

**Subject:** Beyond School Bells Newsletter-March 2024  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 8:02:43 AM Central Daylight Time  
**From:** Beyond School Bells  
**To:** Lauren Clark



March 2024

## Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network

### ELO Innovation Invitational





Youth-driven. Fun and engaging. Career Connected. Community-powered and sustained.

These are some of the takeaways from the second ELO Innovation Invitational that Beyond School Bells hosted on March 5th – 6th at the University of Nebraska Lincoln’s Innovation Campus Conference Center.

Over 260 afterschool program staff and community advocates attended during the two-day conference, which focused on how we can go beyond current practice and create more high quality, cost-effective and locally sustainable Afterschool and Summer programs so that all Nebraska youth have access to affordable programs in their communities. With summer just around the corner, the conference also explored partnership opportunities that are available in every Nebraska community to provide the community-rich learning experiences that young people crave – and afterschool and summer programs are ideally positioned to provide.

Another key theme was career connected learning, including both opportunities for elementary and middle school students to explore the careers that will power their home town’s futures and, for high school students, the opportunity to get hands on work experience helping to design and staff programs serving students across the state.

We want to thank everyone who attended and engaged in this year’s conference – you all made it a great learning experience!



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## ELO Awareness Week

In conjunction with the ELO Innovation Invitational, BSB also hosted ELO Awareness Week at the Capitol, where informational about Expanded Learning Opportunity programs surrounded the 2nd floor Rotunda.

Senator Anna Wishart, a longtime champion of Afterschool and Summer programs, introduced [Legislative Resolution 315](#) declaring the week of March 4th – 8th ELO Awareness Week, and encouraging communities to come together to support this important work in their communities.

Multiple community teams visited the Capitol during their time in Lincoln participating at the ELO Innovation Invitational and met with their Senator and staff to discuss the important role that ELO programs are playing in communities across Nebraska.

For everyone unable to attend last week's gathering, we urge you to reach out to local elected officials to let them know how important Afterschool and Summer programs are to children, families and the vitality of every Nebraska community.

## Nebraskans Recognized Nationally

### Meet AnnaBeth – Nebraska's 2024 MGM Flight Crew Member!



[STEM Next Opportunity Fund's](#) Million Girls Moonshot initiative announced its third cohort of the [Flight Crew](#) - a youth ambassador program that is advancing equity for girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

The Flight Crew elevates youth voices to inspire more young people to become future STEM leaders. The group embodies the spirit of the [Million Girls Moonshot](#), a STEM equity initiative to engage millions more girls in afterschool and summer STEM learning opportunities by 2025.

We are excited to announce that Nebraska's Flight Crew member for this year is AnnaBeth, a junior at Broken Bow High School and a staff member at Super Kids Club, Broken Bow's Afterschool Program. AnnaBeth leads the Engineering Pathways club at her program and is hoping to pursue a career in education after graduation. We look forward to seeing what she accomplishes as a part of this esteemed group of women in STEM advocates this year!

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### Joel Bramhall of Crete Cardinal CLC Named a National Afterschool Ambassador



Earlier this month, the Afterschool Alliance announced it had selected Joel Bramhall, the Director of Cardinal Community Learning Centers and Federal programs for Crete Public Schools, to serve as a 2024 Afterschool Ambassador. He is one of only 15 afterschool leaders in the country chosen for the honor this year. Afterschool Ambassadors continue working with local afterschool programs while serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, working with community leaders and policy makers, organizing events, and in other ways growing support for the afterschool and summer learning programs families rely on.

“I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with the Afterschool Alliance to increase awareness and bolster support for afterschool and summer learning programs,” said Bramhall. “I have witnessed firsthand the impact these programs have on Nebraska students and families, especially as they work to overcome challenges. That is especially important now, as many of students have ground to make up and afterschool programs can help them do that. I am so proud to be part of the afterschool movement and to be a 2024 Afterschool Ambassador.”

And all of us at Beyond School Bells are proud that Joel is representing Nebraska as an Afterschool Ambassador.

[Read the Full Story](#)

## Events and Resources

**BSB Grant Opportunity: Summer of Discovery**



The grass is turning green, the trees are budding, and the birds are singing – summer is almost here! Are you wondering what new ideas students will bring you? What about the projects that parents, caregivers, local businesses, and organizations will partner on? Are you eager to build up excitement and support for your expanded learning opportunities? Join BSB in the Summer of Discovery as we are going beyond the status quo with priorities on youth voice, local partnerships, and sustaining high-quality expanded learning opportunities. To achieve these priorities, BSB will be offering Summer of Discovery grants up to \$15,000 for projects in the categories of:

- Experiential Learning and Local Partnerships
- Movement and Outdoor Learning
- Think Make Create and STEM

Each category has been designed based on youth input from 2023 about what they want to see most in afterschool programming. Projects should include key partnership and program sustainability components to support impactful programming beginning this summer and building into the school year ahead. Please reach out to Dakota Staggs ([dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org)) and Alana Pearson ([apearson@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:apearson@nebraskachildren.org)) with any questions or concerns. We look forward to Discovering the power of summer learning with you!



