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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 Scottsbluff library

For the first time since 2004, Prime Time Family Reading Time will return to the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library.

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 struggle with reading.

Prime Time begins at 6 p.m. Tuesdays Jan. 17 through Feb. 21. Each program begins with a light meal and continues with storytelling and discussion based on award-winning children's books. Selected books will help families discuss themes such as cleverness, determination, differences, fairness and greed.

Storyteller Deb Carlson and discussion leader Nancy Escamilla 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.

"Scottsbluff is always on the cutting edge of creating new audiences for Prime Time," said Erika Hamilton, NHC director of literary programs. "They piloted Prime Time for Spanish-speakers, Prime Time for Native Americans, and now an English-only Prime Time for any struggling reader. We're pleased to partner with the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library to offer this innovative program within their newly renovated building."

A 10-year impact study found that students who participated in Prime Time during their early elementary years outperformed their 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 80 Prime Time series have been held in 14 public libraries, nine elementary schools and three community centers since 2002, including programs in Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, Norfolk and Alliance. Scottsbluff Public Library was one of three Nebraska libraries in 2004 to pilot the bilingual program. Since then, five additional Prime Time series have been offered at four different sites in the Scottsbluff/Gering area.

Prime Time is sponsored in Nebraska by the NHC with funding from the State of Nebraska and Nebraska Cultural Endowment. The C.W. Yount Foundation helps fund Prime Time in Scottsbluff.

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

For more information or to register to participate, contact Cheryl Svoboda, Deb Carlson or Nancy Escamilla at the library, (308) 630-6250.