
Subject: Beyond School Bells Newsletter-September 2024

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From: Beyond School Bells



September 2024

News and Events



Its here!

GetConnected 2024 is just around the corner, or depending on where you are coming from just down the highway – this all day celebration of afterschool and afterschool professionals will take place on September 27th in the Younes South Conference Center in Kearney.

Now is the time to secure your slot!

Register your team at the conference website on the Nebraska Department of Education's website [here](#). Visit the website to find out details about the activities planned throughout the day.

Get Ready!

One way to get you in the right headspace for GetConnected is to listen to [this podcast](#) featuring Dr.

Stephanie Malia Kraus, our conference keynote speaker.

This conversation will give you the background information you can use to contextualize Dr. Kraus' morning keynote and follow up workshop, focusing on how Nebraska's Afterschool and Summer learning programs, and the professionals working in them, play a critical role in supporting the healthy development of all Nebraska youth. The podcast and the presentations she will lead on September 27th are based on insights from her book [Whole Child, Whole Life](#). All registered GetConnected attendees will receive a free, signed copy of Dr. Kraus's book and opportunities to interact with her throughout the conference.

So get registered and get prepared now!

The GetConnected Conference is a longstanding partnership between the Nebraska Department of Education's 21st Century CLC program, Nebraska 4H Extension and Beyond School Bells, with annual gatherings rotating between Kearney and Omaha. Information on the conference can be found [here](#).

Register

Bring Your High School Student Staff to GetConnected

While you are registering your team, we invite you to bring your High School staff with you to GetConnected to participate in the inaugural **Young ELO Professionals Leadership Summit**. During this unique morning session designed for high school staff, young leaders will have a chance to build their skills and connect with other teenage staff. Through highly interactive sessions, Summit attendees will learn about child and youth developmental stages; healthy relationships, ethics, and boundaries; as well as the essential skills that will help them be successful staff in Afterschool and Summer programs. They will also get to play with Legos! Want to bring young staff members with you to GetConnected but you're not sure how you can swing it? Beyond School Bells wants to help!

If interested, reach out to Stephanie Vadnais, svadnais@nebraskachildren.org or Alana Pearson, apearson@nebraskachildren.org.

Lights On Afterschool
October 24th



Michelle started her education career as an elementary teacher but transitioned to afterschool programs when she accepted a position as an elementary school site director and quickly expanded the program into a city-wide initiative, Kearney CLC. Not only did she expand the scale, but Michelle also expanded the focus to include coordination of the community's backpack program to ensure that no child in her programs went hungry. Michelle always worked to keep her program innovative and was the first community to partner with Beyond School Bells on the Think Make Create Labs and, most recently, her creativity led to starting a Horse Club allowing youth in her programs to have hands on experiences with one of her passions.

As Michelle's obituary notes, her legacy will live on through the lives she touched and everyone she met along the way. While devastated by her tragic death, we are all richer by having known and worked with Michelle and hope we can all honor her memory by continuing her important work to enrich the lives of all children through high quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

Announcements and Resources

Applications Now Open!

2024-25 YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (YLC)



WHO WE ARE:

YLC is a group of about **ten high school students** who **are currently staff members or volunteers in a Nebraska afterschool program**. YLC members are interested in improving programs for students!

The **2024-25 Beyond School Bell Youth Leadership Council (YLC)** is an opportunity for high school staff/volunteers in afterschool programs to meet and engage with other high school staff across the state, learn important skills about how to engage with students, and create a project where they will have a positive impact on their afterschool program.

All applications are due **Sunday, September 15th at 11:59 pm.**

YLC students will be paid a \$400 stipend for completing this experience, which includes virtually participating in 12 one-hour meetings (8 in the fall and 4 in the spring) and completing their YLC project. Meeting times will be set on weekday evenings based on availability submitted in the application process.

YLC Website

Student Application

New BSB Team Member – Patricia Sanchez-Stuart

We are so excited to announce that Patricia Sanchez-Stewart has joined the BSB team to help provide direct support to afterschool and summer programs in communities across greater Nebraska. Prior to coming to BSB, Patricia launched and led, for 15 years, afterschool and summer programs in Lexington Public Schools. Lexington's program was built on 21st Century Community Learning Center funding and blended in a variety of funding sources and community partnerships to create a dynamic program that excited, engaged and inspired hundreds of Lexington elementary and middle school youth. We always knew we could turn to Patricia to partner with us on new programming opportunities and are thrilled to add Patricia's passion and years of expertise to our BSB team and to share her insights with communities across Nebraska.

Free STEM Kits Available for Check-Out!

Looking for new, easy-to-teach STEM lessons? Beyond School Bells now has STEMfinity camp curriculum and supply kits that are available to after school programs for check-out on a semester basis. Each camp serves up to 30 K-8 students. There are 12 lessons per camp which take an hour to complete. Available camps include building a better world camp, pirate camp, famous architecture camp, brick lab zoo camp, and more.

