
Subject: Beyond School Bells Newsletter-October 2024

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From: Beyond School Bells



October 2024

News and Events



GetConnected 2024 in the history books!

As September was winding down, Kearney was heating up as epicenter for Afterschool in Nebraska with approximately 300 out of school time professionals converging on the Younes Conference Center for GetConnected 2024 for an engaging, reinvigorating and reflective day of growth and sharing.



Starting with NDE Commissioner Dr. Brian Maher's opening welcome and continuing with Dr. Stephanie Malia Kraus' keynote and, a diverse range of hands-on workshops between peers, GetConnected was all about how Nebraska's Afterschool and Summer learning programs, and the professionals working in them, play a critical role in supporting the healthy development and academic growth of all Nebraska youth.

In addition to gaining skills to enhance programming, participants also reflected on the challenges of the past several years and the vital role that afterschool and summer professionals play in their communities by supporting working families and providing youth with supportive relationships and engaging activities during the vital out of school time hours. Conference organizers were proud to announce the Regent Bob Whitehouse ELO Policy Champion award for Dr. Maher on behalf of NDE's investment of over \$11 million in Federal ESSER III COVID-19 era support to start new and expand existing afterschool programs across the state.



During the conference we also announced the launch of a new Award – the Michelle Arehart ELO Program Director Award, which will be given out annually to ELO program directors across the state starting in 2025. This award was created to recognize the important, out of the limelight work of program directors overseeing programs in communities across the state and was named after long serving Kearney CLC Director who tragically died in a car accident this August.



The Annual 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 – meaning that GetConnected 2025 will be held in Omaha on Friday September 26th, 2025. Information on the GetConnected can be found [here](#).

Lights On Afterschool

October 24th



And there is more energy around Afterschool and Summer programs coming in October as Governor Pillen kicked off Lights On Afterschool recognition month on October the 2nd with a proclamation signing ceremony at the State Capitol.

BSB Vice President Alison O'Toole was joined by Liz Hamm and Dylan Lester at the Nebraska Department of Education to accept this proclamation and to highlight the important role of afterschool programs in communities across Nebraska.

October 24th will be the 25th annual, Lights On Afterschool celebration, a national celebration the vital role that thousands of afterschool and summer programs play in communities across America (and certainly in Nebraska) to support academic growth and healthy youth development, support working families and strengthen communities.

To kick off Nebraska's activities, Omaha's Collective for Youth in Omaha, in partnership with the University of Nebraska Omaha, is scheduling a community-wide celebrations on the morning of October 12th with an Olympic style event at the Sapp Fieldhouse. Other communities across our state will be adding on events throughout the month.

If you are a provider, we encourage you to hold your own Lights On event. If you are an afterschool supporter, we encourage you to visit an event in your community. The [Lights On Afterschool website](#) has important information and a registration form you can fill out to make sure your program is recognized at the national level.

Register Your Event

Announcements

EC² Coming to Nebraska!

Beyond School Bells is proud to announce the launch of the Exploring Career Connections in STEM (EC²) Initiative in Nebraska as one of four state partners with the national nonprofit STEM Next

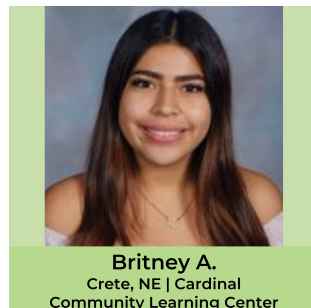
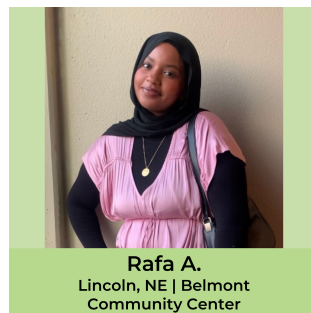
Opportunity Fund with support from the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Pathways for Youth program. This unique initiative integrates afterschool and summer programs into workforce development systems as a model to address the rapidly growing demand for skilled workers in STEM, while strengthening career pathways for rural and underserved youth.

