

Passion in Plano: Learning Program Changes Families, Education, and the Community

February 26, 2016

PLANO, TEXAS, Feb. 26, 2016 – It's not every day you find parents and children excited to work together on homework. But, take a look at families participating in [Toyota Family Learning](#) in Plano, Texas, and you'll find a refreshing enthusiasm for learning.

The national family learning program provides a solution to the educational challenges facing low-income and ethnically diverse families. This week, Toyota and the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) unveiled its newest sites at two Plano schools – Plano Family Literacy School and Sigler Elementary. More than 200 parents and children have been enrolled in the program in Plano since September. It is being funded by a three-year, \$175,000 grant from Toyota and NCFL.

Mireira Escobar, who attends classes with her pre-school daughter, Maggie, said the program is beneficial in many ways. “My life is better now than it was before. At school, I practice my English; now, when I go to the store or talk to teachers, I am much more comfortable. It has helped my entire life – both at home and out in the community.”

Toyota Family Learning empowers parents and caregivers, as well as their children, to become engaged in their schools and communities. It also leverages technology as parents and children learn together and serve their communities through NCFL's Family Service Learning approach, Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time[®], and family-to-family mentoring.

Independent evaluations show that among families participating in Toyota Family Learning in 2015:

- 90% of parents increased their engagement in their children's education
- 96% of parents became better teachers to their children
- 75% of parents increased their English language skills
- 34% of parents got a better job

“Toyota Family Learning makes an impact that will be seen and felt for decades to come,” said Sharon Darling, president and founder of NCFL. “As parents and children are elevated through education and technology training, they realize they can make a difference in their own lives, as well as the community.”

Plano is the 11th community to become part of Toyota Family Learning. Four other cities will be unveiled this year. In total, Toyota has committed \$10 million over a six-year period for this national education initiative.

“We are proud to stand with NCFL to make a real difference in the lives of families across the country,” said Latondra Newton, group vice president and chief social innovation officer for Toyota Motor North America, Inc. “It is especially exciting to bring this program to Plano, site of our new headquarters. By offering ways to learn that are innovative and engaging, we are able to bridge the gap between classroom and lifelong learning so that people can find success on the road of life.”

This year, NCFL and Toyota celebrate 25 years of partnership. Since 1991, more than 2 million families across the country have been impacted by Toyota-funded programs developed by NCFL – a pioneer in the concept of

families learning and serving together to raise literacy levels, build workforce skills, and improve communities. These various programs have been brought to life in nearly 60 cities across the U.S.

The Toyota Family Learning initiative also includes two online learning communities: [Family Time Machine](#), which encourages grantee site families to learn and thrive together, and [Toyota Family Trails](#), a website that inspires families nationwide to learn through family exploration and adventure.