


Donate Your Way

Every donation you make has an impact. Now, there are more ways than ever to give.

- 1 Go to NebraskaChildren.org and select Donate to contribute online.
- 2 Call Jen Thielen at 402.476.9401 to set up a one-time or monthly gift.
- 3 Mail a donation to the address above.
- 4 Talk to your estate planner about leaving a lasting legacy to the foundation.

| Stay Connected |

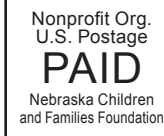
 facebook.com/nebraskachildren

 Twitter: @NE_children

| Next Edition |

Protective factors prevent abuse and neglect

Nebraska Children is a proud member of Community Services Fund, a federation of nonprofit agencies improving the quality of life throughout Nebraska by preserving resources, expanding knowledge, encouraging creativity and protecting rights. Learn more at www.CommunityServicesFund.org.



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Spout

Drops of Change for Children

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation | March 2015



Time to unleash potential

How Nebraska is harnessing the afterschool and summer hours to close the achievement gap.

nebraskachildren
AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION

ELOs Take the Capitol

Afterschool and summer learning opportunities were front and center for the new lawmakers.

Board Member Profile

We welcome Todd Ogden to our board. Find out why Nebraska Children's mission resonates with him.

Introducing Jen Thielen

Meet Nebraska Children's new leader of strategic partnerships.

We're proud to welcome

JEN THIELEN



as our new Associate Vice President of Strategic Partnerships

Nebraska Children is thrilled that long-time children's champion Jen Thielen is taking on the critical role of strategic partnership development.

"Bringing Jen into this role is an amazing opportunity for Nebraska Children," said Kelly Medwick, Chief of Staff. "She is a dynamo and we are so grateful to be able to put her powerhouse personality behind the task of cultivating and sustaining our partnerships."

Jen has already proven her success at building relationships and making things happen for vulnerable kids as the architect of the successful Project Employment program in Omaha. This program, in conjunction with Goodwill Industries and Heartland Workforce Solutions provides job readiness training for young people aging out of the foster care system. Now, Jen is looking forward to her next challenge.

"I've always wanted to do development full time," said Jen. "And I feel so fortunate to be able to work with the investors who make change possible for Nebraska's kids."

Jen's already making organizational history by setting up Nebraska Children's

first-ever volunteer guild in Omaha. The guild will host the organization's annual fundraising event, and participate in other awareness activities for the organization.

"Omaha has such a committed and passionate community of philanthropists," said Jen. "When I announced that we were starting a guild, the response was overwhelming. We already have an amazing lineup of people who are really excited about being founding members and making a major difference in the lives of children."

Jen's family has a long-standing commitment to civic involvement. Her parents, Lynn and Jim Smith, are also very involved in the Omaha community. Jen is married to Nick Thielen, and they live in the Dundee area with their daughter, Audrey.



Would you like to meet Jen?

She'd love to hear from you!
jthielen@nebraskachildren.org
(402) 965-1711



Mary Jo Pankoke

Dear Friends,

Can you believe we're already so far into 2015? It feels to me like we just rang in the new year. But with so many exciting things happening for the children in our state, it's no wonder time is flying.

One thing you'll be hearing a lot about in the next few months is the powerful potential of Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs). These high-quality afterschool and summer enrichment experiences have been shown to reduce the achievement gap between low-income students and their middle-income peers. That's a quandary that's been stumping educators for years...and it looks like the answer may be to focus on the quality of time spent outside the school day.

This issue of Spout will discuss some of the promise that ELOs hold, as well as some of the outstanding ELO work being done right here in Nebraska. We are truly fortunate to have so many dedicated and talented ELO professionals in our state.

I'd like you to watch your newspaper, email and mailbox for information about the benefits and costs of afterschool and summer learning experiences. There's so much to learn and think about, but it's definitely worth a look. This is an investment that can create more opportunities for kids in need and improve the safety, vitality and economic viability of all of our statewide communities.

So, that's how we're starting our year here at Nebraska Children...digging into some heavy research on proven ways to improve the prospects for our state's most vulnerable kids. We hope you'll join us and take some time to read up on what's happening.

