



**NATIONAL
PARENT
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE**

NATIONAL PARENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

An Overview



PARENT LEADERSHIP TO ENGAGE FAMILIES, INFORM COMMUNITIES, AND PROMOTE A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY

At the National Parent Leadership Institute (NPLI), we believe that real change for children and communities occurs when parents, cross race and cross class, are leading at home, in the neighborhood, and in public policy.

National Parent Leadership Institute
Executive Director: Donna Thompson-Bennett
15 River Road Suite 15B
Wilton, CT 06897
www.parentswholead.org
203-667-2303

CIVIC LEADERSHIP

NPLI ENGAGES PARENTS AS CIVIC LEADERS AT HOME, IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, IN THE SCHOOL, AND IN PUBLIC POLICY.

NPLI'S STRATEGIES:

1. Partner with communities to strengthen parent leadership through the proven Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) model. 55 communities across the United States, along with one city in Australia, have been trained to implement the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI).

PLTI starts with a 20-week course for parents in civics and leadership. Parent leadership emerges from developed trust, substantive dialogue, skill building, hope, and high expectations. These ingredients offer parents, who seek to create change for their children and others, a ladder toward leadership. NPLI trains and prepares teams in local communities to bring about these results. We show teams how to engage parents across race and class, to use best practices, and to implement PLTI with fidelity. We deliver national training, local technical assistance, and conduct site visits to support local communities in their parent leadership work.

Through their engagement in PLTI, parents gain personal leadership skills, an increased understanding of public policies, and practical knowledge on how social change occurs. Each PLTI parent leader develops a community project to make the changes that they want to see in the community. Community projects cover a wide range of topics, with approximately 40% connected to education and learning, 30% connected to health and safety, and 30% connected to community and economic development. After PLTI, the leadership path continues, with parent leaders making change in their neighborhoods, their children's school, and their communities.

NPLI evaluations consistently show strong gains with significant increases in knowledge, skills, and civic actions. The outcomes are routinely high for parents of color, parents with low incomes, and parents across regions of the country, geographic locale, and language.

Outcomes for PLTI graduates include:

- Parents were 61% more likely to reach out to an elected official to solve a problem
- Knowledge of government and systems increased 45%
- Parents working on local initiatives increased 28%
- Community activism by parents increased 24%

NPLI offers graduates ongoing opportunities to expand and hone their leadership skills. We have created a national network of parent leaders. Their input is informing our development of an alumni engagement model.

“A movement for getting more parents engaged is slowly picking up steam in my community...

Citizens are starting to join in on the conversations surrounding issues that affect our kids' future.”

—Lamont Douglas,
Parent Leader,
New Orleans



“My PLTI community project was to get young adults educated in the voting process. Now, I am working with Solano County Registrar of Voters to reach residents and increase voter turnout.”
—Lenesha Anderson, Parent Leader, California

2. Work with public and non-profit organizations to prepare them to effectively partner with parents

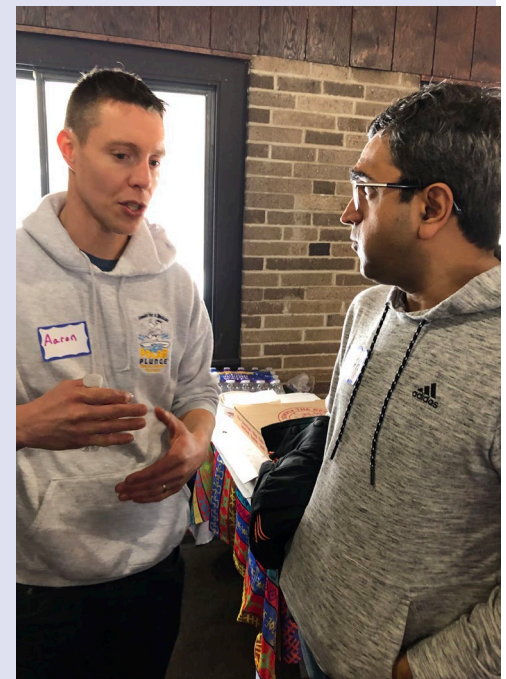
Public agencies, policy makers, and non-profit organizations benefit by partnering with parents in shaping development, delivery, and evaluation of policies, programs, and practices. This type of partnership, where parents are part of the process and where parents, organizations, and policy makers invest in success, quickens effective community change. But, often structural barriers and years of operating without parent input create challenges to parent partnership. NPLI is developing a model of training in best practices for organizations to build capacity in engaging parents.

