



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 will return to the Grand Island Public Library on April 13 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 and talking about books. The six-week series is offered free to families whose children, ages 6 to 10 years, struggle with reading. Seating is limited and pre-registration is requested.

Grand Island's Edith Abbott Memorial Library will host the bilingual series Wednesday evenings, April 13 through May 18, beginning at 6 p.m.

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 compassion, courage, dreams, determination and kinship.

Storyteller María Marquez de Lopez and discussion leader Lisa Brown-Olsen 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.

"We're not showing participants how to read, but why—for enjoyment, for insight, for conversation," said Erika Hamilton, NHC director of literary programs and state coordinator of Prime Time. "We look at situations in books and ask, 'Why did this happen?' 'Has this happened to you?' 'What would you do?' This kind of analysis helps students succeed in all of their classes, not just in reading and writing."

A 10-year impact study of the program found that students who participated in Prime Time during their early elementary years outperformed peers on grade level content in standardized exams. Prime Time students scored higher in language arts and reading, mathematics, science, life science and other subjects. The study, published in 2010, was conducted in Louisiana, where the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities developed Prime Time in 1991.

In Nebraska, more than 65 bilingual and English-only Prime Time series have been held in 15 public libraries, five elementary schools and two community centers since 2004, including programs in Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, Norfolk and Scottsbluff. This will be Grand Island's sixth 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, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Carol Gendler, and The Sherwood Foundation. Primary sponsors and funders for Prime Time in Grand Island include the Grand Island Public Library, Principal Financial Group, and Kaufmann-Cummings Foundation.

The NHC is a private, statewide, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information on the Grand Island Prime Time program, contact Kathleen Nonneman at (308) 385-5333.

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