All of us at Nebraska Children hope the rest of your 2015 is full of new opportunities to grow and learn. As we all know by now, that's the key to The Good Life!

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Pankoke
Mary Jo Pankoke
President and CEO



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New Hires

Kimberly Fonesca,
Project Everlast
Youth Advisor



Kimberly provides the Project Everlast Lincoln council with leadership, advice and a listening ear. She also ensures that young people have opportunities to be heard, so they can help effect change in the foster care system for future generations.

Maellyn Hain,
External Relations
Manager



Maellyn joins Nebraska Children from the United Way of Lincoln/Lancaster County, where she helped with development and volunteer coordination. Maellyn's duties include making sure that our supporters get all the information and help that they need, while helping develop strategies to bring new supporters to the cause.

Catherine Humphries Brown,
Ph.D., Director,
Data and Research



Catherine's previous experience includes work with the Government Accountability Office. Most recently, as a doctoral student at UNO, she conducted evaluation work supporting the Omaha Community Foundation and policy work supporting the university's engagement with the Nebraska State Legislature. Catherine's work is supported by a donation from the Holland Foundation in honor of Barb Weitz.

Early Childhood



Sixpence accepting grant applications
School districts who would like to apply for a Sixpence grant may now download the application at SingASongOfSixpence.org/apply/. Grants range from \$75,000-\$150,000 with a 100% match from the community applying. Currently there are 25 Sixpence Early Learning programs across Nebraska, providing

high-quality early childhood education in center-based settings, through home visitors or using a combination of the two.

Three new Rooted in Relationships communities on the horizon

Thanks to funding from the Nebraska Department of Education's Nurturing Healthy Behaviors grant, we'll be adding three Nebraska communities to our Rooted in Relationships initiative. Rooted in Relationships helps communities build environments for children from birth to age 8 that encourage healthy social-emotional development. Find out more at RootedInRelationships.org.

Middle Childhood

Statewide ELO Coalition meeting brings leaders and advocates together

Statewide stakeholders in afterschool and summer learning opportunities came together in early February for a two-day workshop to plan their activities for 2015. Topics of discussion included building community-wide leadership teams, strategies for building partnerships to expand programming and infusing these experiences with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning.



Teen/Young Adulthood

Project Everlast Lincoln is making a major difference for young people aging out of foster care throughout southeast Nebraska. Through its central access partner, The Hub, Project Everlast Lincoln has served 54 youth and has re-directed 38 referrals from partners in Lincoln/southeast Nebraska in just the few months it has been operating. Opportunity Passport currently has 30 youth enrolled in the program, and a waiting list of 45. These young people will get financial literacy training and a savings match as they work to purchase a car, education, investments, housing or other assets to help stabilize their lives.



Meet
Todd

Todd Ogden is a Nebraska Children donor and now one of our newest board members.

Todd Ogden is currently the Deputy Director of the Downtown Lincoln Association. He is responsible for the development, implementation and oversight of investor/consumer marketing plans. Todd also serves as the primary liaison to over 900 downtown businesses and associations. His duties include economic development, market research, advertising, public relations, retail recruitment and visitor promotions.

Todd is a UNL graduate with degrees in Advertising and Political Science. He is a current member of the International Downtown Association and the Lincoln chapter of the American Marketing Association. He and his wife, Shawna, have one son and another child on the way.

“Everybody deserves to grow up in a positive environment and our state is better off by investing early in the lives that will one day be leading our community and continuing to make it a better place.”

Q: Why did you choose to join the Nebraska Children board?

A: I have had the pleasure of working with a few of their staff members, and seeing their dedication and learning more about the organization through them sparked my interest.

Q: Why do you think investing in strong, stable children and families is important for Nebraska?

A: Nebraska needs to invest in the well being of our youth for multiple reasons. First, it is the right thing to do for our community. Everybody deserves to grow up in a positive environment and our state is better off by investing early in the lives that will one day be leading our community and continuing to make it a better place.

Q: In Lincoln, what are some of the biggest challenges children face?

A: Opportunity. When children are not given the option to explore emotionally, physically and educationally at an early age, it can in many ways, deprive them of a full realization of their true identity.

Q: What change would you most like to see happen for Nebraska's kids?

