PRIME TIME FIRST AID KITS ON THEIR WAY TO FAMILIES
HN put together tote bags of books with journals, gifts, and more to encourage families to read together at home during the pandemic PGS 2-3

Humanities Nebraska put together 300 Prime Time First Aid Kits to send to Nebraska families to encourage reading and discussing books together.
FIRST AID KITS BRING PRIME TIME HOME TO FAMILIES

This month, nearly 300 Nebraska families with preschool and elementary school children are receiving Prime Time First Aid Kits, designed by Humanities Nebraska to be a Prime Time experience at home.

While some Prime Time teams are continuing to offer online reading sessions, many families are unable to participate due to the ongoing pandemic. Our answer is Prime Time First Aid Kits.

The bilingual kit includes nine of the most-requested titles from our Spanish-speaking, African American, Native American, preschool, and multicultural Prime Time tracks. It also includes supplies, gifts (such as a plush wolf and pig), and a family-friendly guide with discussion questions, activities, and further reading suggestions for each book.

The idea to develop and distribute Prime Time First Aid Kits came from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, creators of Prime Time Family Reading Time. As programs stopped meeting in person this spring and moved online for the fall, Louisiana recognized that many families without internet access would miss opportunities to read and discuss award-winning children’s books at home with each other.

We recognized this, too, as Nebraska’s schedule of 50 Prime Time programs for 2020 dwindled to a total of 23. We offered three Prime Time Online programs in the summer and ten online this fall, but they didn’t reach families in Fremont, Hastings, Lexington, Lincoln, Millard, and other communities.

“This is a tough time to be a parent, a student, or a teacher,” said Dr. Erika Hamilton, Director of Literary Programs and Prime Time coordinator for Humanities Nebraska. “Remote learning has caused children and adults to become tired and stressed about online classes and programs.

We hope the First Aid Kits provide what families have been missing online – fun interpersonal connections while exploring books and ideas together at home.”

Humanities
Nebraska wants to make sure families who were not able to participate in Prime Time this year have books to read and discuss during the winter. Books in the kit include:

- The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka
- A Spoon for Every Bite by Joe Hayes
- Too Many Tamales by Gary Soto
- Coyote Steals the Blanket: A Ute Tale by Janet Stevens
- Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock by Eric A. Kimmel
- Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe
- The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch
- Ruby’s Wish by Shirin Yim Bridges
- Doctor De Soto by William Steig

The bilingual discussion guide explores issues of truthfulness, justice, greed, generosity, responsibility, bravery, friendship, leadership, and breaking boundaries. It looks at the role of tricksters in Native American and African tales, offers information on different cultures, and encourages children to create their own stories.

Chris Sommerich, executive director, said, “We hope these kits provide joy and fun to families while also helping them advance their child’s reading and critical thinking skills.”

In November, Prime Time venues who did not offer the program in 2020 signed up to receive kits for families in their community. The kits were sent to the venues in December for distribution at no cost to the families.

Humanities Nebraska is grateful for the generous funding that allowed us to prepare and provide Prime Time First Aid Kits to Nebraska families this winter.

We thank the Sherwood Foundation, Lester A. Walker Foundation, Rogers Foundation, Acklie Charitable Foundation, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, the Johnny Carson Fund at the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Carol Gendler, an appropriation from the Nebraska State Legislature, and an anonymous donor.

For more information about Prime Time and Prime Time Preschool in Nebraska, please visit our website at HumanitiesNebraska.org.

In November, Humanities Nebraska introduced a new series titled, “Valuing the Vote!”, which is funded by the “Why it Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation” initiative, administered by the Federation of State Humanities Councils and funded by Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The series kicked off with a look at how women won the right to vote in the United States featuring Dr. Dianne Bystrom, Nebraska co-president of the League of Women’s Voters and member of the HN Speakers Bureau. A second session by Laureen Riedesel, also of the HN Speakers Bureau, shared the little-known story of Clara Bewick Colby, a Beatrice resident who became a key player in the suffrage movement. In a December session, guest presenter Sally Bisson-Best also introduced the online audience to a Nebraska suffragist, Doris Stevens. This was followed two days later with a panel discussion exploring the current status of women and voting.