To learn more about specific STEMfinity camps and the checkout process, please contact Alana Pearson at apearson@nebraskachildren.org. Learn more about STEMfinity camps by clicking [here](#).



National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) Resources



Discover how to plan, execute, and conclude effective environmental education activities that will engage and inspire your community with these practical tips and resources. Well-planned activities can deepen understanding and foster a lasting connection with the environment.

[Learn More](#)

Upcoming Free Trainings

We encourage you to add these free professional development and training opportunities to your calendar for this fall!

Regional Connections



Beyond School Bells, The Nebraska Department of Education 21stCentury Community Learning Centers, and Nebraska Extension are partnering to provide FREE regional professional development to afterschool providers. The in-person and virtual professional development and networking sessions will be held across the state in four regional hubs during the 2024-25 school year. The Regional Connections PD will focus on three areas: The essentials of running an afterschool and/or summer program, afterschool and the “Whole Child,” and program partnerships and sustainability.

For Fall 2024 dates, locations, and more information see our [website](#) or reach out to Stephanie Vadnais, svadnais@nebraskachildren.org.

Afterschool Chat & Chews

Topic specific trainings and discussions via Zoom on the **second Wednesday of each month** starting September 11, 2024. Topics will range from staff culture, school building relationships, summer learning planning, and more! To receive the Zoom invitation, reach out to Alana Pearson, apearson@nebraskachildren.org.

Upcoming Opportunities

Mini-Grant Opportunity: Eco City Build Clubs

Nebraska's communities are growing and innovating along all kinds of opportunities. As our communities grow and change, so too will the need for today's learning opportunities to evolve to prepare students for the ever-changing future. What better way than to combine engaging club activities with a hands-on project? Beyond School Bells is excited to announce the next iteration of our tried-and-true afterschool program, **City Build 2040!** The City Build challenge is evolving from a stand-alone event to an elementary or middle school club composed of locally relevant topics that connect to a City Build 2040 Challenge. We will add renewed attention to the environmental challenges and strengths of Nebraska's communities and work with students to address challenges and create service-learning opportunities.

In collaboration with National Geographic's [Slingshot Challenge](#), BSB will be supporting Eco City Build clubs. BSB will advise HS students who help run these clubs to create 1-minute videos about environmental challenges they wish to address and will help students to incorporate those ideas into club programming. Students can address challenges like food waste, habitat conservation, opportunities for local renewable energy, or other environmental opportunities that students identify. Clubs will be supported to implement activities including engineering, energy, food systems, conservation, and environmental education as well as Civic Nebraska's [Service-Learning](#) hub for student-directed projects.

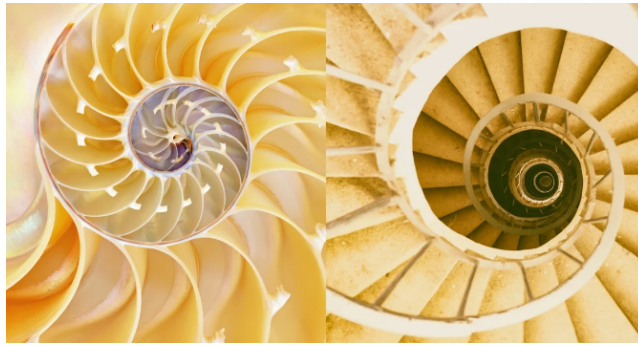
BSB will offer **mini grants** to support staff oversight of club activities, high school student leadership, and supplies for activities and a family engagement event to celebrate students' efforts. Email Dakota Staggs (dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org) for more information or to request an application.

Dimensions of Success: A Free Learning Series about Teaching Science and Engineering to Grades 6-8

Greetings from the Institute for the Study of Resilience in Youth ([ISRY](#)), a Harvard-based research institute funded by the National Science Foundation (Award #2101554)! We want to invite you to our **FREE professional learning opportunities**, which will provide **certificates of completion** and a deeper understanding of science and engineering teaching and learning that integrates resilience and thriving skills for all students in middle school.

These NEW opportunities are made possible by the National Science Foundation (Award #2101554). For more information or to register to secure your space for the 2024-2025 school year, [click here](#).

21st CCLC Opportunity: Receive a Stipend to Implement NASA Biomimicry Curriculum!



Dear Nebraska 21st CCLC Project Directors, Site Coordinators, and Staff:

The NASA Nebraska Space Grant is excited to be participating in a NASA grant project called Stepping Stars, offering biomimicry programming, which is engineering based on nature-inspired design (for example, what do we learn from observing birds as we design and build aircraft).

Afterschool staff receive a \$400 stipend for completing training and implementing curriculum. Please complete the form at [this link](#) if you are interested in learning more about the NASA Stepping Stars program. We are hoping a team of 3 to 4 people at each site will attend the trainings in the fall and then implement the curriculum in spring and summer of 2025. Everyone interested in participating should complete the form, including project directors, site coordinators, and staff.



Our Contact Information

Nebraska Children & Families Foundation
215 Centennial Mall South
Suite 200
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-476-9401
<http://www.NebraskaChildren.org>

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