

Parent Newsletter



Published by the Department of Special Education

Lincoln Public Schools

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Here We Are!



Kris Reckewey, Ph.D.
Director of Special Education

Wow! What an unusual summer we had this year. After the fire at LPSDO, we were relocated for the summer to some offices at Lincoln Southeast High School (LSE). We truly appreciated the hospitality of Dr. Hunter-Pirtle, LSE Principal, with special thanks to Dr. Obrecht and to Mr.

Hollman for opening their offices to us. The LSE office staff was very accommodating and made us feel right at home. Kudos also to our Special Education office staff and the supervisors for making an unusual situation work well. We can look back over the summer with gratitude and with pride for a job well done. Summer school went on as scheduled! We were up and running for the beginning of the school year!

The end of July brought us a move to the Hawthorne Building at 300 South 48th Street. We are located on the north end of the building, and you can access us through Door #2. When you walk in the entryway of Door #2, there will be double doors on your immediate right – please enter those doors and you will see the Special Education office. Our wonderful receptionist, Ashley Sheehan, will welcome you and help you find the person you are looking for.

Our new offices at Hawthorne are beautiful! We are looking forward to adding artwork on loan to us from LPS Art Teachers. The ground-level floor houses our receptionist and registrar, along with our child study team. There are assessment rooms that are designed with young children in mind, an observation room and a small conference room. The audiologists are also located in that area, along with our new audiolog booth. VOICE teachers, homebound teachers, nonpublic teach-

ers, behavior specialists, supervisors and members of the support team are located on the first floor.

We are pleased to be settled in, and we are happy to have such a positive start to the school year. Your child and your family are important to us. We are here for you.

IN THIS ISSUE

Fall Spotlights

- Message From the Director: Here We Are!
- Special Education Leadership Team Responsibilities
- What's New in Special Education 2011-2012
- Parent Advisory Meeting Notes
- Early Years: Routines for Learning
- Computer-Assisted Instruction Reading Project Interventions for Students in LPS Secondary Schools
- Nebraska Red Dawgs Wheelchair Basketball Team and Nebraska Jr. Barons Wheelchair Softball Team
- Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital and Total Respiratory and Rehab Team Up to Put the "Power" in Power Soccer
- Cranestorm Project Brings Awareness of Brain Injuries
- What is Early Head Start?
- Community Opportunities
- Lincoln Easter Seals Nebraska Respite Program



SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Kristine Reckewey, Director of Special Education

436-1932 • kreckew@lps.org

- Department Organization and Operation
- Budget, Staffing and IDEA Grant Coordination
- Compliance Issues at District and Building Levels
- Coordinators/Assistant Principals (monthly meetings)
- Level III Placement Coordination
- Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Preparation and Maintenance of Claim, Plan and Budget, Audits
- Parent Advisory Committee
- Professional Development and Curriculum and Instruction Study Supports
- Psychologists' Supervision
- Response to Intervention (RtI)
- Special Education Website
- Special Education and English Language Learners Committee
- State and Federal Compliance
- Transportation for Special Education

Mary Ells, Assistant Director

436-1806 • mells@lps.org

- Assist in Overall Management of Department
- Assistive Technology Services Supervision
- CRS Resource Program
- Curriculum and Instruction Study
- Data Warehouse
- District-Wide Assessment: Accommodations, Alternate Assessment, CRT, GDR, NRT
- Expertise in Programs/Services for Students with Autism, Learning Disabilities, Mental Handicaps
- Grants Coordination: Collaborative Project and SCIP Grants
- Homebound Program Supervision
- IEPs and Student Record System (SRS): Monitor, Plan and Implement
- Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities (ILCD) Program Evaluation
- Professional Development and School Improvement District Committee
- Professional Development Support Team
- Response to Intervention (RtI) K-12
- Summer Services Support
- Supervision of services for Assistive Technology, Inclusion Cadre, Homebound, Support Team Requests and Nonpublic Schools
- Schools Assigned: Southwest, Feeder Middle/Elementary Schools

Cindy Brunken, Supervisor

436-1902 • cbrunk@lps.org

- Brain Injury Regional Support Team (BIRST) and Grant Co-Chairperson
- Curriculum and Instructions Study and Resource Program Assistance
- Expertise in Programs for Students with Speech-Language Impairments
- IEP - Monitor, Plan, and Implement
- Medicaid - MIPS and Medicaid Administrative Outreach Claim
- Parent Newsletter
- Professional Development Supports
- Response to Intervention (RtI) K-8 Reading and Writing
- Speech/Language Program Supervision
- Summer Services Support
- VIP-UNL Athletic Department/LPS Special Education Co-Chairperson
- Schools Assigned: East High, Feeder Middle/Elementary Schools

