



PCSN Panel Sheds Light on Service-Learning

On February 27, 2014, the **Parents Community Service Network (PCSN)** hosted **A Panel Discussion on Service-Learning** in New York City. The discussion, which was free of charge with registration, focused on successes and obstacles in implementing true, meaningful service-learning in New York City public and private schools, and parents' roles in the process. It featured five panelists, experienced educators with extensive knowledge and leadership in service-learning, representing a cross-section of NYC schools. (See below.)

More than 50 parents, school administrators and service representatives from across the city attended the event, which took place in PCSN member-donated space at the Manhattan Church of Christ on the Upper East Side, and was moderated by Karen Weissman, Ph.D., PCSN co-founder and chair for Curriculum Support of the Community Action Committee at Corlears School.

The panel touched on many aspects of service-learning (defined as the integration of community-service activities with a school curriculum on a frequent or ongoing basis), including why children benefit from such programs, noting that service-learning experiences have been shown to have a positive affect on children's study habits, grades, interpersonal relationships and self-confidence. Other take-aways from the Panel Discussion included information on:

- How service-learning differs from general volunteerism.
- The importance of establishing a public purpose for service projects.
- How service-learning concepts are best introduced to children.
- What types of support teachers need to run service-learning projects.
- How parents can approach, and partner with, their schools to promote service-learning.
- The importance of getting older kids to experience communities-in-need firsthand.
- How to grow a culture of service-learning from the ground up, starting with small projects.

Bringing this information to life with real-world examples were the seasoned panelists:

Daniel Feigin	Division Head, Upper School, Trevor Day School
Perla Miah	5th Grade Teacher, P.S. 57, James Weldon Johnson Leadership Academy
Laurie Piette	Director of Studies, Rodeph Sholom School
M.J. Quigley	Associate Head of School, The Chapin School
Laura Rog	Director, Training and Technical Assistance, generationOn.

Founded in 2013, the Parents Community Service Network (PCSN) is a New York City-based parent network that coordinates and collaborates with schools, nonprofits and other stakeholders to enrich and deepen the experience of community service for all involved. To become a member, e-mail parentscommunityservicenetwork@gmail.com or visit parentscommunityservicenetwork.org.

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