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October 2021

News & Policy

October is Lights On Afterschool Month



On Wednesday, October 6th, Governor Heineman signed a Proclamation identifying October 28th as Lights On Afterschool Day in Nebraska. This 22nd national celebration of the importance of afterschool and summer programs comes during a critical time as Nebraska educators struggle with the continuing challenge of educating youth during a global pandemic. We encourage everyone to use Lights On Afterschool day to let afterschool professionals in your community know how much you value their work and appreciate their service to children, families and our Nebraska Communities. You can visit the Lights On Afterschool website for ideas about your community's celebration.

[See the Proclamation](#)

[Visit the Lights On Afterschool Website](#)

LOA Spotlight on NE's Million Girl Moonshot

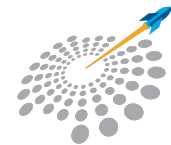


Nebraska will have a youth voice in the national Lights On Afterschool celebration, with Pius sophomore Amanda Gutierrez participating in a panel discussion of youth involved in afterschool STEM programs. Representing BSB's Million Girl Moonshot initiative, Amanda will share her perspectives on the value of afterschool and summer programs to get young people excited, engaged and inspired taking control of their STEM-rich futures.

[Register for the Youth Panel](#)

To find out more about the Million Girl Moonshot, check out the editorial that our Advisory Board wrote in the Omaha World Herald.

We are proud to have this impressive group working on this important project – and representing Nebraska nationally.



MILLION GIRLS MOONSHOT

[Read the Editorial](#)

Growing the Next Generation of Afterschool Leaders



Building on this youth empowerment momentum, we are excited to share policy recommendations our partners at the Afterschool Alliance recently published on the important role working in afterschool programs can play in youth development.

Read Afterschool Alliance's Policy Recommendations



In addition to the benefit to participating teen workers, having HS youth as club leaders can pay big dividends for programs – injecting youth energy and enthusiasm, not to mention near-peer coolness – into afterschool programs. Many Nebraska programs have been experimenting with this model over the past few years, including Lexington, where we caught up with program director Patricia Sanchez-Stewart to update us on this important staffing initiative which has allowed them to serve more youth in their program.

Nebraska Success Stories: Using High School and College Students as OST Staff



Lexington's afterschool program has engaged High School students as staff for years and the sustainability of this option has become largely evident. While many afterschool programs are struggling to fully-staff their programs, Lexington has more applicants coming in than positions open.

High school student applicants also benefit from this experience, as this will be the first hiring process experience for many of them. They can engage in interviews, build their resumes, and receive feedback about their fit for the position.



Not only are these students serving an immediate need for afterschool, but they are also adding to a cycle of development in education where students develop skills to prepare them for the workforce and even propel them to careers in education!

4-H has also implemented a model of student staffing to engage both high school and college students over the past year with great success in providing whole programming including college student leadership and high school student facilitation. After successes this Summer, 4-H is continuing youth employment and accepting applications.

Access 4-H Facilitator Applications Here

"This experience has helped me to realize my passion for teaching"
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT FACILITATOR, BUTLER COUNTY

Reach out to Dakota Staggs at dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org if you have success stories of your own to share!

Meet WRP Fellow Lauren Mott, BSB Program

Specialist

WRP Fellowship

The White-Riley-Peterson (WRP) Afterschool Policy Fellowship is designed to build and connect a diverse national cohort of individuals who have the power to forge sustainable policy environments across all 50 states for high quality, widely available afterschool and expanded learning programs. Each fellow participates in a year-long policy learning curriculum that includes a week-long workshop in the fall in South Carolina and a presentation in the spring at the C.S. Mott Foundation-funded 50 State Network Conference.



Representing Nebraska and Beyond School Bells, Lauren Mott is a [current WRP fellow](#). Lauren's project will focus on InternNE and expanding opportunities for older youth in Nebraska's afterschool programs. Exemplifying the strong interpersonal professional network approach of the fellowship curriculum, Mott described the first virtual fellowship event as "wonderful" because of the innovative way the program began establishing connections between participants. It was a Zoom dinner where "ingredients were mailed to each of us and a chef was on our Zoom to teach us how to prepare the meal." This gave participants a relaxed atmosphere of congeniality and fun where they could start to get to know one another.

