

NEWS RELEASE
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Mural By Bronx Students Wins National Art Contest

*LEAP Afterschool Program Students Designed This Year's
Lights On Afterschool Poster*



Students at the LEAP afterschool program at P.S. 100x in the Bronx (New York) designed the artwork that is being printed on 50,000 [posters](#) that will be displayed at thousands of [Lights On Afterschool](#) events across the country on and around October 20. The students created a vibrant mural featuring sunflowers and marigolds that symbolize the inclusive environment and opportunities for growth that afterschool programs provide. The mural was chosen from hundreds of submissions in a student art contest held earlier this year.

Lights On Afterschool is the only national rally for afterschool. It is organized by the Afterschool Alliance to underscore the need to invest in afterschool programs, which provide fun, hands-on

learning opportunities and offerings that can include homework help; healthy snacks and meals; computer programming; robotics; art, dance and music; opportunities to think critically, collaborate, and communicate with peers and adults; job and college readiness; sports and fitness activities; mentors; and more.

Thousands of *Lights On Afterschool* events are expected to take place across the country this October at schools, 4-Hs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, parks, museums, community centers, and other places. Events will include science fairs, student performances, academic contests, art shows, community service activities, fun runs, visits from lawmakers, and more.

The LEAP afterschool program students worked collaboratively to design the mural, which they painted on the outside of their school, leading up to the entrance. “My favorite part of this mural was painting,” said a fifth grader who worked on the project. “I love painting because it is relaxing and calming. Painting does inspire people; it really makes people have a smile. This is something I can feel good about.”

“During a time when community building is more important than ever, our students came together to share joy through artistic expression and create a symbol of the great things that can happen when we all are one,” said P.S. 100x principal Ariana Arbolina. “Through our partnership with LEAP, our students were able to create a work of art that is a daily reminder of hope, joy, and resilience for the school and larger community.”

“We are incredibly proud of the LEAP students who produced this year’s poster design, and thrilled to share their powerful artwork with people across the United States,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “The learning and growth that occur after school are essential. At afterschool programs like LEAP, students are discovering new interests and forging successful futures. But too many children and families are missing out on the vital opportunities afterschool programs provide. We must ensure all students can access quality afterschool programs, which keep students safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind.”

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 May and June of 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 enroll, cited by 57% of parents as a reason for not enrolling their child. Ninety percent of parents rate the quality of the program their child attends as excellent or very good.

BellXcel, 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.