

Prosper Lincoln Sets Agenda for Taking Action

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Around 9 a.m. Wednesday several hundred tweets went out with a message about lifting Lincoln higher, and the hashtag #prosperlincoln.

This social media blitz was part of the kickoff for the action stage of Prosper Lincoln, a new community effort designed to make Lincoln an even better place to live.

More than 1,000 people attended a breakfast at Pinnacle Bank Arena where Prosper Lincoln leaders announced the three areas of focus: early childhood, employment skills and innovation.

Each of the three areas will have its own development director, business sponsors and oversight committee, said Barbara Bartle, president of the Lincoln Community Foundation, the lead agency for the Prosper Lincoln project.

The process began with surveys in 2014 and 2015, called Vital Signs, showing Lincoln's strengths and weaknesses, which included an increasing number of people in poverty.

In the second public step, last May, Lincolniters were asked to submit ideas for improving Lincoln.

The Wednesday breakfast kicked off the community agenda, where Prosper Lincoln leaders will encourage Lincoln residents to help out in those areas by volunteering, making a donation and spreading the message.

Mayor Chris Beutler identified the Prosper Lincoln process as the "American way."

"We identify our problems, we move on those problems and we solve those problems," he said at the breakfast.

Lincoln residents will soon be seeing messages about one of the areas of focus, early childhood. The messages will encourage people, from parents to volunteers, to read aloud to a child 15 minutes a day, said Library Director Pat Leach.

"It is such a sweet image," she said of a child in granddad's lap with a book.

"But don't let that sweetness blind you to the rock-solid evidence that 15 minutes a day makes a difference, she said.

Prosper Lincoln is shooting for 1 million minutes a month of reading to preschoolers as a first step.

Companies involved in the community action phase include the Abel Foundation, Ameritas, Buffet Early Childhood Fund, Firespring, FUSE Coworking, Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development, Lincoln City Libraries, Lincoln Community Foundation, Lincoln Industries, Lincoln Public Schools, Mapes Industries Inc., Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Nebraska Innovation Campus, Nelnet, Southeast Community College, Tetrad Property Group, Union Bank, W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

More information is available at prosperlincoln.org.

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