

Arkansas School-Age LINKS

Special Edition

Lights On Afterschool

October 22, 2009

Event Planning Guide



Arkansas State University
Childhood Services

Arkansas Department of
Human Services

Division of Child Care and
Early Childhood Education



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, legislators, and the media about events taking place in your program or community to celebrate Lights On Afterschool on October 22, 2009.

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 22nd 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 has 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 or contact Jennifer Harris via e-mail at jenharris@astate.edu or 501-240-2741.

On October 22nd, 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



Materials for the
2009
Lights on
Afterschool Event
Planning Guide!

Consider these tips to
make your Lights On
Afterschool earth friendly
by going **Green**.

Pages 45-46



NEW graphics and materials
including web banners, email
invitation instructions, and
more!

PAGE 23-24



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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. Click on "Lights On!"

This guide is also available for download by visiting the Arkansas Out-of-School Network website at www.aosn.org



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 34 and return it to Jennifer Harris at jenharris@astate.edu

A certificate of recognition will be mailed back to you and your event might be featured in an upcoming edition of School-Age LINKS or on the AOSN website!

Best of luck in the planning of your local celebrations!



Are you a Facebook user?
You can post photos, videos
and comments about
Lights On Afterschool on
Facebook!

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)
-  Parents who are concerned about their children's after-school care miss an average of eight days of work per year. Decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about after-school care costs businesses up to \$300 billion per year. (Brandeis University, Community, Families and Work Program, 2004 and Catalyst & Brandeis University, December 2006)
-  The parents of more than 28 million school-age children work outside the home. (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998)
-  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)
-  Nine in 10 Americans want all children and teens to have some type of organized activity or safe place to go after school. (Afterschool Alliance & Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates Inc., 2008)
-  Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and are more likely to drink, smoke and engage in sexual activity. (YMCA of the USA, March 2001)

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

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





Lights on Afterschool is coming October 22nd!

Please join the Arkansas Out of School Network in a special **Technical Assistance call** on **August 14, 2009 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. CST.**



To make your reservation to attend this call, please contact Woodie Sue Herlein at 870-972-3589 or wherlein@astate.edu

To learn more about the Arkansas Out of School Network visit www.aosn.org.

This technical assistance call is a “must attend” opportunity if you would like the chance to:

- Learn more about what Lights On Afterschool is all about from a national perspective.
- Learn tips and strategies from past Lights On Afterschool event sponsors throughout the state of Arkansas.
- Learn about resources that are available to you as you take the necessary steps to plan a successful Lights on Afterschool celebration!



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, over 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.

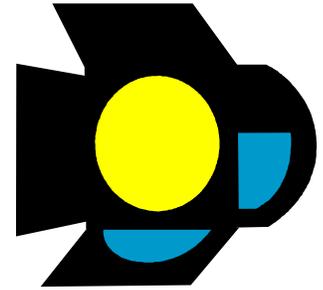
Main Talking Points about Quality Afterschool Programs:

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



WWW.AFTERSCHOOLALLIANCE.ORG

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 16 (414,523 children) have their caregiver(s) in the workforce.

In May 2008, students from the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service completed a report titled “The Demand for After-School Programs in Arkansas” that provided the following information:

 Forty-four percent of Arkansas families report not having regular access to after-school care for their children. While there are currently no comprehensive studies documenting the number of children enrolled in after-school programs in Arkansas or the number of out of school programs, a preliminary assessment by the Arkansas Out of School Network (AOSN) provides some indicators using data from the Arkansas Department of Human Services and the Arkansas Department of Education:

- Over 145,500 children in Arkansas participate in 4-H activities.
- Approximately 63,300 students participate in Boys and Girls Club programs.
- Eighty-four percent (15,950) of the students served by YMCA programs are school aged (6-17 year olds).
- There are currently 423 licensed school ages centers with capacity to serve 27,494 children. An estimated 73 children age 5-13 are eligible for every quality slot in Arkansas.
- There were 43 programs awarded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grants during the last funding cycle. Approximately 12, 587 students were served during the 2006 – 2007 cycle.
- The City of Little Rock’s Prevention, Intervention and Treatment programs serve 2,130 students, and the Pulaski County’s Our Clubs serve over 400 students.

 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.



Sampling of 2008



Events in Arkansas

Eureka Springs

Afterschool Ambassador Barbara Dunnam, Eureka Kids, 479-239-4553
Barbdeschner@Eurekakidz.org

Eureka Kids hosted Lights on Afterschool in Harmon Park on October 16th. Activities included the arrival of the Eureka Kids "Afterschool for All Art Car." The "Art Car" is designed and maintained by the afterschool students and features Jackson Pollock style of painting, flashing light bulbs and youth. The "Art Car" placed fourth in the Eureka Springs Art Car Parade and now it travels all over Arkansas promoting afterschool. Dinner was provided by "On the Border", a restaurant based in Rogers. Displays and games rounded out the event.

Waldron

Lynn Failla, Gurdon Public Schools, 870-353-5123, faillal@gurdon1.dsc.k12.AR.US

Gurdon Public Schools celebrated Lights On Afterschool with a "Balloon Lift Off" at Cabe Middle School. The balloons carried the school's address and the Lights On Afterschool light bulb art with a message. The event was on October 16th from 4:15 to 5:00 PM. Sororities from Henderson State University painted faces and provided other activities for the children. Rotary Club members and local and state policy makers were invited. Mayor Clayton Franklin signed a proclamation at the event. More than 50 people were expected.

