter future.

Sincerely,  
*[your name]*

## Requesting a Proclamation from a Governor or Mayor

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Many communities and states have had success getting their governor or mayor to issue a proclamation in support of *Lights On Afterschool Day*. In fact nearly every governor signs a proclamation. This gesture is a simple way for elected officials to show their support, and gives you something to show off and announce at your event. Below is a sample proclamation.

### Keeping the Lights On After School: A Proclamation

WHEREAS, the citizens of [Name of town/city/district/state/community] stand firmly committed to quality afterschool programs and opportunities because they:

- Provide safe, challenging, and engaging learning experiences that help children develop social, emotional, physical and academic skills.
- Support working families by ensuring their children are safe and productive after the regular school day ends.
- Build stronger communities by involving students, parents, business leaders and adult volunteers in the lives of young people, thereby promoting positive relationships among youth, families and adults.
- Engage families, schools and community partners in advancing the welfare of our children.

WHEREAS, [Name of Program] has provided significant leadership in the area of community involvement in the education and well-being of our youth, grounded in the principle that quality afterschool programs are key to helping our children become successful adults.

WHEREAS, *Lights On Afterschool*, the national celebration of afterschool programs held this year on October 21, 2010, promotes the importance of quality afterschool programs in the lives of children, families and communities.

WHEREAS, more than 28 million children in the U.S. have parents who work outside the home, and 15.1 million children have no place to go after school.

WHEREAS, many afterschool programs across the country are facing funding shortfalls so severe that they are being forced to close their doors and turn off their lights.

Whereas, the [state/city] is committed to investing in the health and safety of all young people by providing expanded learning opportunities that will help close the achievement gap and prepare young people to compete in the global economy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that I, [Name of Governor/Mayor] do hereby proclaim October 21, 2010, as "*Lights On Afterschool Day*"; AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this [governor/mayor] enthusiastically endorses *Lights On Afterschool* and commits our [state/community] to engage in innovative afterschool programs and activities that ensure the lights stay on and the doors stay open for all children after school.

## Requesting a Proclamation from an Organization, Institution or Other Official

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More than mayors and governors can issue proclamations. A school board, a park and recreation department, your own governing board or your partners may also issue a proclamation for *Lights On Afterschool*. Just ask them. You can use this as an opportunity to tell them about the success of your program - and to thank them for their support. Below is some sample language for a proclamation that any organization might adopt endorsing *Lights On Afterschool 2010* and affirming that afterschool is the key to kids' success.

\*\*\*

WHEREAS, [Name of Organization, Institution or Location] stands firmly committed to quality afterschool programs and opportunities because they:

- Provide safe, challenging, and engaging learning experiences that help children develop social, emotional, physical and academic skills.
- Support working families by ensuring their children are safe and productive after the regular school day ends.
- Build stronger communities by involving students, parents, business leaders and adult volunteers in the lives of young people, thereby promoting positive relationships among youth, families and adults.
- Engage families, schools and community partners in advancing the welfare of our children.

WHEREAS, [Name of Program] has provided significant leadership in the area of community involvement in the education and well-being of our youth, grounded in the principle that quality afterschool programs are key to helping our children become successful adults.

WHEREAS, *Lights On Afterschool*, the national celebration of afterschool programs held this year on October 21, 2010, promotes the importance of quality afterschool programs in the lives of children, families and communities.

WHEREAS, more than 28 million children in the U.S. have parents who work outside the home, and 15.1 million children have no place to go after school.

WHEREAS, many afterschool programs across the country are facing funding shortfalls so severe that they are being forced to close their doors and turn off their lights.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that [Name of Organization, Institution or Official] urges the citizens of [Name of Community or County] to ensure that every child has access to a safe, engaging place where the lights are on after school; AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this [Title of Official] enthusiastically endorses *Lights On Afterschool* and is committed to innovative afterschool programs and activities that ensure that the lights stay on and the doors stay open for all children after school.

# Getting Press

## Working with the Press

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*Lights On Afterschool* provides a wonderful opportunity to generate positive news coverage of your afterschool program and to remind policy makers and community members of the need to provide sufficient funding to meet the growing demand for the afterschool programs that serve children and families. Reporters seek out stories that affect their community, and they will want to tell readers, viewers and listeners about threats to afterschool programs. So plan your *Lights On Afterschool* activities with the media in mind. The simple steps outlined here can make your event more newsworthy and help you reach more community members with your messages. If you want to go beyond the basics and really do a full-court press on media, develop and follow a timeline of media outreach that includes outreach to editorial pages, radio and television talk shows and more. The following ten steps should help improve your media outreach. Note: All tools and sample materials are available for downloading at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaMediaMain.cfm>.

### Step One: Create A Media List

If you don't already have a list of reporters, editors, columnists, photo editors and producers who cover education, children and families, parenting, workplace and feature stories in your media market, this is a good time to create one. Some United Ways have media guides that are available to community agencies for a nominal fee, and the public relations offices at community colleges are often willing to share their media lists with other education agencies.

If no such resource is available, make a list of all local TV and radio stations (including college and university-affiliated stations), daily and weekly newspapers (including ethnic, community and other specialty papers), wire services and magazines, locally oriented Internet sites, and newsletters or bulletins from interested community and faith-based organizations. Then call and ask for the name of the editor, reporter or producer who covers education, children and families, parenting, workplace and features. Request the phone, fax and e-mail address for each person. Ask also for the names and contact information for producers at broadcast news and talk shows that cover issues like afterschool, and columnists who cover education and family issues at local newspapers of all kinds. Media lists should be updated twice per year, as journalists tend to shift beats and jobs fairly often. You will use it often, to promote *Lights On Afterschool* and other activities.

### Step Two: Invite the Public to Your Event

Once you have designed your event, use the media to encourage people to come. Send an announcement to everyone on your media list in the middle of September. Be sure to include your name and daytime phone number in case there are any

questions. See sample Save the Date on page 59

### Step Three: Identify Your Key Messages

Develop key messages for your *Lights On Afterschool* rally. These messages will be integrated into all your media materials and will be the focus of remarks by your spokespersons. If possible, narrow your key messages to three, and keep them simple, clear and concise. The following is an example of messages, but be sure to tailor yours to reflect what afterschool programs mean to your community and the challenges facing afterschool programs in your state.

The [name of program] keeps kids safe and healthy, inspires students to learn and helps working families. Children who come to our program every afternoon have a safe place to go, a range of fun and challenging activities, and supervision by adults who help them learn and stay out of trouble. Afterschool is key to kids' success.

Afterschool programs need more resources and more support. Funding shortages are denying too many kids the opportunities that afterschool programs offer. Too many afterschool programs are being forced to cut back or even close because of budget cuts, or because they were unable to secure enough funding in the first place. We ask lawmakers, business and community leaders, parents and others to do more to make afterschool available to every family that needs it.

