
Beyond School Bells Newsletter-December 2024

From Beyond School Bells <bsbinfo@nebraskachildren.org>

Date Tue 12/10/2024 8:18 AM

Beyond School Bells
nebraskachildren



December 2024

News and Events

Registration OPEN: Nebraska's ELO Innovation Invitational 2025



NEBRASKA'S
EXPANDED LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES

Innovation
INVITATIONAL

MARCH 10-12, 2025
UNL Innovation Campus
Lincoln, NE

As we rush to the end of 2024, we are excited to peek into 2025 and our next statewide afterschool professional development event – the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO)

Innovation Invitational, scheduled for March 10 – 12th in Lincoln.

This free event provides opportunities for afterschool and summer program practitioners and advocates to convene alongside community and state leaders to engage in deep conversation and participate in hands on workshops exploring the critical role that exciting, engaging and inspiring afterschool and summer programs play in the lives of children, families and communities across Nebraska.

This year's Invitational will feature a kick off evening dialogue on March 10th with Dr. Stephanie Malia Kraus and will include an in-depth, hands-on workshop utilizing new coaching and program support tools developed around themes in her 2023 book *Whole Child, Whole Life* which was featured in her keynote at the 2024 GetConnected conference.

Dr. Anthony Burrow, who participated in the inaugural Innovation Invitational, will be part of the kick off discussion on the 10th and will help facilitate conversations about the growing body of research focusing on the importance of purpose in youth development and the role of youth serving organizations in helping young people cultivate a sense of purpose in their lives.

As is always, a strong youth voice / engagement component, including an evening event on the 11th and a track to help high school youth learn the skills they need to provide quality afterschool and summer programming to younger youth, will be woven throughout this event.

Finally, this year's Invitational will showcase examples of innovative work taking place in Expanded Learning Programs across the state. There are so many exciting programs going on across Nebraska's ELO programs – and we want to celebrate your success!

Space for this free event is limited, so act now to reserve your spot at Nebraska's 2025 ELO Innovation Invitational.

Register Today!

Program Spotlights

TMC Spotlight: Scottsbluff County, NE



A new TMC Lab - a collaboration between Beyond School Bells (BSB) and University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Extension - will bring STEM opportunities to Scottsbluff County's youth. With its mobility and focus on hands-on learning, this TMC will engage students in rural areas with activities they might not otherwise experience, like makerspace projects, engineering challenges, environmental science, and other STEM-based education.

Through our partnership, UNL Extension hired a full-time Extension Assistant dedicated to managing the TMC Lab and delivering these STEM activities to multiple schools. This position ensures consistency and gives students a great chance to deepen their STEM skills and curiosity. The initiative could be a powerful model for other rural communities aiming to address resource and staffing limitations in after-school programs. The partnership between BSB and UNL Extension will continue to be an important piece in supporting rural afterschool school programs with high quality STEM programming.

Through initiatives like our partnership with UNL Extension with the TMC Lab, BSB is committed to ensuring that students in rural and underserved areas have access to enriching programs that foster creativity, curiosity, and lifelong learning.

Tour of Nebraska Afterschool Programs

A celebration of high-quality afterschool and summer learning programs across Nebraska



Continuing our road trip highlighting innovations happening in afterschool programs all across our state, next stop -

Cozad AfterZone



Cozad AfterZone stands out for its commitment to career exploration at the elementary level, fueled by strong partnerships with community organizations. This summer's Career Connections program was a shining example, featuring activities that introduced students to careers ranging from agricultural science to firefighting, real estate, city planning, and more! These experiences were made possible through local business collaborations, family engagement, and federal ESSER III funding.



Summer Program: Career Connections
COZAD AFTERZONE

Cozad has intentionally built relationships with local businesses and families in their community to bring **career exploration experiences** to the K-5 students they serve.

Director, Karmen Morse, shared, *"We are most proud of the support we received from the community partners, the parents, the teachers, and the school board. Everyone stepped up and helped to be guest speakers everyday this summer. It was fun not only for the students, but for the speakers."*



When we asked what advice she had for other afterschool and summer programs, Karmen said: *"**Networking is a great resource** when developing plans for your program. Utilizing your staff to get ideas and combining learning opportunities when developing your clubs" is essential.*

Beyond School Bells partners with Cozad AfterZone on projects like the Think, Make, Create (TMC) labs and the high school Youth Leadership Council. Their dedication to uplifting staff voices—including high school student staff—ensures clubs and activities remain fun, engaging, and meaningful for all students.

We are proud of our partners throughout the state and look forward to continuing our tour of Nebraska programs. Follow along to see our next stop ([Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#))!

Resources and Opportunities

Winter Regional Connections

January 21-24

Regional Connections



PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Winter Regional Connections will be on Zoom.

- Kearney Area: Tuesday January 21, **1-2 pm Central Time**
- Scottsbluff: Wednesday January 22, **1-2 pm Mountain Time**
- Norfolk Area: Thursday January 23, **1-2 pm Central Time**
- Lincoln Area: Friday January 24, **1-2 pm Central Time**

Contact Stephanie Vadnais (svadnais@nebraskachildren.org) for a calendar invite.

Afterschool Alliance Sustainability and Funding Resources

Recently, Afterschool Alliance proved a free webinar on securing funding and long-term sustainability. This high-level conversation brought together after-school professionals that have found success through various funding opportunities. We found this to be a great discussion, full of important information to help build sustainability into afterschool programs.

To view the webinar and resources, use this link: <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/webinars.cfm?ID=E2C2C7F1-5056-A82E-7A23619A3C43D1D1>



Our Contact Information

Nebraska Children & Families Foundation
215 Centennial Mall South
Suite 200
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-476-9401

<http://www.NebraskaChildren.org>

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage email preferences](#)