National Center for Family Literacy and Toyota Celebrate 20-Year Partnership

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. – (April 7, 2011) The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) – the organization that pioneered the concept of raising the literacy level of parents and children simultaneously – celebrated 20 years of partnership with Toyota today that has impacted 1 million families across the country.

NCFL's partnership with Toyota began in 1991 with an approach that focused on improving the education of preschool children. It continued to evolve and identify emerging needs in populations such as Hispanic and immigrant families. This week, as NCFL celebrates 20 years of partnership with Toyota, more than 50 cities have benefited from its $36 million investment.

"It is rare for a corporate partner to have such a long-term vision and unwavering commitment," said Sharon Darling, president and founder of NCFL. "Toyota's leadership – not only financial but also in terms of organizational and technical assistance – has helped family literacy programming continue to innovate."

As part of the celebration, Dr. Shoichiro Toyoda, honorary chairman of Toyota Motor Corporation, toured a local family literacy site earlier this week and participated in NCFL's annual conference.

"The National Center for Family Literacy exemplifies the American spirit of lending a helping hand to people in need," Dr. Toyoda said. "We look forward to working hand in hand with everyone at the NCFL to improve the program further."

The partnership's family literacy programs have been visited by three first ladies (Laura Bush, Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama), recognized by four U.S. Department of Education secretaries, and influenced federal policy such as welfare reform and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Its efforts have been featured in publications ranging from *PARADE* to *USA Today* to *Education Week*.

National research verifies the success of family literacy priorities and programs:

- A mother's reading skill is the greatest determinant of her children's future academic success, outweighing other factors, such as neighborhood and family income (National Institute of Health).
- Children's reading scores dramatically improve when their parents are involved in helping them learn to read. Children whose parents are involved in this effort score 10 points higher on standardized reading tests (NCFL research).
- Strong gains are being made in places like Oakland, Calif., where students whose parents attended family literacy programs scored 19 percent higher on standardized tests than students whose families didn't participate in the program. This is significant progress for a school system whose graduation rates are less than 25 percent for Latino and African-American students.
- The partnership's latest program, the Toyota Family Literacy Program, began in 2003 and is the first nationwide program of its kind to focus on Hispanic/Latino and other immigrant families. It is unique because it not only brings parents and children together in a classroom but also includes programming that is culturally relevant to the populations served. Program participants have experienced extraordinary outcomes in English language and literacy development, parent involvement and engagement, literacy

behaviors at home, and school-related attitudes and behaviors.

In all, the programs in 50 cities across the country have leveraged more than $229 million in additional investment to sustain and expand family literacy.

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ABOUT NCFL

The National Center for Family Literacy, founded in 1989 and based in Louisville, Ky., is the worldwide leader in family literacy. More than 1 million families have made positive educational and economic gains as a result of NCFL's work, which includes training more than 150,000 teachers and thousands of volunteers. For more information, contact 1-877-FAMLIT-1 or visit www.famlit.org.

ABOUT TOYOTA

Since 1991, Toyota and NCFL have forged successful programs to promote family literacy in the United States. Today, the Toyota/NCFL partnership accounts for 256 family literacy sites in 50 cities and 30 states. As part of this partnership, the Toyota Family Literacy Teacher of the Year award has been presented annually since 1997 and recognizes individual teachers' contributions to improving literacy among youth and adults. Additional information on Toyota's commitment to improving education nationwide is available at http://www.toyota.com/about/philanthropy/education/.

Link to Multimedia Release: http://multivu.prnewswire.com/mnr/toyota/49485/