



## Arkansas Out of School Network

Dear Afterschool Supporter,

Welcome to the **Lights On Afterschool** Event Planning Guide! This guide was created to serve as a resource to help out-of-school time programs across the state inform families, community partners, legislatures, and the media about events taking place in your program or community to celebrate **Lights On Afterschool** on **October 12, 2006**.

The Arkansas Out-of-School Network (AOSN) has personalized this guide because we recognize that each county/community in our state is different and unique. The success of Lights on Afterschool will also have a different flavor throughout our state. In some areas there will be major events involving the entire school-age community, schools, libraries, literacy groups, business and professional groups, Chamber of Commerce, churches and others. In some parts of our state the celebration will be in an individual school-age program whether it is a family child care home, youth based, recreation agency, center based, faith based and/or public school. No matter the size of the celebration, remember we are celebrating our state's most precious resource **school-aged children and youth!**

We are delighted that you have decided to join the Arkansas Out-of-School Network, the Afterschool Alliance and afterschool programs across the country in rallying for afterschool programs. On October 12th remember to speak out for the school-age children and youth in your community and encourage everyone to take a part in this celebration! If you are looking at ways to rally year round with other individuals committed to strengthening, expanding, and sustaining quality out-of-school programs in Arkansas then it is important that you learn more about AOSN.

The Arkansas Out-of-School Network (AOSN) is an active network that has an array of key partners who have committed staff, resources and technical assistance to establishing and maintaining the network and promoting the statewide expansion and development of after-school programs. The mission of AOSN is to create safe, healthy, and enriching experiences for Arkansas youth during out of school times. AOSN's goal is to strengthen, expand and sustain Arkansas' school-based and school-linked services to children and youth, ages 4-19, during out of school time. AOSN had worked to bring you this guide because we know that our goal can only be accomplished through collaboration and building a network between all interested partners in Arkansas. If you are interested in learning more about AOSN, visit our website at [www.aosn.org](http://www.aosn.org) or contact Paul Kelly via e-mail at [pkelly@aradvocates.org](mailto:pkelly@aradvocates.org) or 501.371.9678, Ext. 102.

On October 12th, more than 7,500 communities, and 1 million Americans, will celebrate Lights On Afterschool! Together, we will demonstrate how afterschool programs keep youth safe, help working families and inspire learning. Thank you for being a part of this celebration!

Sincerely,

*Friends of the Arkansas Out-Of-School Network*

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## **Additional Resources Available**

This guide can be kept and used for future Lights On Afterschool events and adapted to fit any special event that your program plans in the future. The materials in this guide can be found at the **Afterschool Alliance** website. There you will find more explanations and samples that you can either copy or customize to fit your needs. For more information visit:

**[www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)**. Click on “**Lights On!**”

This guide is also available for download by visiting the Arkansas Out-of-School Network website at **[www.aosn.org](http://www.aosn.org)**

**While supplies last, requests can be made to the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education for free “Lights On Afterschool” postcards that encourage others to recognize the importance of quality afterschool programs on October 12<sup>th</sup>. These postcards are very colorful and would be a great way to help spread the word to stakeholders in your community. For postcard requests, please contact Kathy Stegall at 501-682-9699**



We would love to know what special events you have planned for Lights on Afterschool in your community/program. Please complete the report on Page 21 of this booklet and return it to the Arkansas Out-of-School Network. A certificate of recognition will be mailed back to you. Best of luck in the planning of your local celebrations!

# Lights on Afterschool At-A-Glance

*Lights On Afterschool* is celebrated nationwide to call attention to the importance of afterschool programs for America's children, families and communities.

In America today, 1 in 4 youth -- 14.3 million children - are alone and unsupervised after school. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning. They provide opportunities to help young people develop into successful adults.

*Lights On Afterschool* was launched in October 2000 with celebrations in more than 1,200 communities nationwide. The event grew in 2001 to more than 3,600 events and more than 7,500 in 2005. This October 2006, 1 million Americans will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool!*

*Lights On Afterschool* is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to quality, affordable afterschool programs by 2010. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has served as Chair of *Lights On Afterschool* since 2001.

The Afterschool Alliance salutes the many *Lights On Afterschool* partners and programs who make this event a success, in particular the After-School All-Stars, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H Afterschool, Junior Achievement, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the YMCA of the USA.

## Main Talking Points about Quality Afterschool Programs:

- **Keep youth safe**
- **Help Working Families**
- **Inspire Learning**



[WWW.AFTERSCHOOLALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.AFTERSCHOOLALLIANCE.ORG)

# Afterschool Facts

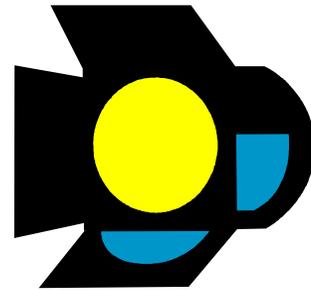
- More than 14 million school age children (25%) are on their own after school. Among them are more than 40,000 kindergarteners. (*America After 3 PM, May 2004*)
- The parents of more than 28 million school-age children work outside the home. (*U.S. Department of Labor*)
- Only 6.5 million K-12 children (11%) participate in afterschool programs. An additional 15 million would participate if a quality program were available in their community. (*America After 3 PM, May 2004*)
- The hours between 3p.m. and 6p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex. (*Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2002*)
- 9 in 10 Americans want all children and teens to have some type of organized activity or safe place to go after school. (*Election Eve Poll, November 2004*)
- More than half of voters (55 percent) think that there are not enough afterschool programs available for children in America today. (*Afterschool Alliance Poll, September 2003*)

**“It is far easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”**

- **Frederick Douglass**  
**Abolitionist, Journalist, and Lecturer**



# A Spotlight on Arkansas



- 💡 Eighteen percent of Arkansas children enrolled in K-12 are taking care of themselves from the time school is out until their parents return from work.
- 💡 Sixty-five percent of Arkansas children under 18 (414,523 children) have their caregiver(s) in the workforce.

