



NCLC N EMAIL BLAST

May 31, 2007

2007 Hours of Opportunity

This year's Hours of Opportunity Conference for afterschool program providers and coordinators, held in Kearney on May 8th and 9th, attracted over 200 participants. The theme of the conference, Promoting Positive Youth Development, was woven throughout the two day event by Michael Brandwein, our keynote presenter. Michael's dynamic presentation tied together a lunch presentation by Girls and Boys Town Executive Director Emeritus Father Val Peters and over 30 breakout sessions and discussion circles on various topics of interest to the afterschool world. Thank you to all of you that attended – you made this year's conference a great success! We will provide you with information about next year's conference in future alerts.

CLC Awareness Week

During the week of May 21 – 25th, the Network assembled banners, brochures, reports, maps, pictures, student projects and other information about afterschool and community learning center programs from local programs (thank you Sidney, North Platte and Lincoln), statewide efforts and national advocates for display at the Capitol Rotunda in Lincoln. This presentation coincided with an editorial in LJS (**go to article**) discussing the importance of CLCs to helping support student achievement, strengthen families and community development. The activity was a success and timing couldn't have been better as it coincided with the debate on the Learning Community bill for Douglas and Sarpy Counties (see next column). We hope to make similar awareness activities a regular part of our calendar of activities.

Additional Omaha Activities

The Network has been working closely with a diverse array of afterschool advocates in Omaha on the development of a school-community partnership to expand the availability of afterschool programs in some of Omaha's most underserved communities. This program will be part of the recently announced Building Bright Futures project Task Force on Afterschool, Mentoring and Tutoring and includes funding blended from a variety of public and private sources. For more information on this initiative, visit the Omaha Afterschool Alliance web site at www.omahaafterschool.org/Default.aspx

New Legislation

During the final weeks of the Legislative session, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed the much anticipated LB 641, the bill that creates the Douglas / Sarpy County Learning Community. One of the primary goals of this bill was to address the achievement gap that plagues poor and minority youth in the Omaha metro area. A key strategy to improving achievement for poor and minority youth was the requirement that the new learning community sponsor two new "elementary learning centers" in high poverty areas in Omaha. These learning centers will provide academic enrichment opportunities for youth as well as parent education and other community outreach programs.

This is the first time that the Legislature has specified the development of full service community learning centers in Nebraska. We are excited about the opportunities that these learning centers will provide both to the youth and families they serve but also as a model for future education reform efforts.

Upcoming Hot Topics Call

Our next Hot Topics call will be held on June 21 at 11:00 and will focus on reforms to school aged child care licensing requirements. The call will feature Pat Urzedowski, Program Administrator for Child Care Licensing, Health and Human Services. Pat's discussion will build on her presentation at the Hours of Opportunity but will be suitable to all those with an interest in state licensing requirements.

Note: This will be the last hot topic call before a one month summer break. We will resume these calls on August 16 when our topic will be using afterschool programs to increase parental engagement. This call will feature LaRon Henderson, the coordinator of school-based services for the Nebraska PIRC program.

