



## Media Advisory

Contact: [Magen Eissenstat](mailto:Magen.Eissenstat@afterschoolalliance.org), 202/609-9889

**Media Advisory for 4 pm ET Wednesday, October 16**

## **Afterschool Students to Chat Online with NASA Leader Tomorrow to Kick Off *Lights On Afterschool* 2024**

Afterschool students across the country will have the chance to ask questions of a NASA leader as part of the kick-off for *Lights On Afterschool* this year. The virtual event will feature Charlie Blackwell-Thompson, NASA's first female launch director. During the live Q&A, Blackwell-Thompson will answer students' questions about space exploration and career paths in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). It will be:

**Online Conversation with NASA's first female launch director  
4 PM ET on Wednesday, October 16  
Hosted by NASA and the STEM Next Opportunity Fund  
[Click here to register for the event](#)**

Blackwell-Thompson oversees the countdown and liftoff of NASA's Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and Orion spacecraft for the Artemis missions. In 2022, she led her team during the first launch of Artemis – an uncrewed flight test of SLS and the Orion spacecraft. She is now preparing for Artemis II, the first crewed Artemis mission.

Now in its 25th year, *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool programs. More than one million people are expected to participate in some 8,000 events in every part of the nation this month. The [Afterschool Alliance](#) organizes *Lights On Afterschool* to highlight the need for more investment in afterschool programs, which keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind that their children are safe, supervised, and learning after the school day ends. Usher is honorary chair of *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

Capital One and Clear Channel Outdoor are generous sponsors of *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

# # # #

*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).*