## **A preliminary after school supply and demand assessment conducted by the Arkansas Out of School Network (AOSN) established the following facts:**

- 💡 Nearly 9,226 of Arkansas children participate in the programs supported by the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, the only federal program dedicated to after school.
- 💡 Over 145,500 children participate in 4-H youth development programs in Arkansas each year.
- 💡 Approximately 63,600 youth participate in programs operated by the state's Boys and Girls Clubs.
- 💡 Arkansas YMCA programs serve 18,921 children each year. Of those 15,950 (84 percent) are school age (6 to 17 years).
- 💡 There are 423 school age centers licensed by the DHHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education with a capacity to serve 25,849 K-12 children. Only 4,268 or 18 percent of these potential slots are in programs meeting quality standards. An estimated 73 children age 5-13 are eligible for every quality slot in Arkansas.
- 💡 The 39 Schools for the 21st Century program currently serve 3,200 students from K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 💡 County and municipal after school programs include 2,130 youth in the City of Little Rock's Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Programs and over 400 youth in Pulaski County's Our Clubs. These programs vary considerably from community to community and various types of programs operate within one program site.

To learn more information regarding out-of-school programs in Arkansas go to [www.aosn.org](http://www.aosn.org) and read the report titled "After School Programs in Arkansas: A Solution Whose Time Has Come" or contact:

**Paul Kelly, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families**  
**Union Station, Suite 306, 1400 W. Markham,**  
**Little Rock, AR. 72201.**  
Email [pkelly@aradvocates.org](mailto:pkelly@aradvocates.org) or 501.371.9678, Ext. 102.

# The Who, What, When & Where

## Who to Invite:

- youth!
- educators and school personnel
- parents, grandparents and extended family
- business and community leaders
- policy makers
- media
- youth organizations: sports teams, school bands, academic and service clubs, volunteers, etc.
- local celebrities: tv news anchor, radio host, athletes
- the community!



## What to do:

- 💡 student-created and led activities like raps, skits, dance, music and poetry
- 💡 sell items to raise funds for your program
- 💡 student demonstrations of afterschool activities, for example yoga, basketball, karate, mural painting, chess, debate
- 💡 ask attendees to show their support for afterschool by signing on to Afterschool for All: Project 2010 (see Afterschool Alliance website)
- 💡 contests and competitions (kids versus adults or kids versus kids)
- 💡 short dance and music performances
- 💡 special guest speakers: parents, local elected officials, the superintendent, mayor, a member of Congress, local celebrities, etc.
- 💡 presentations by youth about their afterschool experience
- 💡 a snack or pizza dinner

## When:

Pick a time that best suits your event goals such as:

- 💡 during your regular afterschool program hours
- 💡 evening hours when parents can participate
- 💡 an early afternoon gathering at a museum, city hall, outdoor square or other public place
- 💡 a breakfast or lunch reception that elected officials and business leaders can attend



## Where:

- 💡 your afterschool program facility, indoors or outdoors
- 💡 city hall
- 💡 public library, park or recreation center
- 💡 museum
- 💡 places of worship
- 💡 school gymnasium or auditorium
- 💡 shopping mall or local JCPenney store



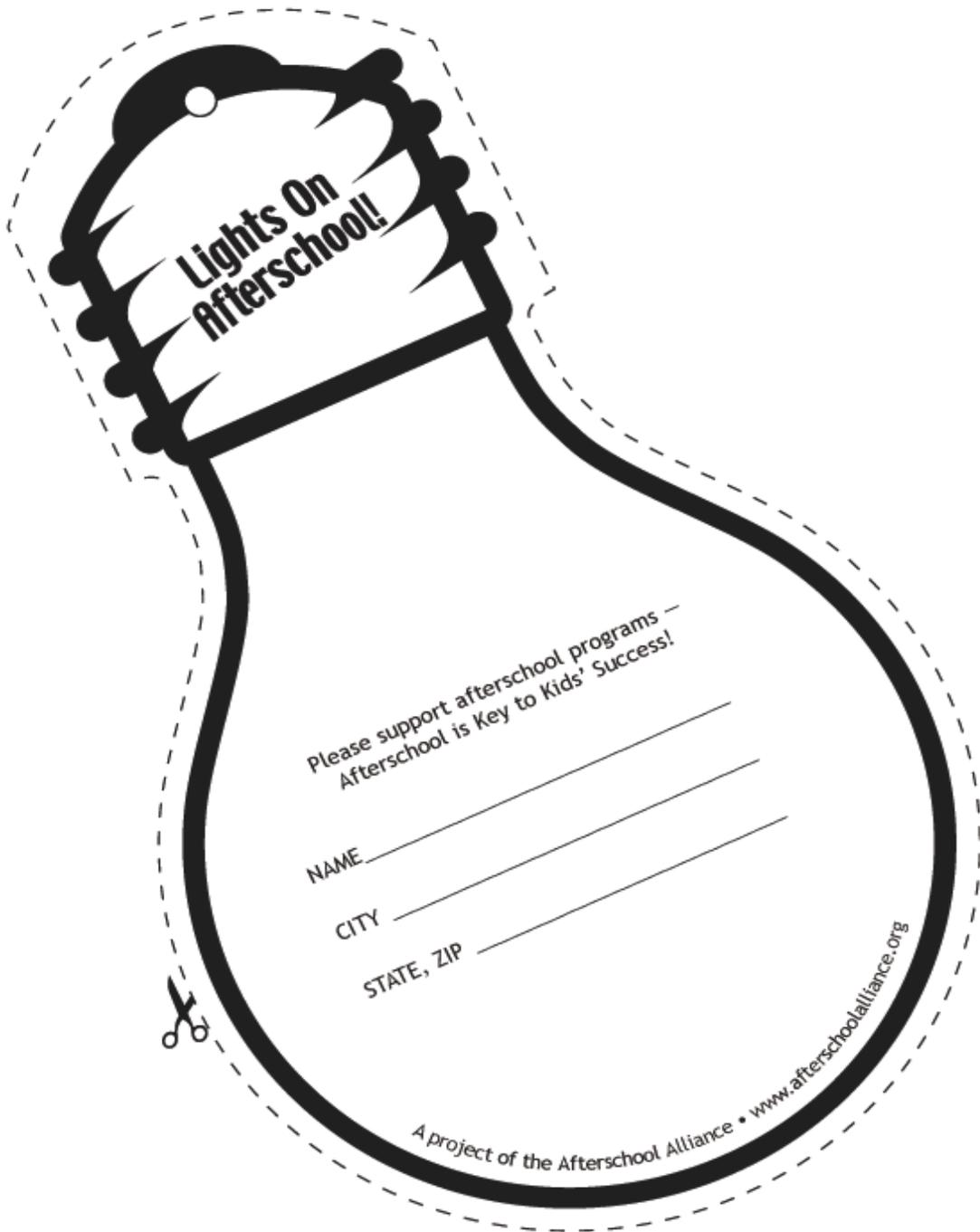
# Lights On Afterschool!

