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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 Lincoln

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

The Eiseley Branch Library, 1530 Superior St., will host the bilingual series on six consecutive Thursday evenings from Oct. 9 through Nov. 13. 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 six to 10. Sessions focus on themes such as fairness, greed, determination, compassion, and family. All books are read and discussed in both English and Spanish.

Discussion leader Evangelina "Gigi" Brignoni and storyteller Ricardo Garcia will introduce parents to the benefits and pleasures of reading and discussing stories with their children. Families also will 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 recent survey of Lincoln families who participated in Prime Time, 91 percent indicated that the program changed the way they read and discussed books together, 91 percent improved their attitude toward the library, and 100 percent showed interest in participating again in Prime Time or similar family reading and educational programs. Participants said that they enjoyed spending more time as a family reading and comparing stories with real life. Although not a goal of Prime Time, two parents said the program helped them improve their English.

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 Lincoln's sixth bilingual Prime Time.

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. Primary sponsors for Prime Time in Lincoln include Lincoln City Libraries, Lincoln Literacy Council, and Merrill Lynch.

The NHC is a private, statewide, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more details, call Pat Leach at (402) 441-8510 or Vicki Wood at (402) 441-8566.