Jennifer Connelly, Supervisor

436-1915 • jconnel@lps.org

- Audiologists, Educational Interpreters and Itinerant Hearing Resource Teachers Supervision
- Books on Tape Services
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs/Services
- Community-Based Education
- Curriculum and Instruction Study Assistance
- Contracts In Coordination
- Professional Development Supports
- Regional Program for the Deaf
- Summer School Coordination
- Surrogate Parent Appointments
- Visual Impairment Programs/Services: Vision Resource Teachers, Mobility Specialists Supervision
- VOICE Program Supervision/Transition with Teri Ourada
- Schools Assigned: Lincoln Southeast, Bryan, Feeder Middle/Elementary Schools

continued on next page

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES . . . CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Mary Phillips, Supervisor

436-1907 • mphil@lps.org

- Early Childhood Special Education Program/Services: Child Study and Home Base Supervision
- Early Childhood Outcomes Monitoring
- Early Childhood Planning Region Team Chairperson and Regional System and Support/Change Grant
- Early Childhood Curriculum and Instruction Study
- Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities (ILCD): Early Childhood Indicators
- Medicaid - MIPS
- Paraeducator Staff Development and Rule 11 Compliance
- Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Program/Services: OT/PT Supervision
- Professional Development Supports
- Summer Services Support
- Schools Assigned: Lincoln High, Feeder Middle/Elementary Schools

Susan Safarik, Supervisor

436-1918 • sbuchan@lps.org

- Behavioral Disorders Program/Services: Behavioral Skills Program, Special Education Alternative Program and Yankee Hill Program Supervision
- Behavioral Specialists and Behavioral Therapists Supervision
- Expertise in Programs/Services for Students with Behavioral Disorders
- Child Guidance Residential Program Supervision and Rule 18 Compliance
- Contracts Out Coordination and Rule 19 Compliance
- Curriculum and Instruction Study Assistance
- MANDT Training Program Supervision
- Professional Development Supports
- Program Review Committee
- Response to Intervention (RtI) Behavior
- Summer Services Support
- Schools Assigned: Northeast, North Star, Feeder Middle/Elementary Schools

WHAT'S NEW IN SPECIAL EDUCATION 2011-2012

Assessment- NeSA Alternate Assessment and Related Curriculum Based on Extended State Standards

- During the summer of 2011, a committee studied the Extended Standards that are addressed in the NeSA Alternate Assessments for Reading and Math. The outcomes of this project will be to:
 - Identify how the Nebraska Extended State Standards interface with LPS Curriculum Standards and Objectives;
 - Note existing curriculum connections or create new curriculum to support student learning of the alternate, extended standards;
 - Provide updates to other staff who teach alternate, extended standards to our students with disabilities. Updates will be shared with staff on a quarterly basis.

Assistive Technology

- During the 2011-12 school year, the ARRA iPods will be updated for use as an assistive technology support for students with disabilities. A revised set of Apps were selected by a district committee last spring. ECSE, Elementary, and Secondary App configurations have been developed and will be installed on iPods during first quarter. Professional development about use of the iPods will be provided.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Supports

- Professional Development offerings related to ASD Best Practices will be studied.
- The ECSE ASD Program Technician project, initiated as an ARRA project, will continue as a component of the Special Education Support Teams. This initiative addresses the needs of 2- and 3-year old children with ASD and related developmental needs.

Behavior Programs

- Construction on the addition to the Yankee Hill building will be completed during the fall semester, 2011.
- Design and planning for construction of a new Don Sherrill Learning Center will take place during the 2011-12 school year.
- Continued study and use of Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans to support students with behavioral/social/emotional concerns
- Planning, professional development, and use of social skills materials for all levels
- Behavior Specialists team will continue to support students/staff through the referral process. The team will continue the study of executive functioning and provide interventions to school teams.

continued on next page

Comprehensive Resource Services

- Elementary, Middle, and High School CRS meetings for resource teachers will target:
 - Improvement of reading and math performance of students with disabilities; and
 - Use of Functional Behavior Assessment and development of Behavior Intervention Plans.
 - Application of the ARRA-purchased Social Skills intervention materials.

Curriculum

- Middle and High School courses offered by the Special Education Department are being reviewed. A committee began to revise course descriptions and objectives during the summer of 2011. Work will continue during the 2011-12 school year. Objectives will be added to Pinnacle in the future.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

- Preschool programs will be offered in 26 elementary buildings, hosting 52 classrooms this year.
 - 48 of the 52 classrooms are integrated with the LPS ExCite program to provide preschool special education services in inclusive classrooms.
 - Three classrooms located at Rousseau and Kooser are the traditional early childhood special education classrooms, enrolling children under five with disabilities and hosting peer models.
 - One classroom at Prescott is exclusively for children who are deaf and/or hard of hearing in an acoustically-treated environment.
- ECSE staff members contributed to district-level committees throughout the year:
 - The IEP Measurable Goals Committee created high use goals stems with informal assessment tools and rubrics.
 - The Routines-Based Assessment Committee provided workshops and support to home based teams, ExCITE Home Visitors, and Student Child Learning Center Home Visitors.