# Light Bulb Art

Use this **reproducible light bulb** to create a vibrant visual at your event, and convey your afterschool message. Deliver your light bulbs to your local Congressional District Office as a follow-up to your event!

**Light Bulb Directions:** Copy the bulbs and let your community get creative. Turn the completed bulbs into a string of afterschool lights, use them to cover the walls of your hallway, or display them as a colorful backdrop for kids' presentations during *Lights On Afterschool!*

Use this version with children if you have privacy concerns.



# Lights On Afterschool! Event Checklist



No matter how big or how small your event will end up being, it is important to map out all the necessary steps your group will need to take in order to create a successful event that achieves your desired outcomes. The checklist below can be used as a step-by-step planning tool that outlines some of the things to consider at different stages of the planning process.

## Whenever you begin the planning process:

- Form your event team. Assign leads for: Event Chair, Logistics; Media and Public Relations; VIPs and RSVPs. Call your first meeting.
- Ask partner organizations or other afterschool providers about working together on a joint event so you can maximize resources.
- Brainstorm:
  - What would you like to come out of your event? Media coverage? A new or better relationship with your mayor? More parent involvement? Impress funders or potential funders?
  - How can you demonstrate that afterschool is key to kids' success to your target audience? Think about the value of your program from the perspective of the community, parents, funders, students, local businesses.
  - Who are the best people to deliver your message? Parents, students, principals, the mayor?
  - Where is the best place to deliver our message with a rally?
  - How can we best highlight the students' and program's achievements and accomplishments? What interesting perspective or project can make a good media story or visual for a news article?
  - Get your juices flowing by checking out what others have done in the Case Studies and Event Ideas [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights\\_on/case.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/case.cfm)
- Hone down your brainstorming list by picking the best ideas to show off your program and reach the audience you are most concerned about.
- Select the time and location. Find out if you need any permits for the event.
- Set the budget.
- Begin compiling a list of community and business leaders, elected officials, media, and parents that you plan to invite to the event.
- Compile a notebook with all of the planning information for easy reference.



- Design the invitation using *Lights On Afterschool* artwork. Be sure to include:
  - Date, Time, Place, and RSVP instructions
- Make sure you have the contact information for everyone involved with planning the event.
- Draw up a responsibility/status report.
- Delegate authority on written assignment sheets.
- Determine the timeline needed to accomplish each task.



- Outline the program. Select and invite the speakers, including policy makers.
- Arrange for catering, photographer, audio equipment, seating, greeters or ushers, restrooms, first aid, supplies, decorations and entertainment.
- Request a proclamation from your mayor or city council.

### **September 1 to September 13**

- Develop a list of reporters, editors, and producers who cover education in your area.
- Create a Save the Date card and distribute it to all of your local media outlets.
- Update your guest list with more friends, media, local dignitaries and celebrities as well as business people and other potential sponsors.
- Remember to pick a backup date for outdoor events in case of inclement weather.



### **September 14 to September 29**

- Prepare an announcement of the event and send it to all local community calendar editors.
- Post signs and posters in public places announcing the event.
- Mail the invitations. Make follow-up phone calls to confirm all V.I.P. guests.
- Plan for a medical professional to be on hand for emergencies during the event.
- Update the RSVP list daily.
- Confirm refreshments, audio equipment, seating, restrooms, first aid, photographer, supplies, flowers, decorations, entertainment, etc.
- Write a step-by-step agenda with times in minutes and the name of the person with primary responsibility.
- Develop a press kit.
- Get proclamation framed for presentation.
- Arrange transportation if necessary for dignitaries and guest speakers.



## **October 2 to October 11**

- Write a media alert (Distribute October 4 or 5).
- Follow-up on invitations. Reconfirm attendance by policy makers and other key speakers. Share the program agenda with speakers; offer to provide talking points.
- Update the agenda.
- Confirm greeters, ushers, drivers and the photographer.
- Update the RSVP list.
- Get a weather report for outdoor events.
- Assign someone to collect news clips on the event, and to tape any morning or afternoon news programs of stations that are planning to cover the event.
- Update your media alert and re-distribute October 10 or 11.
- Have your news release ready to go.



## **October 12**

- Distribute news release by fax or email to local reporters who do not attend.
- Set up a "press sign-in" table and give reporters news release and media kit
- Have guests sign in.
- Have program or agenda available at sign in, along with materials about your program, Lights On and afterschool programs.
- Assign someone to tape any television or radio news broadcasts covering your event.

## **October 13**

- Gather your light bulb art to deliver to Congressional District Offices. Send the artwork with a personal note and information on your program, or arrange to hand deliver it.
- Consider making it a field trip for students.
- Collect your news clips and tapes of coverage, distribute to friends, parents, partners, funders and potential funders.

**Congratulate yourself on a job well done!**



# Involving Youth

The youth in your program know first-hand why afterschool is important and what it provides them. They can be some of your best, and most authentic, messengers. Be sure to involve youth in your event program as well as in the planning. *Lights On!* is a great opportunity to let youth express their views on afterschool.

