

Spout

Cultivating the good life for all of our children

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation | Spring 2017



nebraskachildren
AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION



The Case for Afterschool

What it means for
Nebraska families

Havana Good Time

Friends of Nebraska Children
host the 2nd annual Perfect Pour

Board Spotlights

Meet our newest members of the
Nebraska Children board

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May 18, 2017

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May 24, 2017

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Mary Jo Pankoke

Dear Friends,

Spring has sprung, and all around us are signs of new life, renewal, and growth: budding trees, colorful tulips, kids playing outside.

The kids in our great state are especially top of mind in the springtime. In May, we are celebrating National Foster Care Month – something that's very near and dear to our hearts here at Nebraska Children. There's so much we all can do to support young people in foster care, especially as they approach young adulthood and start lives of their own.

April was Child Abuse Prevention Month, which means we've been busy promoting small steps and actions we all can take to help keep kids safe and happy. Whether it's being a good friend to a struggling parent or voicing your support for afterschool programs with your elected officials, we can all help #BringUpNebraska.

There's much to look forward to this season, but we also have much to look back on and celebrate. In this issue, you'll find a recap of our recent Perfect Pour: A Craft Cocktail Competition event – turn to pages 4-5 to read more about our evening full of excellent cocktails, live music, and dedication to our cause.

Also in this issue, you can catch up with the latest happenings from our initiatives, including Sixpence, Rooted in Relationships, news from Beyond School Bells, and more. But more importantly, as you flip through these pages, please remember that none of this work could be possible without YOUR support, encouragement, and dedication.

Thank you for everything you do, give, celebrate, and support at Nebraska Children. We're endlessly thankful for your commitment to our cause, and with your help I know we can continue helping our children grow and thrive.

Mary Jo

Mary Jo Pankoke
President and CEO



Our mission is to create
positive change
for Nebraska's children
through *community*
engagement.

Be a
Changemaker
for Nebraska Children

Your business can help cultivate the good life for all of Nebraska's children.

Changemakers 2017 is our annual fundraiser where we bring together the state's most committed philanthropists, volunteers, and business owners. Together, we celebrate what a community of contributing citizens can do to benefit children in need.

This year's keynote speaker will be Wes Moore, Army combat veteran, social entrepreneur, and author. His first book, "The Other Wes Moore," became a *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestseller.

In order to make this event a success, we need YOU! Please consider sponsoring Changemakers.

Go to NCChangemakers.org
or contact Jennifer Thielen at
jthielen@nebraskachildren.org



Wes Moore

Event Committee:

Joyce Davis Sandy Parker
Sally Ganem Carol Russell
Suzanne Kotula Rita Stinner

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Changemakers

TUESDAY
OCTOBER 10
2017

11:30 AM TO 1:00 PM

EMBASSY SUITES
LA VISTA

Honorary Chairs:
Governor Ben and Diane Nelson

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STAY CONNECTED

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Twitter: @NE_children

GYAC/Project Everlast Legislative Day



On February 11-13, 19 youth from the Governor's Youth Advisory Council (GYAC) and the Connected Youth Initiative (CYI) gathered to learn about and engage in the legislative process at their annual Legislative Day. This youth-planned and facilitated event aims to connect youth from diverse backgrounds around civic engagement and provide an opportunity for them to have a voice.

In a day and a half of preparation, youth heard presentations from Boys Town young adults, DHHS-CFS, Nebraska Appleseed, and the Coalition for a Strong Nebraska. Topics included the legislative process, voting, advocacy, and how to have solution-focused, nonconfrontational discussions about issues. Amid all the skill development, youth discussed legislation impacting young Nebraskans and selected four bills (LB298, LB487, LB411, and LB504) to capture in brief presentations.

All their work culminated in a day at the Capitol. Youth visited senators' offices and watched floor debate. They shared their bill presentations with senators over lunch and in a meeting with Governor Ricketts. New this year was a tour of the Nebraska Supreme Court with Justice Stephanie Stacy. Youth left full of ideas for their next steps and ways to make next year's event even better. One youth reflected on the evaluation, "I thought this was a great experience. I loved it and I will be much more prepared for next time." 🍃

Beyond School Bells hosts STEM awareness day

Beyond School Bells held an Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) STEM awareness day at the Capitol with youth from Omaha's Howard Kennedy Elementary school participating in a hands-on STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) experiment with mentors from UNO's STEM 4 U program. About 25 senators and staff stopped by during lunch to observe and interact with the youth and get a better understanding of the type of high-quality school-community partnerships that power learning in Nebraska's ELO programs. Beyond School Bells (BSB) used this event to release the findings of recent national research showing that Nebraska youth who participate



in ELO STEM programs have a higher likelihood to take additional STEM classes, increase their sense of themselves as STEM learners, and are more interested in STEM careers. *Learn more at BeyondSchoolBells.org.* 🍃



The Case for Afterschool

by Jeff Cole, Network Lead
Beyond School Bells



In his first Federal budget proposal, President Trump calls for elimination of the only dedicated source of Federal funding for afterschool and summer programs, the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program. The effect of these cuts in Nebraska would be dramatic — communities across the state receive about \$5.5 million a year in 21st Century grant funds that help support 125 high-quality programs serving approximately 20,000 youth.