- The Technology Committee worked with iPods, digital cameras, still cameras, and digital pens (audio and visual recordings).
- The Early Childhood Preschool Outcomes Curriculum Study aligned preschool outcomes with K-1 Standards.
- Due to increased enrollment, homebased teams were reconfigured to align with elementary school boundaries. There will be seven homebased teams this year (an increase from six), and each team will continue to have two ECSE teachers, an SLP, OT, PT, Vision and Hearing Teachers, and an Early Development Services Coordinator.

Hearing Programs

- There will be one session of ECSE HI preschool at Prescott. The instructional team consists of a preschool teacher for children with hearing impairments, a speech-language pathologist and a paraeducator.
- The audiologists are looking forward to conducting evaluations in their new audiology booth located at Hawthorne. In addition to re-evaluations for students of all ages, the audiologists are an active part of the Child Study team. They are also responsible for ordering, setting up and troubleshooting audiological equipment that students have in their classrooms.
- The Southeast Nebraska Regional Program for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (SNRP) has returned to their office at Rousseau. SNRP provides support to students with hearing loss and their families by offering consultation to school districts, audiological support, and coordination of social activities. SNRP is made up of Lincoln Public Schools (serving as the lead agency) and ESUs 4, 5 and 6.

Homebound Services

- Increased use of technology to link students at home or in the hospital with their teachers and peers in classrooms at schools will be targeted by the Homebound Services Team.



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NOTES OCTOBER 6, 2011

Present: Sara Johnson Lipka- ECSE, Renae Rief- Adams, Julie Schadt- Arnold, Bridget Culkins- Brownell, Jodi Benedict- Campbell, Lacy Holroyd- Clinton, Julie O'Brien- Eastridge, Carrie Winkler- Fredstrom, Melanie Ruz-Nuglo- Hartley, Kara Stege- Humann, Krystin Hite- Huntington, Lanny Boswell- Maxey, Eric & Jennifer Mients- Meadowlane, Ryan Pashby- Norwood Park, Cara Lee- Prescott, James Dankert- Rousseau, Kim Kumwenda- Zeman, Annette Powers- Goodrich, Jodie Davis- Irving, Melissa Stake- Lefler, Deb Wilke- Scott, Angela Hogan- East, Angela Rhetus- Lincoln High, Paula Kriz- Southeast, Loree Woods- Southwest

Director of Special Education: Kris Reckewey
Assistant Director of Special Education: Mary Ells
Special Education Supervisors: Mary Phillips, Jenny Connelly, Cindy Brunken

Meeting Minutes

The Lincoln Public Schools Parent Advisory Council met on Thursday, October 6, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Hawthorne building located at 300 South 48th Street. Parents were welcomed by Kris Reckewey, Director of Special Education. Dr. Reckewey provided an overview of the purpose and organization of the Parent Advisory Council.

Statement of Purpose

The Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) Parent Advisory Council is a group that provides an opportunity for parents and district staff to discuss educational issues that affect the learning community. It is a forum that provides for two-way communication between the community and the district. The Parent Advisory Council's function is to strengthen and facilitate the parent-school partnership. Our mission is to work collaboratively to ensure that all students have a successful learning experience in the Lincoln Public Schools.

The role of the Parent Advisory Council is to discuss educational issues that affect students and staff. Members may serve as a sounding board and advise the administrative team about parental concerns and questions. Parents are representative of the parent population. The Advisory Council will discuss instructional and program issues but will not discuss issues that are in conflict with the School Board policy, personnel issues, or any confidential issues that affect a student or a staff member.

Membership

Each school is invited to have a representative on the Advisory Council. Membership is on a rotating basis with terms of one or more years. Parents may express their interest in serving on the council to the principal, coordinator, or director of special education.

Calendar

Meetings of the LPS Special Education Parent Advisory Council will be held four times during the school year. A reminder of the meeting will be sent approximately one week before the scheduled meeting.

Meetings

An agenda will be set for the meetings. Parents will identify topics of interest. A short summary statement of the meetings will also be published on the Special Education Website.

You are encouraged to share that summary and/or to write your comments to share with your school to be included in your school's newsletter. Parents will become aware of your role and can ask you for additional information. We appreciate having informed parents who can advise other parents. We encourage you to bring any questions you receive or to ask for additional information, as needed.

Special Education Department Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide quality educational opportunities for students with disabilities from birth to age 21. It is our aim to improve educational outcomes for all children with disabilities through collaborative efforts among students, families, educators and the community, alike.

