



NEWS RELEASE
September 27, 2012

CONTACT: [Gretchen Wright](#)
202/371-1999

Broad Spectrum of Groups Supporting 13th Annual Nationwide Rally for Afterschool Represent the Diversity of Program Offerings

Science, Arts, Library, Physical Fitness, Education and Governors' Organizations Are Among Lights On Afterschool Partners

Afterschool programs help children develop confidence, learn to be part of a team, connect with their communities, discover artistic talent, explore new interests and participate in athletic activities. They also support the communities in which children live and contribute to building a stronger society. Recognizing the importance of afterschool programs to children, families and communities, a diverse group of more than 200 national, state and local organizations have signed on as national partners for *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool. Many of these corporations, associations and foundations are supporting the event for the thirteenth year in a row. *Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance.

This year's partners include organizations as diverse as the Association of Science-Tech Centers, the Institute of Museum and Library Services Science Centers, Fitness3.com, KidzArt, Mad Science, National Alliance of Urban Literacy Coalitions, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Theatre Action Project, National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, National Governors Association, and the USTA Tennis and Education Foundation to name a few. Science centers, museums and libraries play a key role in providing quality afterschool programming, often bringing the cutting-edge technology and hands on learning opportunities that spark lifelong interests and passions.

In communities across the nation, *Lights On Afterschool* events allow children to showcase the skills they learn and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and to send the message that millions more children deserve an equal chance to thrive in afterschool programs. This year's events will include student performances, runs and walks, open houses, art and essay contests, art displays, tree lightings, carnivals, and much more. To find a *Lights On Afterschool* event in your area, please visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

“By supporting *Lights On Afterschool*, our national partners are demonstrating how much they value our nation’s youth,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. Every child should have the opportunities that quality afterschool programs afford—opportunities to play team sports, create art, conduct science experiments or act in a play. We, and our partners, are striving to provide these life-enriching experiences for children in every neighborhood.”

Since the Afterschool Alliance organized the first *Lights On Afterschool* in 2000, it has grown to include more than 7,500 events across the country and at U.S. military bases worldwide. This year, more than a million people are expected to participate.

This year, for the fifth year in a row, the Empire State Building will be lit in yellow as part of the nationwide rally.

For years, the federal investment in afterschool has lagged far behind the need. In 2007, the *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the chief federal funding stream for afterschool. Yet federal funding stands at less than half that today. Congress is currently considering legislation that would allow other programs to compete for already-limited 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds.

A significant body of research demonstrates that students who attend 21st CCLC afterschool programs regularly are more likely to improve their grades, tests scores and overall academic behavior. More than 15 million school-age children – more than one in four kids in the United States – are unsupervised after the school day ends. The parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs – if programs were available.

#

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.