



NEWS RELEASE

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***Lights On Afterschool* Events Across the Country Showcase Student Art, Dance, Music, Photography, and Poetry**

From flamenco dance to landscape paintings to student artwork, and much more, many [*Lights On Afterschool*](#) events taking place this month will showcase the ways afterschool programs engage and inspire students through the arts. Now in its 25th year, *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool programs. More than a million people are expected to participate at some 8,000 events across the country, held at schools, 4-Hs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, parks, museums, community centers, and other places on or around October 24.

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.

“Through visual art, performance, creative writing, and more, afterschool programs offer a safe place for students to tap into their innate creativity, discover their passions, hone new skills, and learn to express themselves in unique and powerful ways,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “These opportunities are especially critical in light of the mental health crisis facing our nation’s youth. It’s fantastic that so many *Lights On Afterschool* events are showcasing the artistic talents students develop after school. All students should have access to quality afterschool programs, which help them discover interests and foster a sense of belonging.”

Among the arts-focused events that will be part of this year’s national rally:

Los Angeles, California: On October 24, the Immersive Art Collective will partner with Heart of Los Angeles, Fun Zone Reading Club for Homeless Kids, and Hospitality Training Academy to present the Shine On Talent Showcase at The Count's Den to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*.

This free event will feature live entertainment from professional performers and will open the stage to all children who want to show off their talent. The event will also include sports drills, arts and crafts, and cooking demonstrations.

Shoreview, Minnesota: Emmet D. Williams Friendship Connection will host a *Lights On Afterschool* family night on October 24. Students, families and community members will assist in painting a mural, take a family photo for a community family tree, and decorate lanterns that will be strung up in classrooms.

Santa Fe, New Mexico: At E.J. Martinez Elementary, students have trained for two weeks with artists-in-residence from Emi Arte Flamenco, a local dance company, learning to dance, sing, and play the guitar. The partnership will culminate in a flamenco performance for parents and community members on October 22 for *Lights On Afterschool*.

Winterville, North Carolina: To celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Coastal Plain, Jack Minges Unit, will present “Stars of Tomorrow,” a talent showcase, on October 25. Students ages 6 - 12 will showcase their artistic talents through song, dance, music, and poetry for their parents, teachers, and peers. The program’s cheerleading team will also perform.

Knoxville, Tennessee: SHADES of Development at South Doyle Middle School will host a Bob Ross Paint Night on October 24 for *Lights On Afterschool*. Students will share the landscape-painting skills they have learned in their weekly Bob Ross Painting Club with their families and guests. Families are also invited to bring a dish for a potlatch.

Fort Worth, Texas: On October 24, Maroon 9 Community Enrichment Organization will present performances from Kids Acting With Purpose, its free teen afterschool arts program, to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. Students will preview their upcoming production of “Bone Soup: A Kwanzaa Story.” The event will include a panel discussion about the importance of youth arts programs and an educational presentation about Kwanzaa.

This year, *Lights On Afterschool* comes as the federal pandemic relief that has helped afterschool programs meet rising costs and address growing needs winds down. The unmet need for programs is enormous. Today in the United States, for every child in an afterschool program, four more are waiting to get in. Nearly 25 million children not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them, [according to a 2022 survey](#) of approximately 1,500 parents commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research. In recent years, Congress has failed to significantly increase funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the chief federal funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs.

A large and powerful body of evidence demonstrates improvements in grades, school attendance, behavior, and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that students in afterschool programs are more engaged in school and excited about learning, and they develop critical work and life skills such as problem solving, teamwork, and communications.

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

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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.