- During your *Lights On!* program, give young people a time to speak publicly to policymakers about their views on afterschool, learning, education and other related issues. Invite your mayor, school board members or city council members to come to your afterschool program to listen to what kids have to say.
- Have youth decorate light bulbs. If you are near a Congressional District Office, arrange for them to deliver the artwork themselves and meet with the Member or staff. If the offices are far away, work with students to make a project out of sending the box of artwork. The Congressional office should respond with a letter back to your program. Use that as a second learning opportunity to discuss the role of elected officials.
- Work with the local newspaper to have them publish editorials by kids that focus on kids' views of afterschool and learning, how/when/where they have fun learning.
- Work with the local newspaper to feature stories by kid reporters that cover issues including why afterschool programs help kids, what makes a great afterschool program, how to make learning fun.
- Organize an event at city hall or the state house in which young people speak publicly about their views on the issues in front of a large audience that includes policymakers -- give the policymakers a chance to respond/acknowledge the young people's concerns.
- Organize a group of kids to go visit policymakers in your community. This could include the mayor, city council members, school board members, state legislators, the governor, and members of Congress. Work with the young people ahead of time to set up the meetings and develop a list of talking points for the meetings. Notify the press ahead of time so that they can cover the story of young people being their own best advocates on learning and education.
- Work with young people to request a hearing on afterschool and education in your state legislative body. Ask the education committee to hold a special hearing where kids testify about the benefits they receive from afterschool programs, and how afterschool helps engage them in learning.

# More Tips for Involving Youth

## You will need to consider:

- Ages of the students.
- Group size. Will students work in large or small groups or will individuals run their own activities?
- Leadership skills of your students. Could they entirely design and follow through with a project, or will they need a good bit of development and leadership from you?
- Students with disabilities. Special accommodations may need to be made to include students with physical and learning disabilities.
- Training. Would leadership development, planning, public speaking, working with the media, etc., be helpful to youth?
- Recruiting. What would entice youth to want to be involved? What incentives can you offer them, e.g., extra credit, behavior points, field trip privileges?
- Be sure to set some goals and determine how you will measure success - that is, how you and they will know that your project made a difference. By taking these steps before you begin, you increase the likelihood that your event will be successful and that your students will have a sense of real accomplishment. A discussion of objectives, goals and measures can make an excellent preparation activity. Also important in preparation: creating a timeline, task list and budget. See the event planning checklist for ideas.



# Sample Flyer to General Public

How you go about informing others of your upcoming Lights On! event is key to its success! Below are some sample ideas that hopefully will get your creative marketing juices flowing!

## SAVE THE DATE!

Help keep the lights on Afterschool by joining us for the Fifth-Year Anniversary of **Lights On Afterschool!** the only nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs and their important role in the lives of children, families, and communities.

**Open House  
at the State House**

**For  
Lights On  
Afterschool!**

**October  
14, 2004  
5-6PM**

**Coordinated by**  
The Rhode Island  
After School Plus Alliance

*And*  
The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community  
Learning Centers Network

**To RSVP:**  
Paola Fonseca  
(401) 444-0659 or  
paola.fonseca@uwri.org

Lucille Daigneault  
(401) 727-6177 X211



Lights on Afterschool is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to afterschool programs by 2010. Form more information on *Lights On Afterschool!*: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)

# Sample Flyer to General Public

**NM LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL!!**

The NM Out-of-School Time Network and the  
New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community

**INVITATION**

Show your support for quality afterschool programming by attending the Albuquerque *Lights On Afterschool!!* event on October 20, 2005. Join one million Americans as we discuss this critical need and showcase what works. Help us honor New Mexicans who make the afterschool hours a time of opportunity for our children, and in so doing lessen the stress that parents and employers face when children are left alone after the school bell rings.

**WHERE?**  
The Taylor Ranch Community Center  
6300 Mountain Road NW  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
5:00-7:00 PM  
October 20, 2005

**RSVP.**  
[renee@nmforumforyouth.org](mailto:renee@nmforumforyouth.org)  
Renee Paisano-Trujillo  
(505) 821-3574 Ext. 101

New Mexico  
FORUM FOR YOUTH  
in Community

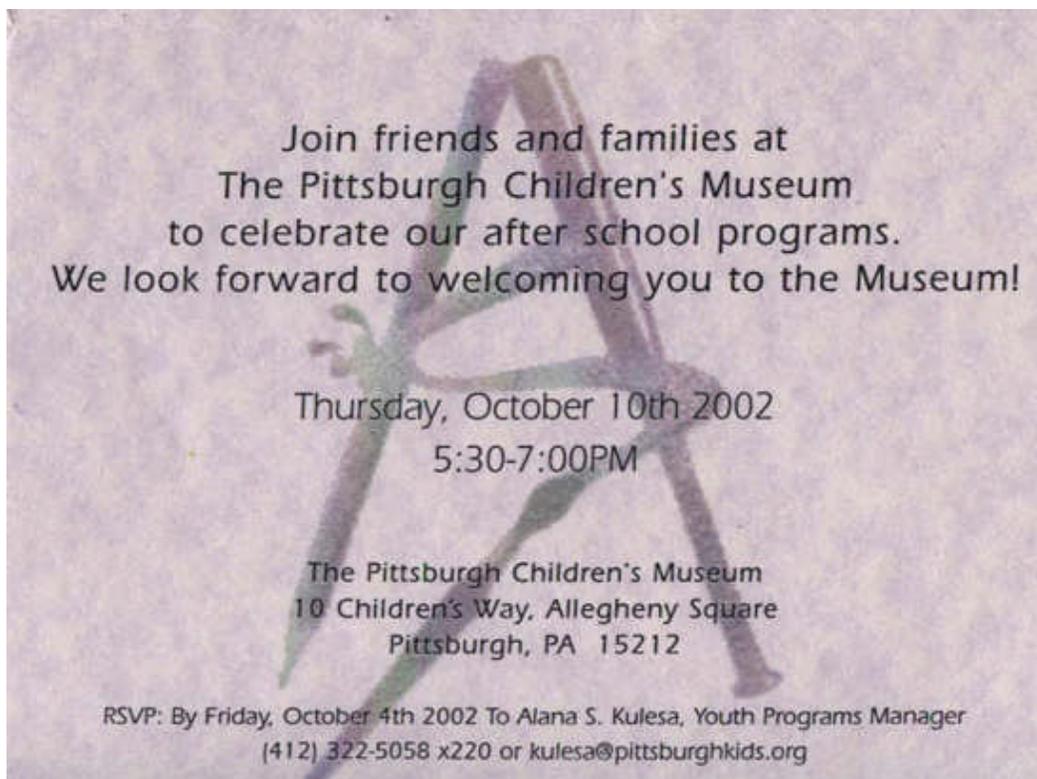
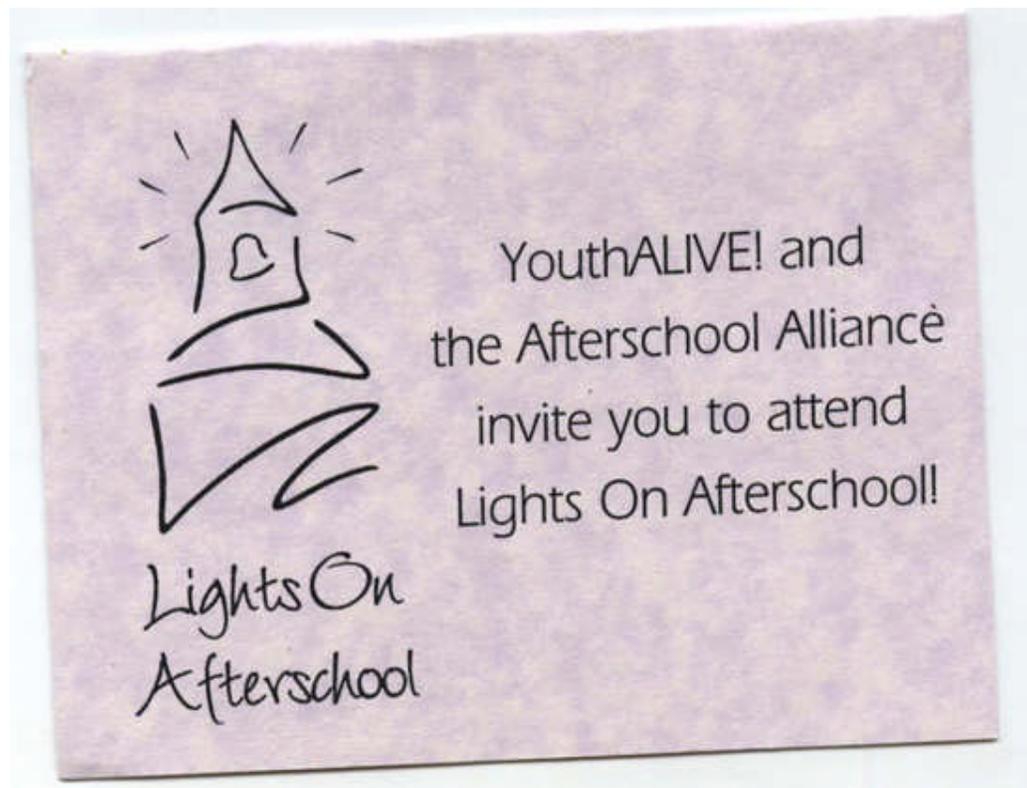
Junior Achievement  
AFTERSCHOOL

