



## NEWS RELEASE

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### ***Afterschool programs across Iowa join in National Lights On Afterschool campaign, calling for “Afterschool for All”***

**Des Moines, IA** – Hundreds of students, parents, business, religious, and community leaders across Iowa joined together today for *Lights On Afterschool*, a rally to celebrate the achievements of afterschool students and draw attention to the need for more afterschool programs to serve the millions of children nationwide who are unsupervised and at risk each weekday afternoon. Thousands of events are taking place across the nation this week to emphasize the importance of keeping the lights on and the doors open after school. One such event will take place in Sioux City, at Beyond on the Bell, where families will enjoy festivities at a local pumpkin patch and celebrate their thriving afterschool program. Beyond the Bell’s mission is helping children and families reach their full potential by providing a safe place to play, creating a quality learning environment, and promoting growth. Many more Iowa programs, with support from the Iowa Afterschool Alliance, will be participating in *Lights on Afterschool* this week.

According to the Afterschool Alliance, over 45,000 children participate in an afterschool program, yet 127,000 more would be enrolled if a program were available. For every child in an afterschool program, 4 are waiting to get in. Further, 96% of parents in Iowa are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program. More work needs to be done to meet the great need for afterschool programs that keep Iowa kid’s safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

“Students who participate in the afterschool programs benefit in so many ways. They explore new ways to connect with their community and find ways to belong beyond the academic day. They grow, academically, behaviorally, and socially. Afterschool programs support the whole family, giving kids a safe place to go while parents work, and including excellent opportunities for parents to become involved in their children’s education.” *Heidi Brown, Iowa Afterschool Alliance.*

Governor Kim Reynolds issued a proclamation declaring October 20, 2022, as Lights On Afterschool Day.

Launched in October 2000, *Lights On Afterschool* is the only nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs, drawing attention to the many ways afterschool programs engage students by offering opportunities to learn new and innovative skills. This event is a powerful

reminder that we need to support afterschool programs and ensure the lights stay on and the doors stay open for all youth after school.

*Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information on the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* and America After 3PM is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

To learn more about *Lights On Afterschool* and see a complete list of events in Iowa visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>. For more information about Iowa Afterschool Alliance, please visit <https://www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org/>.

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