Additional conversations on voting rights are being planned for February and March 2021. To stay informed, please visit HumanitiesNebraska.org/vote, where you can sign up for e-mail alerts, plus book and DVD drawings. For more information, contact Mary Yager, associate director, at mary@humanitiesnebraska.org or 402-474-2131.
GOVERNOR’S LECTURE RAISES MORE THAN $189,000

On September 22, more than 2,000 humanities supporters, students and community members watched the 2020 Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities either online or in person at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln. Doris Kearns Goodwin, world-renowned presidential historian, speaker and Pulitzer Prize-winning best-selling author, delivered the lecture from her home in Massachusetts.

Presented by Humanities Nebraska with co-sponsors the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues, Duncan Family Trust, Union Pacific and the University of Nebraska, the lecture was the second talk in the Thompson Forum 2020-21 series, “Regeneration: Leadership and Hope for a Changing Planet.” Co-chairs were Humanities Nebraska board members Connie Duncan and Chris Zygielbaum.

Earlier in the day, Goodwin met with UNL Honors College students via Zoom. The lecture was also live streamed on the campuses of Nebraska Wesleyan, Peru State College and Wayne State College.

Following the lecture in a Q&A moderated by Dr. Patrice McMahon from UNL, Goodwin answered questions from the in-person and online audiences.

While the coronavirus led HN to cancel the usual benefit dinner that precedes the lecture, many viewers commented on the timeliness of Goodwin’s talk.

One observer commented that “Doris Kearns Goodwin used one of the leadership styles she describes — storytelling — to bring us up close and personal with these presidents and help us understand why they were able to move our democracy forward under challenging times.”

Immediately prior to Goodwin’s lecture, Natalie Hahn received the 2020 Sower Award in the Humanities. A deeply rooted Nebraskan and a true global citizen, Natalie is a former United Nations official, with 38 years of experience in U.N. programs on food crops and nutrition, women and finance, and youth initiatives in various African nations.

This year’s lecture also had the distinction of being the 25th anniversary of the event. Donors made “$25 for 25” donations in celebration of the silver anniversary.

HN is grateful to the donors and sponsors who rallied to support HN and helped to raise more than $189,000 for Humanities Nebraska’s statewide programs. Thank you for making our statewide work possible and helping HN celebrate this special event’s silver anniversary year!

WITH THANKS TO THESE GENEROUS DONORS TO THE 2020 GOVERNOR’S LECTURE

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Q&A WITH DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN

One of the highlights of the Governor's lecture each year is questions from the audience. Governor Pete Ricketts asked the first question this year. Here is their exchange. Lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

GOVERNOR RICKETTS: If you examine the states’ rights issue between the states and the president and the constitutional prerogatives, one example in your book is Theodore Roosevelt during the coal miners’ strike, and where was that presidential authority to be able to intervene in the private sector or the states? This is something that has been a long-time issue in the United States, and certainly relevant today with different states having different responses to the pandemic.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: You’re absolutely right Governor: it’s since the founding of our nation. It was clear at the beginning that the states had primacy, and the difficulty for even raising weapons and money for the army had to do with the fact that each state could decide what they wanted to send to the federal army. This goes back to being in “turbulent times”; it seems that in such times, presidents assume authority because they feel that they are the steward of the people and they have a responsibility for that national dilemma.

You mentioned the coal strike; for six months, it meant that coal, which was the fuel that was absolutely necessary, couldn’t get to places in New England. Hospitals were closing down, schools were closing, and Theodore Roosevelt had no precedent to act.

No president had ever intervened in that kind of situation. But he thought he was a steward of the people, and he had a responsibility for the public that went beyond either the union or the coal owners. So he invited both the union people and the coal owners to a meeting in the White House. He said to them, “I am representing the public. I don’t have an argument in this battle, but I need you to negotiate.” He was eventually able to bring them to the bargaining table and accept a presidential commission that would arbitrate their differences. And that created a new power for a president, to be involved in private affairs, and to be involved in local and state affairs.

Similarly when Franklin Roosevelt took office, the states had primary responsibility for the Depression before he got there, but he assumed federal responsibility.

So while the powers of the presidency have grown over time, the states are the ones that have the power to determine when their economies will close and reopen. So that battle I think will continue. It’s probably a source of initiative, a source of entrepreneurship, a source of conflict in our society, but it’s built into us right from the beginning, to have different layers of power, and hope that those powers can come together when it’s needed for the security of the country.

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"The Book Doctor" visited Prime Time Family Reading Time in Norfolk last March.
Join these generous contributors and help to cultivate an understanding of our history and culture. Thank you for becoming part of our mission!