A: I would love to see the continuation of educating families as a whole. Young children have a far better chance to thrive when their parents and/or guardians gain more knowledge on early childhood development. As a parent of a young (and wild) boy, some things that I have already learned through Nebraska Children's education have helped give me tools to build a foundation for becoming a better parent. 🍀

ELOs in Nebraska

The power hours for closing the achievement gap.

National education reform discussions focus on a search for an elusive magic bullet that will somehow transform the traditional 8am–3pm school day—and eliminate our educational achievement gaps. Decades of experience suggest we shouldn't hold our breath.

What if there was another way? A more effective, less expensive and more enriching way to improve educational outcomes—particularly for low-income kids? One that is showing results in Nebraska and ready for a scale-up?

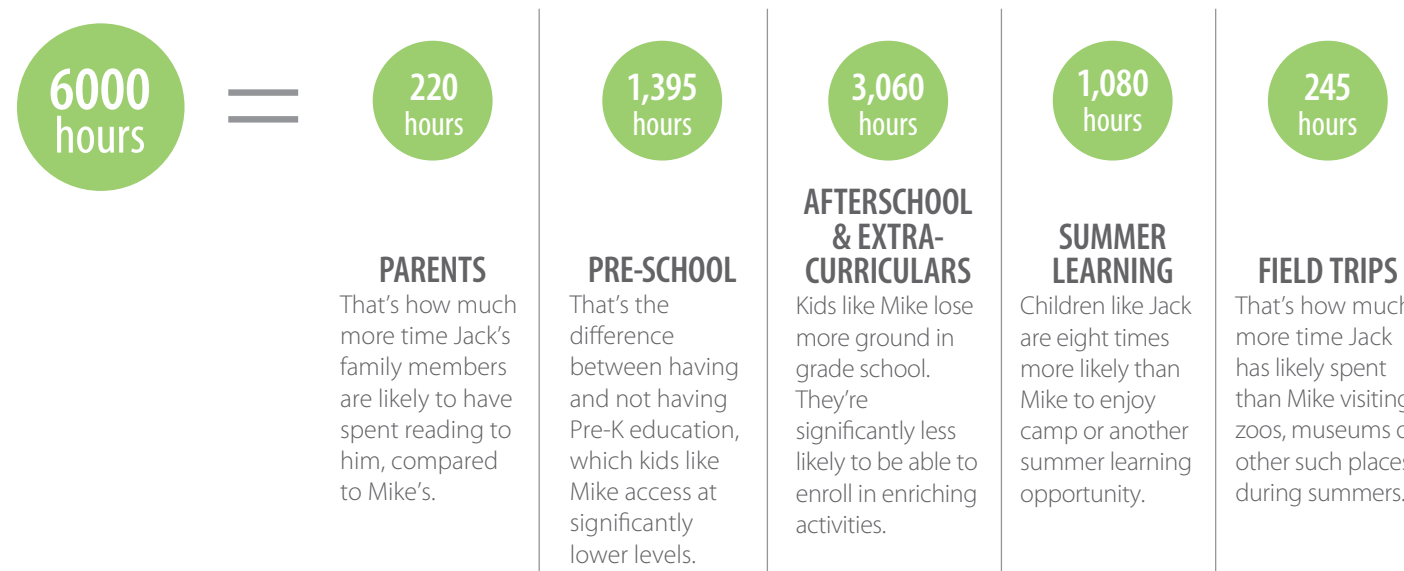
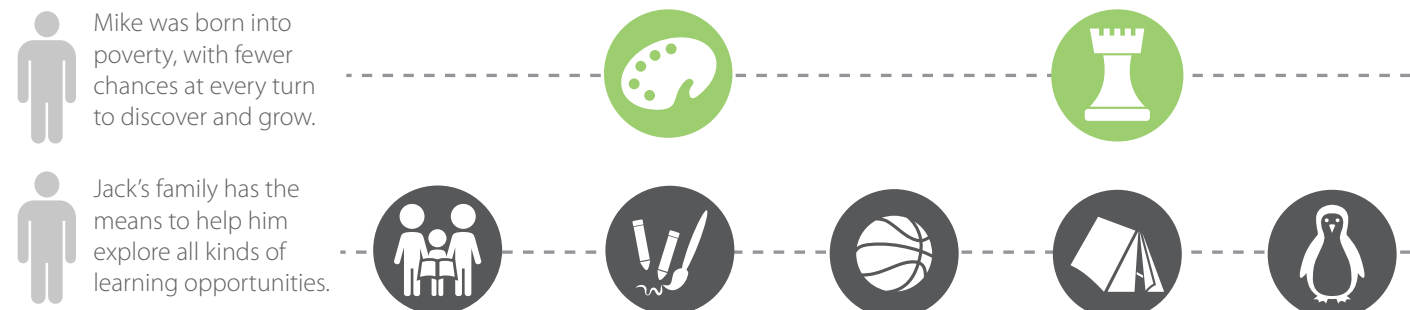
There is. It's the high-quality, hands-on learning that happens afterschool and during the summer.

