**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Summer of Youth grants awarded to 22 Nebraska communities to support summer learning activities**

(Lincoln, NE) – Through the **Summer of Youth**, a partnership between the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and Beyond School Bells (BSB), a program of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, schools and youth-serving organizations across 22 Nebraska communities will receive more than $885,000 in grants to support fun, engaging and student-directed learning activities this summer.

These **Summer of Youth** grants differ from other awards because they required applicants to incorporate youth voice into their action plans.  Over the winter, BSB used an innovative visual brainstorming sheet with youth in four Nebraska communities to identify activities Nebraska youth want to see more of in their afterschool and summer programs.  Communities were then asked to incorporate this information, or interest surveys collected from youth in their communities, to identify projects they wanted to implement this summer.

These grants will fund activity-rich projects ranging from outdoor education in Bancroft-Rosalie and Broken Bow to community-based experiential and gardening activities in Walthill and Wakefield – and exciting, engaging and inspiring activities in other Nebraska communities. These are the communities receiving **Summer of Youth** grants.

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| 1. Albion2. Alliance3. Bancroft-Rosalie4. Bellevue5. Broken Bow6. Cozad7. Fairbury8. Gering9. Kearney10. Lexington11. Lincoln |

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| 12. Macy13. North Platte14. Oakland-Craig15. Omaha16. Red Cloud17. South Sioux City18. Valentine19. Wakefield20. Walthill21. Waverly22. York |

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NDE’s Deputy Commissioner Dr. Deborah Frison celebrated this round of statewide grants.  “NDE is thrilled to provide these communities with the additional federal support they need to expand summer learning opportunities – especially since these grants reflect the kinds of programs youth want more of.  Research confirms the vital role fun and engaging summer learning programs play in supporting student growth and positive youth development. We are thrilled to offer these communities additional funding to allow more Nebraska students to make lifelong memories of a great summer.”

This $885,000 **Summer of Youth** commitment was made possible through combining $710,000 funding NDE received to specifically support summer learning from the Federal COVID relief bill, termed ESSER III, with $175,000 private funding from Nebraska-based philanthropies that BSB is managing.  This investment builds on these communities’ other NDE-funded ESSER III work and additional private support BSB is facilitating to afterschool and summer programs in communities across Nebraska.

For more information on the **Summer of Youth** contact Dakota Staggs at dstagg@nebraskachildren.org or visit the [Summer of Youth](https://u3654913.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn=TeaiJ5U-2FAnpVhXvhVTyw9UxyTEtHl0qSGWMb2A92uuuTfNmYNZQzVRODRFtn776UfvdBn70Z4ia6WcjByECiRg-3D-3DagfY_eC4pQqcNQsq1WIm4jM4EaDkO7b6R5-2B9rTtvpJyGlHlg5OJTz4ASj9pQBMKZDMow8zwZIBl-2B9Cm3YnuzksQJAy77C0-2FaXLWo2RhOK6jq-2BBI6AQI9gryHcWI5lg7-2BBg0DweQuzKQ9HuO7LunonSIfkOcPo32PHsPi4kFZj4jtXJ6wG47DYcdzp2SEmszRVSjNVSNIoD6O6zEBeHu-2BsdKzoVPknvQiM8ibGV11vgJOGlnjHDXRtLIxM4yCAos0pLxblzNzom8oiRtPjZzLgavnOtuGeuMFr2BwUenBcvdW47B96XugG5aR35rwD93sKLD-2F2y1aQ-2BcJ5JCoAYcKXFimm6Jyxt0FJ3gH4Qza8w9sBPLWWspJ-2B-2FWIsNaJ-2FvnK2PbxoKRlwrKPIss4ZVzrPi4Q2Xg-3D-3D) section of the Beyond School Bells website.

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**About Nebraska Children**

For 25 years, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation has partnered with communities and other organizations to create a well-being system that strengthens families, supports unconnected young people, creates learning opportunities for Nebraska’s future workforce, and empowers parents to raise healthy children. To learn more about our work, visit [www.NebraskaChildren.org](http://www.NebraskaChildren.org).

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