Patron's Circle

We thank these generous individuals who helped ensure a vibrant cultural life in Nebraska with cumulative annual gifts totalling $1,000 or more made between September 1, 2019 and October 31, 2020. To learn more about the Patron’s Circle, please contact Heather Thomas at 402.474.2131 or heather@HumanitiesNebraska.org.

Thank you!

Join today and come to our special Patron’s Circle event next spring!

Patron’s Circle April 9, 2021

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HN PROVIDES ANOTHER $308,956 IN RELIEF GRANTS TO NEBRASKA ORGANIZATIONS

Thanks to a special distribution from the Nebraska Cultural Endowment (NCE) matched by an anonymous donor, Humanities Nebraska provided more relief grants to 74 humanities organizations across the state that are battling the challenges of the pandemic, including:

African Culture Connection, Omaha, $5,000
American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, Lincoln, $2,500
Antelope County Historic Society, Neligh, $3,500
Asian Community and Cultural Center, Lincoln, $3,000
Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, $5,000
Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation
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Bluebird Cultural Initiative, Elmwood, $2,093
Blitz Locally Grown, Lincoln, $2,500
Bluebird Theatre, Omaha, $5,000
Bluebird Cultural Initiative, Bellevue, $3,500
Bright Lights, Lincoln, $3,750
Brownville Fine Arts Association, $1,000
Brownville Historical Society, $5,000
Buffalo County Historical Society, Kearney, $7,500
Crane River Theater Company, Kearney, $5,000
Creighton University, Omaha, $2,500
Custer County Historical Society, Broken Bow, $2,500
Douglas County Historical Society, Omaha, $5,000
The Durham Museum, Omaha $7,500
El Museo Latino, Omaha, $6,500
Father Flanagan’s Boys’ Home, Omaha, $2,500
Flatwater Shakespeare Company, Lincoln, $4,000
Fontenelle Forest, Bellevue, $2,500
Fort Atkinson Foundation, Fort Calhoun, $1,000
Fremont Area Art Association, $1,000
Friends of the Homestead, Beatrice, $7,500
Friends of the International Quilt Study Center, Lincoln, $5,000
Friends of the Midwest Theater, Scottsbluff, $7,500
Front Street Cowboy Museum, Ogallala, $6,000
Gage County Historical Society, Beatrice, $7,500
Genoa U.S. Indian School Foundation, $2,400
Golden Spike Tower, North Platte, $5,000
Great Plains Black History Museum, Omaha, $5,000
Great Plains Theatre Conference, Omaha, $5,000
Great Plains Welsh Heritage Centre, Wymore, $750
Hall County Historical Society, Grand Island, $3,000
Hastings Museum of Natural and Cultural History, $4,640
Historical Bryant House, Tekamah, $5,000
Historical Society of Ravenna, $1,500
History Nebraska, Lincoln, $7,500
John G. Neihardt Foundation, Bancroft, $7,500
Johnson County Historical Society, Tecumseh, $3,000
Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, $4,000
Kearney Area Children’s Museum, Kearney, $1,000
Kregel Windmill Factory Museum, Nebraska City, $7,500
Legacy of the Plains, Gering, $7,500
Lincoln Children’s Museum, $1,000
Lincoln County Historical Society, North Platte, $4,600
Malone Center, Lincoln, $5,000
Mildred D Brown Memorial Study Center, Omaha, $7,500
MRB Lewis & Clark Visitors Center, Nebraska City, $5,000
Nebraska Indian Education Association, Walthill, $7,500
Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, $5,252
Nebraska Writers Collective, Omaha, $3,218
Nordfolk Arts Center, $5,000
Nuckolls County Historical Society, Superior, $5,623
Omaha Children’s Museum, $1,000
Omaha Community Playhouse, $2,500
Omaha Girls Rock, $2,000
Omaha Symphony, $2,500
Pierce Historical Society, $2,400
Plainsman Museum, Aurora, $5,000
Platte Valley Literacy Association, Columbus, $2,500
Prairie Arts Center, North Platte, $2,500
Rabble Mill, Lincoln, $4,000
Robert Henri Museum & Historical Walkway, Cozad, $4,000
Robert M Merryman Performing Arts Center, Kearney, $3,750
Sheldon Art Association, Lincoln, $4,000
Strategic Air and Space Museum, Ashland, $5,000
Stuhr Museum Foundation, Grand Island, $7,500
Table Rock Historical Society, $2,500
UNION for Contemporary Art, Omaha, $6,500
University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, $2,500
Weeping Water Valley Historical Society, $1,000
Wessels Living History Farm, York, $5,000

HN TO LAUNCH “WEATHERING UNCERTAINTY: OUR CONNECTIONS TO CLIMATE” SOON

During the coming months, Humanities Nebraska will host a series of conversations that will explore how humans adapt to our climate. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Rhonda Seacrest, it will bring together a cross-section of Nebraskans with different perspectives to share ideas and opinions related to climate change, the media’s role in informing citizens, and our historical and current relationships to weather and climate. The program also connects with a year-long in-depth journalism class at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL).

