What is it? Lights On Afterschool is a national celebration of afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families. Since its launch in 2000, Lights on Afterschool has grown to involve over 8,000 afterschool programs nationwide with 1 million people joining to celebrate the impact these programs have on children, families, and communities. Michigan has traditionally participated with hundreds of events during the month of October.

Additional Resource: Afterschool Alliance’s Lights On Partners Tools and Tips

What’s different this year? Since schools were forced to close in March due to the Covid-19 pandemic and school re-opening plans a mix of virtual and in-person classes this fall, OST programs have struggled to keep staff members employed and doors open in order to assist students and families with basic food needs, academic and social-emotional support, and connections to community services. Financial hardships and reduced enrollments have hit the field hard, with one-fourth of programs across the country openly worried they will be unable to keep operations intact going forward, according to surveys by the Afterschool Alliance. It’s been a tough year for afterschool/OST programs, youth and families, but what better time to spotlight the field’s intrepid efforts and dedication to the schoolchildren and families of Michigan.

A. Around the Mitten – Weekly Social Media Themes
It’s not business as usual this Lights On Afterschool season, not surprisingly given the unprecedented challenges our field is experiencing. Join OST programs across Michigan this month by sharing social media posts and tweets to draw attention to your work on behalf of students and families during the pandemic. It’s a great time to showcase what you’ve been doing.

In this packet, we’ve identified four weekly themes selected by the MASP Communications Committee, and intended to help you tell your Lights On Afterschool story. They appear in Section A. Starting this week, post/tweet a shout-out that describes how a front-line worker, student, or family member has been a shining light in your program. We all have local heroes! Tag them to #LightsOnMi

Post/Tweet your messages in the Michigan-specific frame we’ve provided below.

Throughout October, feel free to use any of the suggested MASP posts/tweets found in Section B. Here are the themes:
(Week 1) Champions
Create a shout-out highlighting an outstanding OST staff, students and family members. Tell us what makes them special, engaged and illustration of the best of afterschool. Champions are:
- Front-line workers
- Students
- Family Members

(Week 2) Wellness: Social, Emotional and Physical
Take a moment to connect, reflect, and support the well-being of youth in your program. Highlight and showcase the ways programs help instill healthy habits that support physical and mental well-being. Additional Resources: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaHealthWellness.cfm
- Social
- Emotional
- Physical

(Week 3) STEM
Afterschool programs play a major role in providing meaningful science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning experiences to diverse groups of youth. These subjects help students succeed in school and prepare them for careers that are driving global economic growth.

(Week 4) Invest in Michigan OST

B. OST/Afterschool Messaging for Facebook/Twitter
(Week 1) Champions: Front-line workers, Students, Family Members
Who are the unsung frontline youth development professional, students and family in your program? What makes them special? Give a shout-out to those people who are highly engaged champions for your program. You know who they are!
- It’s #LightsOnMi & we’re celebrating youth development professionals like (name). They’re going the distance to shore up our OST kids & families, offering vital academic help & crushing distance learning.
- #LightsOnMi proudly calls out OST professionals like (name) for making kids a priority, helping them believe in themselves & achieve their dreams.
- Students like (name) show us how to show up! Celebrate our youth & celebrate OST programs that give our kids the chance to shine! Support OST. #LightsOnMi
- What does family engagement look like in OST? It looks like (name), an OST champion always there to lend a hand to help kids. We celebrate families when we celebrate afterschool during #LightsOnMi.

