



News Release  
October 6, 2022

Contact: [Lisa Lederer](#)  
(202) 371-1997

## **This Month, *Lights On Afterschool* Events Across the Country Will Highlight the Many Ways Afterschool Programs Support Students' Physical and Mental Well-Being**

As the nation celebrates the 23rd annual [Lights On Afterschool](#), many of the thousands of events held on and around October 20 will shine a light on the innovative ways afterschool programs support the 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 building connections to peers and mentors, to serving healthy snacks and meals, to helping young people handle anxiety, to inspiring students to move and get fit, afterschool programs across the country are providing essential support for students’ physical and mental health,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “That support is more important than ever, as the pandemic has taken a real toll on many students’ well-being. We are thrilled that so many *Lights On* events this year are showcasing the healthy habits afterschool programs instill in children and youth, which can last a lifetime.”

The 23rd Annual *Lights On Afterschool* will include events at schools, 4-Hs, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, parks, museums, community centers, and other places. It will kick off with a celebration held in Oakland, California on October 13.

Among the many health- and wellness-focused activities taking place at *Lights On Afterschool* events around the country:

**Portland, Connecticut:** On October 4th, the Connecticut Network for Children and Youth hosted *Lights On Afterschool 2022: A Celebration of the Field in Connecticut* at YMCA Camp Ingersol. The event included hands-on movement activities sponsored by BringtheHoopla, where students use hoola hoops as a tool for exploration, growth, and creativity. Participants also relaxed with Full of Joy Yoga instructors.

**Las Vegas, Nevada:** On October 19th, the Las Vegas 21st Century Community Learning Center will host a strawberry festival for *Lights On Afterschool*. The festival will highlight the strawberries grown in the program's new hydroponic units and include a tour of the farm stands. The event will also spotlight the program's Monarch Conservation Club, where students work to reduce food and water waste and create a habitat for the recently endangered western monarch butterfly. The center will host "Tasting the Harvest" with professional Chefs from the Wolfgang Puck venue at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas featuring sauteed rainbow swiss chard. There will be demonstrations of a kid-friendly strawberry activity, and a professional chef from Boujee Bakery LV will demonstrate making mini strawberry shortcakes. Students will deliver speeches about "Why My After-School Program Is Important To Me." There will be a raffle and swag bags from the Nevada Afterschool Network.

**Syracuse, New York:** The Shonnard Street Boys & Girls Club will host two events for *Lights On Afterschool* this year. On October 20th, Eddie Mitchell, Founder of TEAM A.N.G.E.L, and Clifford Ryan, Founder of OG's Against Violence will visit the Club to speak about positive behaviors and violence prevention. On October 31st, the Club will host its annual Halloween 3-on-3 basketball tournament to encourage physical activity while keeping teens safe and off the streets.

**Macomb, Oklahoma:** On October 20th, the Macomb School community will host a glow walk to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*. Starting at 5:00 PM, the walk will kick off at the Macomb Reflection Garden – a park built in partnership with Macomb School, the National Park Service, Oklahoma National Memorial, and NEEF. Following the walk, there will be a fall carnival. The event will promote health and fitness as well as community involvement.

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:** EducationWorks will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* with an evening of wellness activities at Penn Treaty School on October 20th. Students and their families will participate in a photo/video collage activity showcasing current projects. The event will also include painting, seated yoga, and affirmation development.

**Sioux Falls, South Dakota:** Pettigrew Kids Inc. will host its second annual *Lights On Afterschool* Dance-A-Palooza on October 21. The event will be held in their gymnasium and will include popular and fun dance-along videos, yard games, and glow stick party favors. Light refreshments will be served.

For the 16th consecutive year, the New York skyline will shine for afterschool on October 20th 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 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%).

A [household survey](#) released in April confirms parents see afterschool and summer learning programs as a pivotal support for young people's well-being. Nine in ten parents of afterschool students report their afterschool program gives their child time to interact with peers and build social skills, 82% say it helps build their confidence, and 73% say it helps their child learn responsible decision making. The supports afterschool programs provide are especially important to parents of color and families with low incomes.

The American Rescue Plan provided historic resources to expand access to out-of-school time programs. In July, the U.S. Department of Education launched the [Engage Every Student Initiative](#), a bold call to action to use funds from the American Rescue Plan, as well as state and local funds, to ensure access to high-quality out-of-school time programs for every child. The Afterschool Alliance is one of five coordinating organizations in this historic new public/private partnership.

BellXcel, 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).*