Danville

Randy Isely, Super-Out-School 21st Century Community Learning Centers at S.C. Tucker Elementary, 479-495-4820, iselyr@dps-littlejohns.net

The Super-Out-School 21st Century Community Learning Centers at S.C. Tucker Elementary celebrated Lights On Afterschool on September 4th. An open house was held at the school from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Parents and students learned about the different afterschool programs offered and then signed up their children. Parents toured the classrooms and learned about ways to get more involved with groups such as Watchdog Dads, the Parent Involvement Center and the Parent Teacher Organization. The S.C. Tucker Elementary School Principal, afterschool program director, and other school officials attended.

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!

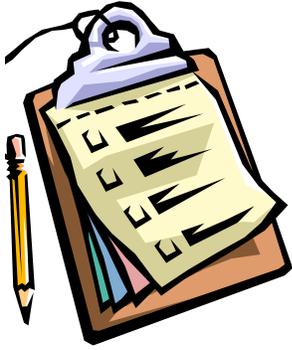
Light Bulb Art

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!



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.

8 to 10 weeks out

- Form your event team. Assign leads for: Event Chair, Logistics; Media and Public Relations; VIPs and RSVPs. Ask partner organizations or other afterschool providers about working together on a joint event so you can maximize resources. Set a meeting or conference call schedule. Draw up a chart listing responsibilities and deadlines.
- Use the questions and ideas on our Who What When & Where page to brainstorm your event. Check out what others have done in the Case Studies. Plan your event with media in mind. Some things to remember:
 - The media - particularly television reporters and newspaper photographers - 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 5PM, for instance, hold the program at 3:15 or 3:30 PM.
- Finalize the time and location. Outline the program. Invite guest speakers, including policy makers.
- Find out if you need any permits if your event is off-site in a public venue. If it is a park, call the Parks department. If a rally at the capitol, town hall or local government building is the plan, contact the building maintenance office or city manager's office. If you are asked for proof of insurance against property damage or personal injury, ask to apply for a waiver of this requirement.
- Set the budget.
- Create your invite list of community members, media, and policy makers.
- Design a print and/or email invitation using Lights On Afterschool graphics. Be sure to include: Date , Time, Location, RSVP instructions
- 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. (See Page 35 for Sample)

6 weeks out

- Compile a list of media to invite to the event. (See Create a Media List page 36)
- Draft and distribute a short newsletter article promoting the event for the websites and newsletters of allied organizations. (See Sample Article on Page 43)
- Draft and distribute a calendar announcement to newspaper calendar sections, as well as local television and radio calendar editors, promoting the event. (See Sample Calendar Announcement on Page 44)
- 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.

For Advanced Media Outreach:

- Draft the script for a 60-second public service announcement (PSA) and distribute it to local radio stations. It should promote Lights On Afterschool, and should be written so that it can be read by stations' on-air talent. (See Sample PSA on Page 46)
- Draft and send pitch letter to editorial page editor of major daily newspaper requesting meeting with the newspaper's editorial board.

5 weeks out

- Send out invitations. Make follow-up phone calls to confirm all V.I.P. guests.
- Draft and distribute a pitch letter to local television and radio talk show producers, including local cable access.

For Advanced Media Outreach:

- Follow up pitch letter to editorial page editor with a phone call to "make sure the letter arrived," and to see if the editor has decided whether to meet with your group.

4 weeks out

- Post signs and posters in public places announcing the event.
- Write a minute-by-minute agenda to be sure you have time for all the speakers and elements in your plans.
- Follow up pitch letter to radio and television (including cable access) talk shows with phone calls.

For Advanced Media Outreach:

- Distribute editorial memorandum to newspapers with which you're not able to schedule editorial board meetings. You might want to collaborate with other afterschool providers in the area.

- Meet with your "editorial board team" to prepare for the editorial board meeting.

3 weeks out

- Update the RSVP list daily. Confirm refreshments, audio equipment, seating, restrooms, first aid, photographer, supplies, flowers, decorations, entertainment, etc.
- Arrange transportation if necessary for dignitaries and guest speakers.
- If you do not have materials about your program, develop a program fact sheet.

For Advanced Media Outreach:

- Meet with editorial board (ideal time frame, but take what you can get!)

2 weeks out

- 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.
- Get proclamation framed for presentation.
- Update the RSVP list.
- Distribute media alert telling reporters of the event to arrive 10 days before.
- Begin assembling components of media kit, for distribution on the day of the event. The kit should include: a fact sheet about your program; a fact sheet about Lights On Afterschool and afterschool; your news release about your event; a copy of any proclamations from the governor, mayor, council or school board; a brochure or other promotional material about your program; copies of prepared remarks by your speakers; information on how to enroll students in the program; a list of upcoming afterschool events; and letters from parents, volunteers or students describing why they support the program.

For Advanced Media Outreach:

- Draft and submit an opinion column to the major local newspaper or to several community newspapers.

1 week out

- Get a weather report for outdoor events.
- Assign people to monitor local TV news shows on the day before, day of and day after the event. Tape any stories about your event. Keep those tapes to show at fundraisers, orientations or meetings you have in the future.

- Copy Afterschool for All petition or sign up forms for attendees to fill out and and light bulbs to decorate.
- Have your news release ready to go.
- Update the RSVP list.
- Begin radio and television interviews, leading up to the event.