Department Goals

1. Demonstrate accountability for increased academic and functional performance for children with disabilities
2. Implement the newly-revised regulations found in IDEA and Rule 51
3. Develop positive relationships with students and families and support students with their social and emotional development to help them reach their potential.

continued on next page

PARENT ADVISORY MEETING NOTES. . . CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Overview of Special Education Services in Lincoln Public Schools

The Special Education Leadership Team provided an overview of the leadership team members' roles and responsibilities, the 13 disability categories identified in Nebraska Rule 51, and services provided to students by the special education department.

Parent Interest Survey

Parents worked in small groups to identify topics of interest to be presented and discussed at future meetings. Topics that were suggested include:

- Transitions from one level to the next
- Summer School
- Behavior Programs and Supports
- Autism
- Technology
- IEP Process
- VOICE Program and transition to services after a student is 21, including legal services, trust funds, Medicaid, when and how do you sign up for housing, and where to begin.
- Strategies for school-home communication regard-

ing what is happening in the classroom, especially as students get older. What are innovative ways to gain information about what is happening at school?

- Family Supports/Respite
 - o Finding childcare for students with disabilities
 - o Answers4Families.org website lists providers who will provide respite for students with disabilities.
 - o Planning Region Team provides training to these providers.
 - o Jenny Mients shared information about PTI which meets on the second Tuesday of every month.
 - o Resource Fair- November 21st sponsored by PTI at Bryan Medical Plaza
 - o One Coalition- parents from many support groups are working together to sponsor events

Future Meeting Dates

November 3, 2011, Hawthorne Building, 300 South 48th Street, Multi-purpose Room, 7:00 PM

February 2, 2012, Hawthorne Building, 300 South 48th Street, Multi-purpose Room, 7:00 PM

March 1, 2012, Hawthorne Building, 300 South 48th Street, Multi-purpose Room, 7:00 PM

EARLY YEARS: ROUTINES FOR LEARNING

When parents get involved in learning, children are more successful. Help your children get off to a good start in school by creating habits like these at home:

- * Remind your children of rules such as “reading before play, television, or any screen time.” This shows them that learning is a top priority. Also, provide them a comfortable place to read or draw without distractions.
- * Take advantage of car time: play word games with your child. Start with something simple like “up”, take turns thinking of opposites (down). Work on counting forward and backwards. For an extra challenge, have your children count from a number other than 1. Try an alphabet search. Look around your surroundings, and find something that starts with a letter A, take turns finding letters (in order or out of order). Play Eye Spy: describe an object in clear view to your child and have them guess what it is. Then let them take a turn. Expect the obvious!

- * Build hand-eye coordination: Have your toddler toss a ball into a laundry basket. Make a ring toss: Cut the centers out of paper plates and let your child toss the rings onto water bottles. You can make the challenge more difficult by having them take a giant step backwards after each successful toss.
- * Sharing at dinnertime is an activity that can go beyond passing the platter. Ask your children to think of one new thing they learned that day. It might spark an interesting conversation at the table.

Hopefully these suggestions provide some free and practical ways to promote school readiness and parental involvement. If you have concerns about your child under age five, please do not hesitate to share them with your IFSP or IEP case manager. We are here to partner with you to help your child reach his or her annual goals and outcomes! Should you have any questions about early childhood special education, please contact Mary Phillips at 402-436-1905 or at mphil@lps.org.

COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION READING PROJECT INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS IN LPS SECONDARY SCHOOLS

During the past two years, Lincoln Public Schools researched and field-tested Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) options to support Reading curriculum and instruction at the secondary level for grades 6-8. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of a computer assisted instructional intervention for middle and high school students who needed to improve their reading performance. The study provided teacher training time, instructional materials and equipment. ARRA funding was used to support the study.

In this recent research, LPS investigated software programs that support students at the Reading Skills level (learning to read) and the Reading Elements level (reading for comprehension). The software-supported systems offer alternate means of instruction and practice that include direct instruction from the teacher; skills practices on the computer; and independent reading and response. The ultimate goal of the project was to provide additional interventions that support students in becoming proficient readers.

As a result of this study, LPS has begun implementation of Computer Assisted Instruction in the Reading Skills 44 class which is offered at all secondary schools and Reading Elements 180 course, which is offered at half of our secondary schools.

Overview of Reading Skills 44: For Students Learning to Decode

The Reading Skills 44 course provides foundational instruction to improve basic reading and phonics skills that assist the student in developing decoding skills. The 50-minute instructional program helps students understand that the 44 sounds and 26 letters in the English language that can be mastered. The program involves students in screening and placement assessments; small group instruction during which the teacher targets individual skills; highly engaging and age appropriate assistive technology skill lessons; and independent reading practices at their instructional levels.

Central to the Reading Skills 44 course is research-based, adaptive software that delivers direct, explicit, research-based phonics instruction. In order to move students through the program efficiently, students practice skills at an appropriate level, based on their performance on an individual assessment. Once placed, students work independently in the software, which is continuously and automatically collecting data on student performance and adjusting accordingly. Students complete instruction organized into four domains.

