

For Immediate Release  
October 25th, 2021  
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**MOST NETWORK CELEBRATES “LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL”**  
*Maryland families, educators join thousands of communities across the country*

The Maryland Out of School Time Network is holding a Lights On Afterschool Festival at Abbottston Elementary School on Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 to 5pm. Organizers will hold a brief press conference at 4pm, with words from Baltimore City Council member Odette Robinson, Senator Mary Washington and Delegate Regina Boyce. Fall-themed activities like pumpkin decorating, face-painting and art stations will be open to all attendees. Food and refreshments, including hot apple cider, will be served throughout.

Started by the Afterschool Alliance in 2000, [Lights On Afterschool](#) is an annual celebration of afterschool programs and their importance in the lives of young people. Every October, communities across the country commemorate the opportunities these organizations provide by making use of light displays and hosting festivals with activities for students and families. Last Year, over a million Americans across 8000 communities took part in in events like these across the country.

Both Governor Hogan and the Mayor of Baltimore City have issued proclamations declaring October 28<sup>th</sup> “Lights On Afterschool Day” in recognition of the role expanded learning programs in strengthening our communities. In addition, Baltimore City Hall will be lit up Thursday evening, joining prominent landmarks like the Empire State building in celebrating Lights On Afterschool.

The Lights On celebration is being held in partnership with Elev8 Baltimore, a Baltimore nonprofit which operates as the lead agency for Abbottston Elementary and provides afterschool programming funded by the Nita Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant.

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, expanded learning programs played pivotal roles in keeping students connected to the classroom and their peers, providing students with educational spaces to combat learning loss and social isolation. Even under less demanding circumstances, afterschool and summer provide opportunities for children to explore their passions in a structured, safe environment. Lights On Afterschool recognizes that making the most of the time students spend outside of the traditional school day is vital to raising well-rounded, happy adults.

*The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide youth development organization, dedicated to more and better opportunities in the out of school hours for all of Maryland's young people. MOST is the state affiliate to the National Afterschool Association, the voice of the out-of-school time profession and one of the 50 Statewide Afterschool Networks funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.*