For Advanced Media Outreach:

Draft and send unique letters-to-the-editor to local newspapers, promoting the event (don't send to any paper considering printing an opinion column you submitted).

Two days before the event

- Distribute updated media alert to arrive today. Update with new information about who will attend or speak, and any other last-minute changes of consequence.
- Call local media to "pitch" them on attending the event.

Lights On Afterschool Day

- Distribute news release by fax or email to your media list.
- Have guests sign in. Set up a "press sign-in" table. See Working with the Press and give reporters news release and media kit. Have program or agenda available at sign in, along with materials about your programs, Lights On Afterschool and the importance of afterschool programs in general.
- Assign people to look out for VIPs.
- Make sure someone is set to tape any television or radio news broadcasts covering your event.

The Day After Lights On Afterschool

- 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.
- Make copies of any articles or broadcast stories and circulate them to your board of directors, funders, parents, volunteers and policy makers at all levels. Keep 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. Maintaining that relationship after the event will help you the next time you are looking for publicity.
- Celebrate! You mastered the fine arts of event planning, media relations and community outreach, and your afterschool program and the children you serve will benefit from your work.

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 21st 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

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



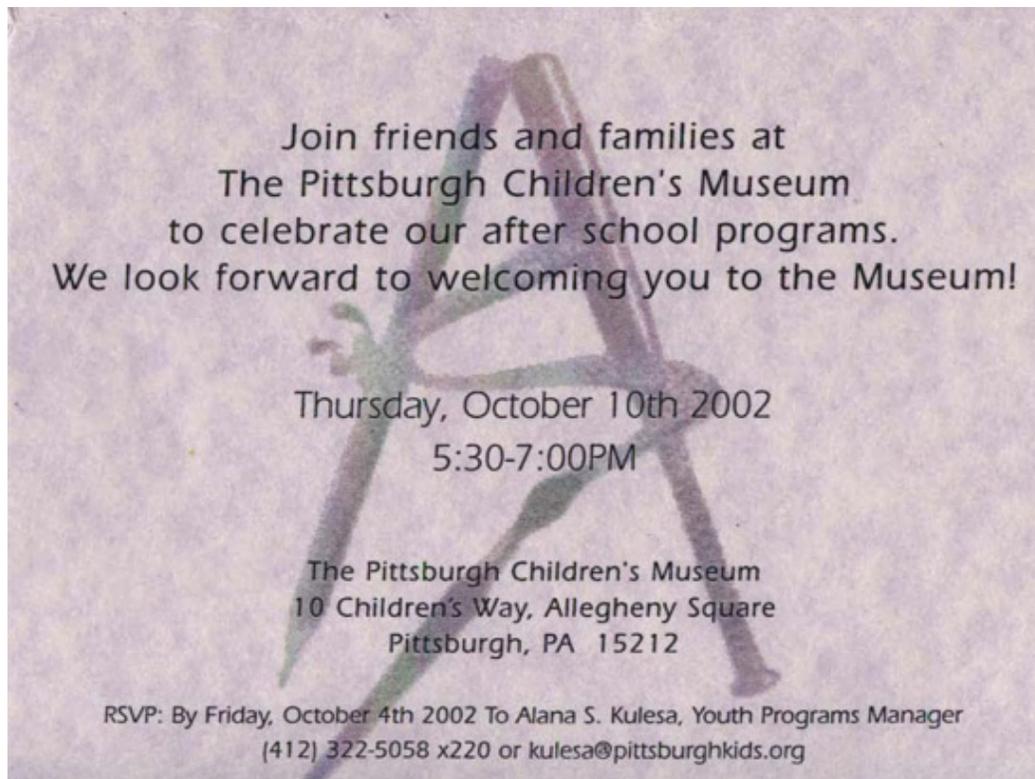
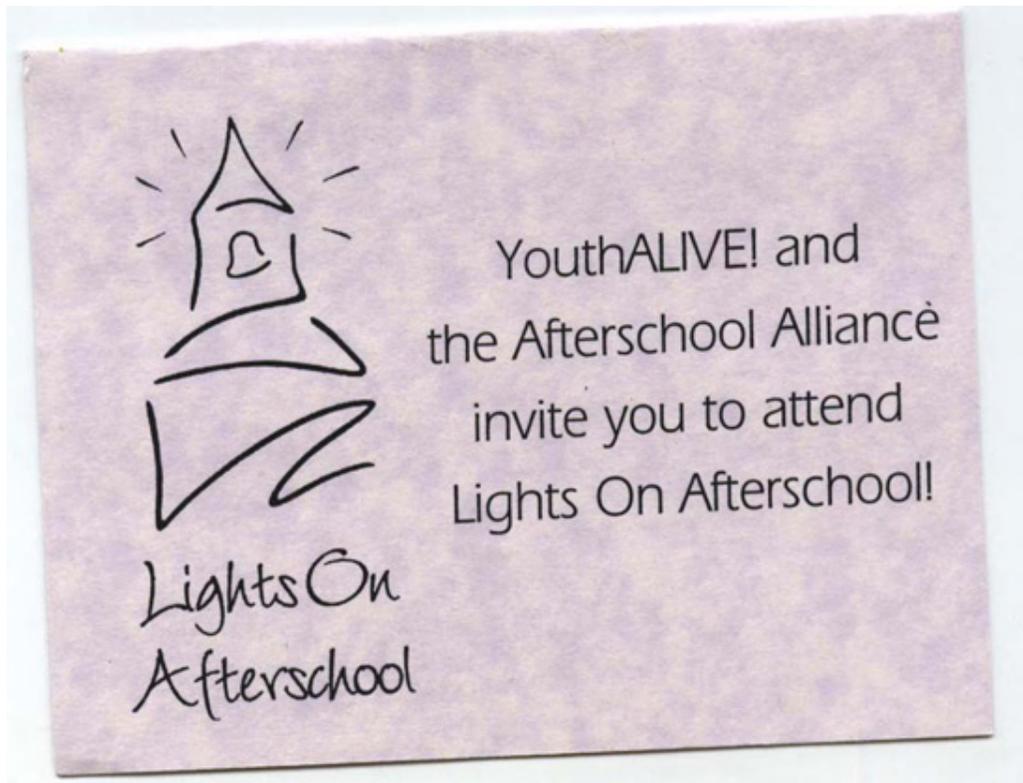
RSVP.