### Step Four: Structure Your Event with Media in Mind

Plan your event with media in mind. Some things to remember:

- The media—particularly television reporters and photographers from newspapers—look for good visuals. Make sure your event has lots of color, action, and signs or banners with your program name and "*Lights On Afterschool*" prominently placed.
- Journalists need to file their stories during late afternoon hours, so plan the program for your *Lights On Afterschool* event as early as possible. If your event goes from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., for instance, hold the program at 3:15 or 3:30 p.m.
- Choose two or three spokespeople. They might include your program director, a mayor or other prominent official who supports the afterschool program, and an articulate student who participates. Make sure the spokespeople know your key messages and are familiar with all aspects of your *Lights On Afterschool* event.
- Be sure you have parental permission for any students who will talk to journalists, on- or off- camera.
- Sign up reporters and identify them with badges or nametags of a specific color when they enter your event so everyone knows who they are. You might want

to assign volunteers to stay with reporters, introduce them to people, explain activities and answer questions.

### Step Five: Appeal to the Press

On October 13 or 14, email, mail or fax a media alert about your *Lights On Afterschool* event (see sample on page 55) to everyone on your media list. It serves as an invitation to reporters to cover the event. An alert is very basic and gives journalists information on who, what, where, when and why the event is important to the community. It is not a news release and need not include quotes or give great detail. A media alert should never exceed one page. If you have a wire service in your community (Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters or a local City News Service), fax a copy of the alert to the "Daybook Editor" there. She or he publishes a calendar of newsworthy events for other reporters to check each day.

On October 19, update the media alert you sent the previous week by adding new speakers or more information about student activities, and email or fax it again first thing in the morning. Once it's out, over the course of October 19 and 20, call everyone on your media list to make sure they received your media alert and to ask if they (or someone from their media outlet) can come. If they are unable to make it, plan to email or fax them a news release on October 21, immediately following or during the event. Many news outlets may be willing to write a story from a press release if they are unable to send a reporter to an event. If you call a talk show producer, ask about booking your afterschool program director as a guest on a future show to discuss the benefits of afterschool and the harm that would come from budget cutbacks.

### Step Six: Issue a News Release

A few days before your event, write a news release (see sample on page 56 and 57). A news release is written like a news story, but has the advantage of being written from your point of view. It contains quotes from important people, background on your afterschool program and *Lights On Afterschool*, and features your key messages. It should not exceed two pages. It is essential that it list a contact person, with daytime and evening (or cell) phone numbers. Because the news release will be distributed at your event in the press kits, it should be written in the past tense. You should also fax it to journalists who do not come to your event.

### Step Seven: Develop Press Kits

Assemble press kits to distribute at your event - enough for all the journalists you expect will come, and then a few extra. The kits can be assembled in plain folders with a label from your afterschool program on the cover or, if you want to be creative, have students decorate the covers and write "press kit" prominently under the drawing. The kits should contain:

- Your news release
- A one-page background sheet on your afterschool program
- A one-page fact sheet on afterschool programs with data added on your state or community (adapt page 63 and 64)
- Copies of the remarks of the mayor or program director, or other speakers

They may also contain:

- Letters from parents, volunteers or students describing why they support the program
- A proclamation from your mayor or governor declaring October 21 "*Lights On Afterschool Day*" (See tips and sample language on page 36 and 37)
- Notable facts - for example, how has your program grown since its inception, how many students are on your waiting list, how many volunteers the program has, etc.
- A page describing your program's upcoming events

### Step Eight: Manage Media at Your Event

On October 21, set up a "media sign-in" table. It should be easily recognizable to reporters and be placed at the entrance to the room or area where your *Lights On Afterschool* event will take place. Assign a staff person or volunteer to be at the table throughout the event to assist journalists. Have a sign-in sheet with "name of reporter," "media outlet," "phone number" and "email" written in columns at the top. Each reporter who signs in should be given a press kit and verbal information about your rally. If something special is happening in half an hour, make sure to tell him/her that. Give each reporter a badge or nametag to wear so everyone at the event can easily identify press people. Do not be surprised if journalists (photographers and camera crews in particular) "take over the room" briefly by setting up special lights for cameras, clipping their microphones to the podium or putting tape recorders on the podium. Be prepared to help them, as long as their needs do not disrupt your event.

### Step Nine: Event Management

Don't let the story end on October 21. Make copies of any articles or broadcast stories about your *Lights On Afterschool* event that appear and circulate them to your board of directors, funders, parents, volunteers and policy makers at all levels. Assign people to monitor local TV news shows on October 22, 23 and 24, and tape any stories about your event. Keep those tapes to show at fundraisers, orientations or meetings you have in the future.

Stay in contact with reporters who attend your event or produce stories. Contact them in May or June to see if they'd be interested in doing an end-of-school-year follow-up on your afterschool program. Or have the students in your program create

a thank you card to send the week after *Lights On Afterschool* in appreciation for a good story. You might even contact the reporter to see if he or she would host a group of kids from your program, so they can see what it's like to work at a TV, radio or newspaper office. Maintaining that relationship after the event will help you the next time you are looking for publicity.

### Step Ten: Celebrate!

On October 22, be sure to collect clips from local newspapers. Then, relax. You mastered the fine art of media relations, and your afterschool program and the children you serve will benefit from your work. Congratulate yourself and your team on a job well done!

## Lights On Afterschool Media Plan & Timeline

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In order to maximize media coverage of your *Lights On Afterschool* event, it is wise to develop and follow a deliberate media outreach timeline. In the same way that preparing a budget forces you to develop a management plan for your afterschool program, a media outreach timeline will force you to develop—and if you're committed to getting attention—stick to a media plan.

Following is a sample media plan. Your plan will differ, of course, depending on how much outreach you are able to conduct and what outreach your event will support.

1. News release on the day of the event, given to reporters who attend, and faxed or emailed to reporters who don't attend;
2. Media kit on the day of the event, given to reporters who attend;
3. Media alert prior to the event, distributed to reporters in advance, for the purpose of enticing them to cover it;
4. Pitch letters to local radio and television talk shows, aimed at arranging an appearance for your spokesperson three to five days before the event;
5. A pitch letter to the editorial page editor of the largest local newspaper, aimed at arranging an editorial board meeting. The one-page letter should briefly describe why the issue is important to the newspaper's readers, list the afterschool participants you would bring to the proposed meeting (no more than four), and specifically request a meeting in a given date range;
6. Editorial memorandum to other newspapers in the area - a two- to three-page memorandum, to be distributed to editorial writers, making the case for an editorial about afterschool's importance to the community and calling for more funding from local, state and federal governments, as well as from the businesses and foundations, and others;
7. Save-the-date announcement about the event for broadcast and print calendars;
8. Radio public service announcements (PSAs) about the event;
9. A sample newsletter or web story for supporting organizations;
10. Opinion article (or guest editorial) to place in a local newspaper;
11. Pre- and post-event letters-to-the-editor for local newspaper(s); and
12. Post-event thank-you notes to media that cover your event.