The Code	Word Strategies	Sight Words	Success
Smart Zone	Prefixes	Automaticity	Anchor Video
Word Zone	Suffixes	Customized Practice	Build Prior Knowledge
Spelling Zone	Roots	High-Utility Words	Mental Models of Text Reading
TextFluency Zone	Endings		Skill Practice
44 English Sounds	Syllable Types		Passage Scaffolds

Overview of Reading Elements 180: For Students Learning to Comprehend

Reading Elements 180 is a reading intervention course that develops adolescent literacy and addresses special reading needs via multiple fronts, including technology, print, and reading practice and discussion. The instructional program directly addresses student needs through differentiated instruction, adaptive and instructional software, high-interest literature for adolescents, and direct instruction in reading, writing and vocabulary skills.

Reading Elements 180 provides multi-level instruction and classroom activity. Each class begins and ends with whole-group teacher-directed instruction. During the 60 minutes between the whole-group sessions, students break into three small groups that rotate among three stations.

continued on next page

READING PROJECT INTERVENTIONS . . . CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

90-Minute Instructional Model

20" Whole-Group Direct Instruction

- Using instructional materials, the teacher begins the day by providing systematic instruction in reading, writing, and vocabulary to the whole class.

60" Small-Group Rotations

- Small-Group Direct Instruction: Using the skill book practice and resources for differentiated instruction, the teacher works closely with students so that individual needs are addressed.
- READ 180 Software: Students use the Software

independently, providing them with intensive, individualized skills practice.

- Modeled and Independent Reading: Students build reading comprehension skills through modeled and independent reading of the READ 180 Paperbacks and Audiobooks.

10" Whole-Group Wrap-Up

- The session ends with 10 more minutes of Whole-Group Instruction.

For further information, contact Mary Ells, Assistant Director of Special Education.

WHAT IS EARLY HEAD START?



Early Head Start (EHS) is a federally funded, comprehensive child development program offered by Community Action. EHS serves low-income pregnant women, children ages birth to three, (including children with special needs) and their families. Through EHS, we aim to help children to grow physically and socially while empowering families to move toward self-sufficiency, and get children ready to go to kindergarten.

Our Home-based Early Head Start Program offers the opportunity to have a Family Advocate work with you and your child within the comfort of your own home for 90 minutes a week. You and your child will benefit from one-on-one attention from your Family Advocate.

Family Advocates are trained to not only provide fun ways for you to help your child learn and grow, they can also help put you in touch with community resources to help you meet your day-to-day needs, and help you provide positive opportunities for your child. Home Visits: The main focus of a home visit is your child's growth and development. A Family Advocate will visit your home for 90 minutes a week, and work with you and your child. During each visit you and your child will have the opportunity to enjoy an activity or experience together. Playgroups: Playgroups are organized play times for you and your child to get to meet other children and parents in the EHS Program. This is a great opportunity to share experiences and learn from others in the program just like you!



Now taking applications

Call Community Action at (402) 875-9385 to schedule a time to fill out an application.

MADONNA REHABILITATION HOSPITAL AND TOTAL RESPIRATORY AND REHAB TEAM UP TO PUT THE “POWER” IN POWER SOCCER

“The goal is to inspire hope and encourage activity and fun among a new potential field of players,” said Madonna Adaptive Sports and Recreation Program leader, Linda Ohnoutka, speaking about the Power Soccer Series, hosted by Madonna ProActive and presented by Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital and Total Respiratory and Rehab. The Series is comprised of four practices held each Wednesday in September, which ended in an exhibition match on Sunday, October 2 at Madonna ProActive.

Nearly a dozen youths from Lincoln participated in the events, which focused on fun as much as learning. “The Power Soccer Series allowed players an opportunity to engage in healthy physical and social activity and most importantly, to have fun,” said Madonna Recreation Therapist Rick Haith. “Watching them play in the final match was beyond rewarding. The amount of enthusiasm and fun they were having was contagious,” Haith added.

In the world of adapted sports, Power Soccer is one of the fastest-growing sports for power wheelchair users and is the first competitive team sport designed and developed specifically for power wheelchair users. Participants include persons with quadriplegia, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, head trauma, stroke, spinal cord injury and other disabilities.

Since soccer is such a popular sport among school aged children, recreational therapists in Madonna’s Adapted Sports and Recreation Program wanted to offer a similar opportunity for children with disabilities. Power Soccer is played in a gymnasium on a regulation basketball court. Two teams attack, defend and spin-kick a 13-inch soccer ball in an attempt to score goals.

According to Haith, a soccer shield that affixes to the front of each power wheelchair is one of the key pieces of equipment in the game. Although Madonna was able to purchase a few of the shields for the program, more

were needed. Enter community partner Total Respiratory and Rehab. Several employees at Total Respiratory and Rehab designed, built and donated five shields to the program, which has allowed more children to participate in the game. In addition, the company lends power wheelchairs for use during the power soccer clinics and tournaments.