JCPenney  
afterschool  
preparing your potential

Afterschool  
Alliance

An Event Supported by the Afterschool Alliance

# Sample Invitation to General Public



# Sample Invitation to Policy Maker

**(On your letterhead)**

Dear *Policy Maker*:

On October 12, 2006, our afterschool program will be participating in the 7<sup>th</sup> annual *Lights On Afterschool* nationwide celebration of afterschool programs . We will be one of more than 7,500 sites across the nation sending the message that afterschool is key to children's success, and that we must keep the lights on and doors open after school. Parents, media, employers, neighbors, school officials and others have been invited to help us rally support for safe, stimulating afterschool programs.

We would like you to be part of our local celebration scheduled

- *Date and time*
- *Place*
- *Address*

Our program is going to include a half hour ceremony and we would be honored to have you as our keynote presenter. Your role would include:

- A 15-minute statement of the benefits of afterschool and
- Presentation of the proclamation to the Director

The benefits of quality afterschool programs are clear. They support working families by ensuring that children are safe and productive when the school day ends. Quality afterschool programs make our communities stronger by involving students, parents, business leaders and volunteers. Quality afterschool programs give children the opportunity to discover hidden talents as they grow academically and socially.

I look forward to having you join us for *Lights On Afterschool!* I will call you next week to confirm your availability. We hope that you will help us keep the lights on after school, and give our children a brighter future.

Sincerely,



# Example of 2005 Events in Arkansas



Learning from the success of others is a great way to venture into planning an event of your own. Remember... no event is too small to get the message out that afterschool programs are important for America's children, families, and communities! Below is just a sampling of some ideas that occurred last year in Arkansas. For more event ideas from across the nation visit the Lights On website at:

**[http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights\\_on/events.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/events.cfm)**

**Eureka Springs, Arkansas:** Afterschool Associate Barb Dunnam, Eureka Kids, Inc., 479-253-8006, [Bdeschner@youthfunding.com](mailto:Bdeschner@youthfunding.com)

An old-fashioned carnival with a pie eating contest, barbecue, games and activities will be held on October 20th from 3:00 - 6:30 PM at Harmon Park. The building will also be open for tours. City Council and School Board members will speak at the event and the children will present the officials with keys to the building as a symbolic gesture in support of the theme, "Afterschool is Key to Kids' Success." Governor Mike Huckabee has signed a state Proclamation. One hundred and fifty people are expected.

**Little Rock, Arkansas:** Callye Gibbons, Christ Lutheran School, 501-663-5212, [cgibbons@clutheran.org](mailto:cgibbons@clutheran.org)

Christ Lutheran School will hold a fall party for parents and kids on October 20th from 4:00 - 6:00 PM. Mayor Jim Dailey, the School Board President and members, the Pastor, and JCPenney may attend. One hundred twenty-five people are expected.

**North Little Rock, Arkansas:** Jennie Cunningham, NLR Parks and Recreation Programs, 501-791-8545, [nlrpr\\_artshumanities@comcast.net](mailto:nlrpr_artshumanities@comcast.net)

On October 20th from 4:00 -7:00 PM, the North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Program will hold an event at the North Heights Community Center to showcase the Aspire program. From 4:00 - 5:00 PM, there will be youth activities addressing the theme, "Healthy Minds and Bodies" including a health fair with endurance and health assessment tests for the children and adults. Children will decorate the Lights On Afterschool light bulbs and there will be a light bulb decorating contest among town dignitaries. At 5:00 PM there will be a pep rally featuring cheerleaders and dance groups. Guest speakers include Commission Board Member and School Principal Charles Jones. Two student representatives from each center will read essays about the importance of afterschool and a parent will offer a testimonial. Following the pep rally, parents will visit information tables and displays. More than three hundred people are expected.