renee@nmforumforyouth.org
Renee Paisano-Trujillo
(505) 821-3574 Ext. 101



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 XX, 20XX, our afterschool program will be participating in the Xth 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,

[Your Name and Title]

Creating a Sample E-Mail Invitation

Sending your invitation via email gives you the advantage of tracking who you have invited, who has RSVP, and who you will need to follow up with. This will also give you a chance to personalize your invitation with information about your program – where it's located, how many children are being served, activities provided, etc. You can either send an email invitation using your own email system, or using an electronic invitation service such as EVITE.com. The advantage of your email is that you can get rsvp's right in your mailbox without checking an outside service; the advantage of a service like EVITE is that all of the event rsvps are tracked for you in one place, and don't clog your inbox. You can also use more graphics in your email invitation. Both are FREE!

From your email – Keep it short and sweet with one or two nice but simple color graphics (too many graphics will make your email large, and some people may not receive it). Use our email header for Lights On Afterschool. Try to make it brief enough that readers will see most of the information in their email preview screen.

Subject: Come Celebrate Lights On Afterschool Oct XX



YOU'RE INVITED TO A CELEBRATION!!

Make plans to join [organization/program name] and the Afterschool Alliance to celebrate the importance of afterschool programs, [date], for the Lights On Afterschool! In communities today, 14.3 million children take care of themselves after the school day ends. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning. Join us, along with 7,500+ afterschool programs nationwide, in celebrating our afterschool programs.

[Be sure to include information about your event. Also remember to thank your sponsors. Sample below]

- o Who: [Lucky Kids Afterschool Program]
- o What: [An open house event with food, fun and entertainment]
- o When: [Thursday, October 18th, 2007 – 3 pm until 5pm]
- o Where: [Johnson Elementary School, 1234 Main Street]
- o Why: [Come and experience first hand what fantastic activities the Lucky Kids Afterschool program is providing the youth of Johnson Elementary. The children will showcase their talents for art, dance and reading by providing participants with an art show of recent

projects completed in the afterschool program; provide a talent show featuring African-dance and ballroom dance; and read written stories entitled "What Lucky Kids Has Done for Me" .]

[If you want people to r.s.v.p. for the event, be sure to tell them how and by what deadline]

Lucky Kids would like to thank the following for making this event a great success!

Corner Pizza Store
ABC Party Supplies

- E-invitation services - Services such as EVITE.com can help you create attractive invitations and manage your r.s.v.p.s. You can often select a design format or create your own. Upload our graphics to customize your invitation; consider using photos from your program or past events, or artwork by afterschool students. (NOTE: typically art files must be either a .JPG or .GIF format with maximum size 500 KB).

Creating an e-invitation through EVITE.com

- Visit www.evite.com to get started creating your invitation
- Choose a design. Design your own invitation or choose from a list of designs created by evite.com. If designing your own, choose a background our upload your own from your computer.
- Upload your main image – lights on graphic artwork, pictures from your program, your logo, etc. (must be either a .JPG or .GIF maximum 500 KB)
- Choose the colors of your text, event title, headers and reply boxes
- Enter Details. Enter the event title, location, time, and host name (your program name). Be sure to include a message about your event, such as, what activities are planned, sponsor thank you, what keynote speakers or prominent individuals have been invited. Preview your invitation to make sure all information is correct.
- Add Guest. Create your guest list by importing your contacts list from your address book or by inserting email addresses in the space provided. Be sure to choose your reply style in order for your guest to select the correct response to your evite. When your guests reply, their responses will be grouped under the headers yes, no and maybe. You can customize these headers by choosing a reply style offered by Evite or by creating your own. There is a 750 guest maximum.
- Email Messages to Guest. Evite will automatically send an email to your list of contacts to alert them about the invitation and also provide a link to view the invitation. This alert will include the event title, the main image and a message that you create about the event.
- Register with Evite and check your guest list often. Make sure to log into your evite.com invitation often to track who has responded and who needs a follow up call. With evite.com, you will also be able to send reminders to invited guests about the event and invite more people.

Using Lights On Afterschool to Raise Funds



Lights On Afterschool presents a great opportunity to raise money for your program or organization. Your event can offer sponsors valuable exposure to the media, to families and to current and potential customers. It also gives sponsors a chance to show that they care about the community -- a trait that directly translates into consumers' likelihood to purchase their products. Here are a couple of tools and tips to help you maximize Lights On Afterschool funding opportunities.

10 Tips for Getting (and Keeping) Sponsors

1. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK!!

