

National Literacy Program Unveiled At Three Las Vegas Schools

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LAS VEGAS ? A national family literacy program was unveiled today at three Las Vegas elementary schools. The program ? funded by a \$600,000 grant from Toyota ? is coordinated by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL). It is the only initiative of its kind to focus on the needs of Hispanic and other immigrant families on a nationwide basis.

The Toyota Family Literacy Program (TFLP) is now up-and-running at Tom Williams Elementary, Reynaldo Martinez Elementary and Paul Culley Empowerment Elementary in the Las Vegas area. The three schools average 77 percent Hispanic enrollment.

In addition to launching the program at these three schools, the funding will allow NCFL to provide comprehensive support for training, educational materials and technical assistance at each site. The Public Education Foundation and Clark County School District (CCSD) are working hand-in-hand with NCFL to implement the family literacy program.

?We are very proud to be able to bring one of Toyota?s best practices nationally in corporate responsibility to our community,? said Judi Steele, president, The Public Education Foundation. ?We are a strong advocate of helping parents become more active partners in schools and more engaged in their children?s learning, so the Toyota Family Literacy Program enables us to reach into a community in a meaningful and significant way. This is an outstanding example of public-private partnerships at work.?

CCSD Superintendent Dr. Walt Rulffes said, ?We deeply appreciate this generous grant from Toyota, and we commend the work of the National Center for Family Literacy.?

?As part of the local business community, we see the drastic need for such a program ? a need that is growing by the minute,? said Raymond Specht, vice chairman of Henderson-based Toyota Financial Savings Bank. ?Toyota has teamed with NCFL to help thousands of families improve their literacy skills across the U.S. We are excited that NCFL is bringing the program to the Las Vegas area and look forward to many success stories.?

Along with Las Vegas, four other cities are part of the latest \$3 million expansion of the Toyota Family Literacy Program: Springdale, Ark.; Long Beach, Calif., Las Cruces, N.M.; and Memphis, Tenn. A total of 191 school districts submitted applications for the five spots.

Created by NCFL, which is the country?s leader in the practice of raising the literacy level of parents and children simultaneously, the Toyota Family Literacy Program is NCFL?s signature initiative. TFLP ? which got its start in 2003 and now operates in 25 cities across the U.S. ? increases basic language and literacy skills among Hispanic and other immigrant families, and provides parents with the skills they need to help their children succeed in school. It specifically serves children in kindergarten to third grade and their parents.

The program is unique not only because it brings parents and children together in the classroom, but it also incorporates NCFL?s multicultural family literacy model, which is programming that is culturally relevant to the populations served. Since 1991, Toyota?s commitment to NCFL programming has exceeded \$36 million.

Ana González, one of the first Las Vegas participants along with her son Bryan Trejo, a kindergarten student at Reynaldo Martinez, has already seen positive results.

“Since I entered this program to study English, I have become more confident in communicating with people. My children and I communicate more because now they ask me questions about their homework and get involved with mine. I feel that they have more confidence in me now.”

Results from the TFLP programs already implemented include:

- Significant literacy gains by adults with 54 percent improving literacy scores by at least one level. This has contributed to an improved understanding of basic oral and written instructions in English, reading a note from a teacher, setting up a doctor’s appointment, and displaying basic computer literacy skills (word processing and sending e-mail);
- Children in the program exceeded peers in such areas as academic performance (79 percent), motivation to learn (86 percent), attendance (96 percent), classroom behavior (91 percent), and involvement in classroom activities (88 percent);
- 92 percent of parents stating they are better able to help their child with homework; and
- 91 percent of parents stating their child’s grades have improved.

“By partnering with Toyota, NCFL has nurtured a proven formula of research and delivery of family literacy services that not only works for the participants, but for the betterment of the communities,” said Sharon Darling, president and founder of NCFL. “And, we’re proud to say, our path to success here in Las Vegas has been set by the impressive gains made by thousands of TFLP participants in family literacy programs nationwide.”

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 <http://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 241 family literacy sites in 47 cities and 29 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 www.toyota.com/about/our_commitment/philanthropy/education.