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For Immediate Release

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Family Service Association Launches Device Free Dinner Campaign to Bring Families Back Together

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NJ (December 13, 2017) – The Family Service Association of South Jersey (FSA) is bringing the growing Device Free Dinner initiative to South Jersey tabletops to help families tune in to each other and turn off their devices.

The campaign, and its Family Dinner Project extension, offer tips for parents to reduce the distractions that devices like smartphones, televisions and video games cause during family dinners.

"Dinnertime is a sacred occasion for families to come together and bond," FSA President and CEO Cindy Herdman Ivins said. "Our ultimate goal is to relinquish the hold of technology on our families and make dinner a time for connection again."

For the many families with two working parents, dinnertime is often the only chance for parent-child bonding. Research shows that technology prevents conversations and interactions amongst families.

According to the non-profit Family Dinner Project:

- Nine out of 10 parents think quality dinner conversations help develop connections with their children.
- More than half of parents worry that electronic devices are hurting conversation.
- Forty-seven percent of parents said they or a family member used a mobile device at dinner in the last week.
- Eighty-eight percent of adults say they disapprove of using phones at a family dinner.

Ultimately, the Project's research shows what parents have known for a long time: that sharing a fun family meal is good for the mind, body and soul of all family members. Other supportive studies show a link between regular family meals and positive behaviors in children, such as higher grade-point averages, resilience and self-esteem. Family meals are also attributed to lower rates of substance abuse, teen pregnancy, eating disorders and depression.

Improving the quality of life for individuals and families in our community.





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With its new initiative, FSA seeks to enlist local families into taking the #DeviceFreeDinner pledge to better their families. Such tips include planning device-free meals in advance, establishing boundaries for family meals and other strategies for getting kids off their devices.

Common Sense Media, a non-profit organization that runs the national Device Free Dinner Campaign, recently enlisted Will Ferrell in a series of dramatic and hyperbolic commercial spots to highlight the negative effect smartphones and other technology have on family time.

The commercials feature the actor getting comically scolded by children for being lost in his smartphone during a meal, highlighting the sad reality many American families face every night.

FSA hopes through the movement, that families will come together to share their experiences and insights to help each other realize the benefits of family dinners. Together, they'll figure out the resources needed – like tips for setting dinnertime goals, overcoming obstacles such as conflicting schedules and engaging everyone in meaningful conversation – to improve the frequency and quality of their mealtime interaction.

For more information on FSA's Device Free Dinner Campaign, visit <http://fsasj.org/dfd>

About Family Service Association:

Family Service Association is a non-profit United Way partner agency dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals and families in our community for over a century. FSA touches more than 7,000 lives annually in four program areas: Behavioral Health, Strengthening Families and Communities, Safety Net and Child Welfare Advocacy. FSA operates Family Success Centers in Egg Harbor Township and Galloway, and partners with the Egg Harbor Township School District to operate the Teen Center in Egg Harbor Township High School. Annual events include Faces of Hope, Ladies Night Out, FSA Golf Tournament and other fundraisers and community outreach programs. Visit FSAsj.org or call 1-877-272-2331.

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