These proposed cuts reflect a lack of understanding of the vital role and impressive results these programs generate both in Nebraska and around the country. Both national and local data tell the same story — afterschool matters. Long-term evaluations show that when young people regularly participate in high-quality programs like Nebraska's 21st Century grant-supported programs, we see improvements in the critical ABCs: Attendance increases, Behaviors improve, and Course work improves. The benefits don't stop there — a new study illustrates that Nebraska's afterschool programs are also proven to have a significant impact in developing the STEM-knowledgeable workforce we need to power our future economy.

On the plus side...

In contrast to this Federal proposal, two bills currently making their way through the Nebraska Legislature illustrate that even in these tough times, support for high-quality Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) programs is growing.

In the Education Committee, Senator Adam Morfeld (District 46) introduced LB 246, a bill which would allow districts to exceed their budget authority

(but not their property tax levy limit) to support ELO programs through a vote of their elected, local school boards. For districts with student populations over 1,000 students the exemption could reach \$100,000; for districts with 1,000 students or fewer, the exemption could be up to \$50,000. BSB is very supportive of this local control, pro-ELO bill and glad to report that it made it out of the Education Committee with a 5-3 vote.

In the Appropriations Committee, Senator Rick Kolowski (District 31) introduced LB 270, a bill to provide \$750,000 in funding to support the ELO Opportunity grant program. If enacted, this new funding would follow up and enhance the \$250,000 that the Legislature authorized last year, funding which is being used right now to support new school-community partnerships across the state.

Afterschool programs are an effective part of STEM

A new, national evaluation of afterschool shows these programs are a powerful platform for STEM learning. Working across 11 states—including Nebraska—the Afterschool STEM System-Building Evaluation involved nearly 1,600 youth in 160 afterschool programs. The results show afterschool STEM programs have a significant impact on youth identity as STEM learners, their desire to take more STEM courses, their interest in STEM careers and other important 21st century skills and attitudes.

Unsurprising to us, the study found that Nebraska youth showed the most significant gains of any of the participating states in several key indicators. Find out more at BeyondSchoolBells.org. 🍃

Havana Good Time supporting Nebraska Children

The second annual Perfect Pour Craft Cocktail Competition transformed The Living Room at the Mastercraft in Omaha into pre-



embargo 1950s Cuba, complete with live music, cigars, hand-crafted rum cocktails, and an auction of beautiful period 1950s Omaha photography.

The main component of the night was the final round of this year's Perfect Pour Cocktail Competition, officiated per IBG rules. Eight bartender finalists representing bars and restaurants from all over the Midwest (narrowed down from a field of 23 competitors) were asked to create one-of-a-kind cocktails for event guests using Brugal rum, an event sponsor. Cash prizes were awarded to Adam Flohr from the Down Under Lounge (People's Choice) and Austin Foster from The Diving Elk in Sioux City, Iowa (Judges' Choice).

Guests danced the night away to Rhythm Collective and The New Humans, who provided Latin jazz and Caribbean reggae tunes. Guests had the opportunity to win one of four Cuban-themed raffle prizes, including a "Viva Cuba" package with cigars and liquor not available for purchase in the states. Event guests were treated to a variety of Caribbean-inspired savory treats provided by Catering Creations, including pork belly and pineapple skewers, brisket corn dogs, hand-made guacamole, coconut mango chicken, and more.

The event drew approximately 350 guests and raised more than \$35,000 for Nebraska Children!

This fun, well-organized event would not be possible without the Friends of Nebraska Children group, who planned and brought the event to life, and our generous supporters who keep our doors open and make our work possible. *Thank you all!* 🍸



Thank You to Our Generous Perfect Pour Sponsors

Sixpence celebrates 10th anniversary with new website

SingASongofSixpence.org

Anyone who has celebrated an anniversary knows that relationships are more likely to reach major milestones when the partners make strong communication a priority. The Sixpence Early Learning Fund is an effective and enduring partnership built upon a dynamic conversation about what Nebraskans can do to ensure more of our youngest, most vulnerable children are prepared to succeed in school and life.

This is why it makes perfect sense that Sixpence is starting off its 10-year anniversary celebration with the launch of its new website.

We've designed our new site to keep the lines of communication open and strong between early childhood professionals, legislators, funders, school administrators, and everyone else who has helped make Sixpence a success. We've outlined the key facts about brain and skill development in the infant and toddler years to explain why this developmental period is crucial. We've developed an overview of our core values—supportive parenting, public-private collaboration, and good stewardship—that make Sixpence a good investment in Nebraska and

its citizens. We've also provided an overview of the developmental gains infants and toddlers are making in Sixpence-supported programs statewide. Finally, the site still provides a quick and efficient way for Sixpence grantees to share detailed information about their programs and report on their progress in working with parents and children.

