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**The Child Center of NY's
Lights On Afterschool Rally Brings Together Thousands**

***Queens Children, Parents and Community Leaders at 15 Different Programs
Join 12th Annual National Rally for Afterschool Programs***

Queens, NY – Thousands of children, parents, business and community leaders came together yesterday for a *Lights On Afterschool* rally at 15 different Queens afterschool programs run by The Child Center of NY to celebrate the achievements of afterschool students. The event—sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance—was designed to draw attention to the need for more afterschool programs to serve the millions of children each day. Approximately 7,500 *Lights On* events occurred across the nation, which is now in its twelfth year. The Empire State Building was bathed in yellow light to show support.

Lights On Afterschool participants at JHS 185 in Flushing saw students showcase their afterschool projects and performances, while elected officials, parents and students cheered them on. Local leaders and Child Center of NY staff **warned that tight budgets are endangering afterschool programs here in New York** and around the country, forcing many to cut back or even close their doors.

“The Lights on After School program is a shining example that afterschool programs keep our children safe, inspire them to learn, engage them in positive activities, and relieve the worry of working parents about how their children spend their afternoons,” said New York City Councilman Peter Koo. “Unfortunately, too many of our children are unsupervised and exposed to potential dangers on the street. As elected officials we need to ensure that after school programs are adequately funded. I am personally committed to doing all I can to ensure that, in the very near future, every child who needs an afterschool program has access to one in his or her community.”

“We are all extremely proud of our afterschool students and the incredible work they’re doing,” said Deepmalya Ghosh, Director of Youth Development at The Child Center of NY. “Afterschool programs do an outstanding job of keeping kids safe, inspiring them to learn, and helping working families. Everyone who cares about this issue needs to show support for

full funding for afterschool programs.” Mr. Ghosh serves as an Afterschool Ambassador for New York State for the Afterschool Alliance.

The Child Center of NY, a 58-year old non-profit whose mission is to help at-risk children and youth succeed in life, opened its first Afterschool Program in 1998. It now serves over 2,000 children, providing homework assistance, mentoring, tutoring, sports clubs, plus a vast array of academic enrichments and opportunities for artistic expression.

In conjunction with *Lights On Afterschool* this year, the Afterschool Alliance has just released its 2011 State-by-State Progress Reports and Consumer Guides. Sponsored by JCPenny, the guide reviews state policies, funding and other activities that affect afterschool programs in each state. The guide also offers tips to parents seeking afterschool programs for their children. For information on how New York rated in the progress reports, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org.

A significant body of research demonstrates that students who attend afterschool programs regularly are more likely to improve their grades, tests scores and overall academic behavior. More than 15 million school-age children are unsupervised after the school day ends.

More information on the Afterschool Alliance and *Lights On Afterschool* is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

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