Nebraska's Out-of-school-time STEM programs provide opportunities for project-based learning and real-world application of STEM concepts, which research shows can increase youth interest in STEM by up to 20%. By strengthening connections with Nebraska employers, we are taking those out of school time experiences one step further to expose youth to career pathways in their own communities.

We are excited to collaborate with STEM Next Opportunity Fund and a host of state and local partners to bring this transformative initiative to Nebraska over the next three years. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to get involved!

[Press Release](#)

Welcome to Our 4th Cohort of BSB YLC Students!





Kalel B.
Fremont, NE | Fremont ASPIRE



Aubrey L.
Oakland-Craig, NE | Oakland-Craig
Afterschool Program



Lilliauna C.
Aurora, NE | Edgerton
Explorit Center



Stacy M.
Crete, NE | Cardinal
Community Learning Center



Tabi P.
Bancroft-Rosalie, NE | DEN
Program



Elissa R.
Albion, NE | Cardinal
Community Learning Center



Trinity S.
Fremont, NE | Fremont ASPIRE

Please welcome our **2024-25 Youth Leadership Council (YLC)** students from across the state. Our first virtual meeting of the year kicked off on September 30th where these 9 outstanding high school students got to know one another and learn more about afterschool programs across the state. Students shared what they love about the programs in their communities and what they hope for the future of those programs.

Throughout the school year, these students will be meeting weekly to gain the skills they need to positively impact their afterschool programs through their very own service-learning projects. We cannot wait to see what these students will dream up for their local programs!

We would like to give a special thank you to the National Youth Leadership Council for supporting this work and strengthening our service-learning opportunities for students in afterschool. To learn more about YLC, click the button below. To bring service-learning to your afterschool program, see below for upcoming trainings hosted by the National Youth Leadership Council.

[Learn More about YLC](#)

Upcoming Staff Trainings

Service-Learning in Afterschool: A Free Staff Training

Are you interested in connecting the students in your program to their community through service learning? The [National Youth Leadership Council](#) (NYLC) is offering free, virtual professional development opportunities that explore innovative approaches to engaging young people in service-learning. This training is designed to equip educators and afterschool staff with the tools to engage students in meaningful, hands-on activities that address real-world issues. Participants will learn how to foster leadership skills, social responsibility, and critical thinking among youth. Don't miss

this chance to enrich your afterschool program with proven strategies from NYLC. Sign up today!

October 9, 2024 (1:00-3:00 PM CDT), "Making the Case: Youth Engagement Through Service-Learning" Program leaders will learn to identify the benefits and values of high-quality service-learning and align organizational goals to enhance youth engagement and get access to free resources.

October 22, 2024 (11:00 AM-2:00 PM CDT), "Engage: Facilitating Service-Learning in Afterschool" will equip educators with tools to implement service-learning, focusing on the IPARD process.

Register Today

Regional Connections



Join us for an IN PERSON October gathering of afterschool and summer program professionals in four regional hubs across Nebraska- Kearney, Scottsbluff, Norfolk, and Lincoln. Beyond School Bells, NDE 21st CCLC and Nebraska Extension are partnering to provide FREE regional professional development to afterschool providers. Lunch will be provided.

The [Regional Connections PD](#) will focus on three overarching areas:

- *The essentials of running an afterschool and/or summer program.*
- *Afterschool and the "Whole Child"*
- *Program partnerships and sustainability.*

For the October gatherings, we'll discuss how the essential topics of **staffing** and **professional development** interact with all three areas!

Dates and Locations:

- **Kearney:** Thursday October 17, 10:30-1:00 pm (**Central**), Kearney Public Schools Administration Building, 320 W 24th St.
- **Scottsbluff:** Friday October 18, 10:30-1:00 pm (**Mountain**), Scottsbluff High School, 313 E 27th St
- **Norfolk:** Thursday October 24, 10:30-1:00 pm (**Central**), Norfolk Public Library, 308 W Prospect Ave
- **Lincoln:** Friday October 25, 10:30-1:00 pm (**Central**), Lincoln Community Foundation 5thFloor, 215 Centennial Mall S.

Email Stephanie Vadnais (svadnais@nebraskachildren.org) to register or if you have any questions!

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.



Our Contact Information

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