**North Little Rock, Arkansas:** Paige Banks, Ridgeroad Middle Charter School Related Arts Program, 501-771-8155, [paigebangs@yahoo.com](mailto:paigebangs@yahoo.com)

The "Lights On, Drugs Gone" event will be October 25th at 5:30 PM. In collaboration with Red Ribbon Week, the focus of the event will be drug education. Various arts and music programs will be showcased. A state representative will speak and the Superintendent Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Mayor Patrick Henry Hays and Youth Council Director Jan Scholl. One hundred and fifty to 200 people are expected.

# Registering an Event with the Arkansas Out-of-School Network and the Afterschool Alliance

On October 12, 2006, thousands of afterschool programs in communities nationwide will celebrate *Lights On Afterschool!* Be a part of this effort to showcase the importance of afterschool programs and underscore the need for quality afterschool programs for all children.

To let the Arkansas Out-of-School Network know what you did in your community, please complete the following form. After returning it to the Arkansas Out-of-School Network, you will receive a certificate of recognition that you can proudly display at your program to commemorate your successful involvement.

The Afterschool Alliance is also interested in learning more about what is going on a national level. To register your event with them, you can visit their web site at:

[http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights\\_on/get\\_involved.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/get_involved.cfm)

To **fax or mail** your information to the Afterschool Alliance, see the appropriate form at:

[http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights\\_on/documents/Registration\\_Mailer\\_2005.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/documents/Registration_Mailer_2005.pdf)



Lights On  
Afterschool!



## 2006 Lights On Afterschool: EVENT REPORT FORM

We want to know what special events that you and your community have done for Lights On Afterschool. Complete this form and list all of the special events your program participated in for Lights On Afterschool and send it in to the Arkansas Out of School Network for a Certificate of Recognition.

**Organization or Program Name:**

**Address:**

**County:**

**City:**

**State:**

**Zip:**

**Contact Name:**

**Phone Number:**

**E-Mail address:**

**Tell us about what you did to celebrate Lights On Afterschool! (Use additional paper if needed)**

**How many people attended your event?**

**Who encompassed the group of attendees? (Ex. parents, mayor, media, etc.)**

**What lessons did you learn from hosting this event that you would take into consideration when planning future Lights On events?**

Please return this form to the following address:  
ASU Childhood Services, ATTN: Woodie Sue Herlein, AOSN Network Coordinator  
P.O. BOX 808 State University, AR 72467

# Sample Proclamation for Organizations, Institutions and Other Officials

More than mayors and governors can issue proclamations. A school board, a park and recreation department, your own governing board or your partners may also issue a proclamation for *Lights On Afterschool!* Just ask them. You can use this as an opportunity to tell them about the success of your program - and to thank them for their support. Below is sample language for a proclamation that any organization can adopt to endorse *Lights On Afterschool* and affirm that afterschool is key to kids' success.

WHEREAS, **[Name of Organization, Institution or Location]** stands firmly committed to quality afterschool programs and opportunities because they:

- Provide safe, challenging, engaging and fun learning experiences to help children and youth develop their social, emotional, physical, cultural and academic skills.
- Support working families by ensuring their children are safe and productive after the regular school day ends.
- Build stronger communities by involving our students, parents, business leaders and adult volunteers in the lives of our young people, thereby promoting positive relationships among children, youth, families and adults.
- Engage families, schools and diverse community partners in advancing the welfare of our children.

WHEREAS, **[Name of Program]** has provided significant leadership in the area of community involvement in the education and well-being of our youth, grounded in the principle that quality afterschool programs are key to helping our children become successful adults.

WHEREAS, *Lights On Afterschool*, a national celebration of afterschool programs on October 12, 2006, promotes the critical importance of quality afterschool programs in the lives of children, their families and their communities.

WHEREAS, many afterschool programs across the country are facing funding shortfalls so severe that they are being forced to close their doors and turn off their lights.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that **[Name of Organization, Institution or Official]** urges the citizens of **[Name of Community or County]** to ensure that every child has access to a safe, engaging place where the lights are on after school; AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this **[Title of Official]** enthusiastically endorses *Lights On Afterschool!* and is committed to innovative afterschool programs and activities that ensure that the lights stay on and the doors stay open for all children after school.

# Getting Press: Working with the Media



*Lights On Afterschool* provides a wonderful opportunity to generate positive news coverage of your afterschool program and to remind policy makers and community members of the need to provide sufficient funding to meet the growing demand for the afterschool programs that serve children and families. Reporters seek out stories that affect their community, and they will want to tell readers, viewers and listeners about threats to afterschool programs. So plan your *Lights On Afterschool* activities with the media in mind. The simple steps outlined here can make your event more newsworthy and help you reach more community members with your messages. If you want to go beyond the basics and really do a full-court press on media, develop and follow a timeline of media outreach that includes outreach to editorial pages, radio and television talk shows and more. A sample timeline is included here.

## Ten Steps to Media Coverage

### Step One: Create a Media List

If you don't already have a list of reporters, editors, columnists, photo editors and producers who cover education, children and families, parenting, workplace and feature stories in your media market, this is a good time to create one. Some United Ways have media guides that are available to community agencies for a nominal fee, and the public relations offices at community colleges are often willing to share their media lists with other education agencies. If no such resource is available, make a list of all local TV and radio stations (including college and university-affiliated stations), daily and weekly newspapers (including ethnic, community and other specialty papers), wire services and magazines, locally oriented Internet sites, and newsletters or bulletins from interested community and faith-based organizations. Then call and ask for the name of the editor, reporter or producer who covers education, children and families, parenting, workplace and features. Request the phone, fax and e-mail address for each person. Ask also for the names and contact information for producers at broadcast news and talk shows that cover issues like afterschool, and columnists who cover education and family issues at local newspapers of all kinds. Media lists should be updated twice per year, as journalists tend to shift beats and jobs fairly often. You will use it often, to promote *Lights On Afterschool* and other activities.

## Step Two: Invite the Public to Your Event

Once you have designed your event, use the media to encourage people to come. Send an announcement to everyone on your media list in the middle of September. Be sure to include your name and daytime phone number in case there are any questions.