3. Advance racial equity and social justice through family civics

Effectively working across race and class is the foundation of NPLI's work as we authentically engage parents as leaders in communities. Data shows that PLTI parent leaders are more effective at partnering across race and class after PLTI and they have an increased commitment to racial equity and social justice. Informed by in-depth interviews with PLTI parent leaders, NPLI has prioritized an expansion of this work, providing training to alumni in racial equity facilitation skills and deepening our racial equity dialogue in the 20-week PLTI curriculum.

4. Influence and inform the parent leadership field

Parents co-created the PLTI curriculum and participate in its evaluation and outcomes. This parent-centered approach to parent leadership evaluation drove our collaboration with evaluators as well as other parent leadership and democracy initiatives to begin the national Parent Leadership Indicators Project. This shared work moves us from silo-based initiatives or snapshot program evaluation to measuring the ripple effect of change in parents, organizations, and communities as outcomes of parent leadership. We are working with others to design and develop a national evaluation process to evaluate the impact of parent leadership models on individuals, families, homes, and communities.



“What I love about PLTI is the focus on community-wide issues that need attention. It’s motivating to be part of a program to improve the community.”
—Yader Medal, Parent Leader, Colorado

“PLTI launched me into a world of social cause and public policy advocacy.”

—Maureen O’Neill-Davis, Parent Leader, Connecticut

WHY NPLI?

Authentic parent leadership improves children, family, and community life, while advancing the civic life of our nation. NPLI is a national nonprofit that partners with local communities, counties, and states to fortify family civics via parent leadership. Our aim is to grow more communities where parents have a significant voice at the table to create policies, programs, and practices that are more responsive to what parents and families need to thrive.

We are creating parent-informed communities where parents, cross race and cross class, are leading.

We accomplish this by:

1. Partnering with communities to strengthen parent leadership through the proven Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) model
2. Working with public and non-profit organizations to develop agencies that are prepared and ready to partner with parents
3. Advancing racial equity and social justice through family civics
4. Influencing and informing the parent leadership field

STORIES OF COMMUNITY IMPACT INCLUDE:

- City leaders in Alexandria, Virginia embedded parent leaders into the city planning process by creating designated seats for PLTI alumni at their commissions and committees.

“PLTI helped me see there are many layers to parent involvement and student success. Better informing parents is a small investment that can pay huge dividends.”—Bill Campbell, Parent Leader, Alexandria School Board Member

- PLTI parent Toyin Anderson identified that her Rochester, New York neighborhood had fewer recreation options than others. She envisioned creating a spray park that her neighbors could use each summer. Ms. Anderson reached out, and then partnered with city leadership to bring this dream to fruition.

“Toyin has been the community advocate for this project. Toyin persisted, and because of what she learned in PLTI, there is now a new spray park opening for kids in Rochester in the summer.”—Mayor Lovely Warren

- After talking with a number of fellow immigrant parents in Danbury, Connecticut, PLTI parent leader Liz Quinonez realized that the lack of quality childcare was reaching crisis proportions. Parents were faced with the gut-wrenching decision of leaving their children in substandard care to be able to work. To address this, she connected home-based childcare providers to training opportunities. This community initiative resulted in local leaders recognizing that a lack of affordable childcare was at the heart of the employment problem and a root cause for poverty.

“Liz connected us with parents who were concerned about their childcare. Their impassioned pleas gave real meaning to our efforts. Liz helped convince the Boston Federal Reserve Bank, through their Working Cities Initiative, to invest in the lives of families in Danbury CT.”—Kim Morgan, CEO, United Way of Western Connecticut



“I used to be so bossy when I was in front of a crowd. Never really having all the facts. Now, I research and observe before using my voice. This helped me get an unsafe play area replaced at our

park. And, after PLTI, I joined the Board of the Community Action Partnership of Providence.”

—Erin Clark, Parent Leader, Rhode Island