



BHK CHILD DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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*'Serving children and families through comprehensive
early childhood education, health and family support services'*

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From: BHK Child Development Board
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Great Explorations hosts *Lights On Afterschool!* events

Family night links five local schools, children, parents and communities to national event

HOUGHTON – Children, parents and community members are invited to join nearly one million people at 6,000 events across the nation emphasizing the importance of after-school programs through *Lights On Afterschool!* family fun nights on October 14.

Local events will take place at five Great Explorations after-school sites: Washington Middle School in Calumet, Lake Linden-Hubbell Public Schools, Dollar Bay-Tamarack City Area Schools, Houghton Elementary School and Chassell Township Schools. The doors open to the general public at 6 p.m. All events are free and no registration is required.

Lights On Afterschool! will give parents, children and community members a taste of the kinds of after-school activities area children enjoy daily in the five Great Explorations programs. The program, operated by BHK Child Development Board, seeks to improve academic performance, provide enrichment opportunities and strengthen families.

All sites will offer food, prize drawings and information about Great Explorations clubs and activities. In addition, schools will host unique activities to engage the entire family, including:

- Musical performances by students at Washington Middle School
- Information booths about extracurricular activities and sports at Lake Linden-Hubbell
- A buffet dinner prepared by U.S. Coast Guard volunteers as well as autographs and souvenirs from Michigan Tech men's and women's basketball players at DB-TC

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- Games and activities for kids and a visit by the BHK mobile toy-lending library at Chassell
- Music from the MTU Pep Band and Swing Band as well as interaction with community organizations and the Michigan Tech hockey team at Houghton Elementary

“*Lights On Afterschool!* is a wonderful showcase for the after-school programs that operate every afternoon,” said Rod Liimatainen, BHK executive director. “Great Explorations meets an important community need for adult supervision of young people in after-school hours, and offers a wide range of learning opportunities in a setting that is safe, nurturing and fun.”

Great Explorations Co-Director Cindy Cowell said the after-school activities are extensions of the academic day, but with an important distinction.

“At G.E., children learn by doing,” Cowell said. “In Explorer Clubs like Journalism, Quilting, Archery and Puppet-making, teachers reinforce the lessons of core subjects like language arts and math, but they integrate learning and practice into hands-on projects in a way that makes learning fun.”

The fifth annual national *Lights On Afterschool!* Day is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to after-school programs by the year 2010. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, an advocate of funding for after-school programs, is National Chair of *Lights On Afterschool!*

In addition, Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm proclaimed Oct. 14 as *Lights On Afterschool!* Day, citing “the critical importance of quality after-school programs in the lives of children, their families and their communities.”

Great Explorations is funded by a federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. For more information on Great Explorations or local *Lights On Afterschool!* events, contact Cowell at 482-3663 or call the GE site coordinator at a participating school.

More information about *Lights On Afterschool!*, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org