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## **New Research Shows Need For Quality After School Programs**

On October 22, Thousands of Area Children & Parents Will Join Millions Nationwide In Celebration To Help Keep The Lights On AfterSchool

October 16, 2009 -- On October 22, parents, children, caretakers, community volunteers and advocates, are invited to area YMCA-led afterschool programs throughout Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati to celebrate the accomplishments that children enjoy because of the enriching experiences at afterschool sites. More than 22 sites including CincyAfterSchool and locations managed by the Melrose, M.E. Lyons, Clippard Family, and R.C. Durr YMCA branches will host Lights On AfterSchool! Events. (specific times are below)

It is all part of a national celebration organized by the Afterschool Alliance and sponsored by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. 'Lights On Afterschool!' shines the light on after-school programs and calls attention to the need for more after-school resources nationwide.

A national study showing 15.1 million children left alone after the school day demonstrates the strong need for engaging activities after the last classroom bell. Greater Cincinnati children are fortunate because YMCA-led afterschool programs are offering them opportunities to thrive; however, there continues to be a growing need for more sites to serve more students. *\*Please see below for more on the research.\**

"We know that quality after school activities are good for children and for communities because we have seen success firsthand. Lights On AfterSchool! is an opportunity for parents and others who care about the futures of our young people to experience our programs and help ensure all children have access to them," said Jennifer Henderson, YMCA senior program director.

With more than 60 after school locations, the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is one of the largest providers of child care programs in this region. In Cincinnati, the YMCA is a lead agency in the nationally recognized CincyAfterSchool Network – a partnership between Cincinnati Public Schools, the YMCA and other leading youth development agencies, school leaders and volunteers representing the after school component of Cincinnati Public School's Community Learning Center initiative. With 28 sites, CincyAfterSchool serves students in grades K through 12. Tutoring/mentoring; telecommunication/technology; career exploration; service learning; fine arts; leadership training; recreation; multi-cultural/diversity; non-school day programs including Saturdays, holidays, summers, evenings and family sessions are offered at each one. Some of their successes include: 46.6% increase in reading test scores from 2007 to 2008; 44.8% increase in math test scores from 2007 to 2008; 93.6% plan to attend college.

YMCA AfterSchool program goals include: increasing student achievement, reducing risk-taking behavior, and providing balanced programming opportunities for all children, youth, and their families.

