



For Immediate Release

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Nearly 1000 Children And Adults Expected To Help Rally For Afterschool Programs At Lights On! Afterschool Celebration

On October 18, Music Hall will play host to nearly 1000 children and staff representatives from Cincinnati after-school sites rallying for quality after-school programs. Lights On! Afterschool, the two-hour, activity packed evening (from 6 to 8 p.m.) is part of a national celebration being organized by the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. Nationally, more than 6,000 after-school sites will host celebrations to send the message that such programs are key to children's success and must keep operating.

At Lights On!, children will participate in an array of hands-on activities that link after-school fun to academic lessons. A representative of JCPenney will present to the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati a check totaling \$175,000 to be able to serve nearly 400 additional children in need with life-enriching, quality afterschool programs. **Wayne Brady is scheduled to open the rally with a Meet and Greet from approximately 6 p.m. until 6:10 p.m.**

Other activities include:

- Essay Contest
- Resource Fair with CincyAfterSchool partners
- Appearance by local artist/author/songwriter Annie Ruth
- MadCap Puppets
- YMCA Double Dutch jump roping team performance
- YMCA ArtWheels arts programming
- D.A.R.E. Car Officer
- Opportunities to learn more about CincyAfterSchool

'Lights On Afterschool!' shines the light on after-school programs and calls attention to the need for more after-school resources nationwide. In America today, over 14 million children are alone after school. In Ohio, nearly 30% of youth are responsible for taking care of themselves yet nearly 25% of those youth would be likely to take part in an afterschool program if one were available in their community. In Cincinnati, the CincyAfterSchool Network led by the YMCA and Cincinnati Public Schools, offers low income children at 16 school sites a safe place to learn and grow after school.

CincyAfterSchool is a prime example of community resources pulling together to develop and staff after-school programming. The Network began after it received a \$5.1 million federal grant from the Ohio Department of Education's administration to develop community-learning centers at nine Cincinnati Public Schools sites, engaging neighborhoods and parents. With the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati as a lead partner, new grant funding has recently allowed the program to expand to 16 CPS sites. The goal at each school is to serve 250 children with programs such as tutoring/mentoring; telecommunication/technology; career exploration; service learning; fine arts; leadership training; recreation; multi-cultural/diversity; non-school day programs including Saturdays, holiday camps, and summer camp; and family sessions.

The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is the area's largest non-governmental, non-profit community services organization providing safe and nurturing environments for people of all ages, regardless of their ability to pay. More than 43,000 kids, 52,000 families, and 14,000 teens are served each year in a broad range of programs, including mentoring, youth leadership, and volunteerism through community outreach initiatives that promote the character values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is also the Tri-state's largest provider of childcare, serving people of all faiths, races, ages and incomes.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to after-school programs by the year 2010. More information on the Alliance and Lights On Afterschool! is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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