## MEDIA TIMELINE

### Six Weeks Before the Event

- Draft and send pitch letter to editorial page editor of major daily newspaper requesting meeting with the newspaper's editorial board.
- Draft the script for a 60-second public service announcement (PSA) and distribute it to local radio stations. It should promote *Lights On Afterschool*, and should be written so that it can be read by stations' on-air talent (see sample).
- Draft and distribute a short article (see sample) promoting the event for the websites and newsletters of allied organizations.
- Draft and distribute a save-the-date announcement to be sent to newspaper calendar sections, as well as local television and radio calendar editors, promoting the event.

### Five Weeks Before the Event

- Draft and distribute a pitch letter to local television and radio talk show producers, including local cable access.
- Follow up pitch letter to editorial page editor with a phone call to "make sure the letter arrived," and to see if the editor has decided whether to meet with your group.

### Four Weeks Before the Event

- Distribute editorial memorandum to newspapers with which you're not able to schedule editorial board meetings. You might want to collaborate with other afterschool providers in the area.
- Follow up pitch letter to radio and television (including cable access) talk shows with phone calls.
- Meet with your "editorial board team" to prepare for the editorial board meeting.

### Three Weeks Before the Event

- Meet with editorial board of major local newspaper.

### Two Weeks Before the Event

- Draft and submit an opinion column to the major local newspaper or to several community newspapers.

### One Week Before the Event

- Draft and send unique letters-to-the-editor to local newspapers, promoting the event.
- Distribute media alert telling reporters of the event to arrive today.
- Begin radio and television interviews, leading up to the event.
- Begin assembling components of media kit, for distribution on the day of the event. The kit should include: a fact sheet about your program; a fact sheet

about *Lights On Afterschool* (see sample); a fact sheet about afterschool (see sample); your news release about your event; a copy of any proclamations from the governor, mayor, council or school board; a brochure or other promotional material about your program; copies of prepared remarks by your speakers; information on how to enroll students in the program; a list of upcoming afterschool events if there are any; and letters from parents, volunteers or students describing why they support the program.

#### Two Days Before the Event

- Distribute updated media alert to arrive today. Update with new information about who will attend or speak, and any other last-minute changes of consequence.
- Call local media to “pitch” them on attending the event.

#### Day of the Event

- Distribute news release and media kit by hand to reporters who attend; and
- Distribute news release by fax or email to local reporters who do not attend.

#### Day After the Event

- Draft and mail a letter-to-the-editor to newspapers, responding to their coverage, or lack of coverage, of *Lights On Afterschool*.
- Send a short email of appreciation to anyone who wrote or broadcast about the event.

## *Lights On Afterschool* as a Fundraiser

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*Lights On Afterschool* presents a great opportunity to raise money for your program or organization. Your event can offer sponsors valuable exposure to the media, to families and to current and potential customers. It also gives sponsors a chance to show that they care about the community - a trait that directly translates into consumers' likelihood to purchase their products. We've created a couple tools and tips to help you maximize *Lights On Afterschool* funding opportunities.

### 10 Tips for Getting (and Keeping) Sponsors

- 1. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK!!**  
The #1 reason why groups or businesses don't participate and give \$\$ is that no one ASKED them. 9 out of 10 groups you approach may say "no" but it is that one "yes" that counts!!
- 2. DON'T BE DISCOURAGED BY A "NO"**  
Play detective and investigate if "no" means "not right now". This could be an opportunity to start building a relationship with a potential funder to find out more about their philanthropic objectives, policies, and the key gatekeepers with whom you need to stay in touch.
- 3. "PITCH" TO THE BOTTOM LINE**  
When compiling your sponsorship levels, remember you are not just asking the sponsor to cover the cost of your event's budgeted items such as t-shirts, banners etc. Rather, you are selling a sponsorship package that is worth much more - a direct affiliation with the community; the greatest and most in-demand resource for a corporate sponsor. When possible, specify the projected number of attendees and emphasize the anticipated number and types of impressions that the sponsorship will achieve for the sponsor. For example, if your event draws 500 participants, the sponsor can anticipate 500 impressions by placing its logos on the event programs.
- 4. PLAN AHEAD**  
Most businesses and groups have a finite grants/sponsorship budget that they distribute according to a set giving cycle. You should also remember that your organization is most likely competing with other organizations for those funds. It pays to plan ahead before your *Lights on Afterschool* event will take place to confirm the potential sponsor's giving cycle in order to meet the set deadlines.
- 5. BAND TOGETHER**  
*Lights On Afterschool* is a great opportunity to team up with other local organizations to compete for sponsorships or grants. This team approach will benefit both you and the sponsor: lower costs for maximum exposure.

6. **WHAT'S IN A NAME**  
Attract potential sponsors with creative media-savvy ways to publicize a partnership with your organization and to increase the number of impressions for the sponsors. See our list of 32 Ways to Give Sponsors Exposure at your *Lights On Afterschool* Event for ideas (page 48 and 49).
7. **DO THE LEG WORK**  
Offer to do the leg-work to generate media i.e. press release for print, radio and TV to publicize your sponsor's role. Visit the Afterschool Alliance's website for media outreach tools at:  
<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaMediaMain.cfm>
8. **DON'T FORGET YOUR THANK YOUS**  
Be sure to personalize your thank yous! For example, instead of just sending a thank you card, create an "afterschool champion" award ceremony to honor your sponsor's corporate citizenship and include your organization's children in the ceremony to present the award. Another example of making the thank you more meaningful is by having the children create their own thank you cards for the sponsor.
9. **ALWAYS STAY IN TOUCH**  
Be sure to keep the door open for future asks by sending your sponsor periodic updates on your organization.
10. **ASK AGAIN!**

## 32 Ways to Give Sponsors Exposure at your *Lights On Afterschool* Event

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1. Print sponsor's name on all clothing (i.e. on the back of t-shirts).
2. Print sponsor's name on invitations and event materials. You can use a self inking stamp on your invitations.
3. Print sponsor's names on all promotional material i.e. save the date cards, entry or registration forms, posters, tickets, etc.
4. Include displays encouraging attendees to support or frequent the sponsor's business.
5. Print sponsor's logos on banners and podium signs.
6. Set up tables for sponsor's product samples/materials at your event.
7. Give the sponsor the opportunity to distribute coupons for products.
8. Lend sponsors time at the podium to talk about their company's commitment to afterschool.
9. Distribute sponsor's advertising materials to participants as inserts in programs or newsletters.
10. If hosting a reception, offer the sponsor the opportunity to name a table.
11. Display sponsor's logo on your organization's website.
12. Add a hotlink from your organization's web pages to the sponsor's website.
13. Include photos of participants, staff etc. wearing sponsors' logo in media packets.
14. Include sponsor's name in an advertisement in your local or community newspaper inviting the community to join you both for *Lights On Afterschool*.
15. Display a poster or flier about the event with sponsor's logos on bulletin boards in your organizations' entry way or offices.
16. Print sponsor's logos on event giveaways such as cups, medals and ribbons - or let the company produce them and hand them out.
17. Print sponsor's logos on name badges.
18. Promote sponsor's name and products on the PA system during the event.

