



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lights on Afterschool

Pledge to be a Light Switcher Afterschool

[Hampton, VA, October 15—] Alternatives, Inc., a community based non-profit specializing in youth development will be hosting their 8th Lights on Afterschool event. This event will be held virtually on **October 22nd from 4:30PM-5:30PM**. This event seeks to inform key stakeholders and decisions makers why Alternatives, Inc. afterschool programming is essential to a student's life. All attendees will receive a virtual tour of programming after an amazing *light show*. There is no cover charge for this event. The Zoom information is provided in the "Links" section below.

Alternatives, Inc. has been at the forefront of advocating for youth, training youth how to advocate for themselves, and developing youth socially and emotionally. Afterschool is one of the many programs that this takes place. Lights on Afterschool is an initiative launched by the Afterschool Alliance to bring awareness to the importance of afterschool learning and to encourage federal funding. "Afterschool programs keeps children safe, inspires them to learn, and challenges them to develop important character traits," said Shireen McHenry, the Out of School Time Manager of Alternatives, Inc. "We understand that protective factors such as caring adults, consistent routines, mindfulness practices, and school and community connectedness build resiliency in young people. When children have a safe, fun, and creative place to belong they are able to grow and prosper."

Why afterschool?

- 79% of parents support public funding for afterschool
- 77% say afterschool help them keep their jobs
- 64% say afterschool excites children about learning
- 72% say afterschool reduces the likelihood that kids will engage in risky behavior
- In Virginia there are 190,444 students in afterschool programming
- A staggering 390,792 who are waiting for an available program
- And a disappointing 236,414 who are alone and unsupervised afterschool

In 2019-2020 Alternatives, Inc. serviced 150+ middle school students with a combined 1,508 hours of enrichment, tutoring, homework help, and physical fitness. In March, with the progression of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools closed and subsequently afterschool programming. Alternatives, Inc. were one of the first programs in Virginia to transition to a virtual format.

Links

For more information about Alternatives, Inc. www.altinc.org

For media contacts and FAQ www.altinc.org/press.html

Facebook www.facebook.com/AlternativesIncYouthDevelopment

Instagram www.instagram.com/AltIncVA

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/alternatives-inc-va

About Alternatives, Inc.

Founded in 1973, Alternatives has been helping others be aware of structures by providing opportunities for youth voice.

Over 3500 children and youth served this past year. Programs range from preschool-high school, during school and afterschool, and focus on areas for youth voice such as service learning curriculum where they identify a problem, how it became a problem and create and implement ideas to solve the problem, a safe place to go after school and get academic and enrichment opportunities, and youth ambassadors where young people advocate and give their ideas into policies which impact them. They also train adults on youth/adult partnerships and best practices in working with young people.