Amy Strode, who is employed by Total Respiratory and Rehab, played soccer on both the high school and college levels. Most recently, she coached the 11 children who participated in four weeks of practices and scrimmages, and then showcased their skills in a game that concluded the four week series at Madonna ProActive on October 2. Other employees got involved helping Amy with weekly practices and cheering the kids on



from the sidelines.

Frannie Green of Total Respiratory and Rehab said that she and her fellow employees have really enjoyed partnering with Madonna through the power soccer program. “It’s so gratifying to see how much the kids enjoy the game,” she said. “It’s important that they have opportunities more like their peers.”

In addition to Amy and Frannie, Madonna offers special thanks to the following: Total Respiratory and Rehab employees who have helped make Power Soccer a success: Nate Israelson, Troy Vodehnal, Jim Heydt, Kurt Schroeder, Kevin Fuller and David Blaser.

“Total Respiratory and Rehab has been a big game-changer for this program,” Rick said. “Our hope is to have a corporate partner for each of our adapted sports and to create a one-of-a-kind experience for everyone involved.”

For more information about power soccer and/or other sports and recreation opportunities for youths with activity limitations, contact Rick Haith, 402-483-9474 or rhaith@madonna.org.

NEBRASKA RED DAWGS WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL TEAM AND NEBRASKA JR. BARONS WHEELCHAIR SOFTBALL TEAM

The Nebraska Red Dawgs are a team made up of children with lower limb disabilities including spina bifida, amputation, cerebral palsy, leg length discrepancy, club foot, and spinal cord injuries. This organization provides opportunities for children with these needs to experience competitive sports just like their able-bodied peers. Research has shown that exercise has a positive impact on children with physical challenges just as it does for their able-bodied peers.

The Red Dawgs have two different levels of participation. They offer a prep team for boys and girls ages 12 and under and a varsity division team for those ages 13 and up. Students do not need to use a wheelchair in dai-

ly living in order to participate, in fact most players do not use a wheelchair except for competition. The team does have wheelchairs available for participants to use. Teams practice at the University of Nebraska-Omaha on Saturday mornings at 9:00 at the HPER building.

We are part of the Eastern Nebraska Wheelchair Athletic Association. This is an excellent opportunity for kids with special needs not only to compete in athletics, but to meet other kids with situations similar to their own. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kelly Fischbach at 605-670-9485 or by email kfischbach13@hotmail.com.

LINCOLN EASTER SEALS NEBRASKA RESPITE PROGRAM

We are excited to begin the 2011-2012 Respite Weekends in Lincoln! Are you ready to join us for an amazing season? We also have some VERY exciting news about improvements and changes to the Lincoln Program! Let us share them with you!

First, we now have an official e-mail for the Lincoln Easter Seals Nebraska Respite Program: lincolnrespite@ne.easterseals.com, so e-mails will be coming from this new address. Please send all respite questions to this e-mail address, as we can all access it, to better serve you.

With having an e-mail specifically for respite, you can now sign up for Lincoln Respites via our respite e-mail! The phone line will also be available in case anyone prefers that method, so you have two options.

Also, we have some amazing past staff that will be planning and leading the respite weekends here in Lincoln. Welcome to this new position: Lily, Amanda & Mary! We are super excited for their energy and planning to lead us on new adventures here in Lincoln! They already have some exciting events planned. Annette & Chrissy will still be overseeing the administrative side of respite here in Lincoln (i.e., sign-ups, coordinating busing, staffing, etc.) and will be "around" for part of the respites.

And now....for the most exciting improvement....you can

enter a drum roll hereWe are changing the structure of the weekends to serve more campers! Respites will have 2 parts; 1 group will come to Lincoln Southeast High School on Friday evening at 6:00 pm and spend the night in the two classrooms (just like previous years), then participate in a specific day of activities on Saturday, and be picked up by supper time on Saturday. The second group will join us just for a "day camp" on Saturday at the event site, with lunch provided. This new set-up will allow more campers to participate in the main activities on Saturday. So, we will be able to accommodate about 10 campers for the overnight "option" and maybe as many as 20 or more for the Saturday-only group. This also allows new campers to come and "check us out" for a day without having to commit to an overnight. For funding, you can still use waiver funds like before (1 day for Saturday only, and 2 days for Friday-Saturday), or the new cost for the weekends will be: Saturday only: minimal, variable rate (dependent upon activity) and Friday-Saturday: \$250. Please remember that scholarships are available if you need them. Please ask. For questions about funding and specific Saturday-only rates, please contact Mike Tufte (mtufte@ne.easterseals.com or 800-650-9880).

continued on next page

LINCOLN EASTER SEALS . . . CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Dates for Lincoln Respites:

**December 2-3, 2011 (Saturday event: hopefully....
Star City Parade and downtown event)**

February 3-4, 2012 (Saturday event: TBA)

March 2-3, 2012 (Saturday event: TBA)

If you have a camper who is interested in signing-up for a respite in Lincoln, please email: lincolnrespite@ne.easterseals.com, or call our Lincoln voicemail: 888-858-5069 x15 to register. Please indicate if you are signing up for Friday night-Saturday or Saturday only. You may begin signing up 1 month before each respite (i.e., for the respite beginning on November 7th, you may e-mail or call and leave a message on October 7th). We

are now sending all confirmation and waiting list letters out via e-mail (as it is much faster!). Please forward this information to anyone who can use it.