## Step Three: Identify Your Key Messages

Develop key messages for your *Lights On Afterschool* rally. These messages will be integrated into all your media materials and will be the focus of remarks by your spokespersons. If possible, narrow your key messages to three, and keep them simple, clear and concise. The following is an example of messages, but be sure to tailor yours to reflect what afterschool programs mean to your community and the challenges facing afterschool programs in your state.

**The [name of program] keeps kids safe and healthy, inspires students to learn and helps working families.** Children who come to our program every afternoon have a safe place to go, a range of fun and challenging activities, and supervision by adults who help them learn and stay out of trouble. Afterschool is key to kids' success.

**Afterschool programs need more resources and more support.** Funding shortages are denying too many kids the opportunities that afterschool programs offer. Too many afterschool programs are being forced to cut back or even close because of budget cuts, or because they were unable to secure enough funding in the first place. We ask lawmakers, business and community leaders, parents and others to do more to make afterschool available to every family that needs it.

**We're proud to join students, parents, educators and community leaders at 7,500 rallies across the country in calling for 'afterschool for all' for Lights On Afterschool!** The Afterschool Alliance organized this event to underscore how important it is to keep the lights on and the door open for kids at afterschool programs. We support the Afterschool Alliance's mission to give every child access to an afterschool program.

## Step Four: Structure Your Event with Media in Mind

Plan your event with media in mind. Some things to remember:

- The media - particularly television reporters and photographers from newspapers - look for good visuals. Make sure your event has lots of color,

action, and signs or banners with your program name and "*Lights On Afterschool*" prominently placed. Journalists need to file their stories during late afternoon hours, so plan the program for your Lights On Afterschool event as early as possible. If your event goes from 3 PM to 5 PM, for instance, hold the program at 3:15 or 3:30 PM.

- Choose two or three spokespeople. They might include your program director, a mayor or other prominent official who supports the afterschool program, and an articulate student who participates. Make sure the spokespeople know your key messages and are familiar with all aspects of your *Lights On Afterschool* event.
- Be sure you have parental permission for any students who will talk to journalists, on- or off- camera.
- Sign up reporters and identify them with badges or nametags of a specific color when they enter your event so everyone knows who they are. You might want to assign volunteers to stay with reporters, introduce them to people, explain activities and answer questions.

### **Step Five: Appeal to the Press**

On October 4 or 5, email, mail or fax a media alert about your *Lights On Afterschool* event to everyone on your media list. It serves as an invitation to reporters to cover the event. An alert is very basic and gives journalists information on who, what, where, when and why the event is important to the community. It is not a news release and need not include quotes or give great detail. A media alert should never exceed one page. If you have a wire service in your community (Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters or a local City News Service), fax a copy of the alert to the "Daybook Editor" there. She or he publishes a calendar of newsworthy events for other reporters to check each day. On October 10, update the media alert you sent the previous week by adding new speakers or more information about student activities, and email or fax it again first thing in the morning. Once it's out, over the course of October 10th and 11th, call everyone on your media list to make sure they received your media alert and to ask if they (or someone from their media outlet) can come. If they are unable to make it, plan to email or fax them a news release on October 12, immediately following or during the event. Many news outlets may be willing to write a story from a press release if they are unable to send a reporter to an event. If you call a talk show producer, ask about booking your afterschool program director as a guest on a future show to discuss the benefits of afterschool and the harm that would come from budget cutbacks.

## Step Six: Issue a News Release

A few days before your event, write a news release. A news release is written like a news story, but has the advantage of being written from your point of view. It contains quotes from important people, background on your afterschool program and *Lights On Afterschool*, and features your key messages. It should not exceed two pages. It is essential that it list a contact person, with daytime and evening (or cell) phone numbers. Because the news release will be distributed at your event in the press kits, it should be written in the past tense. You should also fax it to journalists who do not come to your event.

## Step Seven: Develop Press Kits

Assemble press kits to distribute at your event - enough for all the journalists you expect will come, and then a few extra. The kits can be assembled in plain folders with a label from your afterschool program on the cover or, if you want to be creative, have students decorate the covers and write "press kit" prominently under the drawing. The kits should contain:

- Your news release
- A one-page background sheet on your afterschool program
- A one-page fact sheet on afterschool programs with data added on your state or community (adapt [www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights\\_on/a\\_facts.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/a_facts.cfm) )
- Copies of the remarks of the mayor, program director, or other speakers

They may also contain:

- Letters from parents, volunteers or students describing why they support the program, a proclamation from your mayor or governor declaring October 12 "Lights On Afterschool Day", notable facts - for example, how has your program grown since its inception, how many students are on your waiting list, how many volunteers the program has, etc., and a page describing your program's upcoming events.

## **Step Eight: Manage Media at Your Event**

On October 12, set up a "media sign-in" table. It should be easily recognizable to reporters and be placed at the entrance to the room or area where your Lights On Afterschool event will take place. Assign a staff person or volunteer to be at the table throughout the event to assist journalists. Have a sign-in sheet with "name of reporter," "media outlet," "phone number" and "email" written in columns at the top. Each reporter who signs in should be given a press kit and verbal information about your rally. If something special is happening in half an hour, make sure to tell him/her that. Give each reporter a badge or nametag to wear so everyone at the event can easily identify press people. Do not be surprised if journalists (photographers and camera crews in particular) "take over the room" briefly by setting up special lights for cameras, clipping their microphones to the podium or putting tape recorders on the podium. Be prepared to help them, as long as their needs do not disrupt your event.

## **Step Nine: Event Management**

Don't let the story end on October 12. Make copies of any articles or broadcast stories about your Lights On Afterschool event that appear and circulate them to your board of directors, funders, parents, volunteers and policy makers at all levels. Assign people to monitor local TV news shows on October 11, 12 and 13, and tape any stories about your event. Keep those tapes to show at fundraisers, orientations or meetings you have in the future. Stay in contact with reporters who attend your event or produce stories. Contact them in May or June to see if they'd be interested in doing an end-of-school-year follow-up on your afterschool program. Or have the students in your program create a thank-you card to send the week after *Lights On Afterschool* in appreciation for a good story. You might even contact the reporter to see if he or she would host a group of kids from your program, so they can see what it's like to work at a TV, radio or newspaper office. Maintaining that relationship after the event will help you the next time you are looking for publicity.

