The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to practice leadership through action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women’s Leadership’s website at http://iwl.rutgers.edu.
“The America I love still exists at the front desks of our public libraries.” – Kurt Vonnegut, *A Man Without A Country*
Table of Contents

05 About the OLL
08 Intellectual Foundation
12 Connection to Feminist Leadership
15 Insights Gained
20 Future Impact
22 Bibliography
About the Online Lending Library
The Problem

The number of books in a child’s home is important to their progress in school and success later in life. During the pandemic, as schools and libraries close their doors, less and less reading material is made available to children.
Mission Statement

The Online Lending Library (OLL) is an organization that allows students to choose and keep the novels that interest them. Serving elementary, middle, and high school student, OLL provides books to interested students in the Central Jersey area.
Understanding Books Drives

- Understanding the role of a book drive
- Service-learning in literacy education
- The mindset to approach service
- Helping is different from serving a community
The Poverty Gap in Education

- Poor children don't struggle in school because of their families -- they struggle because of poverty.

- "Cultural Deprivation"

- Long-standing stereotypes that blamed poor families for their misfortunes.

- More than 40 percent of children live in low-income families
### Percent of U.S. adults reading books and literature, by demographic subgroup: 2012, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 U.S. adult population (millions)</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Percentage point (pp) change</th>
<th>Statistically significant change</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>All adults</strong></td>
<td>246.7</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>-1.9 pp</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>119.0</td>
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<td>44.3%</td>
<td>-0.4 pp</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>127.7</td>
<td><strong>63.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.5%</strong></td>
<td>-3.2 pp</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td><strong>Race/ethnicity</strong></td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>39.4</td>
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<td>32.2%</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>157.6</td>
<td><strong>60.6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>59.6%</strong></td>
<td>-1 pp</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>African American</td>
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<td>46.6%</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>52.5%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>+1.1 pp</td>
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<td>18-24</td>
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<td>25-34</td>
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<td><strong>57.2%</strong></td>
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<td>55.4%</td>
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<td><strong>Highest level of education</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Grade school</td>
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<td>High school diploma</td>
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<td>39.9%</td>
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<td>Some college</td>
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<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
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<td>72.5%</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>-4 pp</td>
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<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
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<td><strong>81.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>78.6%</strong></td>
<td>-3.1 pp</td>
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Fig 1. Demographic breakdown of Adult Readers (Pinsker)
Connection to Feminist Leadership
Women and Education

In early education, for a girl to be rated as equally capable as her male classmate, she not only has to achieve equal academic success, she has to be seen as working harder than him (Cimpian).
The Shift to Online Learning could Worsen Educational Inequality

- “Digital Divide”
- Trauma of the Pandemic
- What online learning means for students
Insights Gained
Met frequently with my mentor to adjust the parameters of my project

Identified two organizations to reach out to: Youth Empowerment Services and I-RISE

Developed a Facebook Page to display the books collected

Created a poster and project summary to reach out to organizations & reached out
Welcome to the Online Lending Library! On this page, students and parents will be able to claim which book or series of books they would like to receive. Simply comment under the post of which book you would like to get (only one book/series per student) with your email. The official email for the Online Lending Library (lendinglibrary.nj@gmail.com) will then reach out to you with details.

There are no shipping costs associated with this organization or the Institute of Women’s Leadership, but there may be delays in shipping because of the pandemic. All books will be properly sanitized before shipping. Please comment any questions below or email them to the official Lending Library email. If you are interested in donating, please reach out! Thank you all for participating!
Online Lending Library Project
Neha Saju
n1083@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Project Summary
The Online Lending Library will be a resource for students in the New Brunswick, Newark, and Highland Park areas. Because of COVID-19, schools are operating under remote instruction and libraries across the state are functioning with limited capacity. Having access to literature at home is foundational for a child’s early education and important for an individual’s continued education. This project seeks to distribute books to students who are interested in reading.

The Online Lending Library will use a Facebook page to post pictures and descriptions of books that have been donated for the project. The project will work with community organizations to advertise the book donations. Students and their parents can write in the name of the individual picking up the book (either the name of the student or parent) and the name of their town below the post of the book they would like on the Facebook page. I will work with three community organizations (one in New Brunswick, one in Newark, and one in Highland Park) where children will be able to pick up the books they have chosen. All through the month of November and early December, children will be able to select the books that they would like to own. By the mid-December, I can bring selected books to interested community organizations so families will be able to pick up a free book (or book series) in time for the holidays using a staggered pick-up schedule. There will be no cost for books or transportation, as this project is being funded completely by the Rutgers Institute for Women’s Leadership.

The individual behind this project is a Rutgers junior named Neha Saju. Neha is majoring in History and Political Science and hopes to go to graduate school to get a Masters in Public
Operating during a Pandemic

• Importance of checking social media updates
• Signing up for a newsletter to better understand the needs of the organization
Future Impact
Moving forward!

• Expanding the number of available books for children
  • Focusing on getting more books in Spanish
• Pursuing other routes outside of community organizations
  • Public Libraries (reaching out to 2 systems)
  • Orphanages (1 organization)
  • Homeless Shelters (1 organization)
Bibliography

“Closing the Education Gap for Girls of Color.” NWLC, 30 Nov. 1, nwlc.org/blog/closing-education-gap-girls-color/.


