



# Partnerships: Teacher Tools

## Connecting Locally with Parents

Potential partners for a service-learning experience don't need to come from across the community or globe; they are as close as your students' parents or guardians. As family engagement consultant and NYLC Board Member Hedy Lemar Walls, Ph.D., illustrates below, service-learning experiences can be an easy entryway into a school that may otherwise seem daunting to parents. The time is right for this sort of engagement, as the No Child Left

Behind Act challenges schools, districts, and states to develop programs that include family and community involvement in supporting academic achievement.

Walls, in her recent doctoral dissertation, applies researcher Joyce Epstein's six typologies for parent involvement, listed below, as a framework for parent involvement in service-learning projects.

**Standard:** Service-learning partnerships are collaborative and mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

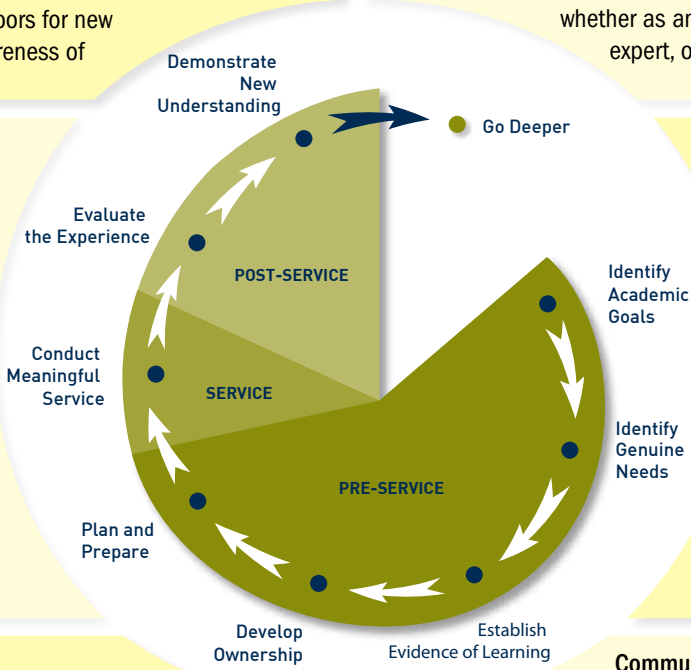
### Parent Roles in Service-Learning

**Collaborating with the Community**  
When parents engage in service-learning with their children, they experience positive connections with the school and community that often open doors for new partnerships and greater awareness of community services.

**Volunteering**  
Service-learning provides parents with an array of volunteer opportunities that get them involved with the school – whether as an adult chaperone, community expert, or participant in a celebration.

**Decision-Making**  
When parents participate in service-learning activities, they experience positive relationships with the school and community. This can lead to their greater involvement in decision-making bodies such as school and district task forces, PTA/PTOs, advisory councils, and school site councils.

**Parenting**  
Through participation in service-learning activities, parents talk with their children about the benefits of involvement in the community as they take on such roles themselves and gain new ideas for how to talk with their children about this sort of civic engagement.



**Learning at Home**  
Service-learning provides new roles for parents to support their children's learning – as community experts during the research phase, as reflection partners, or as evaluators on the efficacy of a project.

**Communicating**  
Service-learning provides new opportunities for schools to develop positive relationships with families, including reciprocal communications about positive student behaviors.

## Going Global with Reciprocal Partnerships

A collaboration with a partner school in another country offers great opportunities for students to use their knowledge of technology and online tools to move a project forward. As the group of students in both countries jointly plan and share information about the implementation of their respective projects, they also learn about social, political, and cultural issues in another country.



Steps	Project Example: Green Roofs	Technology Resources
Engage with partner school in an online discussion about issues in both communities and agree on an issue that both schools want to tackle.	In our project example, both schools decide to explore the idea of green roofs. Find out more about green roofs at: <a href="http://greenroofs.org">greenroofs.org</a> .	Use Google groups or create a Facebook group to discuss issues.
Learn about this issue in both countries and communities. Find a way to present and share this information with partner schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the pollution level in our town/city?</li> <li>• Are there green roofs already?</li> <li>• How many green m<sup>2</sup> per 100 m<sup>2</sup> are there in our city?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a simple webpage on the issue and how it affects your community using Google Apps.</li> <li>• Link to uploaded photos on Picasa.</li> <li>• Share slideshows on <a href="http://slideshare.net">slideshare.net</a>.</li> </ul>
Both partners design their own service-learning project to address the agreed upon issue, and share ideas about the activities they want to carry out with their counterpart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a green roof on your school or other public building.</li> <li>• Inform policy-makers about the benefits of green roofs.</li> </ul>	Share project ideas and project progress in Google groups or <a href="http://TakingITGlobal.org">TakingITGlobal.org</a> .
Document the project using photos, videos, or art.	Take pictures or video of the entire planning and construction process.	Post pictures or videos of your progress online and share them with your partner.
Reflect on how the impacts of the issue differ between the two communities and countries.	How does (or will) climate change or pollution affect your communities?	Share thoughts on your Google group.
Develop a common presentation of both projects.	Present the projects as a ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• book</li> <li>• photo slide show</li> <li>• video documentary</li> <li>• music collaboration</li> </ul>	... by using tools such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://blurb.com">blurb.com</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://slideshare.net">slideshare.net</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://television.tv">television.tv</a></li> <li>• audio software to create a collaborative piece of music, like in <a href="http://playingforchange.com">playingforchange.com</a></li> </ul>
Plan a public celebration to share the projects with the wider public.	Invite community-based organizations, politicians, and other stakeholders who have an interest in city planning or environmental issues.	Add pictures and video of your celebration to the ongoing documentation of the project.
Consider going larger with the project, engage in reflection activities, and ask questions such as, Who benefits? So what? and Now what?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider more or deeper partnerships.</li> <li>• Involve policy-makers and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Expand to related issues.</li> <li>• Remember to consider the global picture.</li> </ul>	