The #1 reason why groups or businesses don't participate and give \$\$ is that no one ASKED them. 9 out of 10 groups you approach may say "no" but it is that one "yes" that counts!!

2. DON'T BE DISCOURAGED BY A "NO"

Play detective and investigate if "no" means "not right now". This could be an opportunity to start building a relationship with a potential funder to find out more about their philanthropic objectives, policies, and the key gatekeepers with whom you need to stay in touch.

3. "PITCH" TO THE BOTTOM LINE

When compiling your sponsorship levels, remember you are not just asking the sponsor to cover the cost of your event's budgeted items such as t-shirts, banners etc. Rather, you are selling a sponsorship package that is worth much more - a direct affiliation with the community; the greatest and most in-demand resource for a corporate sponsor. When possible, specify the projected number of attendees and emphasize the anticipated number and types of impressions that the sponsorship will achieve for the sponsor. For example, if your event draws 500 participants, the sponsor can anticipate 500 impressions by placing its logos on the event programs.

4. PLAN AHEAD

Most businesses and groups have a finite grants/sponsorship budget that they distribute according to a set giving cycle. You should also remember that your organization is most likely competing with other organizations for those funds. It pays to plan ahead before your LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL event will take place to confirm the potential sponsor's giving cycle in order to meet the set deadlines.

5. BAND TOGETHER

LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL is a great opportunity to team up with other local organizations to compete for sponsorships or grants. This team approach will benefit both you and the sponsor: lower costs for maximum exposure.

6. WHAT'S IN A NAME...

Attract potential sponsors with creative media-savvy ways to publicize a partnership with your organization and to increase the number of impressions for the sponsors. See our list of 32 Ways to Give Sponsors Exposure at your Lights On Afterschool Event for ideas.

7. DO THE LEG WORK

Offer to do the leg-work to generate media i.e. press release for print, radio and TV to publicize your sponsor's role. Visit the Afterschool Alliance's website for media outreach tools at: www.afterschoolalliance.org/media_main.cfm

8. DON'T FORGET YOUR THANK YOUS

Be sure to personalize your thank yous! For example, instead of just sending a thank you card, create an "afterschool champion" award ceremony to honor your sponsor's corporate citizenship and include your organization's children in the ceremony to present the award. Another example of making the thank you more meaningful is by having the children create their own thank you cards the sponsor.

9. ALWAYS STAY IN TOUCH

Be sure to keep the door open for future asks by sending your sponsor periodic updates on your organization.

10. ASK AGAIN!



32 Ways to Give Sponsors Exposure at your Lights On Afterschool Event

1. Print sponsor's name on all clothing (i.e. on the back of t-shirts).
2. Print sponsor's name on invitations and event materials. You can use a self inking stamp on your invitations.
3. Print sponsor's names on all promotional material i.e. save the date cards, entry or registration forms, posters, tickets.
4. Include displays encouraging attendees to support or frequent the sponsor's business.
5. Print sponsor's logos on banners and podium signs.
6. Set up tables for sponsor's product samples/materials at your event.
7. Give the sponsor the opportunity to distribute coupons for products.
8. Lend sponsors time at the podium to talk about their company's commitment to afterschool.
9. Distribute sponsor's advertising materials to participants as inserts in programs or newsletters.
10. If hosting a reception, offer the sponsor the opportunity to name a table.
11. Display sponsor's logo on your organization's website.
12. Add a hotlink from your organization's web pages to the sponsor's website.
13. Include photos of participants, staff etc. wearing sponsors' logo in media packets.
14. Include sponsor's name in an advertisement in your local or community newspaper inviting the community to join you both for Lights On Afterschool.
15. Display a poster or flier about the event with sponsor's logos on bulletin boards in your organizations' entry way or offices.
16. Print sponsor's logos on event giveaways such as cups, medals and ribbons - or let the company produce them and hand them out.
17. Print sponsor's logos on name badges.

18. Promote sponsor's name and products on the PA system during the event.
19. Lend sponsors use of photos of the event for their own publications and promotions.
20. Include sponsor's name or logo in your organization's newsletter article about the event.
21. Set sponsorship levels whereby sponsors at higher levels have additional, distinct benefits and visibility.
22. For high levels of giving, offer a sponsor category exclusivity guaranteeing that you will not recruit any of their competitors as sponsors.
23. Adapt any of the ideas here as part of long-term sponsorship package that launches at Lights On and is carried out for the next year via visibility in your publications, on your web site, at events.
24. Develop an awards ceremony as part of your event, and honor the company for its leadership. Issue a press release about the award, and be sure to send a picture of the company rep receiving the award to your local papers.
25. Include a number of tickets or seats at tables for your Lights On Afterschool event as part of sponsorship package.
26. Acknowledge the sponsor in all media materials - media advisory and press releases - about the event.
27. For higher donors or "Presenting Sponsors" of the event, include a quote from the company in your news release.
28. Develop a way for the company's product to be used at your event.
29. Give sponsor products, coupons or discounts away as a door prize to give the product exposure in the community.
30. Bring your sponsor up on stage and present with a giant thank you card decorated by children; be sure to get a photo for your publications, web site and to send local media.
31. Make a sponsor's contribution to your program the focus of your event or program, and in a news release.
32. Members of your organization can participate in the sponsor's own promotional activities i.e. the sponsor can feature the youth and parents served by your afterschool program as "special guests" at company board meetings, and other appropriate events to profile their community giving.

