



NEWS RELEASE

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Afterschool Means Art, Cooking, Science, Reading, Dodgeball and More – and So Does *Lights On Afterschool*

Events to Celebrate Nationwide Rally for Afterschool Programs Highlight Range of Activities

The 10th annual nationwide rally for afterschool programs will include a range of events and activities as diverse, fun and exciting as the programs themselves. *Lights On Afterschool* 2009, organized by the Afterschool Alliance, will feature reading, astronomy, gardening, cooking and much, much more.

At the Southeast Family Center YMCA in **Colorado Springs, Colorado**, the focus will be on astronomy. On October 22, children, parents and the community will come to the YMCA to view the stars in a mobile planetarium and hear presentations by an astronomer. For more information, contact Kaylan Sisco, Southeast Family Center YMCA at 719-622-3558.

Students in **New Haven, Connecticut** will assemble on October 22nd at Ross/Woodward Classical Magnet School to hold a citywide celebration, *Lights On Afterschool* Gallery Walk. Each of the 53 participating schools will have a display table and student groups will perform. Community partners will showcase their programs. There will be performances and presentations by numerous groups, including: band, cheerleaders, football, soccer, volleyball teams, school choir and storytellers. For more information, contact Charles Warner, New Haven Public Schools, 203-946-7478.

The Louisville Kids Art Academy in **Louisville, Kentucky**, in partnership with the United Nations Association, will promote literacy and appreciation for other cultures through its *Lights On Afterschool* event, “We Dream of a Better World Through Reading” on October 22. Through Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), books will be handed out to all the students to encourage reading, especially about other cultures. The event will also feature an International Festival, with information about other countries, as well as international costumes, dance, music, arts and crafts, and cuisine. For more information, contact Geraldine Woods, Louisville Kids Art Academy at 502-583-8822.

The YMCA in **Springfield, New Jersey** will host a concert with acclaimed children’s entertainer and recording artist Guitar Bob on October 22 for *Lights On Afterschool*. The concert will feature sing-along songs with upbeat vocals, rockin’ guitar, and bluesy harmonica from Guitar Bob’s new CD, “Kids on the Move.” The singer will also perform a Family Concert on

Saturday, October 24 to benefit the YMCA's Strong Kids Program. For more information, contact Maria Marinaccio, YMCA of Springfield, NJ at 973-467-0838 ext. 17.

The Boys & Girls Club of Transylvania in **Brevard, North Carolina** will use *Lights On Afterschool* on October 22 as an opportunity to highlight its new program, the Harvest Project, a community garden grown by the club's youth members. Families will be invited to participate in a fall harvest of the garden, learn how to can vegetables, and prepare a family supper using produce from the garden. For more information, contact Melanie Jones, Boys & Girls Club of Transylvania County at 828-885-7800.

At the H.O.P.E. Program in **Newell, South Dakota**, Mayor Mike Wolff and two City Council Members will participate in *Lights On Afterschool* on October 22 by reading to children in the program. Students will also discuss the importance of having the lights on after school and what it was like for children before the modern convenience of electricity. There will be arts and crafts projects that all incorporate light. For more information, contact Sabrina Harmon, Harvesting Opportunities to Promote Education (H.O.P.E.) Program at 605-381-9136.

The **Dallas (Texas)** Afterschool Network will raise awareness about the need for afterschool programs by hosting a yellow school bus tour, "Get on the Bus" on October 22nd as part of *Lights On Afterschool*. Policy makers including members of the Dallas City Council and representatives from the District Attorney's office, police, local corporations and foundations, and others will visit three afterschool programs and examine what happens to the thousands of children with no afterschool program to attend. For information, contact Tanya McDonald at 214-912-4308.

On October 22, Playmates Child Development Center of **Kenova, West Virginia** will partner with the Junior League of Huntington to host a "Kids in the Kitchen" event. Participants will prepare healthy recipes, learn about nutrition and participate in physical fitness activities. "Kids In the Kitchen" is an initiative of The Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI), designed to help communities address the urgent issues surrounding childhood obesity and poor nutrition. For more information, contact Amanda Perdue, Playmates Child Development Center of Kenova at 304-453-4858.

At *Lights On Afterschool* rallies throughout the country on and around October 22, Americans will urge leaders to increase support for the afterschool programs that children and families need. In support of the event, the Empire State Building will be lit up for the third year in a row and this year, for the first time, thanks to Woodcraft Rangers, city officials in Los Angeles will light the historic Lindbergh Beacon atop City Hall that evening, so that national landmarks on both coasts will be lit up in celebration of afterschool.

Actress Rhea Perlman is a spokesperson for *Lights On Afterschool* and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair, a position he has held since 2001.

In advance of *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance released the second *America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America*, the most in-depth study ever to explore how America's children spend their afternoons. Sponsored by the JCPenney

Afterschool Fund, a charitable organization committed to inspiring children to be smart, strong and socially responsible, it finds that despite an increase in the number of children attending afterschool programs over the last five years, more than a quarter of the nation's schoolchildren are on their own in the afternoons. The parents of 18 million children say they would enroll their kids in afterschool programs, if programs were available. Data from all 50 states will be released on October 15.

As part of this year's *Lights On Afterschool* celebration, Bright House Networks will air a new documentary on the benefits of afterschool, featuring the personal stories of youth and families across the country.

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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.

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