



NEWS RELEASE
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From New York City's Empire State Building to the Mighty Lights Bridge in Memphis, the Lights Are On for Afterschool Across the United States Today!

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Pumpkin volcanos. Paper rollercoasters. Canned food drives. Literacy nights. Chalk-It-Up art contests. Spooky science nights. Virtual STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fairs. Bullying prevention lessons. Frankenstein bowling. Fall festivals. Trunk-or-treating for children. Those are among the many activities that students, parents, educators, lawmakers, community and business leaders, and others are joining today as part of the 22nd annual [Lights On Afterschool](#), with afterschool providers hosting thousands of events across the country, some in-person and some virtual.

Organized by the [Afterschool Alliance](#), *Lights On Afterschool* is the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. The diverse, creative events it includes demonstrate the many ways afterschool programs help students succeed in school and in life.

The New York City skyline will shine for afterschool tonight when the Empire State Building is lit in yellow and blue. Other landmarks being lit for afterschool include: the RSA Building in Birmingham, Alabama; Denver's City and Council Building in Colorado; Caesars Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana; LeVeque Tower in Columbus, Ohio; the World's Only Corn Palace in Mitchell, South Dakota; the Mighty Lights Bridge in Memphis, Tennessee; Houston's Spaceport in Texas; and the Charleston, West Virginia Coliseum and Convention Center.

This evening, the Afterschool Alliance is holding a *Lights On Afterschool* National Youth Town Hall. U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona will kick off the event with a taped message. A panel moderated by radio personality Ally Lynn will feature young people sharing reflections about the role afterschool programs play in their lives. Learn more and [register here](#).

Among the thousands of events taking place at afterschool programs around the nation:

Gadsden, Alabama: The Gadsden City School District is holding *Lights On Afterschool* events at 11 locations. They will engage parents and feature drive-through activities and outdoor events. Activities will be STEM-focused and will have a STEM make-and-take activity for students. There will be a Halloween safety activity and booths for parents.

Orange Park, Florida: For *Lights On Afterschool*, the YMCA of Florida's First Coast has planned three projects: a lightbulb contest at which students and their families will decorate a lightbulb; an art contest at which they will draw their favorite thing about the Y; and the 16th annual 'Read for the Record' featuring student readings of *Amy Wu and the Patchwork Dragon*.

Macon, Georgia: Bibb County School District Before and After School Programs will host *Lights On Afterschool* events at each of its sites. Each school will have carousel activities such as lightbulb art, African Drumming, dance, fitness, science with slime, paint and play, pumpkin carving, cake walk, music, and outdoor gaming. Special guests will include representatives from Cadence Bank, Macon Bacon,

Navicent Health, Macon Fire Department, Starbase Robins, G Ryders Bike Club, Project Aware, Tubman Museum, Girls Scouts of Historic Georgia, and the Museum of Arts and Sciences.

Chicago, Illinois: The YMCA Community Schools Initiative is hosting a virtual open house. Families will join via Google Meets and participate in a Destination Imagination (DI) structure-building challenge. DI introduces kids to a range of ideas, skills, and techniques while they work in teams to solve a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) Challenge. Students will build on their knowledge base and share their experiences and understanding with their parents as they try to outbuild other families.

Rochester, New York: To celebrate *Lights On Afterschool*, GRASA is partnering with the Center for Disability Rights to hold an inclusive trunk-or-treat event. It will be held at Frontier Field and will include a low-sensory portion of the night, followed by a costume contest, a large screen playing Halloween shows, a Star Wars reenactment team, and more than 20 stations handing out treats.

Cranston, Rhode Island: On October 27, Edgewood Highland Elementary School hosted a STEM Advantage *Lights On Afterschool* Celebration. The outdoor event is a collaborative effort of STEM Advantage, Cranston Public Schools, Rhode Island Foundation, United Way of Rhode Island, Mystic Aquarium and Ocean State Kidz Club. During the celebration, youth demonstrated their STEM skills to friends and family members and showed off the new STEM Accelerator program at Mystic Aquarium. The Cranston City Council presented a *Lights On Afterschool* resolution.

Watertown, South Dakota: The Boys & Girls Club of Watertown and the Watertown Northeast Technical High School Science Program are holding a *Lights On Afterschool* event with a STEM focus. High school students are setting up science stations with fun science activities, such as seeing a human brain and learning how physics works. Club members will build towers with playing cards and explore space by playing with the Galactic Kits through the 4-H STEM challenge program. Older Club members will build a toy car out of everyday recyclable material.

El Paso, Texas: Throughout the week, the BOOST Network and its 15 member programs are celebrating *Lights On Afterschool*. To kick off the celebration, BOOST Network distributed 750 activity kits. On October 25, programs participated in a TikTok challenge. On October 26, students designed light bulbs powered by potatoes. On October 27, participants created fireworks in a jar. On October 28, BOOST Network is hosting a virtual Facebook Live event to showcase various, including a visit from the El Paso Chihuahuas Minor League Baseball mascot.

“Lights On Afterschool this year showcases not only the skills students hone and the talents they develop at their afterschool programs, but the strength and resilience of these programs, which have stepped up during the pandemic to meet the educational, social, emotional, and practical needs of students and families,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “In the best of times, afterschool programs do remarkable work, keeping kids safe, inspiring them to learn, and giving working parents the peace of mind that comes with knowing their children are safe and supervised after the school days ends and until they return from their jobs. For the last year-and-a-half, afterschool programs have been expanding their hours and services, delivering meals and enrichment kits, supporting students learning remotely, connecting families to social services, and much more.”

“So we are especially pleased that so many programs are participating in today’s national rally for afterschool,” Grant continued. “We are sending the message that there aren’t nearly enough afterschool programs to serve the students and families who need them. The American Rescue Plan is providing an important but temporary boost for these programs, but the recovery and the growth we need will take more time and resources.”

The most recent America After 3PM household survey of more than 31,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, finds that for every child in an afterschool program in the United States, three more are waiting to get in. The families of 24.6 million children — more than ever before — are unable to access a program. Many report cost as a barrier. There are significant inequities, with Black and Latinx children unable to access the afterschool programs their parents want for them.

Almost 1.5 million children received an afterschool supper through the Afterschool Nutrition Programs on an average day in October of 2020, according to [a study](#) issued by the Food Research & Action Center this week. Participation in afterschool suppers increased by more than 37,317 participants from October 2019 to October 2020.

See a [list of local Lights On Afterschool events](#). To find other events in your area, see [this map of events](#).

BellXcel, Capital One, and Clear Channel Outdoor are generous sponsors of *Lights On Afterschool* this year.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.