Case Studies:

Lights On Afterschool Sponsorship

Provided below are a few case studies of successful events including tips from organizers on what worked; ideas for event activities and themes; and a short description of some past Lights On Afterschool events. We hope these are useful in your planning and help spark some ideas for your own event! To view more case studies visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaCases.cfm>



Youth Race Inspires Policy Maker to Act

Where: Austin, Texas

Who: 160 afterschool programs held events in the Austin area that involved state leaders and special recognition for a Member of Congress.

Highlights: A main kick off event with a student torch race to the state capitol. Students passed the torches on to legislators to call attention to the thousands of area children without afterschool. The creative event inspired a state policymaker to help find needed funding for afterschool.

Former Afterschool Ambassador Anna Land's 2003 Lights On Afterschool event in Austin, Texas was a week-long affair, drawing on a broad coalition of afterschool organizations in the community.

Land says she can see the long-term impact, citing local politicians who participated who are now stronger advocates for afterschool. "We have one county commissioner who made a particularly fiery speech about how we have to do more for our kids. So after the event, we went back to him to ask for help, and in a time of stretched budgets, they've put aside important funding for afterschool."

THE PROGRAM

Festivities began on October 5, the Saturday before the Thursday October 10 celebration, with the official state kick-off event for Lights On - a torch race to the state capitol aimed at raising awareness of the estimated 34,000 children in the greater Austin area without access to afterschool programs. Student carrying the torches were all winners of an essay contest on the importance of afterschool. Local athletes and dignitaries joined the students along the way. At the end of the run, students handed their torches to state legislators, who joined in a rally in support of afterschool. A local "afterschool hero" - a Member of Congress with a strong record of support for afterschool - was presented with an award.

Later that week, 160 afterschool programs held smaller Lights On Afterschool events at their facilities around the Austin area. The events included open houses, rallies, celebrations, student performances and demonstrations, and more. Land's own program, Heart House, a fixture in other communities in the state, used the occasion to celebrate the grand opening of its new Austin site.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Recruit A Hero. Secure a hero, like a Member of Congress. "Look for someone with pull whose participation will make others in the community want to be involved."
- Get Organized. "We had a detailed project plan which we could show people and it helped bring them on board."
- Get Early Buy In from Partners. Determine which afterschool programs and organizations are most likely to participate, and invest them in the plan first. A number of community based organizations, including Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, 4-H, and Boys and Girls Scouts, were particularly eager to join in, and their early participation helped generate enthusiasm that attracted other organizations to the effort.

Community Comes Together to Light Up

Where: Evansville, Indiana

Who: More than 2,000 participants, and 30 community agencies



Highlights: A unique coming together of the entire community -- local businesses, community programs, area leaders, parents, and youth -- to organize, fund, and celebrate Lights On. The spirit of the event is captured in a 20 minute firework display. "Afterschool is about opportunities, and Lights On Afterschool is a tremendous opportunity for youth, families and communities to come together in celebration," says Evansville event co-chair Dan Diehl. The Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (E-VSC) and Evansville community Lights On Afterschool event has been held for several years at Bosse Field, a historic baseball stadium in Evansville. The event highlights the importance of afterschool programs in the lives of children, youth, families and communities, and draws more than 2,000 people.

THE PROGRAM

Children and youth from area afterschool programs performed, more than 30 community agencies set up booths and provided games, food, entertainment, and Lights On t-shirts were provided free to everyone. The event culminated with a huge, exciting 20-minute fireworks display. Opening ceremonies featured the Girl Scouts, Central High School Junior ROTC, and Joshua Academy singing the National Anthem. Dr. McCandless, the E-VSC Superintendent, read a Mayoral proclamation announcing Lights On Afterschool Day. Youth performances followed, including: Evans' Spirit Squad, Glenwood's and Harwood's African Drumming Ensemble, Delaware's Orff Ensemble, Carver's Touring Strings, Cedar Hall's Players with Pat Coslett, Dexter's Sign Language Choir, Howard Roosa's Spanish Club, Culver's Steppers, the African Elementary Choral Ensemble, and Lodge's Choir. Johnny Kincaid of Smokefree Communities, provided a kick-off for Red Ribbon Week activities, and Deputy Williams of the Sheriff's Department and Mary Dunham of Newspaper in Education announced the drug-free slogan award winner. The Boy Scouts were featured in closing ceremonies.

Area businesses donated door prizes that were given out throughout the event. Youth and parents signed a drug- and alcohol-free pledge written on a paper light bulb, and attached the light bulbs to railings at the baseball stadium. The Lights On theme was emphasized with a banner, paper light bulbs throughout the stadium, t-shirts with the Lights On Afterschool logo, performances by students from afterschool programs, and spotlights on kids sharing, "What afterschool means to me?"

SPONSORS

The event was funded entirely through community donations, including those from: The Evansville Courier and Press: Newspaper in Education; Vectren; Old National Bank; and the Evansville Otters. For many years, the Evansville Otters baseball team donated free tickets to local afterschool programs. The Council built on that relationship and successfully recruited the team to lend Bosse field stadium to host Lights On Afterschool. The Otters also provided in-kind donations such as soft drinks, hot dogs and popcorn in addition to volunteering their personnel to staff the concession stands.

One of the highlights of the Evansville Lights On Afterschool event is the popular fireworks display. To cover the cost, the Council recruited a local energy company to be a community partner for Lights On Afterschool. The Council made a compelling pitch asking the company to literally help "keep the lights on afterschool for Evansville". The company was receptive to the pitch and has continued to sponsor the fireworks display for the past 4 years.

