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Leap NYC
212.769.4160 ext. 5 / pr@leapnyc.org

LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL
VIOLENCE TURNS TO SUCCESS AT LEAP AFTERSCHOOL AT 22
Bronx Empowerment School Recognized for Exemplary Afterschool Program

BRONX, NY (Oct. 12, 2006) – The *Leap* (Learning Through an Expanded Arts Program) Afterschool Program at JHS 22 was recognized by representatives of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) as an exemplary afterschool program at JHS 22's Lights On Afterschool event. The event highlighted the need to expand afterschool opportunities across the country and celebrated the great strides JHS 22 has made in improving student achievement and safety.

The Lights On Afterschool event included “works in progress” performances by *Leap Afterschool at 22's* marching band, drama club, Capoeira (Brazilian martial arts) club, African chorus and poetry slam club. A student-produced documentary, chronicling last year's *Leap Afterschool at 22*, was also shown to those in attendance.

Located in the poorest congressional district in the nation, and labeled one of the city's 12 most violent schools in 2004, JHS 22 is now one of the city's new empowerment schools and has progressed from a school whose student body refused to stay afterschool for tutoring and enrichment services, into one which has nearly the entire student population engaged in afterschool programming. In its second year, *Leap Afterschool at 22's* attendance has tripled from 90 students last year to nearly 300 students during the 2006-2007 school year.

Leap Afterschool at 22's Director Jim Pugliese attributes the program's spike in participation to a strong school administration and the uniqueness of the *Leap* programming. **“The success of our afterschool program rests on the collaborative relationship we have forged with Principal Shimon Waronker and his faculty,”** says Pugliese. **“Using the Leap model of incorporating hands-on, arts-based approaches to teaching, and extending the standard curriculum, has definitely made a positive impact on student achievement.”**

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All of *Leap's* programming, for nearly 300 fifth through eighth grade students at JHS 22, provides seamless connections and extensions to the school-day curriculum. The program combines tutoring, homework help and test preparation, and is focused on mathematics, science and English Language Arts. Also featured are sports- and arts-based enrichment activities, including architecture, dance (step and hip-hop), drama, drumming, documentary filmmaking, gymnastics, journalism, slam poetry and many others. The program aims at helping students pass mandated tests and meet or surpass state standards, while challenging students to learn or expand skills in a wide variety of activities.

“We are proud of the impact our afterschool program is having at JHS 22,” says Ila Lane Gross, *Leap* executive director. **“Jim Pugliese’s tremendous leadership skills and the innovation of the Leap artists and staff, provide a model for the fusion of hands-on, arts-based activities with the standard curriculum, enabling JHS 22 students to reach their full potential.”**

Leap Afterschool at 22 receives local funding from the Department of Youth and Community Development and federal funding from No Child Left Behind Supplemental Educational Services (SES). The program employs a staff of 34 facilitators, including nine *Leap* artists.

Lights On Afterschool Day is an initiative of the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children have access to afterschool programs by the year 2010. More information on Lights On Afterschool is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

For 30 years, *Leap* (Learning through an Expanded Arts Program), an educational service organization, has been teaching the standard academic curriculum through the arts and developing programs designed to help students with social issues. *Leap* works in more than 300 public schools, community-based organizations, shelters and cultural institutions throughout the New York metropolitan area, serving more than 220,000 students and 8,600 teachers each year. *Leap* Executive Director Ila Lane Gross is available for comment concerning this and other arts education initiatives. For more information, call (212) 769-4160 ext. 5 or visit www.leapnyc.org.

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PHOTOS FROM LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL AT JHS 22



Leap's Marching Band – Marching band students perform the national anthem at the *Leap* (Learning Through an Expanded Arts Program) Afterschool Program at JHS 22 in the Bronx.



Leap's Percussion Ensemble – Percussion ensemble students perform under the direction of Christine Bard at the *Leap* (Learning Through an Expanded Arts Program) Afterschool Program at JHS 22 in the Bronx.

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