



NEBRASKA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 330
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: (402) 474-2131 Fax: (402) 474-4852
E-mail: nhc@nebraskahumanities.org
Website: www.nebraskahumanities.org

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Contact: Erika Hamilton, (402) 474-2131 ext. 104

Prime Time program returns to Grand Island

Prime Time Family Reading Time, a Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC) family literacy program designed to help strengthen participants' interest and skills in reading, will return to Grand Island with opportunities for Spanish- and English-speaking parents and their children.

The Grand Island Edith Abbott Memorial Library, 211 N. Washington St., will host the bilingual series on six consecutive Wednesday evenings from Oct. 15 through Nov. 19. Each program begins with a light dinner and continues with storytelling and discussion based on award-winning children's books. The program is free and open to the public.

The six-week series is offered to families with children ages 6 to 10. It includes sessions on fairness, greed, courage, ingenuity and family. All books are read and discussed in both English and Spanish.

Discussion leader Lisa Brown-Olsen and storyteller Joan Gardner will introduce parents to the benefits and pleasures of reading and discussing stories with their children. Families will also learn about library resources and services. Separate pre-reading activities will be available for younger siblings.

"It's so important for children to learn the joys of reading early in life, especially when it involves reading and discussing books with their families," said NHC Senior Program Officer Erika Hamilton, state coordinator of Prime Time. "A love for learning through reading has a positive impact on how well a child does in school."

In a survey of Grand Island families who participated in Prime Time in fall 2007, 100 percent said the program changed the way they read and discussed books together, 89 percent improved their attitude toward the library, and 94 percent showed interest in participating again in Prime Time or similar family reading and educational programs. One participant said that, after attending Prime Time, "the children want to read, whereas before they didn't like to."

Initially developed by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, bilingual and English-only Prime Time sessions have been held in Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, South Sioux City, Norfolk, Scottsbluff, and other Nebraska communities over the last five years. This will be Grand Island's fourth bilingual Prime Time, having held their first in spring 2006.

Prime Time programs are sponsored in Nebraska by the NHC with major funding from the State of Nebraska, Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and the Gilbert M. and Martha H. Hitchcock Foundation. Local funders for Prime Time in Grand Island include Principal Financial Group Foundation, Inc.

The NHC is a private, statewide, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For more details, contact Merry von Seggern or Kathleen Nonneman at (308) 385-5333.