

Lied Center, Nonprofits Launch 'Grumble Project' to Combat Childhood Hunger

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The Lincoln Community Foundation, Lied Center for Performing Arts and Food Bank of Lincoln are joining forces in a communitywide initiative centered on finding a long-term, sustainable solution to childhood hunger in Lancaster County.

The Grumble Project was born out of the Lincoln Vital Signs report, which revealed alarming statistics about poverty and food insecurity, especially among Lincoln children. The project's mission is to raise awareness about the realities of childhood hunger in Lincoln and find solutions. In conjunction with the campaign, a new website, <http://grumbleproject.org>, has been launched by the food bank to house information and resources, details on Grumble Project outreach and "Grumble Stories" of community members who have been affected by food insecurity.

Story collection will be a vital component of the Grumble Project. A Grumble Stories display and collection booth is being designed and built by Bruce Thiel, Ebbeka Design Studio and the Food Bank of Lincoln. It will appear at various Grumble Project events and numerous locations throughout Lincoln. Community members are invited to share their own Grumble Stories in the booth either verbally or in writing, submit their stories via <http://grumbleproject.org> or contact the Food Bank of Lincoln.

The Lincoln Community Foundation is also presenting a new family musical commissioned and produced by the Lied Center for Performing Arts titled "Puddin' and the Grumble." The show was written by Becky Boesen and David Von Kampen and inspired by the children of the Clinton Creative Club, an after-school club facilitated by the Lied Center at Clinton Elementary School.

"This is a unique opportunity to utilize performing arts as a way to start conversations and work together to support our children and their families who face hunger," said Barbara Bartle, president of the Lincoln Community Foundation.

Told through the eyes of a plucky fifth-grader, "Puddin' and the Grumble" fearlessly takes on hunger in the community and features an uplifting score that includes everything from cha-cha and rap to soaring Broadway-style melodies. Puddin's journey is made complete with the help of her big-hearted and often hilarious family and friends. The show will make its premiere March 10-20 at the Lied Center's Johnny Carson Theater. Tickets are available at <http://liedcenter.org>.

Following select performances, audience "talk backs" will be facilitated by a panel including members of the show's artistic team and experts from Lincoln's human services community. Panelists will represent a wide diversity of ages and backgrounds and foster an open dialogue

with the audience, leading to a discussion of how to further the mission of the Grumble Project and alleviate food insecurity in the Lincoln area.

"The arts have a way of making difficult topics more approachable," said Bill Stephan, executive director of the Lied Center. "Our hope is that 'Puddin' and the Grumble' will spark a dialogue in our community, creating greater awareness of the challenges we face and, most importantly, help us arrive at a solution."

Scott Young, executive director of the Food Bank of Lincoln, said: "Combining the arts with human service always provides exceptional impact. The child hunger story in Lincoln, Nebraska, and America is important for all of us to hear and acknowledge. The creators of the musical have crafted a sensitive, thoughtful and entertaining story about child hunger, family resilience, the importance of education and the vulnerabilities faced by families who are an important part of our community."

To learn how to support the Grumble Project can email cchristensen22@unl.edu, mkumke@lincolnfoodbank.org or pamh@lcf.org.