



NEWS RELEASE  
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CONTACT: [Gretchen Wright](mailto:Gretchen.Wright@afterschoolalliance.org)  
202/371-1999

## **A Million People Rally Today to Keep the Lights On After School**

### ***15<sup>th</sup> Annual Rally for Afterschool Programs Includes 8,000 Events Across the Nation***

On the heels of a major new study that found that, despite rapid growth in afterschool participation, one in five children in the United States is unsupervised in the afternoons, students, parents, educators, community leaders, policy makers, business leaders and others rallied for afterschool programs today as part of the 15<sup>th</sup> annual [Lights On Afterschool](#). The only nationwide rally for afterschool programs includes more than 8,000 events in every corner of the country, and at U.S. military bases worldwide. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance to highlight the many ways quality afterschool programs support children, families and communities.

Based on a household survey of more than 30,000 U.S. families, the new [America After 3PM](#) study found huge unmet demand for afterschool programs; the parents of 19.4 million students said they would enroll their child, if an afterschool program were available. In response, in classrooms, community centers, science museums, parks and recreation centers, malls and other settings, more than one million people are coming together today to celebrate and support the quality afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

At today's events, students, their families and guests are conducting science experiments, providing community service, performing original music and dance, joining sports tournaments, creating computer animation, planting community gardens, learning about the environment, and sending the message that millions more children need quality afterschool programs. As a part of the celebration, the Empire State Building in New York City will be lit up in yellow this evening for the eighth year in row. The governors of 49 states and the mayor of the District of Columbia issued proclamations or letters declaring today *Lights On Afterschool Day*, and the United States Senate passed a bipartisan resolution supporting *Lights On Afterschool*.

*"Lights On Afterschool* events give children and youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more students need quality afterschool programs," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Our many partners, including Bright House Networks, the Empire State Building, Mozilla, Healthy Kids Out of School, the Maker Education Initiative, Nickelodeon, the Association of Science-Technology Centers, the Alliance for Excellent Education, and dozens of others are helping us spotlight the fun, educational, hands-on learning activities that quality afterschool programs offer children each afternoon. We need much more support from government at all levels, business, philanthropy and other sectors if we are to make afterschool programs available to all students."

Among the *Lights On Afterschool* events set for today:

- ✓ Students from eight afterschool programs in **Anchorage, Alaska** are exploring the Anchorage Museum and its Imaginarium Science Center. The Woodland Park Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year, Emily Brown, will speak about why afterschool programs matter. U.S. Senator Lisa Murkoswki and U.S. Rep. Don Young are scheduled to attend.
- ✓ Third and fourth grade students at the HSCSD #1 Program in **Hot Springs, Arkansas** are conducting experiments that involve science, technology, engineering, arts and math. Then they will launch paper lanterns to “light up the sky for afterschool” at the Ralph Witters Elementary School.
- ✓ More than 30 afterschool programs in **Oakland, California** are hosting *Lights On Afterschool* open houses. The school district has partnered with Alameda County Public Health to emphasize health and wellness and the county is providing cookbooks in English and Spanish, and family friendly physical activity guides. Many open houses will feature student performances, team-building exercises, poetry readings, talent showcases, cultural dances, sports competitions and more.
- ✓ Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation and Live Healthy Gwinnett, in partnership with JM Tull Y, Kidspllosion, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Gwinnett Public Library, Gwinnett 4–H and Health and Human Services, is hosting “A Walk Among the Stars *Lights On Afterschool*” at Alexander Park in **Lawrenceville Georgia**. The Hollywood-themed event will include marital arts with ninjas from “The Lego Movie,” a Zumba party, and a walk around the park under the stars.
- ✓ In **New Orleans, Louisiana**, a partnership of Young Audiences of Louisiana, NORDC and the City of New Orleans is hosting a mega carnival across from City Hall in Duncan Plaza. The event will feature spacewalks, a rock climbing wall and other family-friendly activities. The Carl LeBlanc Band will perform at City Hall during the event.
- ✓ Voices for Ohio’s Children is hosting a *Lights On Afterschool* rally at the statehouse in **Columbus, Ohio**. Afterschool providers, students, families and youth advocates will meet with legislators and there will be student performances.
- ✓ This week the Irving Recreation Center in **Norman, Oklahoma** is hosting “Try It Week” for *Lights On Afterschool*. Youth throughout Norman will participate in Irving’s afterschool classes, without charge. Activities include ballet, jazz dance, flamenco dancing and creative basketball dribbling.
- ✓ Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time in **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** is hosting a *Lights On Afterschool* celebration at the Carnegie Museum of Art and Natural History. The event will feature student performances, hands-on learning opportunities for youth, and more. More than 500 participants are expected.

- ✓ The Greater Houston *Lights On Afterschool* Alliance is hosting a celebration of afterschool accomplishments at City Hall in **Houston, Texas**. Houston City Council Member Richard Nguyen will speak and CASE for Kids director Lisa Thompson Caruthers will serve as emcee.

This year Mozilla and the Afterschool Alliance teamed up to create the *Lights On Afterschool Webmaker Challenge* – a simple, fun activity to help afterschool programs develop students’ digital literacy skills. For the *Lights On Afterschool Webmaker Challenge*, students designed their own digital posters, using Mozilla’s free Webmaker platform.

Bright House Networks is sponsoring a *Lights On Afterschool* [Facebook Photo Contest](#) through which afterschool programs can win up to \$2,000.

For a complete list of national *Lights On Afterschool* partners, please visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaNatPartners.cfm>.

Several hundred *Lights On Afterschool* event descriptions are [here](#) . To find an event in your community, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

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