19. Lend sponsors use of photos of the event for their own publications and promotions.
20. Include sponsor's name or logo in your organization's newsletter article about the event.
21. Set sponsorship levels whereby sponsors at higher levels have additional, distinct benefits and visibility.
22. For high levels of giving, offer a sponsor category exclusivity guaranteeing that you will not recruit any of their competitors as sponsors.
23. Adapt any of the ideas here as part of long-term sponsorship package that launches at Lights On and is carried out for the next year via visibility in your publications, on your web site, or at events.
24. Develop an awards ceremony as part of your event, and honor the company for its leadership. Issue a press release about the award, and be sure to send a picture of the company rep receiving the award to your local papers.
25. Include a number of tickets or seats at tables for your *Lights On Afterschool* event as part of sponsorship package.
26. Acknowledge the sponsor in all media materials—media advisory and press releases—about the event.
27. For higher donors or “Presenting Sponsors” of the event, include a quote from the company in your news release.
28. Develop a way for the company's product to be used at your event.
29. Give sponsor products, coupons or discounts away as a door prize to give the product exposure in the community.
30. Bring your sponsor up on stage and present with a giant thank you card decorated by children; be sure to get a photo for your publications, web site and to send local media.
31. Make a sponsor's contribution to your program the focus of your event or program, and in a news release.
32. Members of your organization can participate in the sponsor's own promotional activities i.e. the sponsor can feature the youth and parents served by your afterschool program as “special guests” at company board meetings, and other appropriate events to profile their community giving.

## Sample Materials, Fact Sheets and *Lights On Afterschool* Order Form

Sample Cover Letter to Send with Light Bulb Artwork (page 52)

Light Bulb Artwork (page 53-55)

Sample Media Alert (page 56)

Sample News Release (page 57-58)

Sample Radio Announcer Copy (page 59)

Sample Newsletter Text (page 60)

Sample Calendar Announcement (page 61)

*Lights On Afterschool* Fact Sheet (page 62)

Afterschool Fact Sheet (page 63)

Sample News Release for NSO's (page 64-65)

Sample Electronic Invitation - (page 66)

*Lights On Afterschool* Order Form - Button, Awareness Bracelets and More! (page 67)

*Lights On Afterschool* Color-On Promo item information (page 68)

## Sample Cover Letter to Send with Light Bulbs

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[Insert Address - Visit (<http://capwiz.com/afterschool/home/>)  
to obtain your member's district office address  
DO NOT SEND TO WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE]

Dear [Insert Member of Congress],

On October [Insert Date of *Lights On Afterschool* event], we celebrated *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide event recognizing the critical need for quality afterschool programs. We are enclosing light bulbs that were decorated by youth and families participating in our program. We hope that these light bulbs will serve as a reminder of the importance of afterschool programs like ours - programs that keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families.

In addition to our local event, more than 7,500 programs participated in *Lights On Afterschool* this October; all seeking to illustrate the benefits of afterschool programs and the pressing need for additional programs. Unfortunately, 15.1 million children in this country have no safe, supervised place to go when the school day ends.

At [Insert Afterschool Program], we are a [Insert one-paragraph program description including details about sites, kids served, any evaluation findings, etc. Be sure to mention if you receive federal funding like 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC or CCDBG]

Afterschool programs are critical to our kids' development, and are necessary to help keep our communities safe and our kids safer, stronger and smarter. Please continue to 'help keep the lights on' after school and help us serve the children and families of [Insert City/Town Name].

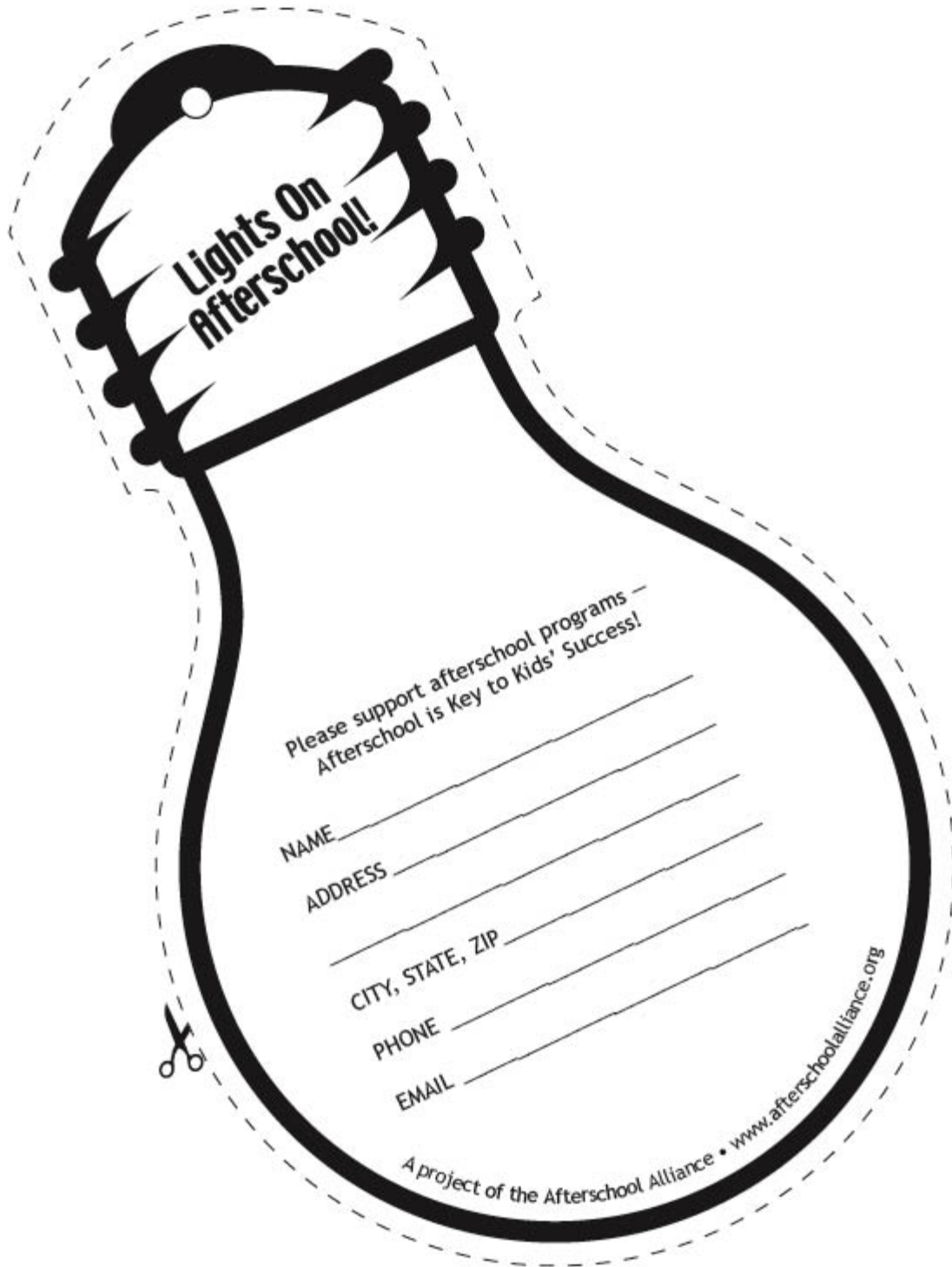
Sincerely,

[Insert Name]  
[Insert Organization]

