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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 Norfolk

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 Norfolk with opportunities for Spanish- and English-speaking parents and their children.

Grant Elementary School will host the bilingual series on six consecutive Thursday evenings from Sept. 11 through Oct. 16. 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. It includes sessions on fairness, courage, dreams, ingenuity and greed. 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 available through the Norfolk Public Library. Separate pre-reading activities, provided by Northeast Community College's Early Childcare Program, 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 recent survey of Norfolk families who participated in Prime Time, 80 percent said that the program changed the way they read and discussed books together and 100 percent showed interest in participating again in Prime Time or similar family reading and educational programs. After attending Prime Time, one participant said, "I really can see that reading can be fun for the kids. It doesn't have to be just a read and then close the book. During and after reading you can discuss things."

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, Scottsbluff, and other Nebraska communities over the last five years. This will be Norfolk's fifth bilingual Prime Time, having held their first in the fall of 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. 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.

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

For more information, contact Delva Santee at (402) 644-2543.

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