We look forward to another great year of respite weekends here in Lincoln!

Thanks!

Chrissy Scheer and Annette Hurt

Co-coordinators for Easter Seals Nebraska Lincoln Respite Program lincolnrespite@ne.easterseals.com

***Also Note:** There will still be "traditional" Friday-Sunday respite weekends out at Camp Eagle (near Fremont). For dates and more details please check the website: www.campeastersealsne.com

CRANESTORM PROJECT BRINGS AWARENESS OF BRAIN INJURIES

Pediatric Acquired Brain Injury is the number one cause of death and disability for children and young adults in the United States. Causes of PABI can be both Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), as well as non-traumatic brain injury (ABI).

TBI causes: falls, motor vehicle incidents, sports concussions, blast injuries from war, violence/assault, child abuse, shaken baby syndrome, gunshot wounds, bicycle accidents, or anything else resulting in trauma to the head.

Non-traumatic causes: brain tumors, meningitis, strokes, high fevers, lack of oxygen such as in near-drowning incidents or due to difficulty breathing after birth, poisoning, ischemia and substance abuse.

More than 3,000,000 new pediatric brain injuries ranging from "mild" to severe occur every year in the United States, and over 1,000,000 children are hospitalized each year due to Pediatric TBI.

The Brain Injury Association of Nebraska (BIA-NE) is launching a statewide project called "Cranestorm—Wishes in Flight." The goal of this project is to fold and collect 36,000 origami cranes, one for every Nebraskan (child, adult, service member or veteran) living with a disability due to brain injury.

This is an excellent opportunity for students, groups or employees to acquire volunteer service hours while doing something fun!

You can create crane folding events at birthday or block parties, meetings and community events or through work. The goal of this project is to raise awareness and educate people about brain injuries and to work toward preventing them in the future.

To join this effort, go to www.biane.org to see a video on how to fold a crane and how to be a part of this amazing project!



COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Conservatory of Contemporary Dance, Every Monday for Kids with Special Needs

LOCATION: 2701 O Street, Suite 6, LINCOLN

TIME: 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

COST: First session FREE, Registration Fee FREE, \$20 1st month, then \$45 every month after

QUESTIONS: Contact Monya DeBoer at 402-405-6470 or email ccddance@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION: Dance class of various studies, for ALL AGES from 3 & up! Come make friends, and have fun learning about dance. This class is open to BOYS & GIRLS BOTH!!

Art Planet, Art Classes for Kids with Special Needs

LOCATION: Art & Soul at 5740 Hidcote Drive, Lincoln, NE 68516

TIME: Every Tuesday for Kids with Special Needs ages 5-18

COST: Go to the website at www.artplanetlincoln.com for class listings and information

QUESTIONS: Contact Tamara Weber at 402.610.2295 or hello@artplanetlincoln.com

DESCRIPTION: AP Studio is where kids with special needs get to attend an art class designed uniquely for them! Qualified instruction will be provided in a small group setting as we explore and expand each student's skill level. Come meet new friends while creating with paint, clay, pencils, and most of all-your imagination! Students with Asperger's and high functioning autism are encouraged to register for their spot in a class made just for them! Dreams Unlimited has Tuition Assistance available for Art Planet.

Ager Play Center 9-week Session, for Children with Special Needs ages 6 mo. - 5 yrs

LOCATION: 1300 South 27th Street, LINCOLN, NE

TIME: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

COST: \$65 per session/family *Scholarships are available

RSVP & MORE INFORMATION: Contact the Therapeutic Recreation Team for more information and to request an application. Go to agertr@lincoln.ne.gov or 402-441-7901, 402-441-8666.

DESCRIPTION: The Developmental Play Program has been specifically designed for families of very young children with special needs. We offer a safe, family-friendly environment, structured activities, opportunities to interact with other parents, professional presentations, adaptive toys to accommodate children of all abilities, trained staff and volunteers, an opportunity for siblings

to play together and a special time to PLAY with your child! Dreams Unlimited Has Funding available for Cost Assist for Ager Play Center.

Cheer & Dance Express Classes – for Kids with Special Needs Ages 4-25 NEW CLASS!!!