Mott looks forward to learning more deeply about the policy arena structuring out-of-school-time programs in Nebraska. She is excited to be a part of a national network of capable and motivated professionals and looks forward both to bringing ideas from other state's best policy practices back to Nebraska. When asked what lessons she's learned so far, Mott shared, "you must strike a balance between having high expectations and reasonable expectations. I want to make sure that the policy ideas I have are big enough to make a difference, but not so big that they are not attainable."

[Read More](#)

Resources & Opportunities

BSB Programming Priorities

The pandemic has shown expanded learning opportunity programs provide much needed opportunities for youth to re-engaged in learning. Throughout 2021-22 year, BSB will ratchet up our support for ELO programs across the state to help communities to excite, engage and inspire youth through dynamic afterschool and summer program offerings.



Programmatically, our support focuses on a diverse group of activities. We are excited to relaunch Mission to Mars 2.0, an engineering and STEM-rich, club-based experience based on fun, problem solving, and imaginative play. At the same time, BSB will be supporting a range of community-specific and statewide environmental and conservation activities, allowing youth opportunities to engage in hands-on projects and service learning in safer outdoor spaces. Service learning in general will be another BSB priority, as we envision new and yet unforeseen opportunities to engage Nebraska youth in providing valuable services to their COVID-19 stressed communities. And finally, as we work to build back a better Nebraska, we will be supporting entrepreneurship activities designed to help Nebraska youth create new opportunities to grow dynamic, prosperous communities across the state as they explore future careers.

We are excited about our support for these and other opportunities that await youth in Nebraska's ELO programs in the 2021-22 school year.

For more information about these exciting programs, please contact our BSB Director of Content and Delivery, Sandy Day at sday@nebraskachildren.org.

New Programming Opportunity: Grow NE

BSB is excited to announce a new project entitled GrowNE which will build on our experiences as part of the Food Systems Game Changers Lab hosted by IDEO, Thought for Food, and the Rockefeller Foundation as well as BSBs newest initiative, the Freight Farms Greenery. GrowNE is made possible by funding through National Geographic Education and will provide Nebraska youth with hands-on experiences centered on local food systems, gardening practices and technology, and food systems careers. Building on the Food Systems Game Changers Lab, this project highlights the importance of local foods for nutrition, sustainability, and local support for local businesses.

GrowNE also builds on lessons-learned from BSB's ground-breaking incorporation of The Greenery shipping container farm in afterschool to accommodate learners of all ages, abilities, and interests. Like The Greenery, GrowNE will incorporate high-tech growing technology, but rather than a shipping container, it will introduce aeroponic gardens and automated raised bed gardens with the FarmBot to afterschool. This project has begun a first year pilot with partner CLC programs in Lexington and Walthill but BSB is confident the project will be expanded to more Nebraska communities in years to come.



Any afterschool program who would like to join the learning community around using these innovative gardening tools can email the project lead, Dakota Staggs at dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org.

Events

Try, try again: **RESCHEDULED GetConnected Statewide Afterschool Conference**

If at first (and second) you don't succeed...

After having a couple of attempts to bring Nebraska's afterschool community together disrupted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are trying again, with a first ever winter conference. Get registered now for the *Rescheduled GetConnected*, which will be held at Omaha's CHI Center on Friday February 25th, 2022.

This hybrid conference will include six rooms set up for live streaming workshops for both remote and in person attendees and eight rooms providing opportunities for in-person attendees to get hands-on workshops experiences. Given the timing, a major focus will be on summer learning – how we can use the Summer 2022 to reengage and accelerate learning in communities across the state.

[Register Now](#)

Another *Rescheduled GetConnected* theme we will explore is Community Schools and the promise they hold for helping Nebraska youth, families and communities to respond to the challenges of COVID-19. This theme builds on a day of recorded conversations that were held on September 10th (the original rescheduled conference date) that brought together local, state and national experts in community school design and implementation.

You can access this series of three, one-hour conversations at Nebraska Talks now!

[Access the Series](#)



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