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From: Beyond School Bells

To: Lauren Clark



Beyond School Bells

nebraskachildren



November 2023

News & Announcements

Lights On Afterschool Celebrations Shine across Nebraska in 2023



In October, school buildings and community centers across Nebraska once again lit up with celebrations of "Lights On Afterschool," an annual, national event highlighting the significance of after-school programs for our communities.

This year marked the 24th annual Lights On Afterschool celebration, and Nebraska didn't disappoint. Children, parents, educators, and communities came together to celebrate the vital role that after-school programs play in the lives of young learners. The celebrations, officially held on October 26th, were a testament to the dedication of Nebraska to ensure that students have access to safe and enriching activities outside regular school hours.



Nebraska's activities started a bit earlier, with events in North Platte and Omaha taking place the week before celebrations took place in communities across the state. These events showcased the talents and achievements of students participating in after-school programs. They also emphasized how these programs contribute to keeping kids safe, inspiring them to learn, and supporting working families. In recognition of Nebraska's Lights On events, the Nebraska Examiner ran this [commentary](#) highlighting the impact that these programs have on children, families and communities.

The success of Lights On Afterschool in Nebraska wouldn't have been possible without the collective effort of the staff working and partnering organizations working at sites across Nebraska. As we look back on these celebrations, we are reminded of the commitment Nebraskan's have to nurturing our youth and providing them with opportunities to thrive beyond the classroom.

Let's continue to support and champion after-school programs, recognizing their vital role in shaping the future of our children.

Celebrating 20 Years of Nebraska's 21st Century Community Learning Centers



It's a milestone worth celebrating! The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) program has been making a significant impact on Nebraska's children, families and communities for two decades. The 21st CCLC, established by Congress and by the Federal government, is administered by NDE and has been instrumental in providing hands-on, engaged learning afterschool and summer learning opportunities in both urban and rural areas across Nebraska.

Bridging the Gap

Starting with a handful of sites in 2003, Nebraska's 21st CCLC program now serves around 20,000 students annually in 143 school-based and community-powered sites across the state. The program has enriched the lives of tens of thousands of students and supported working families in urban and rural communities alike. Offering academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours, 21st CCLC sites ensure students receive a well-rounded education complementing but not duplicating school day learning. From science experiments to arts and cultural activities, 21st CCLCs have been instrumental in bridging the educational gap, making learning fun and engaging.

Transforming Lives

Over the past 20 years, the program has touched the lives of countless children, providing a safe and supportive environment for them to learn, explore, and grow. Indeed, program administrators estimate that over 1.8 million hours of programming have been delivered over the 20 years of the 21st CCLC program. The dedication and hard work of the 21st CCLC directors and staff have been a driving force behind the success of these centers.

A Bright Future

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Center

program, we look forward to the continued impact it will have on child, families and communities across Nebraska. With its commitment to hands-on, engaged learning, the 21st CCLC program remains a shining example of how education can transform lives and empower future generations.

Let's raise a toast to celebrate 20 years of excellence in education, and here's to many more years of success!

Resources & Opportunities

NBA Math Hoops

Free Math and Movement Resources and Games



NBA Math Hoops leverages the game of basketball and the NBA/WNBA brands to build fundamental math and social-emotional skills through a physical and digital basketball-themed board game, a curriculum, and a community program experience. Designed for students in grades 4-8, this free program develops students' algebra readiness prior to entering high school, while strengthening important skills including self-regulation and executive function. The NBA Math Hoops program is implemented in in-school, out-of-school, and home learning environments.

To learn more, sign up for a free virtual training session: <https://nbamathhoops.com/training>

Free Virtual Training

National Geographic Slingshot Challenge
Register Today!



National Geographic’s Slingshot Challenge is well underway! This opportunity challenges youth aged 13-18 to identify an environmental challenge they wish to address and record a 60-second video explaining or showcasing their solutions. [There is plenty of time left to participate, so register today!](#) **Video submissions are due February 1st 2024.** National Geographic freely provides all the student and educator resources necessary to complete the challenge.

Beyond School Bells is offering programming support for the high school students participating in the challenge to bring their food systems, energy, conservation, or other environmental ideas to life and to incorporate them into K-8 afterschool programming. Afterschool Programs facilitating slingshot submissions can receive TA, student coaching, and mini-grant support to enact student solutions and youth-led programming. Reach out to Dakota Staggs (dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org) with questions or to sign up!

Register

Food Systems Afterschool – Grow ELO BSB Funding Opportunity

Even though the sky isn’t quite as bright blue as the summer, and the wind isn’t nearly as warm, you can still have a garden club! Whether it’s a student-challenge to introduce a compost bin in the cafeteria, a grow tower salad club, or a garden design project, food systems clubs can run year-round. BSB will support food systems clubs through our Grow ELO initiative for clubs, student leadership, or even Afterschool to Table projects to provide produce. It’s not too late to apply for Food Systems programming support this fall and winter!

Email Dakota Staggs (dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org) with questions or complete an interest form by clicking below.

Interest Form

Million Girls Moonshot (MGM) October Resources

November is Native American Heritage Month!



For November, the Million Girls Moonshot is excited to celebrate Native American Heritage Month! Here are some ways you can join the celebration:

Check out these 12 amazing Indigenous women scientists: [12 Indigenous Women Scientists to Follow](#)

Astronaut @AstroDuke became the first #NativeAmerican woman in space. Nicole Mann from the Wailacki tribe of the Round Valley Indian Tribes hopes her experience will inspire indigenous youth to shoot for the moon. Learn more [here](#). #NativeAmericanHeritage

Indigenous Women Scientists

Astronaut Nicole Mann

Free Activities for Afterschool Programs

[STEM Activities for Families](#) - Family engagement is a key factor in developing a positive STEM identity and success in STEM. These easy to implement, fun hands-on activities can be shared with families. The activities focus on engineering, technology, and math skills and content.

[Earthquake Rollers](#) - This engineering activity focuses on ways to keep people safe in earthquake zones. Earthquakes can cause serious damage to buildings and even loss of human life. Youth participate in this hands-on engineering activity to find out if engineers can keep the millions of people in earthquake zones safe.

For the full collection of November MGM resources, [please join our Facebook group](#) and access the September post!



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