# Light Bulb Artwork

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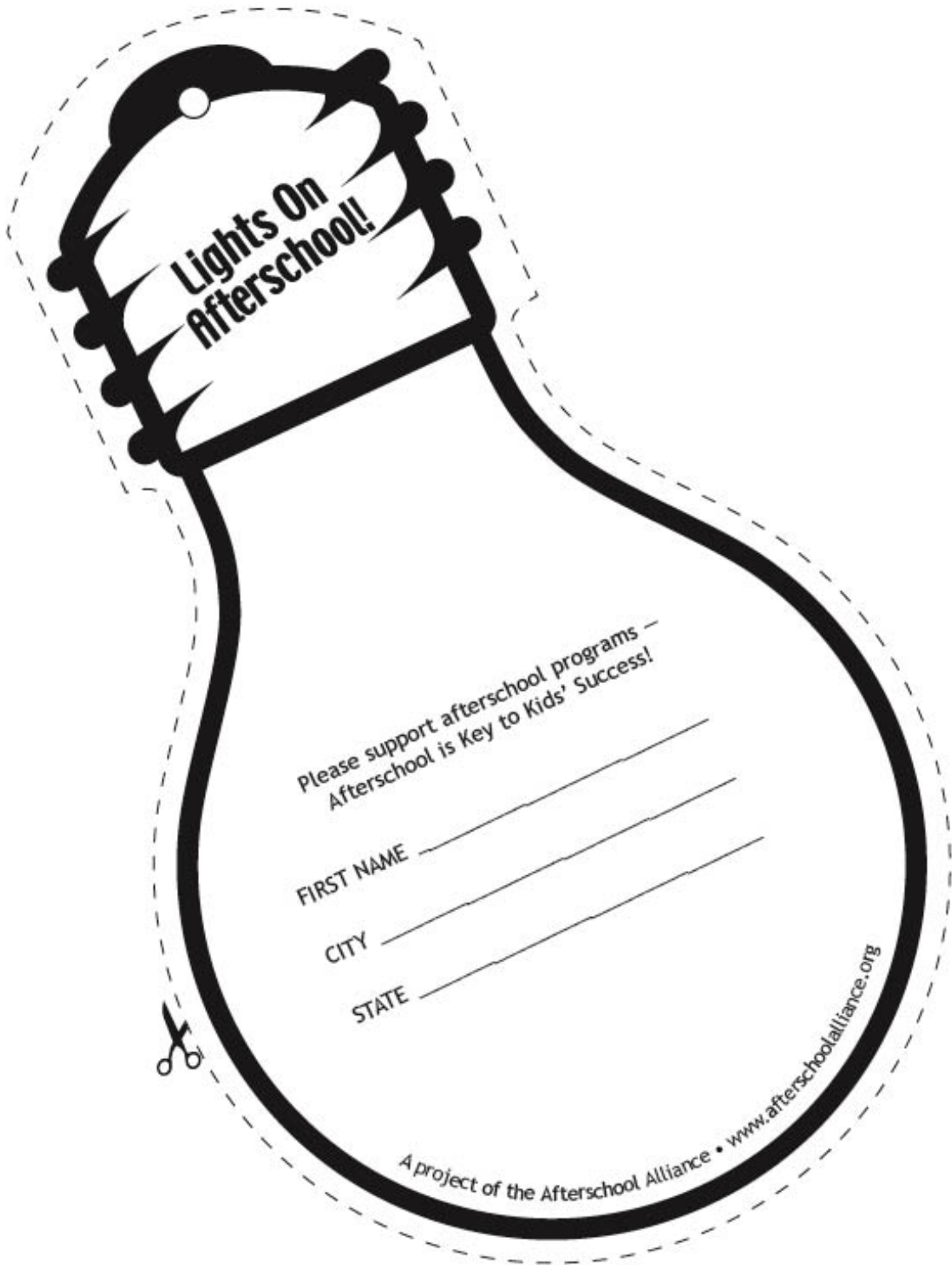
Version 1.



# Light Bulb Artwork

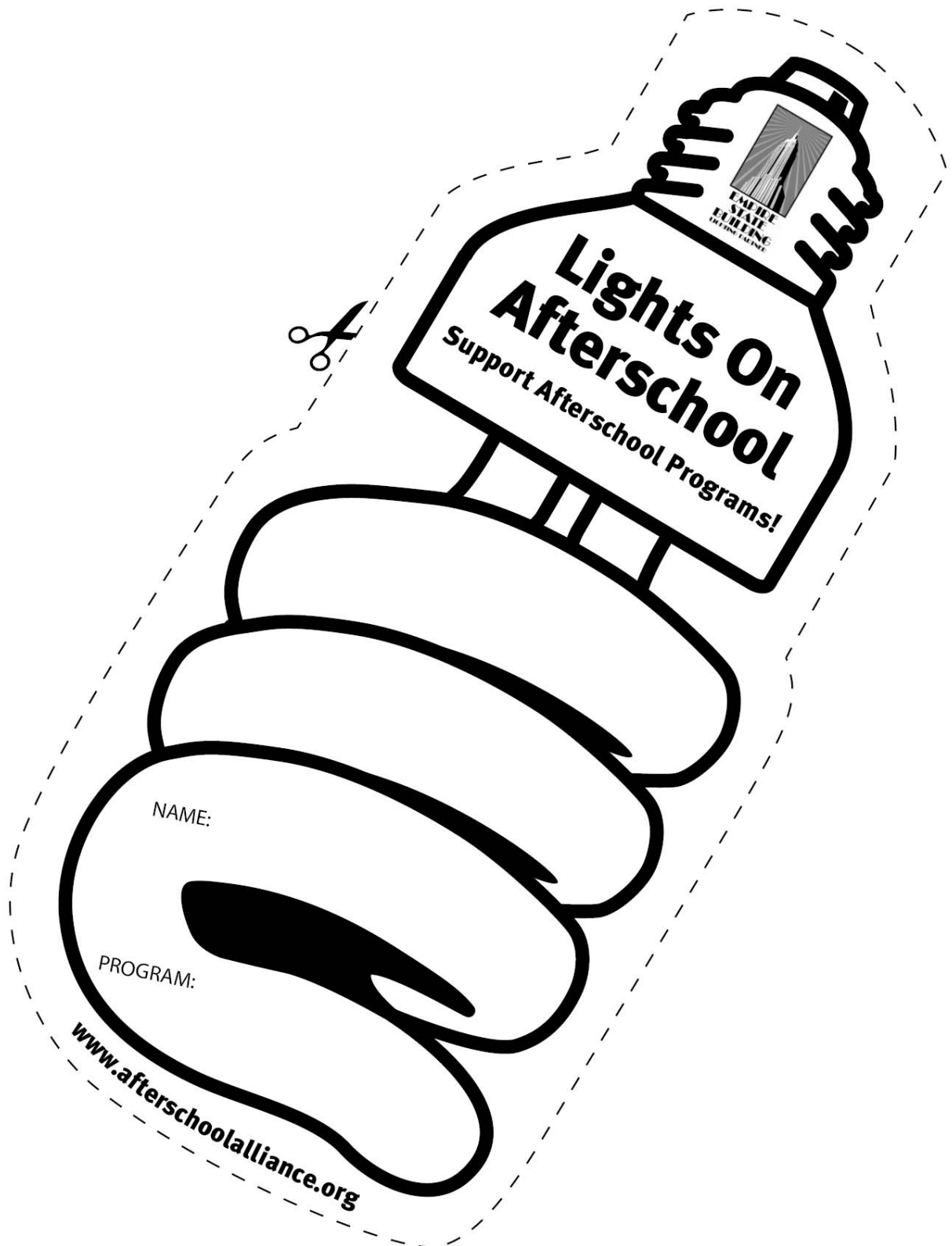
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Version 2. Use this version with children when privacy concerns arrive