Watch our weekly e-blast for dates and times. To sign up, send an email to info@humanitiesnebraska.org.

“PRAIRIE FORGE” ON WWII SCRAP METAL DRIVE CHOSEN FOR ONE BOOK ONE NEBRASKA

During 2021, Nebraskans are encouraged to read and discuss “Prairie Forge: The Extraordinary Story of the Nebraska Scrap Metal Drive of World War II” by James J. Kimble. Initiated by Omaha World-Herald editor Henry Doorly, the scrap metal drive inspired Nebraskans statewide and became the model for a national effort.

One Book One Nebraska is sponsored by Nebraska Center for the Book, Humanities Nebraska, and the Nebraska Library Commission. Resources for book clubs, libraries, etc., will soon be available. For details, visit OneBook.Nebraska.gov/2021 or search “One Book One Nebraska” on Facebook.
GRANT SPOTLIGHT: VESPER CONCERT SERIES
“THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF THE UNARMED”

Since 1988, Vesper Concerts of Omaha has presented diverse experiences in chamber music in an annual series of free concerts. Early last March, Vesper Concerts hosted composer and social advocate Atlanta-based Joel Thompson for a number of school visits followed the next day by a public performance at the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Community Engagement Center, featuring an a capella choir from Omaha Central High School and UNO’s concert choir.

Titled “The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed,” Thompson’s composition was inspired by “the onslaught of killings of unarmed black men” and visual artist Shirin Barghi’s #LastWords project.

Thompson used the text structure of Joseph Haydn’s “Seven Last Words of Christ” to form the structure of this choral work, incorporating the last known words of several of the men and boys featured in Barghi’s art, including Trayvon Martin.

Each of the seven victim’s words are set to a different musical style, though a French Renaissance-era secular tune, L’homme armé anchors the theme throughout.

Originally sung by an all-male chorus with string quintet and piano, the work is a powerful way to tell these stories.

“After Michael Brown and Eric Garner were killed in 2014, I wrote it as a way to process my feelings,” Thompson told CNN shortly after the Omaha performance. “No piece I’ve ever written since will be as vulnerable, because I didn’t expect anyone to see it.” With a grant from Humanities Nebraska, Thompson was able to visit with students at four Omaha-area high schools and the UNO music department during the day before the concert to talk about how this work, originally intended to be a private expression of grief, had become a way to help listeners connect with victims and broaden their understanding of social justice.

More than 400 people attended the performance, double the number originally anticipated.

HN AWARDS 14 GRANTS TOTALING $59,843

Humanities Nebraska recently awarded the following grants:

Asian Community and Culture Center, Lincoln, $10,000 to help fund “Untold Migrant Stories.”
Elkhorn Valley Museum, Norfolk, $3,500 in support of a Nebraska Music Hall of Fame exhibit.
John G. Neihardt Foundation, Bancroft, $1,593 to help fund the Centenary Celebration of Nebraska’s Poet Laureate John G. Neihardt.
Johnson County Historical Society, Inc., Tecumseh, $2,000 in support of a student oral history collection project called, “Stories: Yes,” in conjunction with the Museum on Main Street exhibition, “Crossroads: Change in Rural America.”
Lincoln Orchestra Association, $2,750 for the 2020-2021 Lincoln Symphony Orchestra’s pre-concert chats.

Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, Lincoln, $1,000 for the virtual 2020 Pilster Lecture & Mari Sandoz Symposium.
Nebraska Shakespeare Festival, Omaha, $8,000 to support “Shakespeare on Tour.”
Nebraska Writers Collective, Omaha, $6,000 to support the touring artist series for Louder Than a Bomb: Great Plains.
NET Foundation for Television, Lincoln, $10,000, for an episode of Nebraska Stories, “When the World Changed.”
Opera Omaha, Omaha, $1,500 towards producing writing workshops and a poetry booklet for a special initiative called “Poetry & Music 2021.”
The Robert Henri Museum and Historical Walkway, Cozad, $2,000 to help fund the exhibit, “Henri: From the 100th Meridian to International Fame.”
The University of Nebraska Foundation, Lincoln, $5,000 in support of the KANEKO and University of Nebraska at Omaha Library Creative Academy’s civic leadership module.
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Board of Regents, $2,000 for outreach programming related to the Hostile Terrain 94 exhibition and $4,500 in support of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute’s Winter Lecture Series symposium, “Global Displacement, Political Conflict and Climate Change.”
IN MEMORY