We will continue to enhance and add to the website. Our goal is to keep partners and colleagues well-informed about Sixpence, our successes, and the challenges and opportunities still ahead. If we can keep that conversation going, even more children will be growing toward happy and productive lives by the time Sixpence reaches its next anniversary milestone. Be sure to stop by and let us know what you think. 🍏

The proof is in!

Rooted in Relationships releases Evaluation Report and new video series

Rooted in Relationships recently finalized videos for communities that are in their third year of implementation: Dakota, Dawson, and Saline counties. Each video is unique and highlights the strengths and progress of their Pyramid and Systems work.

The initiative also released its 2015-2016 Evaluation Report, which highlights successful implementation of Circle of Security Parenting, Pyramid Model, and other evidence-based practices over the course of the year.

Learn more at RootedinRelationships.org



Rita Stinner

As a lifelong educator, Rita Stinner's passion for children is obvious. Rita recently retired as the Director of Music for Western Nebraska Community College. Though the years, she has taught music to children of all ages and all socio-economic groups. "I have seen it all when it comes to kids and families," Rita says. "I am especially worried about the afternoon programs available for children — there seems to be a drop-off occurring, and this leads to a disconnect on many levels." She notes that Nebraska Children has done so much to fortify communities and strengthen families.

Rita and her husband, State Senator John Stinner, live in Gering, Nebraska. As she travels through the state with her husband, she readily offers to share the success stories of Nebraska Children, and in some instances, provide the education and relationship building in communities that may be reluctant to welcome programming into their communities. "I am a great promoter!" she adds. "I never hesitate to stand up for what I believe in, and I believe in what's best for Nebraska's children!"

Raised in Missouri Valley, Iowa, she attended college at UNL. Rita and her husband have two children and three grandchildren. 🍏

Suzanne Kotula

Suzanne Kotula's ability to understand and navigate children's issues is apparent from her many volunteer activities in Omaha. She brings experience, innovative ideas, and energy to help strengthen the guild and other volunteer opportunities.

"I see the importance of social service agencies working together to provide the best continuance of care for Nebraska's children," Suzanne says. "I am impressed at how effective Nebraska Children has been in bringing parties together on important issues." Through her work as a tireless community volunteer, she is keenly aware of the challenges facing Nebraska's children and families, particularly wellness, homelessness, and hunger. "Caring for our children requires teamwork and collaboration," Suzanne says. "I am anxious to become part of the team."

Raised in Mapleton, Iowa, Suzanne graduated with a nursing degree from Creighton University. She completed a Master's Degree while living in Washington, D.C. Suzanne and her husband, cardiologist Rudy Kotula, have two children and live in Omaha. 🍏



Dear Friends,

I am honored to serve as President of Friends of Nebraska Children for 2017. Since beginning in 2016, Friends of Nebraska Children has continued to grow and build on the success of our first year. I am amazed every day at the dedication of the members of this group and what they have accomplished in a short time.



The Friends recently held their second annual Perfect Pour: A Craft Cocktail Competition on February 25. For those who were able to attend, I hope you had a great time sampling craft cocktails from our innovative participants and listening to the live reggae and jazz, all while mingling with other Nebraska Children and Families Foundation supporters! To our attendees, donors, and sponsors, because of you – and approximately 350 attendees and eight competing bartender finalists – we brought in more than \$55,000. These funds will help strengthen families and communities across our state, giving children opportunities to thrive!

Thank you for your generosity!

Let's not let our impact end there; let's build on the momentum of a great evening! The Friends of Nebraska Children and I hope you will consider joining us.

We are a group of volunteers who support the work of the foundation through volunteerism, fundraising, and community awareness. As a member, you'll receive invitations to Nebraska Children special events, a subscription to the Spout newsletter, and volunteer opportunities. With dues beginning at \$30, it's a great way to become more involved with Nebraska Children and continue to support its important work

Warmly,

Nick Thielen
President, Friends of Nebraska Children

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JOIN THE FRIENDS!

Membership in Friends is open to all those interested in partnering with Nebraska Children.

FriendsOfNebraskaChildren.org



What are you doing this summer?

How about channeling your inner camp counselor? Camp Catch-Up is seeking **dedicated, compassionate staff** to work alongside our campers: youth who have been separated from their siblings due to out-of-home care.

Western NE Camp: Nebraska State 4-H Camp, Halsey, NE

Staff arrive evening of Wednesday, June 14, and depart at 1 p.m. on Sunday, June 18.

Eastern NE Camp: Eastern NE 4-H Center, Gretna, NE

Staff arrive at 1 p.m. on Thursday, July 13, and depart at 1 p.m. on Sunday, July 16.

Learn more about Staff requirements and apply at campcatchup.org.





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215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508



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: 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

4. Talk to your estate planner about leaving a lasting legacy to Nebraska Children.

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Nebraska Children and Family Foundation's sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent Charity Evaluator. www.charitynavigator.org