



News Release
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***Lights On Afterschool* Events Across the Nation Next Month Will Highlight the Many Ways Afterschool Programs Boost Student Achievement and Well-Being**

Washington, D.C. – The reach and creativity of afterschool programs will be on display in October when programs across the country join the 24th annual [Lights On Afterschool](#). Some 8,000 events will be held on and around October 26th to shine a light on the innovative ways afterschool programs support the success and well-being of young people. Organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#), *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool programs, which keep kids safe and healthy, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind.

“From helping students catch up academically, to helping them connect with mentors and peers, to engaging them with STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), to serving healthy snacks and meals, to inspiring them to get fit, and much more, afterschool programs are providing essential support for our children and youth,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “We are thrilled that so many *Lights On Afterschool* events this year are showcasing the many ways afterschool programs boost students and support their families.”

The 24th annual *Lights On Afterschool* will include events at schools, 4-Hs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, parks, museums, community centers, town halls, state capitols, and other sites. Among the thousands of *Lights On Afterschool* events being planned around the country:

Laurel, Delaware: For *Lights On Afterschool*, the Laurel Boys & Girls Club will hold a Harvest Party in the Park on October 23. The event will include activities such as inflatable water slides, sack races, limbo, and more, as well as a petting zoo, corn hole, face painting, a DJ, a photo station, pumpkin tic tac toe, fall-themed book Bingo, and a cake walk. More than 300 students, parents and community members are expected, and Laurel Mayor John Shwed may attend. Students will deliver remarks about the importance of the Club’s afterschool programs in their lives and communities.

Honolulu, Hawaii: For *Lights On Afterschool*, the Hawaii Afterschool Alliance will hold a rally at the Hawaii State Capitol Rotunda on October 25. Students will tour the State Capitol building and wave signs with messages about the importance of afterschool programs. The event will also include student performances and testimonies about the impact their afterschool programs have had on their lives. Community leaders will deliver remarks. As many as 300 people may attend.

Poteau, Oklahoma: The Poteau Pirate Quest afterschool program will mark *Lights On Afterschool* with a literacy-themed event in partnership with the Patrick Lynch Public Library on October 23. The event will include read-alouds from Good Time Theatre performers in costume, sign-ups for library cards and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, a literacy class for parents, and literacy-themed Bingo with prizes including grocery and gas cards. The program will give away 500 free books to children and conduct a drawing for free Kindle e-readers. As many as 500 people may attend.

Columbia, South Carolina: On October 12th, the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance will host a STEM Extravaganza for more than 500 students from kindergarten to 12th grade for *Lights On Afterschool*. The event will take place at Segra Park. Stations along the stadium’s concourse will offer hands-on, interactive STEM-based activities for students. The event will celebrate the important role of afterschool programs in keeping South Carolina’s youth safe, engaged, and prepared to be successful adults.

Nashville, Tennessee: On October 26, Why We Can’t Wait will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with an open house and rally at Cleveland Street Baptist Church, featuring remarks from Tennessee State Senator Heidi Campbell. The nonpartisan event will highlight the importance of youth voices. Students will collaborate on bills to address community issues such as homelessness, violence prevention, gun safety, and more. In addition, Dr. Catherine K. Armwood-Gordon, Associate Professor of Civil and Architectural Engineering at Tennessee State University, will present on drones and career paths in STEM. The event will include spoken word and musical performances. More than 150 people are expected.

Angleton, Texas: Communities In Schools of Southeast Harris County will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with hands-on science experiments at the Young Elementary “fall crawl” festival. The afterschool program will showcase a glowing water science experiment, homemade “ooblek,” and other hands-on “mad scientist” STEM activities. The event will take place on October 26 and more than 200 people are expected.

For the 17th consecutive year, the New York skyline will shine for afterschool on October 26th when the iconic Empire State Building is lit in yellow and blue to celebrate.

Some 24.7 million U.S. children not in an afterschool program would be enrolled, if a program were available to them, according to a [survey of 1,500 parents](#) commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance and conducted by Edge Research in 2022. That is the highest number ever recorded. Unmet demand for afterschool programs is significantly higher among Latino and Black children (at 60% and 54% respectively) than among children overall (49%). Cost is the top barrier to enrollment, cited by 57% of parents as a reason for not enrolling their child. Ninety percent of parents rate the quality of the afterschool program their child attends as excellent (51%) or very good (39%).

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.