Filling the gap.

Low-income students have far less exposure to informal, out-of-school learning opportunities than their peers. In fact, high-income families spend approximately \$100,000 more on their children's enrichment activities over the course of their childhood than low-income families do. And it's this imbalance that occurs every summer and each day afterschool, that creates a lower level of academic achievement among kids in need.

WHAT'S AN ELO?

An Expanded Learning Opportunity—or ELO—is a type of high-quality afterschool or summer educational experience that takes place outside the regular school day through strong school-community partnerships. These hands-on, experiential, enriching chances to learn build on, but don't duplicate, what students are learning during the school day, and allow new and exciting ways to interact with the subject matter. Research shows that regular participation in these high-quality programs has a significant impact on student attendance, behavior and course work—critical components of long-term success.



Nebraska is #8 in the U.S. for afterschool programming



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

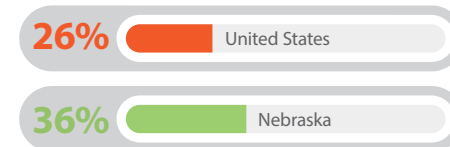
Sold on ELOs? Ready to help close the achievement gap? Here's what you can do:

- Contact your community's afterschool/summer learning program and find out what they need. Many would love volunteers to conduct tours of businesses, facilitate clubs, provide financial literacy programming...really anything that you're good at! One of the goals of an ELO is to show students new things that they won't see in class.
- Talk to your state senator about the importance of afterschool and summer learning, sharing that ELO programs support student growth, assists working families and are crucial to Nebraska's long-term economic viability.
- Support Nebraska Children, as we work at the state and community level to improve the quality and accessibility of Nebraska's ELO programs. Use the enclosed envelope, or visit NebraskaChildren.org/afterschool.

How did we score so high?

Every four years, the Afterschool Alliance conducts the America After 3PM study, which surveys parents about their satisfaction with their state's afterschool programs. From this survey and related data, the Alliance ranks each state on how well they're doing when it comes to delivering ELOs in the 3-6 pm hours. This year, Nebraska made it into the top 10 based on two key measures: dosage and parent satisfaction.

Right now, there are 71,983 Nebraska children unsupervised afterschool, compared to just 57,201 who are in afterschool programs. Overall, Nebraska's school kids are unsupervised more than the national average:



There is still room for improvement.

While Nebraska deserves the high marks it has scored for afterschool ELOs, there are many students who need access to high-quality ELO programs.

We're also seeing that most of the students that participate in Nebraska's afterschool programs are not those who most need them, as only 28% of participants qualify for free or reduced lunch. Price may be a factor here, as the weekly cost for an afterschool program is more expensive in Nebraska than the national average. 🍷

Lincoln CLCs

Lincoln Community Learning Centers provide afterschool and summer learning through 18 elementary schools, 6 middle schools and 1 high school. Each school partners with a lead organization in the community who provides ELO instructors to help with homework and engage kids in arts, crafts and STEM learning. The Lincoln CLCs have seen:

- Decreased truancy
- Higher ratings of school connectedness
- Parents demonstrated high parent engagement with school
- Partners view Lincoln CLCs as a collaborative effort that helped children and families connect with their community
- Strong academic gains

Chadron Afterschool Club

This northwest Nebraska community leverages relationships at Chadron State College to serve 250 K-8 students during the school year and

50 over the summer. Programming includes environmental science, cooking, art, music and more.