The Council explored other opportunities to recruit sponsors by contacting other business groups in the community. For example, a local bank was recruited to help defray event programming expenses and the local newspaper donated ad space to promote the event for several weeks leading up to the actual day. The donated ad space was valued at \$8-9,000.

These partnerships enabled the Council to produce a hugely successful Lights On event. A key factor in getting and keeping these partnerships was making sure to foster a personal connection with the sponsors. For example, in addition to submitting a formal proposal to the local bank, the Council also invited representatives from the bank to their planning meetings to help them become more fully invested.

Recognition

To recognize and thank their sponsors, the Council prominently featured the sponsors in all of the Lights On event materials. For example, all newspaper advertising, programs, yard signs and other promotional materials included a thank you to sponsors and featured their company logos. Following the event, the Council sent a big thank you card along with specially created CD of the event highlights to the sponsors.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Organizer Dan Diehl offers several keys to the program's success:

- Celebrating the Community. "We have broad community involvement. This is not a school event. It is a community event. We have made it a celebration of community."
- Everyone Has A Role. "Because it is a community event, there is a great deal of ownership in the process. Various youth serving organizations make up the planning committee and help with volunteer recruitment, marketing, performance planning, and overall organization."
- Youth Are Front and Center. "The absolute, number one key to success is the youth performances. This is the very essence of why afterschool programs are important. The event gives our youth an opportunity to perform in front of thousands of people. This is an opportunity that they would never have without the event."
- For Sponsorships:
 - Frame Lights On Afterschool as a community event to increase participation from everyone.
 - Promote the event as much as possible i.e. take out newspaper ads, radio appearances, yards signs, television commercials.
 - When fundraising, focus on making personal connections. Identify an individual in the organization and keep them updated about your Lights On Afterschool event.
 - Be prepared to follow up with phone calls after submitting proposals.



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

On October 22, 2009, 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/loaHostEvent.cfm>



Lights On
Afterschool!



2009 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. Please use additional paper as needed.

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!

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: Arkansas Out of School Network, ATTN: Woodie Sue Herlein, P.O. Box 1377, 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 22, 2009, 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 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 15 or 16, 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 19, 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 20th and 21st, 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 16, 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 (visit the AOSN website for more information)
- 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 22nd "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 22nd, 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 22. 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 22, 23, and 24 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 23, 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

Media Alerts are one-page announcements of an upcoming event. They are designed not for the public, but for journalists. Their purpose is to inform reporters of upcoming events, and convince them that these events are genuine news stories that are worthy of coverage. Some tips about media alerts:

- Media Alerts are excellent tools to use to attract media to your afterschool events. If a newsmaker like your mayor or Congressional representative is attending, make sure this is emphasized in your Media Advisory.
- Alerts can be written in narrative form, like the example that follows. Or they can be written in bullet form, answering the questions: What, When, Where, Who and Why. Regardless of the format, an alert must announce an upcoming event or press availability.
- An Alert should say when an event is, where it is, and what and whom reporters will find there. It should also offer a compelling reason for media to attend.

(on your letterhead)

MEDIA ALERT

October XXX, 2009

Contact: [your program/rally contact]
[daytime phone number] (day) and [evening phone number] (eve.)

[Your program name] to Hold Lights On Afterschool! Rally October 22

7,500 Rallies Nationwide Aim to Make Afterschool Programs Available to All

The [your program name] Afterschool Program will sponsor a Lights On Afterschool rally on October 22nd at 3 pm. The rally in support of afterschool programs will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the creation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, the principal funding stream for federal support for afterschool programs. It will be one of more than 7,500 such events around the nation that day, the ninth annual Lights On Afterschool celebration, organized by the Afterschool Alliance. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is Chair of Lights On Afterschool again this year. Speakers in [your city/town] will call for expanding afterschool opportunities so that every child who needs a program has access to one, and discuss the harm that results from budget cuts and freezes.

Participants in the Lights On Afterschool rally include Mayor [your mayor], School Board Chair [your school board chair], as well as local business leaders, educators and other officials. The event will highlight three of the significant contributions that afterschool programs make to [your city/town/district]: 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: [your program or city name] Lights On Afterschool Rally
- When: 3 pm, October 22, 2009
- Where: [location, address]
- Who: Mayor [your mayor's name], School Board Chair [your school board chair], local business leaders, parents and supporters of afterschool

For more information or to arrange interviews with speakers, contact [your program/rally contact] at [daytime phone number].

[Amend the following section to the specifics of your program]

The [your program name] opened in [year opened] 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 working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information on Lights On Afterschool is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.



