



NEWS RELEASE
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San Juan County, New Mexico Student Wins National ‘Lights On Afterschool’ Poster Contest

The [poster](#) to promote *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs, was designed this year by 16-year-old Ashley Parker, who attends the [Blended Zine](#) afterschool program at the Farmington Public Library in Farmington, New Mexico. Parker’s vibrant, colorful poster features a Broadway-style *Lights On Afterschool* sign with doodled patterns around it.

An aspiring artist, Parker made the art for the poster in Blended Zine, which publishes a literature and art magazine, *Blended*, for teens and by teens in San Juan County. She has participated in the afterschool program for two years. The Afterschool Alliance chose her artwork from hundreds of submissions and it is featured on the official 2014 *Lights On Afterschool* poster, to be displayed at rallies and events on and around October 23rd.

This will be the 15th annual *Lights On Afterschool*; it will include thousands of events around the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide that give youth a chance to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more children and youth need quality afterschool programs.

“We are so proud of Ashley,” said Flo Trujillo, youth services coordinator at the Farmington Public Library and an Afterschool Ambassador for the Afterschool Alliance. “Ashley was also a recent Teen Choice winner for Blended Zine and has her work on display at the Lt. Governor’s Office in the New Mexico Roundhouse. It’s an honor to have her art used for this national event.” Parker will be introduced at the New Mexico Afterschool Alliance Lights On Afterschool Conference in Albuquerque on October 24th and 25th and will autograph posters.

“I was so excited when I learned I had won. I was bouncing up and down in my chair,” Parker said. “I’ve really enjoyed the two years I’ve been coming to Blended Zine, and the afterschool program has given me real life experiences with creating and publishing my art.” Parker says she’s looking forward to being part of the Blended Zine magazine’s production team and becoming more involved with the design, layout and promotion of the magazine.

“This year’s poster, with its colorful Broadway-style marquee sign, is a creative way to showcase not only the wonderful arts programs many afterschool programs offer, but the ways afterschool programs help students discover their passions,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director

Jodi Grant. “In addition to art, afterschool programs provide homework help, mentoring, sports and physical fitness, robotics, digital learning, community service, and many other hands-on learning opportunities. These programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families. That’s why it’s so important that we make afterschool programs available to every child and family. We congratulate Ashley on winning this contest and thank her for sharing her beautiful art with us so that we, in turn, can share it with students, parents, educators, community leaders and others everywhere.”

A large and growing body of evidence demonstrates improvements in attendance, behavior, academic achievement and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that afterschool programs encourage increased parental involvement – an important building block for student success.

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool* 2014, the Afterschool Alliance will release new data from the nation’s most comprehensive longitudinal survey of how America’s children are spending their afternoons. “America After 3PM,” a survey of more than 30,000 families, will provide new information on how participation and demand for afterschool have changed over the last decade and how they vary by state, income level, ethnicity, and more. For the first time, “America After 3PM” will include detailed data on STEM (science, technology, education and mathematics) and physical activity in afterschool. The forthcoming “America After 3 PM” report is funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Wallace Foundation and the Noyce Foundation, with additional support from the Heinz Endowments, The Robert Bowne Foundation and the Samueli Foundation.

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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.