# Energy Efficient Light Bulb Artwork

Use the new energy efficient light bulb artwork when planning a 'green' *Lights On Afterschool* Event.



# Sample Media Alert

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*(on your letterhead)*

## MEDIA ALERT

October XXX, 2010

Contact: [your program/rally contact]  
[daytime phone number] (day)  
[evening phone number] (eve.)

[Your program name] to Hold *Lights On Afterschool* Rally October 21

*7,500 Rallies Nationwide Aim to Make Afterschool Programs Available to All*

The [your program name] Afterschool Program will sponsor a *Lights On Afterschool* rally on Thursday, October 21 at 3 pm. The rally will be one of more than 7,500 such events around the nation that day, the ninth annual *Lights On Afterschool* celebration, organized by the Afterschool Alliance. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair, a position he has held since 2001. Speakers in [your city/town] will call for expanding afterschool opportunities so that every child who needs a program has access to one, and discuss the harm that results from budget cuts and freezes.

Participants in the *Lights On Afterschool* rally include Mayor [your mayor], School Board Chair [your school board chair], as well as local business leaders, educators and other officials. The event will highlight three of the significant contributions that afterschool programs make to [your city/town/district]: keeping kids safe and healthy, inspiring them to learn, and relieving working parents of worries about their children's activities during the afternoon hours. Hundreds of parents, supporters and community members are expected to attend.

- What: [your program or city name] *Lights On Afterschool* Rally
- When: 3 p.m., October 21, 2010
- Where: [location, address]
- Who: Mayor [your mayor's name], School Board Chair [your school board chair], local business leaders, parents and supporters of afterschool

For more information or to arrange interviews with speakers, contact [your program/rally contact] at [daytime phone number].

[Amend the following section to the specifics of your program]

The [your program name] opened in [year opened] with a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant from the U.S. Department of Education. It now serves 250 children, providing homework assistance, mentoring, tutoring, and classes and clubs in sports, recreation, mathematics, chess, and dozens of other subjects. The program is a collaboration between the school system, YMCA, Museum of Arts and Sciences and three local colleges.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information on *Lights On Afterschool* is available at [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org).

###



[add event specifics, similar to the following]

Activities at the [your city] rally included student art and science displays; instrumental, singing and dance performances; and remarks by Mayor [your mayor], School Board Chair [your school board chair], local business leaders, 6th-grader [add appropriate student grade, name], educators and other community leaders.

[Add specific quotes, names, similar to the following]

“We are all very proud of our afterschool students,” said program director [your program director]. “There’s no reason that learning should stop at 3 p.m., particularly if the alternative is unsupervised time in front of a television set, or any of the dangerous or unhealthy behaviors that can ensnare children in the afternoons. Like so many other afterschool programs around the nation, ours is supported by funding from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, which is now marking its tenth anniversary year. Over the past decade, it has provided funding to allow millions of children to attend afterschool. However it is today woefully underfunded, so all who care about afterschool need to show their support for full funding for the 21st Century initiative.”

[Add your program specifics]

The [your city] Afterschool Program opened in 1999 with a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant from the U.S. Department of Education. It now serves 250 children, providing homework assistance, mentoring, tutoring, and classes and clubs in sports, recreation, mathematics, chess, and dozens of other subjects. The program is a collaboration of the school system, YMCA, Museum of Arts and Sciences and three local colleges.

*Lights On Afterschool* is a nationwide event to recognize the critical importance of quality afterschool programs in the lives of children, their families and communities. It is a project of the Afterschool Alliance - a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensuring that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information on the Alliance and *Lights On Afterschool* is available at [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org).

# # #

## Sample Radio Announcer Copy

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Take this Public Service Announcement (PSA) to your radio stations and ask if they will read it on the air to let the community know about your *Lights On Afterschool* event. Edit the text as needed.

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### Afterschool Programs - Live Announcer Copy: 60

If you could give a child a safe place to go after school, would you? What about helping kids get better grades and go on to college? Or giving them time to explore new worlds and discover hidden talents?

You can help—we all can—by showing support for afterschool programs in [insert your town]. Attend a *Lights On Afterschool* event October 21 in your community.

In America today, 15.1 million children are alone after school. [Replace this national figure with data about your state from the [America After 3PM Study](#), see Research at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)].

Help give them a place to go.

Log on to [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org) to find the *Lights On Afterschool* event in your community. October 21. That's Thursday. Mark it down and look it up at [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org).

A public service message from the Ad Council, the Afterschool Alliance, the Mott Foundation and this station.

## Sample Newsletter Text

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*Participate in Lights On Afterschool!*  
October 21, 2010

Join more than 7,500 communities and 1 million Americans in celebrating afterschool programs at the Afterschool Alliance's 10<sup>th</sup> annual *Lights On Afterschool!* This nationwide event calls attention to the importance of afterschool programs and the resources required to keep the lights on and the doors open. [ORGANIZATION] is proud to be a *Lights On Afterschool* National Supporting Organization.

Too many children—15.1 million—are missing out on afterschool opportunities. Participate in *Lights On Afterschool* and help call attention to this important issue.

To learn more about *Lights On Afterschool*, register an event, access Event Planning Tools, or find out what is going on in your area on October 21, visit ([afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org)). Those who register will be receive free posters, and their events will be promoted to media and the public. *Lights On Afterschool* is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to afterschool programs.

## Sample Calendar Announcement

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Send a Calendar Announcement to the Calendar Editor at print and broadcast outlets, including newspaper calendar sections, local television, cable and radio calendar editors, promoting the event. To identify the Calendar Editor, call the outlet and ask for the name and contact information for the calendar editor. If you are doing a hard copy mailing, you can just address the envelope to “Calendar Editor” at the particular outlet and mail it. Typically, media outlets run monthly calendars, so they need to get information on your event as soon as possible.

