



Michigan Humanities Council

*Michigan People, Michigan Places
Our Stories, Our Lives*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2007

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Humanities Council awarded \$60,000 for PRIME TIME reading program in Detroit, Saginaw and South Haven

Four community libraries selected to implement reading program for Spanish-speaking families

(LANSING)----The Michigan Humanities Council (MHC) received a \$60,000 award to implement the PRIME TIME FAMILY READING TIME ® program at four Michigan libraries: Butman-Fish Branch, Saginaw; Campbell Branch Library, Detroit; Hoyt Public Library, Saginaw; and, South Haven Memorial Library, South Haven. The award was presented by PRIME TIME Inc., an affiliate of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH), and the American Library Association. Based on illustrated children's books, PRIME TIME is designed to help low-income, low-literate families, including English language learners, bond around the act of reading and talking about books. It models and encourages family reading and discussion of humanities topics, and aids parents and children in selecting books and becoming active public library users. Each library chosen will implement PRIME TIME programs between February and November of 2008.

Libraries in Michigan were selected to participate along with public libraries in Florida, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and New York. A total of 11 states and library systems applied to host the program. This award to MHC will target PRIME TIME to Spanish-speaking families. Notably, this is not the first PRIME TIME program to come to Michigan; the Kalamazoo Public Library has implemented PRIME TIME since 2001 as an important literacy program to its underserved community.

“The Michigan Humanities Council is pleased to bring this unique literacy program to Michigan’s underserved and Spanish-speaking communities,” said Janice Fedewa, executive director of the MHC. “We are hopeful that the demonstrated success of PRIME TIME in Kalamazoo, and in other states, will be replicated for families in these four other Michigan communities.”

The MHC will receive grant funding and support materials to present the PRIME TIME series. Each series will meet once a week for six weeks. Through a discussion leader and a storyteller, children ages 6 to 10 years and their parents or guardians will hear classic children's stories; watch reading aloud demonstrations; discuss humanities themes in each book and learn about library resources and services.

(more)

At each of the four libraries, bilingual programs will be offered to serve Spanish-speaking children and their families. Younger siblings, ages 3 to 5 years, will participate in separate pre-reading activities.

PRIME TIME is based on a successful series of the same name that was created by the LEH in 1991 at the East Baton Rouge (La.) Parish Library and has spread nationwide with funding from NEH. Over 24,000 individuals have participated in more than 750 PRIME TIME programs in 36 states and the Virgin Islands – this includes participants in Kalamazoo. PRIME TIME received the 2003 Advancement of Literacy award from the Public Library Association (PLA), a division of the ALA, and the Coming Up Taller award from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities in 2000.

For more information about PRIME TIME, please visit www.leh.org or www.ala.org/publicprograms. The Michigan Humanities Council, founded in 1974, is a private, non-profit organization funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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