MILLION GIRLS MOONSHOT

**Ready, STEM, Go! Free Virtual Conference**  
March 27-28



**2024**  
**READY,**  
**STEM,**  
**GO!**

VERMONT  
OHIO  
NEBRASKA  
ILLINOIS  
MONTANA  
NORTH DAKOTA

**March**  
**27 & 28,**  
**2024**

**Free**  
**for all!**

**SAVE THE**  
**DATE**

**Register**  
**at the**  
**link**  
**below!**

Join this virtual conference focusing on STEM in out-of-school time! BSB and 5 other state networks have joined to bring you motivating speakers, exciting activities, and inspiring ideas!

It is your final chance to register for this free, virtual conference where presenters and panelists from across the country will cover a full array of STEM topics including STEM career exploration, teaching math through movement, and how engage middle and high school students in STEM learning.

[Register Today!](#)

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**A Conversation with Rachel Wagner**  
 March 19

# A CONVERSATION WITH RACHAEL WAGNER

Join us as we discuss  
working with a surgical  
robot in space and life as a  
woman in STEM.

March 19, 2024  
Noon

NEBRASKA  
WOMEN IN STEM

UNO Bio  
Nebraska

Nebraska  
Cures



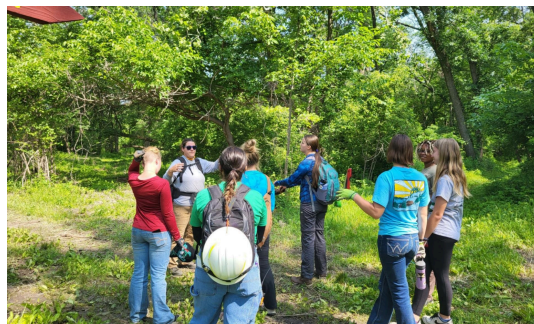
Join Nebraska Women in STEM for "A Conversation with Rachael Wagner", a Nebraska Space Grant and EPSCoR funded student as she discusses working with a surgical robot in space and life as a woman in STEM.

The virtual conversation will be held on March 19, 2024 at noon. For more information and to register, click the button below.

Register Today!

## Spotlight: Environmental Conservation Action Program (E-CAP) Opportunities

**Calling All High School Students Interested in Conservation!**  
BSB's 2024 Conservation Experience Application is Open



We are excited to announce the 2024 Conservation Experiences Afterschool initiative aimed at engaging high school students in conservation efforts across our state. Beyond School Bells is

offering a series of conservation experiences designed to inspire students to become environmental stewards and explore local career paths in conservation.

Through half- to full-day experiences, students will have the opportunity to connect with conservation professionals, participate in hands-on activities, and develop valuable skills that will benefit them both personally and professionally. From wildlife conservation to sustainable agriculture, these experiences will provide students with a deeper understanding of the importance of conservation and the role they can play in protecting our planet. BSB will coordinate support for small groups (3-5 students) of high school students to travel to local conservation experiences this spring and summer. Interested programs and students can reach out to Dakota Staggs ([dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org)) with questions and to sign up!

Conservation Experiences are a precursor to the Conservation Management Internship which will pair high school students (including recent graduates) with college mentors on a two-week trip to conservation organizations across Nebraska. Students interested in the full internship can [apply here](#).



We encourage you to share this information with your students and help us spread the word about this exciting opportunity. Together, we can empower the next generation of environmental leaders and make a positive impact on our environment.

[Students Apply Today!](#)

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## Tree-a-Thon 2024

Arbor Day is just around the corner, and Beyond School Bells is excited to invite you to join us in celebrating this special day with the annual Tree-a-thon! Arbor Day, celebrated on April 26th this year, is a day dedicated to planting and caring for trees, and what better way to honor this day than by participating in the BSB Tree-a-thon?

The Tree-a-thon is a fun and educational event that encourages students to get outdoors, connect with nature, and make a positive impact on their environment. Participating Afterschool programs will have the opportunity to plant trees at school or with a community partner, learn about the importance of trees in our ecosystem, and engage in other exciting activities related to conservation and sustainability. Sites must [apply by April 4th](#) to receive trees in time.



Site Applications due April 4

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## Bloom Box @ School Last Call!

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and Nebraska Forest Service have a few [Bloom Box @ School](#) spots left for 21CCLC sites! This program provides engaging training for hands-on activities from Project Learning Tree, garden trainings from the NSA, and ready-to-plant native pollinators and/or trees for your school. Consult your administration and grounds management team and [sign up today](#) or reach out to Sarah Buckley ([sarah.buckley@unl.edu](mailto:sarah.buckley@unl.edu)) for more information.

Bring Bloom Box to Your Program Today!

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### Our Contact Information

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