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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Prime Time reading program returns to Grand Island

Prime Time Family Reading Time will return to the Grand Island Public Library on Oct. 14 with opportunities for Spanish- and English-speaking parents and their children.

Prime Time is a Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC) family literacy program designed to help strengthen participants' interest and skills in reading. The six-week series is offered free to families with children ages six to ten, but seating is limited and registration is requested.

The Grand Island Public Library will host the bilingual series for six consecutive weeks, Oct. 14 through Nov. 18. All sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings except for the fifth session, which will be held Thursday Nov. 12.

Each program begins with a light meal and continues with storytelling and discussion based on award-winning children's books. All books are read and discussed in both English and Spanish. Selected books will help families discuss themes such as courage, determination, fairness, ingenuity and loyalty.

Discussion leader Lisa Brown-Olsen and storyteller Maria Marquez de Lopez 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 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 2008 survey of Nebraska families who participated in Prime Time, 87 percent indicated that the program changed the way they read and discuss books together, 70 percent improved their attitude toward the library, and 98 percent showed interest in participating again in Prime Time or similar family reading and educational programs.

Initially developed by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 48 bilingual and English-only Prime Time series have been held in 15 Nebraska libraries, five schools and one community center in the last five years, including programs in Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, South Sioux City, Norfolk and Scottsbluff. This will be Grand Island's fifth bilingual Prime Time, having held their first in the spring of 2006.

Prime Time is sponsored in Nebraska by the NHC with funding from the State of Nebraska and Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Primary sponsors and funders for Prime Time in Grand Island include Principal Financial Group and the Grand Island Community Foundation's Community Impact Fund.

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

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