## **Step Ten: Celebrate!**

On October 13, be sure to collect clips from local newspapers. Then, relax. You mastered the fine art of media relations, and your afterschool program and the children you serve will benefit from your work. Congratulate yourself and your team on a job well done!

# Sample Media Alert / News Release

(on your letterhead)

**(MEDIA ALERT/NEWS RELEASE)**

October 5, 2006

Contact: Martha Willow

234-555-6789 (day)

234-555-9876 (eve.)

## **Bay City Afterschool Program to Hold *Lights On Afterschool* Rally 7,500 Rallies Aim to Make Afterschool Programs Available to All**

The Bay City Afterschool Program will sponsor a *Lights On Afterschool* rally on Thursday, October 12 at 3 PM. The rally in support of afterschool programs will be one of more than 7,500 such events around the nation that day – the seventh annual *Lights On Afterschool* Day, organized by the Afterschool Alliance. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Chair of *Lights On Afterschool* again this year. Speakers in Bay City will call for expanding afterschool opportunities so that every child who needs a program has access to one, and discuss the harm that could result from budget cuts.

Participants in the *Lights On Afterschool* rally include Mayor Indigo Mitchell, School Board Chair Erin Faulkner, as well as local business leaders, educators and other officials. The event will highlight three of the significant contributions that afterschool programs make to Bay City: keeping kids safe and healthy, inspiring them to learn, and relieving working parents of worries about their children's activities during the afternoon hours. Hundreds of parents, supporters and community members are expected to attend.

**What:** Bay City *Lights On Afterschool* Rally

**When:** 3 PM, October 12, 2006

**Where:** Bay City Middle School Auditorium, 4521 Maple Street

**Who:** Mayor Indigo Mitchell, School Board Chair Erin Faulkner, local business leaders, parents and supporters of afterschool

For more information or to arrange interviews with speakers, contact Martha Willow at 234/234-2345.

The Bay City Afterschool Program opened in 1999 with a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant from the U.S. Department of Education. It now serves 250 children, providing homework assistance, mentoring, tutoring, and classes and clubs in sports, recreation, mathematics, chess, and dozens of other subjects. The program is a collaboration between the school system, YMCA, Museum of Arts and Sciences and three local colleges.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children have access to afterschool programs by the year 2010. More information on *Lights On Afterschool* is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

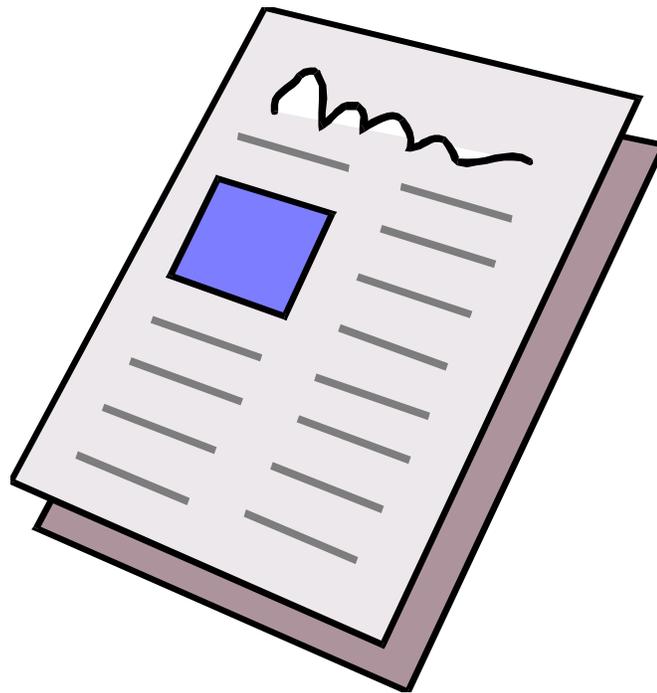
# Sample Newsletter Article

## **Participate in Lights On Afterschool! October 12, 2006**

Join 7,500 communities and 1 million Americans in celebrating afterschool programs at the Afterschool Alliance's 7th annual Lights On Afterschool! This nationwide event calls attention to the importance of afterschool programs and the resources required to keep the lights on and the doors open. [ORGANIZATION] is proud to be a Lights On Afterschool National Supporting Organization.

Too many children -- 14.3 million -- are missing out on afterschool opportunities. Participate in Lights On Afterschool and help call attention to this important issue.

To learn more about Lights On Afterschool, register an event, access Event Planning Tools, or find out what is going on in your area on October 12, visit [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org). Those who register will be receive free posters, and their events will be promoted to media and the public. Lights On Afterschool is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to afterschool programs by 2010.



# Sample Calendar Posting

## **LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL! October 12, 2006**

This October, more than 7,500 communities and 1 million Americans will celebrate Lights On Afterschool, a nationwide event organized by the Afterschool Alliance to rally support for afterschool programs.

Community organizations and programs are invited to hold their own celebration, or participate in a local event, and help call attention to the benefits of afterschool programs.

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning. In the U.S. today, 14.3 million children go home alone after school. To sign up to host an event, locate an event in your area, or access event planning tools visit:

[www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights\\_on/index.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/index.cfm).



# Sample Radio Announcer Copy

Take this Public Service Announcement (PSA) to your radio stations and ask if they will read it on the air to let the community know about your *Lights On Afterschool!* event. Edit the text as needed.

## Afterschool Programs - Live Announcer Copy: 60

If you could give a child a safe place to go after school, would you? What about helping kids get better grades and go on to college? Or giving them time to explore new worlds and discover hidden talents?

You can help - we all can - by showing support for afterschool programs in **[insert your town]**. Attend a *Lights On Afterschool* event October 12th in your community.

In America today, 14.3 million children are alone after school. **[Replace this national figure with data about your state from the America After 3Pm Study].**

Help give them a place to go. Log on to [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org) to find the *Lights On Afterschool* event in your community. October 12th. That's Thursday. Mark it down and look it up at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

A public service message from the Afterschool Alliance and this station.



# Sample Event Logos

Need help creating your own marketing publications? Consider using the following logos in your publications! The following logos can be downloaded from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights\\_on/logos.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/logos.cfm)



**Lights On Afterschool!**