



NEBRASKA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Book Fest offers free programs for children

Children who visit the Lincoln Children's Museum on Oct. 18 can be silly with Mike Mennard, play storybook bingo with "Cactus Jack," read and role-play with author N.L. Sharp, meet "Eleanor Roosevelt," and identify Nebraska's backyard birds in a series of free programs entitled "Outside the Lines: Creative Storytelling Activities for Children."

The museum at 1420 P St. has teamed up with the Nebraska Book Festival, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Commission, and Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC) to offer the programs for children and their families. The NHC is sponsoring free admission to the museum.

"We believe it is important to encourage literacy at a very young age," said Sarah DeWald, director of education for the children's museum.

Programs begin at 11 a.m. with Bill Clemente sharing bird songs, photos, coloring pages, and creative writing exercises for all ages to learn more about backyard birds.

At noon the Lincoln-based musician, poet and funny guy Mike Mennard will perform children's tunes about pirates, pizza and other "wholesome wackiness." "Eleanor Roosevelt" and "Amelia Earhart" will appear at 1 p.m. in the museum's airport to tell about the night they snuck out of a White House dinner party to go flying above Washington, D.C. After the story, children can ask questions about flying airplanes and the famous First Lady.

At 2:15 p.m., award-winning children's book author N.L. Sharp will help children think about questions such as "What do you do when you're asked to do something you don't like?" She will read from her books "Today I'm Going Fishing With My Dad" and "The Ring Bear," lead role-playing exercises and encourage creative writing. Her books will be available for sale and autographs.

The programs culminate with storybook bingo at 3:30 p.m. "Cactus Jack," portrayed by Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale, will read some favorite children's books while children listen for key words on their bingo card.

"The Nebraska Book Festival is a celebration of books—books we read, listen to, talk about, and write," said Erika Hamilton, senior program officer at the Nebraska Humanities Council. "The festival has traditionally focused on adults, but it's important for children to celebrate books, too."

Free events for adults include a keynote address by novelist Kent Haruf, poetry slams, and sessions on "The Politics and Press of Fear," science and fantasy fiction, Nebraska Book Award winners, the life of married writers, and dueling chefs. Book sales, readings, author autographs and exhibits will be held all day. The festival concludes with a free evening reception honoring Paul Johnsgard, noted Nebraska biologist, ornithologist, and author of 50 books on natural history.

The complete festival schedule is at www.nebraskabookfestival.org.

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