



## Metropolitan Family Service

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Metropolitan Family Service Hosts Pumpkin Lights On Celebration: *A Local Event to Highlight National Lights On AfterSchool Initiative***

Portland, Oregon – October 16, 2007 –On **Thursday, October 18, 2007**, hundreds of thousands of children across America will join parents, educators, and community, religious and business leaders to rally in support of the after school programs that keep kids safe, inspire academic achievement and help working families.

This year, the Metropolitan Family Service SUN Schools after school programs at Dexter Middle School and Shaver Elementary will host local *Lights On Afterschool* celebrations, for several hundred children and families. The celebrations in support of after school programs are among more than 7,500 such events around the nation that day – **the eighth annual *Lights On Afterschool* celebration, organized by the Afterschool Alliance.**

The Pumpkin Lights On event will be held at Shaver Elementary from 6 pm to 8 pm.

- Kids are invited to dress in costume
- There will be free pumpkins for families to decorate and keep
- Games and activities like gourd bowling and a cake walk, face painting
- Glass blowing demonstrations will be featured
- Free ice cream floats

Burgerville is generously cooking and donating more than 300 cheeseburgers, to be sold to raise money for the Shaver Parent Faculty Association.

Locally, Metropolitan Family Service works to strengthen school communities by providing family friendly events to engage parents and by recruiting businesses and volunteers to participate in after school programs in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties.

#### **Background Information**

About **Metropolitan Family Service (MFS)**: For more than half a century, Metropolitan Family Service has played a vital role in the lives of children, families, and older adults. We provide services at more than 100 sites. Metropolitan Family Service makes connections that

STRENGTHENING  
FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS  
WHILE ENHANCING  
THEIR PARTICIPATION  
IN COMMUNITY LIFE

strengthen the lives of 30,000 individuals and families each year. Metropolitan Family Service's skilled and caring volunteers contribute more than 160,000 hours annually in the tri-county area, a value of \$2.3 million.

**SUN Community Schools** are a collaboration of local nonprofits, Multnomah County Office of School and Community Partnerships, the city of Portland Parks and Recreation, and Centennial, David Douglas, Gresham-Barlow, Portland Public, Parkrose, and Reynolds school districts.

Shaver Elementary is located at 3701 NE 131st Pl, Portland, OR 97230

Dexter McCarty Middle School is located at 1400 SE 5th Street, Gresham, OR 97080

The **Afterschool Alliance** is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. The 2007 *Lights On Afterschool* launches the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers initiative, which has made after school programs available to hundreds of thousands of children across the nation over the last decade. Still, funding has not kept up with demand and millions of children are alone and unsupervised each afternoon after the school days ends. The event highlights the value of expanding after school opportunities so that every child who needs a program has access to one.

The No Child Left Behind Act authorized \$2.5 billion for after school in FY07, but funding is stalled at less than \$1 billion. This year, the House of Representatives voted to increase it by \$125 million this year, which would provide programs for 125,000 more children. After school leaders are encouraging the Senate to adopt the same increase.

More information on *Lights On Afterschool* is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).