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In a boost to Staten Island's economy, domestic workers launch the borough's first worker-owned cooperative businesses

Staten Island, New York

Brightly Cleaning and Love & Learn Childcare, two businesses launched today in Staten Island by local domestic workers, have set out to boost the borough's economy through worker-ownership. Each business' services, practices, and prices are established by the workers themselves, who collectively manage the business - and share profits.

"We want to build these businesses not just for ourselves," said Cirenia Dominguez, a professional cleaner and co-owner of Brightly Cleaning. "We want to create opportunities for the community and be an example of collective power that can inspire others, especially our children."

The 15 worker-owners of Love & Learn Childcare and 6 worker-owners of Brightly Cleaning aim to provide high-quality home services at fair wages and in a safe and dignified environment. "As a mother of two young children and active member of my community, having flexibility in my work schedule is essential," said Erika Cortes, a nanny and co-owner of Love & Learn Childcare. "Now, I control my own schedule, so I can work in the mornings and pick my children up from school."

The 6 founding worker-owners of Brightly Cleaning and 15 founding worker-owners of Love & Learn Childcare developed their worker cooperative businesses over the last year, including organizing the business entity, implementing democratic decision-making processes, and completing necessary business management and advanced industry skills trainings. With support from the Staten Island Foundation, La Colmena Staten Island Community Job Center and the Center for Family Life in Sunset Park provided community business development supports and technical assistance to these social entrepreneurs.

"In addition to offering members opportunities to develop assets and wealth, worker cooperatives provide pathways for members to build solidarity and networks, develop self-esteem and new skillsets, and ensure that the flow of education and capital returns to the community," said Maru Bautista, Co-Director of Cooperative Development at the Center for Family Life.

Brightly Cleaning and Love & Learn Childcare join the growing cooperative sector in New York City. More than 60 worker-owned cooperative businesses are creating well-paid jobs and social capital through worker-ownership, participatory and collaborative decision-making, and leadership development. The cooperative business

model has been recognized as an effective economic development strategy by the New York City Council, which last month announced an investment of \$3.048 Million in worker cooperative development this fiscal year.

[Love & Learn Childcare](#) is now providing nanny services throughout Staten Island, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. [Brightly Cleaning](#) is available for home and office cleaning in Staten Island, Manhattan below 59th Street, and Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.



La Colmena is a community-based organization working with day laborers, domestic workers, and low-wage immigrant workers in Staten Island through organizing, education, culture and economic development. La Colmena provided community outreach and supports to the worker-owners of Brightly Cleaning and Love & Learn Childcare.



Center for Family Life in Sunset Park (CFL), a neighborhood-based social services organization, has incubated and supported 18 cooperatives over the past 10 years. Brightly and Love & Learn, which received training and technical assistance from CFL, are the latest businesses to come out of the growing cooperative movement in New York City, bringing this successful model of workforce and economic development to Staten Island.