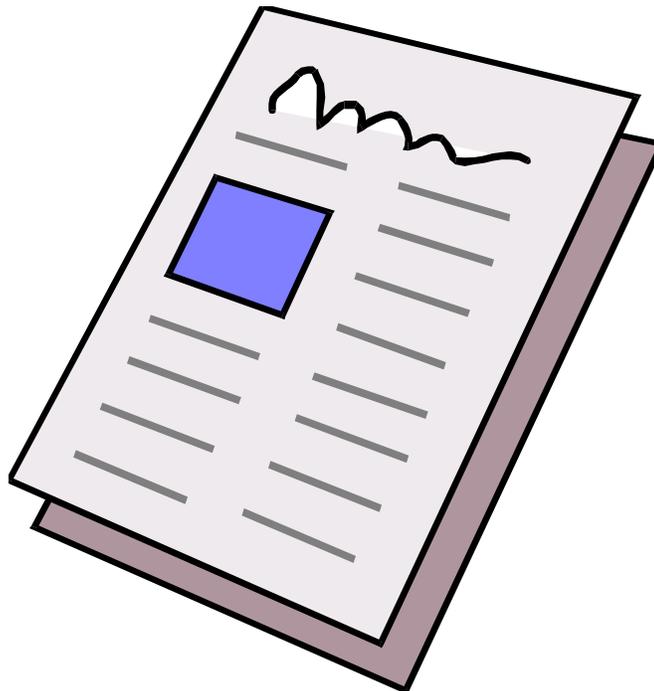
Sample Newsletter Article

Participate in Lights On Afterschool! October 22, 2009

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 22, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org. Those who register will 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

Send a Calendar Announcement to the Calendar Editor at print and broadcast outlets, including newspaper calendar sections, local television, cable and radio calendar editors, promoting the event. To identify the Calendar Editor, call the outlet and ask for the name and contact information for the calendar editor. If you are doing a hard copy mailing, you can just address the envelope to "Calendar Editor" at the particular outlet and mail it. Typically, media outlets run monthly calendars, so they need to get information on your event as soon as possible.

September 3, 2008

CONTACT: [Your Name and Phone Number]

Calendar Announcement:
Lights On Afterschool Rally, October 22
[Location]

[Name of your program] will join with the Afterschool Alliance in this year's Lights On Afterschool, a nationwide series of rallies in support of afterschool programs, on October 22. This year marks the eleventh anniversary of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, the federal government's principal funding stream for afterschool programs. To mark the occasion, and to urge full funding for afterschool, supporters of will gather for Lights On Afterschool rallies in more than 7,500 communities. In all, one million Americans are expected to gather at events across the country to draw attention to the need for more afterschool programs.

[Name of program]'s Lights On Afterschool event will be at [location] from [time]. [Brief description of event and activities – outdoor carnival, open house, dinner, sports competition, etc.]. Special guests include [mayor, school superintendent, local celebrity, etc.]. [Name of program] currently serves [number] youth in [your community/the school's neighborhood] providing them a safe place to go after the school day ends.

[All community members] are invited to attend. For further information about the event, please contact [your name] at [your phone/email address]

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families and inspire learning. According to data from the Afterschool Alliance, 14.3 million children are without adult supervision in the afternoon hours.

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 22nd 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 to find the Lights On Afterschool event in your community. October 22nd. That's Thursday. Mark it down and look it up at 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/loaLogos.cfm>



Lights On Afterschool!



GO GREEN : Making Your Lights On Afterschool Event Earth Friendly

Consider these tips to make your Lights On Afterschool earth friendly by going GREEN. Incorporate into your Lights On Afterschool event and everyday after to ensure that your afterschool program makes great strides with a smaller carbon footprint.

For Program Providers

- Go paperless - Register your Lights On Afterschool event online at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaHostEvent.cfm> rather than mailing or faxing your registration form
- Recycle your paper, plastic and aluminum items by contacting your local recycling agency. Have them bring you recycle bins to sort your items. Find your local recycling center by visiting www.recyclingcenters.org.
- Email invitations to your Lights On Afterschool event!
- Offer finger foods or serve fruit and veggies on a stick to help reduce the use of paper and plastic products. Serve ice cream sandwiches or popsicles to eliminate the use of plastic spoons and bowls.
- Take a class field trip to your local recycling center and learn about the different types of ways to recycle, reuse and reduce waste.
- Post a 'Green Activity of the Day' and have students perform that activity during regular- and after- school hours.
- Consider becoming a Go Green Afterschool Program/School. Visit <http://gogreeninitiative.org/index.php> to register your program/school
- Use the energy efficient light bulb artwork at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaBulbArt.cfm> to show that your program is going Green for Lights On Afterschool. Don't throw them out after your

event! Instead mail a bunch to your congressional, state or local representative and use the rest as decoration for your classroom. Have youth take artwork home to post on refrigerators or in your office.

- If your school is multi-leveled, try taking the stairs to reduce the amount of energy used when taking the elevator. This saves energy and promotes a healthy body!
- Print using the draft option on your copier and use both sides of the paper.
- Recycle your toner and inkjet cartridges! Purchase returnable or refillable toner cartridges.

For Community Participants

- Walk, ride a bike or use public transportation to your local Lights On Afterschool event.
- Bring your own mug or glass to refill your refreshments while attending a Lights On Afterschool event.
- Map your Carbon Footprint (<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/>) to find out how your daily activities effect the environment in terms of green house gases. Seek ways to lower your carbon dioxide output.
- Before you toss that glass bottle into the trash can consider this: the energy savings from recycling one glass bottle can power a laptop computer for 25 minutes!
- While helping wee ones color the energy efficient light bulb for Lights On Afterschool, consider stopping by your local drug store and replacing your home light bulbs with energy efficient ones.
- Recycle your toner and inkjet cartridges as well as old cell phones!
- Turn off the water!
- Fact: The United States uses about 346,000 million gallons of fresh water every day. The average person in the United States uses anywhere from 100-150 gallons of water per day and much of this consumption is from just flushing the toilet.
 - Turn off equipment and lights when they are not in use.



Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
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Little Rock, AR 72203-4608

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