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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Prime Time literacy program returns to Norfolk

Prime Time Family Reading Time, a Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC) family literacy program for low-literacy, low-income families, will return to Norfolk with opportunities for both Spanish- and English-speaking parents and their children.

Lincoln Elementary School will host the series on six consecutive Tuesday nights from March 20 through April 24. Each program begins with a light dinner and continues with storytelling and discussion based on award-winning children's literature.

The six-week series of reading and discussion is designed for families with children ages six to 10. It includes sessions on fairness, greed, courage, dreams, determination and loyalty. All books are read and discussed in both English and Spanish.

Discussion leader Darlene Rodriguez and storyteller Juanita Ramirez will introduce parents to the benefits and pleasures of reading and discussing stories with their children. Families will also learn about resources and services that are made available by the Norfolk Public Library. Separate pre-reading activities will be available for younger siblings.

Prime Time reinforces the role of the family in society, encourages parents and children to form bonds over reading and learning together, and teaches parents and children to read and discuss humanities topics. The program also encourages low-literacy, low-income parents to enter or continue their own educational programs to improve their employment opportunities.

"It is so important for children to learn the joys of reading early in life, especially when it involves reading and discussing books with their families. A love for learning through reading has a positive impact on how well a child does in school," said NHC Program Officer Erika Hamilton. "We're pleased to be working with Lincoln Elementary, the Norfolk Public Schools, and Read Aloud Norfolk to continue offering this exciting family literacy program to the citizens of Norfolk."

Developed as an English-only program by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, bilingual *Prime Time* sessions have been held in Lincoln, Crete, Omaha, Grand Island, South Sioux City, Scottsbluff, and other Nebraska communities over the last several years. This will be Norfolk's second bilingual *Prime Time*, having held its first at Grant Elementary School in the fall of 2006.

Bilingual *Prime Time* programs are sponsored in Nebraska by the NHC, the State of Nebraska, the Nebraska Library Commission, and TierOne Charitable Foundation. Primary sponsors for *Prime Time* in Norfolk include the Norfolk Public Schools and Read Aloud Norfolk. Both have played leading roles in applying for and implementing the program. Other sponsors and donors include Target, Runza, Burger King, and King's Lanes.

The NHC is a private, statewide, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information or to register to participate, contact Pam Weyhrich, family reading night coordinator for Lincoln Elementary, at (402) 644-2550.