



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NCFL selected by national grant competition to develop podcast series

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation taps NCFL to change narrative around poverty through storytelling

Louisville, KY (June 10, 2020)—The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) has been selected by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation from more than 1,200 applicants as one of 28 grantees working to dispel myths about poverty and economic mobility. NCFL was named a recipient of the Foundation's *Voices for Economic Opportunity Grand Challenge*, which seeks to elevate diverse voices in order to broaden the conversation about the issues inhibiting economic mobility and generate deeper awareness along with actionable understanding.

To do this work, NCFL will develop and launch a new podcast series that will highlight the remarkable stories of low-income, diverse families across the U.S. who have improved their communities through Family Service Learning. Over the next 16 months, NCFL will engage with families from across the country to share their stories of leading intergenerational service learning projects in their communities. Their stories will then be incorporated into personal, in-depth features to create a series of podcasts that will be distributed nationally.

Principal project benefits will be twofold: local expressive presentations will work to reframe entrenched narratives about the perceived potential of high poverty communities to participate and enact change, while the national podcast distribution will help to illuminate the complexities of poverty by elevating the voices of those experiencing it.

Highlighted family projects will relate to [Family Service Learning](#), a research-based approach to improving communities while building leadership skills. Developed by NCFL with seed funding from Toyota, Family Service Learning has been implemented in 45 communities nationwide and creates conditions for networks of families to identify challenges and historic barriers in their communities, work together to design a solution, carry out the solution, and share their work with other residents. As a result, families practice employability skills, combat the social isolation common in high poverty areas, and lead and drive change in their communities through their agency and voice.

Over the next year, families will tell their stories via podcast episodes, which will be published from July to October 2021. The series will enable listeners to learn firsthand about the nuances and multilayered complexities that create and perpetuate inequitable systems resulting in poverty throughout the country.

“We are so excited to provide hardworking families with an authentic space to elevate their voices to a national audience,” said NCFL President and Founder Sharon Darling. “It is crucial that we listen to families, learn from their experiences, and work with them to enact change in the very systems that are upholding inequities that lead to generational poverty.”

The *Grand Challenge* is made possible through funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Raikes Foundation, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, Omidyar Network, and Schultz Family Foundation.

About the National Center for Families Learning

The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) is a national nonprofit that works to eradicate poverty through education solutions for families. Partnering with educators, literacy advocates, and policymakers, NCFL develops and provides programming, professional development, and resources from the classroom to the community that empower and raise families to achieve their potential. For more information on NCFL, visit familieslearning.org.

Media Contact

Shea Coughlin
Vice President, External Affairs
Director of Communications
502-655-0770

###