LOCATION: 4001 S. 8th Street, LINCOLN, NE

TIME: **Sunshine Little Rays Team (ages 4-10)** Tuesdays 7 – 7:45 pm **NEW TEAM!!!** **Sunshine Team (ages 11 – 25)** Thursdays 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

MORE INFORMATION : 402-489-5111 and www.cheeranddanceexpress.com

[cheeranddanceexpress.com](http://www.cheeranddanceexpress.com)

DESCRIPTION: Cheer & Dance offers **TWO** classes for children with special needs. The Sunshine team has won many awards and always receive a standing ovation! They have performed at numerous competitions and shows throughout the Omaha and Lincoln area. The students learn cheers, jumping, jumping on trampolines, stunts and much more!! This team has made a huge impact on the kids' self-esteem and confidence!

Kindermusik Sign & Sing: Sign Language Class

INTENDED AUDIENCE: Kids ages 6 months to 3 years

LOCATION: 1111 Old Cheney, LINCOLN

REGISTRATION: To register, go to www.kindermusik.com

MORE INFORMATION: Call Shawna Gordon at 402-770-1486

DESCRIPTION: Early on, a child has an innate desire to communicate. He reaches up to be held, claps when he's happy, turns away when he is full. That's why learning sign language makes so much sense in a hearing child's world. Using his hands, he can say what he means & a parent can understand what he needs. This program is developed by Signing Smart.

Sibshops

For siblings of kiddos who have special needs

LOCATION: Culler Middle School, 5201 Vine Street, LINCOLN

TIME: 1:00 – 3:00 pm

COST: FREE

MORE INFORMATION: Contact Adam at 402-421-8866 or arcifss@windstream.net

MUST RSVP BY NOVEMBER 16 – SPACE IS LIMITED TO FIRST 20 KIDS

DESCRIPTION: This is an award-winning, nationally-affiliated program for youth ages 8 – 13. It is uniquely

continued on next page

designed to provide high-energy activities for siblings of children with developmental disabilities. Sibshops are a place where siblings may obtain peer support & education within a recreational context while having fun. Siblings connect with each other & share similar experiences. This is for brothers & sisters of individuals with developmental disabilities. Siblings experience many of the same concerns as their parents, as well as other concerns uniquely their own.

Pediatric Parent Support Group: Every 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month

This support group is for parents of children who have acquired injuries.

LOCATION: Alexis Verzal Children's Rehabilitation Hospital, Lower Level of Madonna Hospital, 5401 South St., Lincoln, NE

AT MADONNA: Enter through the main entrance of the AVCRH. TIME: 3:30 to 4:30 pm

MORE INFORMATION: Contact Amy Nordness at 402-483-9697 or Kristin Luethke at 402-486-8182

RSVP for Pediatric Play Group: Contact Kristin Luethke at 402-486-8182 to ensure that we have the necessary amount of staff/volunteers present.

DESCRIPTION: The support group meets the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month. Come & expand your knowledge, while gaining insights and encouragement from other parents. **There is a Pediatric Play Group held in conjunction with the Parent Support Group.** It is in the Kit Scott Therapeutic Learning Center. It is open to children ages 3-7. On the 2nd Wednesday of the month,

there is music group offered, & on the 4th Wednesday of the month, the Angel Dog volunteers & their pets lead creative play. THIS GROUP IS OPEN TO INPATIENT FAMILIES ALSO. Just let us know, so we can monitor your child while you are at group.

Lincoln Early Planning Region Team Resource Fair for families with kiddos who have special needs

LOCATION: Culler Middle School, 5201 Vine Street, LINCOLN

(enter through gym doors on the south end of the building and follow signs)

DATE: Wednesday, November 16th TIME: 5:00 – 8:00 pm

MORE INFORMATION: Contact Jen Meints at 402-327-6061 or jennifer.meints@cch-neb.com

DESCRIPTION: Some of the groups providing resources are: Early Developmental Network, Early Planning Region Team; Complete Children's Health; The Arc of Lincoln; The Autism Family Network; Early Head Start; O.N.E. Coalition; LPS ExCITE; Lincoln Park and Recreation AND MANY MORE!!!!

Adapted Skiing Trip with Dreams Unlimited, February 8 - 12

LOCATION: National Sports Center for the Disabled, Winter Park, COLORADO

MORE INFORMATION: Contact Mary Ebers at 402-420-2099

DESCRIPTION: This is an adapted ski trip that Dreams Unlimited has done for years. Minimum age requirement is 6.



Lincoln Public Schools
P.O. Box 82889
Lincoln, NE 68501

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lincoln, Nebraska
Permit 158

LINCOLN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Barbara Bajer
Kathy Danek
Kevin Keller
Don Mayhew
Ed Zimmer

Katie McLeese Stephenson
Stephen C. Joel, Superintendent

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 82889 • Lincoln, NE 68501-2889

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

6/11