



NEBRASKA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

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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 Omaha

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 two Omaha libraries with opportunities for Spanish- and English-speaking parents and their children.

The South Omaha Library will host a bilingual series on six consecutive Thursday evenings, March 19 through April 23. The Washington Branch Library will host an English-only series on six consecutive Saturday mornings, April 11 through May 16. Each program is free and open to the public. Sessions begin with a light meal and continue with storytelling and discussion based on award-winning children's books.

The six-week series are offered to families with children ages 6 to 10. They include sessions on fairness, greed, courage, ingenuity, loyalty, compassion and family. In the bilingual series, all books are read and discussed in both English and Spanish.

Discussion leaders and storytellers 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 2008 survey of Nebraska families who participated in Prime Time, 87 percent said the program changed the way they read and discuss books together, 68 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. Eight English-only and nine bilingual Prime Time programs have been offered in Omaha since 2004.

Prime Time is sponsored in Nebraska by the NHC with major funding from the State of Nebraska, Nebraska Cultural Endowment and Nebraska Library Commission. Primary sponsors and funders for Prime Time in Omaha include the Omaha Public Library and its Foundation, Friends of the Omaha Public Library, The Sherwood Foundation and Carol Gendler.

The NHC is a private, statewide, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information about the bilingual South Omaha program, contact Liliana Lopez or Norma Pountney at (402) 444-4850. For more information about the English-only Washington Branch program, contact John Bernardi at (402) 444-4800.

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