Communities Together Can-Columbus

The Communities Together Can program in Columbus, a partnership led by the UNL Extension, includes a unique emphasis on the performing arts, helping to expose more students to music and helping them improve their academic performance.

View the video now at <http://bit.ly/ColumbusCLC>.

Crete Public Schools ELOs

This afterschool program has already seen remarkable outcomes—particularly with students who need extra academic attention. The teachers work closely with afterschool staff to ensure that students who need additional help get it, and to connect with parents in a more meaningful way.

Fremont Kids Cooperative

The 280 students who participate in the Fremont Kids Cooperative choose

from a variety of engaged learning activities, acquiring new skills and showcasing their own strengths, skills and leadership. Through a series of "clubs," students select what interests them, and are able to engage in hands-on learning on topics that they are passionate about. The Theatre Club, for example, offers students the opportunity to write scripts, build sets, direct a play and perform for an audience. Students that participate in the program have shown improvements in their overall homework completion, class participation, classroom attentiveness and their engagement in school. Additionally, the program helps students strengthen their social skills. Parents of students in the program have increased their engagement with their child's school.

Kearney Community Learning Center

KCLC provides 540 students each year with a safe, enriching environment where they can receive homework help, participate in enriching activities

and discuss issues they faced during the day, which leads to better academic results and greater classroom participation. Enriching, hands-on experiences in arts, sciences and wellness are available to aid students in becoming well-rounded, engaged citizens as adults. Many of the activities that have been started in the program are due to the students' interests. This allows students to explore many different career paths.

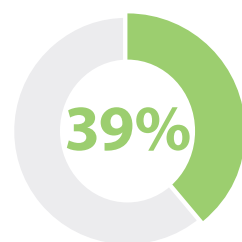
Omaha's Collective for Youth

Collective for Youth facilitates school-community partnerships at 29 elementary and middle schools in the Omaha Public School System. More than 6,000 students came through their ELO programs last year.

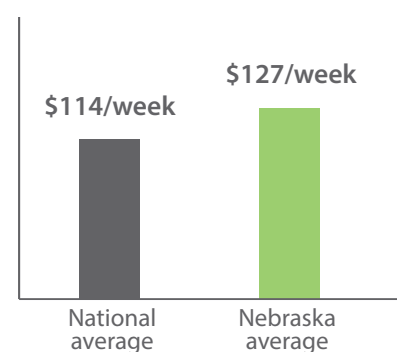
View the video now at <http://bit.ly/OmahaCFY>.

Sidney's Cool Kids Club

This afterschool program served 230 kids in the last school year, plus 200 over the summer. Educational programs included cooking, art, music, robotics and more.



39% of Nebraska middle-schoolers would participate if an ELO was available.



WHO ARE NEBRASKA'S SUCCESS STORIES?

ELOs in the Capitol



Governor Ricketts hands the proclamation for Expanded Learning Opportunity Week to Jeff Cole, Network Lead for Beyond School Bells, a Nebraska Children collaboration.

During the week of January 19-23, the Nebraska Capitol hosted Expanded Learning Opportunity Week to raise awareness of the importance of informal, afterschool and summer learning opportunities for our students.

The week's activities started with a gubernatorial proclamation, and included a week-long display in the Capitol Rotunda, featuring tables from ELO programs statewide.

On Wednesday, January 21, Beyond School Bells, a Nebraska Children collaboration, hosted a legislative luncheon to provide state senators and their legislative aides with information on the powerful impact ELOs can have on reducing the achievement gap and setting up Nebraska for a more prosperous economic future. 🍃



Senator Kate Bolz speaks to other state senators and legislative aides at the legislative luncheon on January 21 at the State Capitol.

2nd Annual • Pinwheels for Prevention

PICNIC

A celebration of positive parenting

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

11 AM - 2 PM

THE RAILYARD | LINCOLN'S WEST HAYMARKET

The Pinwheels for Prevention Picnic is all about bringing families together to celebrate the power of positive interactions. Join us for 3 hours of FREE music, games, giveaways and family fun. All are welcome!

- Free lunch, drinks and desserts
- Bounce houses
- Face painting
- Balloon animals
- Performance from The String Beans
- Free giveaways!