JANICE COLLINS-BROOKS, 1936-2020
Janice Brooks-Collins died on November 12. Hundreds of children in the North Omaha area knew her as “Miss Janice,” the discussion leader for their Prime Time Family Reading Time sessions at Washington Branch library. Janice joined the Prime Time team in 2006. Janice was also a member of the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau for nearly 20 years, sharing the history of African-American Gospel music and folktale.

FRED MATTHIES, 1925-2020
Frederick J. Matthies died on September 1. Born in Omaha, he served in the U.S. Marine Corp during the Korean conflict, later earning an engineering degree from Cornell. He worked for Omaha’s HDR and then moved to Leo A. Daly Architects and Engineers. Fred was a trustee on the Augusta Board of Regents and board member of the Lutheran Hospital (now Methodist Hospital). He was also on the board of Humanities Nebraska.

JODY FIKE, 1935-2020
Jody Fike died on November 10. She was president of the Omaha Junior League, chair of the Ak-Sar-Ben Women’s Ball Committee, and director of the first Health Fair of the Midlands for the Omaha Red Cross. In 1979, Jody received the Girls Club of America Distinguished Service Award and was named United Way of the Midlands Volunteer of the Year. She served on numerous boards including HN’s foundation board 2000-2006.

JOHN SCHLEICHER, 1965-2020
John Schleicher died on August 9. Born in Superior and raised in Plattsmouth, John loved his state’s history and people. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Hastings College and a master’s degree from the University of Nebraska. He was an archivist/director of numerous museums and organizations and a member of the HN Speakers Bureau. He served on the HN board from 2014-2020 and served as Council chairman during 2019.

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Nebraskans like you provide the financial power to connect us through programs like Prime Time Family Reading Time and Nebraska Warrior Writers, to start conversations about voting and climate, and to share new stories and opportunities for Nebraskans.

Your tax-deductible support by December 31 will help connect us and reach more Nebraskans—thank you!

You can give by check, through our secure website, HumanitiesNebraska.org, joining the Patron's Circle or you can donate stock or make a Legacy gift.

HOWEVER YOU SUPPORT HUMANITIES NEBRASKA, THANK YOU.

If you have any questions, please contact Heather Thomas, Director of Development, at 402.474.2131 or heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Community Services Fund (CSF) is a coalition of 70 diverse nonprofits working to build a vibrant, creative and healthy community.

HN greatly appreciates donors who designated gifts to us through their CSF workplace giving campaigns. Thank you!

Please go online and visit communityservicesfund.org to learn more.

To update address or cancel subscriptions, call 402.474.2131 or e-mail info@humanitiesnebraska.org.
Nebraska Warrior Writers began as an idea and became a family. Since 2014, veterans, active duty military, and their support partners have entered the halls of the Veterans’ Administration building in Lincoln or library meeting rooms in Omaha and Grand Island to see what this program is about.

They listen to speakers who inspire them through writing prompts. They discuss and explore aspects of writing and publishing. They separate into small groups to read their own writing for feedback and inspiration from other writers. They learn about each other, listen to each other, support each other, and become a family.

Now, for the first time, the work of Nebraska Warrior Writers is available as a published anthology. *From Warriors to Warrior Writers: Journeys to Healing* is a collection of poems, essays, fiction and nonfiction written by 23 authors and edited by workshop facilitator Sara Hollcroft. Most of the work was written during, for, or in response to workshop sessions.

The book, available in print and eBook, can be ordered online from Amazon and Barnes & Noble. You can find direct links to those online sellers at NeWarriorWriters.org. Print copies may also be purchased directly from Humanities Nebraska, or you can ask your local bookseller to order a copy for you. Retail price is $16.95.

Humanities Nebraska partners with the Nebraska Writing Project at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln to offer this series of writing and discussion workshops. Funding for the program is provided by the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Nebraska Warrior Writers is a proud recipient of the Nebraska Center for the Book’s Jane Geske Award for “exceptional literacy contributions.” *From Warriors to Warrior Writers* was published by Humanities Nebraska through Redbrush in November.