

# NEWS



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## Department of Human Services

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Anne Marie Ambrose,  
Commissioner

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### 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Lights On After-School Rally Event spotlights importance of quality after-school programming

*Philadelphia, Oct 20*-The 12th Annual Lights On After-school Rally was held at Thomas Paine Plaza at 4:30pm on October 20<sup>th</sup>. The rally is part of a national event sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance involving more than 7,500 communities across the country and celebrates the after-school programs that keep kids safe, inspires them to learn and helps working families. Aimed at urging Congress not to divert or deny federal funding for after-school programming, the event featured a proclamation by Mayor Michael A. Nutter, youth performances and inspirational speakers.

“After-school programs are an essential component in Philadelphia’s strategy to improve the life chances and outcomes for youth.” said Mayor Nutter. “These programs not only keep our young people safe, but enable them to develop important academic and social skills.”

According to Department of Human Services Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose, DHS funds nearly 200 afterschool and summer programs for youth grades K to 12 through its Out-of-School Time (OST) initiative managed by PHMC. These programs are located in various settings across Philadelphia including schools, churches and community-based sites.

“Quality out-of-school-time programming has been shown to benefit youth in a myriad of ways,” said Ambrose. “Evidence suggests a correlation between frequent attendance in OST activities and increases in academic achievement, school attendance, time spent on homework and extracurricular activities, enjoyment and effort in school, and better student behavior.”

As part of the event, the Afterschool Alliance, in conjunction with jcpenny, released 50 state progress reports that examined how each state is helping keep the lights on for kids and families after-school. The progress reports review state policies, funding and other activities that affect after-school programs, examine the need in each state for these programs, offer tips to parents seeking after-school programs for their children and suggest ways that all state residents can support after-school.

The rally, emceed by David Brown, Chairman of the Board of Advisors for WURD, will feature remarks by Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, as well as performances by the South East Collaborative Break Dancers, Young Achievers Learning Center “Light It Up” Dancers, Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia and Martin Luther King, Jr. High School Talent Center’s Bucket Drummers/Dancers. Representatives from multiple afterschool networks are participating in the Rally. In addition to DHS, they include programs operated by the Parks and Recreation Department, the Free Library, the Mural Arts Program, the School District, the Archdiocese, and other organizations—large and small such as school age child care operators, the After Schools Activities Partnership, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs and more.

Additionally, as a “megawatt winner” of the Light Up a Landmark Contest, Philadelphia was awarded \$5000 to support its after-school programming. The contest, sponsored by the After-school Alliance and jcpenny, recognizes efforts to highlight the importance of after-school programming through the lighting of city landmarks. In Philadelphia, PECO will display “National Lights On for After-school Programs – 10/20 [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)” on its Crown Lights and The LOVE Park fountain and Boathouse Row will be colored dark blue on the day of the event.

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*The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is charged with protecting children from abuse, neglect, and delinquency; ensuring their safety and permanency in nurturing home environments; and strengthening and preserving families by enhancing community-based prevention services. In partnership with community organizations, DHS provides services to strengthen the overall well being of Philadelphia children, youth, and families using a customer focused approach that is responsive to evolving community needs.*