

DRAFT NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL” EVENT FOCUSES ON AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS THAT INSPIRE LEARNING, KEEP KIDS SAFE, HELP WORKING FAMILIES *Communities Statewide, Nationwide Will Celebrate Oct. 18*

PHOENIX, Ariz. (Sept., 2007): Communities throughout Arizona will join 1 million people in 7,500 communities nationwide to celebrate the value and importance of afterschool programs during “Lights On Afterschool,” a series of afternoon events beginning Oct. 18, created by the Afterschool Alliance, and supported by the Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence.

“Lights On Afterschool Arizona,” sponsored by the Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence and Kismet Print Productions, encourages afterschool programs, programmers, parents, community leaders, volunteers, kids, and mentors to create special events to bring attention to the value, importance, and fun of afterschool programs.

More than 25 events have been scheduled around the state and additional events are being planned. All events are listed on the Afterschool Alliance web site, www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence is offering Lights on Afterschool toolkits that include a planning guide, curriculum, five Lights On Afterschool posters, and a copy of Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano’s proclamation declaring Oct. 18 as Lights On Afterschool Day.

In addition, afterschool youth are encouraged to enter the Light Bulb Art Contest for a chance to win one of three IPODs courtesy of WalMart. To receive a toolkit or for more information about the art contest, contact the Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence at (602) 279-7100 or by visiting www.azfterschool.org.

“Many events will be scheduled after school from 3 to 6 p.m. Scheduling events at this time of day underscores one of the primary reasons that afterschool programs

are so important,” said Lisa Rice, executive director of the Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence. “The hours between 3 and 7 p.m. are the most dangerous for our children because more of them get into trouble or are victims of crime during that four-hour period.”

But more than providing a safe place for children during out-of-school time, afterschool programs have led to improved school performance (socially, in grades, and on test scores), helped children build self-confidence and self-esteem, and have helped working families.

“For those people already involved in afterschool programs, the value and benefits are already clear,” Rice said. “Lights On Afterschool is designed to raise awareness and provide information about afterschool programs to those not yet involved but for whom the benefits would be obvious and immediate.”

For additional information or to receive a Lights On Afterschool tool kit, visit www.azafterschool.org.