September 3, 2010

CONTACT: [Your Name]  
[Your phone number]

*Calendar Announcement:*

Lights On Afterschool Rally, October 21

*[Location]*

[Name of your program] will join with the Afterschool Alliance in this year’s *Lights On Afterschool*, a nationwide series of rallies in support of afterschool programs, on October 21. In all, one million Americans are expected to gather at events across the country to draw attention to the need for more afterschool programs.

[Name of program]’s *Lights On Afterschool* event will be at [location] from [time]. [Brief description of event and activities - outdoor carnival, open house, dinner, sports competition, etc.]. Special guests include [mayor, school superintendent, local celebrity, etc.]. [Name of program] currently serves [number] youth in [your community/the school’s neighborhood] providing them a safe place to go after the school day ends.

[All community members] are invited to attend. For further information about the event, please contact [your name] at [your phone/email address]. For more information about *Lights On Afterschool* or about afterschool programs in general, visit [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org).

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning. According to data from the Afterschool Alliance, 15.1 million children are without adult supervision in the afternoon hours.

## *Lights On Afterschool* Fact Sheet

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*Lights On Afterschool* is celebrated nationwide to call attention to the importance of afterschool programs for America's children, families and communities.

In America today 15.1 million children are alone and unsupervised after school. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning. They provide opportunities to help young people develop into successful adults.

*Lights On Afterschool* was launched in October 2000 with celebrations in more than 1,200 communities nationwide. The event grew in 2001 to more than 3,600 events, and more than 7,500 in 2009. This October, more than 1 million Americans will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool!*

*Lights On Afterschool* is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to quality, affordable afterschool programs. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

The Afterschool Alliance salutes the many *Lights On Afterschool* partners and programs who make this event a success, in particular the After-School All-Stars, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H Afterschool, Junior Achievement, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Young Rembrandts, and the YMCA of the USA.

# Afterschool Fact Sheet

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NOTE: Adapt this fact sheet to your state and community. For state data, go to <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchAmerica3PM.cfm>

## The Afterschool Hours in America

- More than 15 million school-age children (26 percent) are on their own after school. Among them are more than 1 million are in grades K to 5. (Afterschool Alliance, 2009)
- The parents of more than 28 million school-age children work outside the home. (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998)
- Only 8.4 million K-12 children (15 percent) participate in afterschool programs. An additional 18.5 million would participate if a quality program were available in their community. (Afterschool Alliance, 2009)
- The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex. (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2002)
- Nine in 10 Americans want all children and teens to have some type of organized activity or safe place to go after school. (Afterschool Alliance & Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates Inc., 2004)
- Over three-quarters of Americans (76 percent) agree that members of Congress, state and local elected officials should increase funding for afterschool programs. (Afterschool Alliance & Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates, Inc., 2008)
- Currently, the federal government contributes only 11 percent of the cost of afterschool, while 29 percent of the children in afterschool meet the federal government's definition of low-income and in need of federal assistance. (Afterschool Alliance, 2009)

## Afterschool Programs Benefit Youth, Families & Communities

- Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and are more likely to drink, smoke and engage in sexual activity. (YMCA of the USA, March 2001)
- Early childhood education expert James Heckman concludes that a compliment of early education and participation in afterschool programs can reduce initiating drug use among youth by nearly 50 percent (45.8) while reducing the likelihood of them skipping school by half. (Investing in Our Young People, University of Chicago, 2006)
- An analysis of 73 afterschool studies concluded that afterschool programs using evidence-based approaches were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for youth, including improvements in children's personal, social and academic skills, as well as their self-esteem. (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007)
- Children in LA's BEST afterschool program attend school more often and report higher aspirations for finishing school and going to college. LA's BEST participants are 20 percent less likely to drop out and are 30 percent less likely to participate in criminal activities. Researchers estimate that every dollar invested in the LA's BEST program saves the city \$2.50 in crime-related costs. (UCLA National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing, June 2000, December 2005 and September 2007)
- The Promising Afterschool Programs Study found that regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students. (University of California at Irvine, 2007)
- Parents miss an average of eight days of work per year due to a lack of afterschool care. Decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about after school care costs businesses up to \$300 billion per year. (Community, Families and Work Program at Brandeis University, 2004; Catalyst & Brandeis University, December 2006)
- Students in programs supported by The After-School Corporation improved their math scores and regular school day attendance compared to non-participants. High school participants passed more Regents exams and earned more high school credits than non-participants. (Policy Studies Associates, July 2004)
- Participants in Citizen Schools' afterschool programs are much more likely to go on to high-quality high schools compared to non-participants (59 percent vs. 28 percent). Former Citizen Schools participants were also significantly more likely to graduate from high school in four years when compared to Boston Public Schools students overall. (Policy Studies Associates, July 2009)

# Sample News Release for National Supporting Organizations

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[Partner Letterhead]

NEWS RELEASE  
October XXX, 2010

[Phone

CONTACT: [Name]  
]

[Organization] Joins *Lights On Afterschool*

[Youth/Family/Education Leader] Becomes a National Supporting Organization, Joining the Afterschool Alliance in Sponsoring Thousands of Afterschool Rallies on October 21

[Dateline] -- [Spokesperson] of [organization] today announced that the [organization] will partner with the Afterschool Alliance and dozens of other national organizations on October 21 in organizing more than 7,500 rallies around the country in support of afterschool programs. The tenth annual *Lights On Afterschool* will be the largest nationwide rally for afterschool ever held.

“We are delighted to join these rallies, which are sending a powerful message about the urgent need for more afterschool programs,” said [spokesperson]. “We’ve arrived at a critical juncture. The unmet need for afterschool programs is enormous, and funding is tight. Too many afterschool programs have been forced to cut back hours or services, or close entirely, because of inadequate budgets at the federal, state and local levels. With *Lights On Afterschool*, Americans are saying they want the lights on after school for our kids.”

Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant welcomed [organization]’s support. “We’re grateful to be partnering with [organization]. They have a proven track record of [providing afterschool services/supporting afterschool programs], and they make *Lights On Afterschool* even stronger. We share with [organization] the conviction that afterschool programs are essential because they inspire children to learn, keep them safe, and help working families. On October 21, we’ll join together with thousands of other organizations and more than a million Americans in speaking out for afterschool programs.”

Still, funding has not kept up with demand, and more than 15 million children are alone and supervised after the school days ends.

more

Add One

*Lights On Afterschool* was launched in October 2000 with celebrations in more than 1,200 communities nationwide. The event grew in 2001 to more than 3,600 events, and more than 7,500 in 2008. This October 2010, more than one million Americans will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* across the United States and at military bases around the world.

[Add paragraph about what form your organization's partnership will take - how many events, affiliates, children served, etc.]

[Insert boilerplate description of your organization]

*Lights On Afterschool* is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, 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).

## Creating an E-Invitation

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Now that you've planned your *Lights On Afterschool* event, it's time to start creating invitations to send to people you would like to have attend. Sending your invitation via email gives you the advantage of tracking who you have invited, who has RSVP, and who you will need to follow up with. This will also give you a chance to personalize your invitation with information about your program - where it's located, how many children are being served, activities provided, etc.