Additional resources: Youth involvement http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaInvolveYouth.cfm
(Week 2) **Wellness – Social, Emotional and Physical**

*How does your program help kids remain healthy, especially in a pandemic? Share one of these messages. Feel free to localize them to your area.*

- OST programs *(or your program name)* help keep kids on a healthy path by instilling lifelong healthy habits. Join us in celebrating #LightsOnMi.
- *(Your name)* offers healthy options in OST time - nutritious foods & drinks, a safe place to play, & limits on time on digital devices. #LightsOnMi
- We believe every kid deserves healthy food & opportunities to be physically active when school is out of session. Join us. Celebrate OST. #LightsOnMi
- Studies show young people who participate in OST programs have fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and lower rates of drug use than their peers. We’re celebrating OST. #LightsOnMi
- Studies find that young people who participate in evidence-based SEL programs show an 11 percentile-point gain in academic achievement. Celebrate #LightsOnMi
- Afterschool programs like ours serve as a trusted source of support for schoolkids, bridging school and home. Support OST! #LightsOnMi

**Additional resources:**
- [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/sel-toolkit.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/sel-toolkit.cfm)
- [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaHealthWellness.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaHealthWellness.cfm)

(Week 3) **STEM**

*Highlight STEM programs that you’re doing this fall! STEM education is critical to the success of our future workforce—and therefore our economy. This makes STEM even more central in the minds of voters, and places it near the forefront in many candidates’ and policymakers’ speeches. Here are some general STEM posts/tweets to use.*

- One job in the high-tech sector leads to 4 new jobs in local goods & service industries. In 5 years, employers will need to hire nearly 1 million employees w/ basic STEM literacy and more than 600,000 employees with advanced STEM knowledge. Afterschool can help. #LightsOnMi
- OST programs are crucial partners in STEM education improvement efforts. W/students spending less than 20 percent of their waking hours in a classroom, they need more exposure to STEM subjects than that time allows. Invest in OST! #LightsOnMi
- Did you know - 75% percent of Nobel Prize winners in the sciences report that their passion for science was first sparked in non-school environments? Invest in OST. #LightsOnMi
- There is now a significant body of research and evaluation that show high-quality afterschool STEM programs not only successfully engage children in STEM but build skills & help them view themselves as someone who can participate. #LightsOnMi
A majority of parents - 69% - with children in afterschool programs report that the children receive some form of STEM activities in their programs; 70% of parents say afterschool programs should offer STEM. Support OST. #LightsOnMi

Additional resources: [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/stem.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/stem.cfm)  
[http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/electionkit/MakingTheCase.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/electionkit/MakingTheCase.cfm)

(Week 4) **Invest in Michigan OST**

- An investment in afterschool is an investment in a child’s future! Support additional financial resources for afterschool in Michigan – far too many kids are left out. It’s #LightsOnMi time.
- Michigan is not close to having an appropriate level of support for afterschool programming – falling short by $50 Million a year, says the MI DOE. It’s time to shine the light. #LightsOnMi time.
- By supporting funding for afterschool/OST, we’re investing in a child’s future. If you agree, help shine the light on afterschool! #LightsOnMi
- As the pandemic drags on, families who have the greatest need for after-school programs for their children have had less access. Support greater funding for MI students after school & in OST. #LightsOnMi

Framed! Graphic Elements and more

**Use our signature graphic** (right) for your social media conversations!

Pair it with photos that tell a story from your program.

**Access our Facebook profile** frame here:  
[www.facebook.com/profilepicframes/?selected_overlay_id=336710383403751](http://www.facebook.com/profilepicframes/?selected_overlay_id=336710383403751)

**Access an Instagram-friendly** graphic here:
Want more?

- Lights On Afterschool Social Media Toolkit
- Social Media Graphics
- Engagement Calendar - daily sample social media posts; located on www.afterschool.nptoolkit.org under “engagement materials.”

Find other graphic elements and an event planning toolkit for Lights On Afterschool 2020 on the Afterschool Alliance website at http://afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm. The website also offers:

- Virtual and small group activities
- Ideas for showcasing activities online
- Making Lights On visible in communities.

Ask your City Council, School Board, Township Board or County Board for a tribute to Afterschool and OST. Need a sample draft? Find one here: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaProclamationPolicy.cfm

Looking for LOA posters? Contact Shaun Gray at the Afterschool Alliance at sgray@afterschoolalliance.org