



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

Kids at 2011 *Lights On Afterschool* Events Will Demonstrate Math Skills, Science Smarts, Horse-Riding Abilities, Cultural Awareness, Musical Talent and More

The 12th annual *Lights On Afterschool* will provide children across the country and at U.S. military bases overseas with the opportunity to showcase the skills, abilities and interests they have developed in afterschool programs. Organized by the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. Each year, afterschool staff and students invite their communities to join them and learn more about the programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

This year is no exception. More than a million people are expected to participate in more than 7,500 events, including:

A spaghetti dinner and Math B.I.N.G.O. Night at the Shopneck Boys & Girls Club in **Brighton, Colorado** on October 20. Families of all the Club members are invited to join the festivities where they will be able to win prizes for their math prowess. Members of the Totch Club (the program's youth leadership group) will conduct tours of the Club to showcase the facility and programs. For more information, contact Dan Roybal, 303-637-7272.

A *Light On Afterschool* games event hosted by the Boys & Girls Club of Bay County in **Panama City, Florida** on October 20. Activities will include parent vs. child foosball games, art displays, street hockey, prizes and giveaways. Participants will be invited to visit a Healthy Start information table where they can learn about community resources available to meet the health care needs of local families. For more information contact J.C. Schwab, 850-763-3546.

The Sixth Annual Afterschool *Lights On* Parade organized by the Vietnamese Initiatives in Economic Training in **New Orleans, Louisiana** on October 20. The parade will feature students and staff from four area schools, who will march through the streets of New Orleans to show their afterschool pride, showcase the program, and reach out to the community. For more information, contact Lan Hoang, 504-255-0400.

An open house sponsored by the Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE 21st Century After-School program in **Nesquehoning, Pennsylvania** on October 20. The event will feature a musical about logistics, which is one of the careers in the fields of science, technology engineering and math (STEM) that youth in the program have been studying. Afterward, young people in the program will demonstrate various types of alternative energy, using wind bags,

sailboats in a mini swimming pool and student-made hover crafts. Other students will perform an anatomy and physiology dance. The event will close with the premiere of SHINE'S new DVD, "The Future is Now," about teaching STEM in afterschool programs. For more information, contact Afterschool Ambassador Jeanne Miller, 610-799-7013.

The "*Blazing New Trails*" event, sponsored by Richland County School District One in **Columbia, South Carolina** on October 20. The event will focus on equestrian arts and the outdoors. Youth from the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce Homework Centers Program will participate in a variety of activities, including horseback riding, equestrian math lessons, hayrides, horseshoe games, "Grand Ole Opry" barn/line dancing, an outdoor barbeque, equestrian care and safety, and stable tours. Awards will be presented to the 2011 Great Friend to Afterschool recipients and the 2011 Poster Contest and Essay Contest winners. For more information, contact Afterschool Ambassador Traci Young Cooper, 803-231-6842.

For information about other *Lights On Afterschool* rallies planned across the country, visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>.

"The things that make afterschool programs so beneficial, fun and diverse are showcased each year during *Lights On Afterschool*," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "It's exciting and inspiring to see children and youth in afterschool having fun with math, showing off their science skills, performing on-stage, riding unicycles, making healthy meals and more. Afterschool programs support the whole child and that's why we need to ensure that the funding for these essential programs is protected."

The children, parents, grandparents, educators, community leaders, policy makers, celebrities and others expected to participate in the 12th annual *Lights On Afterschool* will be urging Congress not to divert or deny federal funding for afterschool. For years, the federal investment in afterschool has lagged far behind the need. The *No Child Left Behind Act* authorized \$2.5 billion for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (the chief federal funding stream for afterschool) in 2007, yet funding stands at less than half that today. Congress is currently considering legislation that would allow other programs to compete for the already limited 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds.

During *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance, in conjunction with jcpenny, will release 50 state progress reports that examine how each state is helping keep the lights on for kids and families after school. The progress reports review state policies, funding and other activities that affect afterschool programs, examine the need in each state for these programs, offer tips to parents seeking afterschool programs for their children and suggest ways that all state residents can support afterschool.

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.

For the fifth year in a row, the Empire State Building will be bathed in yellow light in support of the nationwide rally. This year, the Afterschool Alliance and jcpenny are holding a contest to

encourage officials in other cities, towns and villages across the country to “Light Up a Landmark” as part of their *Lights On Afterschool* events.

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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.