Using an electronic invitation service such as EVITE.com will help in these matters. EVITE.com allows you to select a pre-designed e-vite or you can create your own and it's FREE! By uploading graphic artwork and logos from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaLogos.cfm>, you can customize your invitation and include artwork that is relevant to the cause of your event - to keep the lights on for afterschool! You can also use pictures taken by youth during the program, artwork that has been drawn by youth or pictures of the youth themselves (must be either a .JPG or .GIF maximum 500 KB).

### Steps to Personalizing your e-invitation through EVITE.com

- Visit [www.evite.com](http://www.evite.com) to get started creating your invitation
- Choose a design. Design your own invitation or choose from a list of designs created by evite.com. If designing your own, choose a background or upload your own from your computer.
- Upload your main image - lights on graphic artwork, pictures from your program, your logo, etc. (must be either a .JPG or .GIF maximum 500 KB)
- Choose the colors of your text, event title, headers and reply boxes
- Enter Details. Enter the event title, location, time, and host name (your program name). Be sure to include a message about your event, such as, what activities are planned, sponsor thank you, what keynote speakers or prominent individuals have been invited. Preview your invitation to make sure all information is correct.
- Add Guest. Create your guest list by importing your contacts list from your address book or by inserting email addresses in the space provided. Be sure to choose your reply style in order for your guest to select the correct response to your evite. When your guests reply, their responses will be grouped under the headers yes, no and maybe. You can customize these headers by choosing a reply style offered by Evite or by creating your own. There is a 750 guest maximum.
- Email Messages to Guest. Evite will automatically send an email to your list of contacts to alert them about the invitation and also provide a link to view the invitation. This alert will include the event title, the main image and a message that you create about the event.
- Register with Evite and check your guest list often. Make sure to log into your evite.com invitation often to track who has responded and who needs a follow up call. With evite.com, you will also be able to send reminders to invited guests about the event and invite more people.

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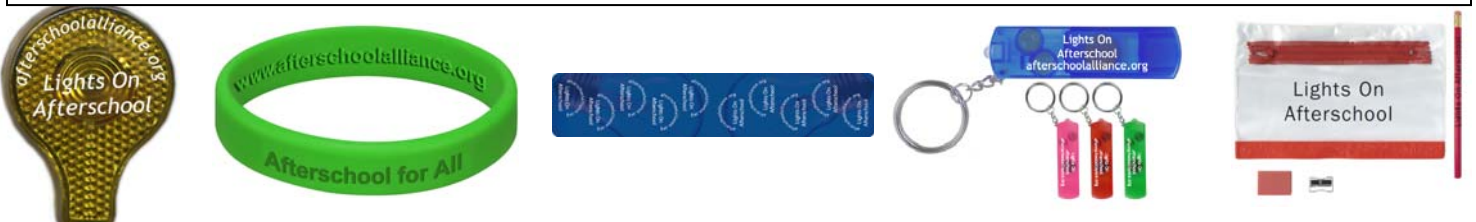
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## LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL 2010 PURCHASE ORDER FORM

Purchase Order Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (if required)      Order Date: \_\_\_\_\_      Delivery Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_      Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<u><b>BILLING ADDRESS</b></u>		<u><b>SHIPPING ADDRESS</b></u>	
Organization _____		Organization _____	
Address _____		Address _____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
Contact _____		Attn _____	
Phone# _____		Fax# _____	
Email Address: _____			



ITEM	COST					ORDER QUANTITY
<b>Flashing Strobe Button</b> <i>Yellow ONLY</i> <b>Order Deadline: 10/11/2010</b>	<b>100</b> \$1.32	<b>250</b> \$1.20	<b>500</b> \$1.07	<b>1000</b> \$0.99	<b>2500</b> \$0.94	Minimum 100
<b>Awareness Bracelet</b> <i>Lime Green</i> <b>Order Deadline: 09/24/2010</b>	<b>100</b> \$0.86	<b>250</b> \$0.77	<b>500</b> \$0.58	<b>1000</b> \$0.44	<b>2500</b> \$0.33	Minimum 100
<b>Magnetic Bookmark</b> <i>Blue ONLY</i> <b>Order Deadline: 10/04/2010</b>		<b>250</b> \$0.40	<b>500</b> \$0.30	<b>1000</b> \$0.28	<b>2500</b> \$0.27	Minimum 250
<b>Keylight with Whistle and Compass</b> <i>Choice of Color -OR- Assorted Colors</i> <b>Order Deadline: 10/04/2010</b>		<b>250</b> \$0.93	<b>500</b> \$0.82	<b>1000</b> \$0.72	<b>2500</b> \$0.64	Minimum 250
<b>Back To School Pencil Bag</b> <i>Red ONLY</i> <b>Order Deadline: 10/04/2010</b>		<b>250</b> \$1.40	<b>500</b> \$1.28	<b>1000</b> \$1.19	<b>2500</b> \$1.09	Minimum 250

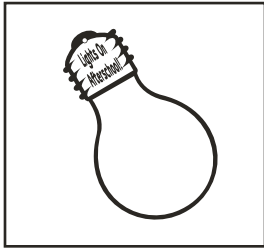
**Rush charges may apply to orders placed after the above deadline dates.**



Mach III, Inc. 1701 S. Eisenhower Avenue Mason City, IA 50401

(641) 424-1511 Toll Free - 800-247-5988 FAX (641) 423-7843

CONTACT - C.Q. Tefft II Email: cq@mach3ww.com



ITEM # ORIGINAL Lights On! Light Bulb  
Image size is 7 1/2" X 8 1/2"

ITEM # ECO Lights On! Light Bulb  
Image size is 7 1/2" X 8 1/2"

**COLOR-ONS PRICING**

- 25 Pieces = \$4.25 Ea.
- 50 Pieces = \$3.25 Ea.
- 100 Pieces = \$2.25 Ea.
- 500 Pieces = \$1.50 Ea.
- 1,000 Pieces = \$1.25 Ea.
- 2,500 Pieces = \$1.00 Ea.

**(ADD . 25 ea. for Glow-In-The-Dark!)**

**Glow-in-the-dark!**



Add Glow-in-the-dark for only 25 cents more per design.

ITEM NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

QUANTITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
(25 MINIMUM)

PRICE: \_\_\_\_\_

SUB TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

TAX \_\_\_\_\_  
(for Iowa orders ADD 7%)

TOTAL PRICE: \_\_\_\_\_

(Shipping is billed for and added to invoice)

**SHIP ADDRESS:**

Company/Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Attention: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Ship Via (Standard Shipping is ground) \_\_\_\_\_

P.O.# \_\_\_\_\_ Ordered By \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT METHOD**

MasterCard    Visa

American Express

3 Digit Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ ORDER DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ DELIVERY DATE \_\_\_\_\_

To receive via Ground by October 21st, orders must be placed by October 1, 2010.

Rush orders may be placed after October 1st with rush charge incurred.