



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Senate promotes family service initiative in wake of COVID-19

Multigenerational program recognized as tool to fight pandemic challenges

WASHINGTON, DC (September 22, 2020) – Innovative family-centric programming designed to enable communities to fight COVID-19 challenges has once again received support from the United States Senate.

[Family Service Learning](#), a framework that facilitates family-generated community service projects, was recognized today by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Corey Booker (D-NJ). A resolution introduced this week designates the week of September 21-25, 2020 as “National Family Service Learning Week.” This is the fifth consecutive year the U.S. Senate has supported a resolution highlighting Family Service Learning.

Developed by the [National Center for Families Learning \(NCFL\)](#), Family Service Learning creates a pathway for low-income families to lead community service projects. Through a deliberate, six component educational program, families identify problems within their own communities and carry out service projects to address them. The projects are researched, designed, and executed by families in their own communities, flipping the paradigm for low-income families who often feel disconnected from community service.

Communities will face new challenges such as navigating remote learning, digital literacy, and building and maintaining new relationships within communities. Family Service Learning programs are equipped to face these barriers through unique community engagement via video conferencing or in a socially distanced manner, the resolution states.

Family Service Learning projects can be carried out in-person or virtually, and allow parents to gain literacy, computer, and communication skills while building social capital, deepening their community connections, and developing additional skills that are critical to getting and keeping a job. Often, participants secure a job or a better job by the end of their service project. Children participate in service projects alongside adult family members, observing their parents as active community members and role models.

“We are encouraged by the U.S. Senate reaffirming the importance of Family Service Learning during these challenging and pivotal times,” NCFL President and Founder Sharon Darling said. “Low-income families are often excluded from community service projects due to barriers, perceived or otherwise,

and this versatile programming empowers families to impact community issues, connect with other families, develop problem solving and collaboration skills, and gain employability skills. Now more than ever, families need and deserve these tools to become agents of change.”

Results from an independent evaluation of Family Service Learning have found that Family Service Learning can:

- Expand voice, social capital and networks of participating adults;
- Expand self-efficacy and self-confidence;
- Increase formal learning, including content knowledge, research and academic skills;
- Increase technology skills;
- Increase opportunities to develop work-based skills;
- Improve employment status- 46% of participating adults secured a job or improved their existing work status.

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.

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