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Durham's Partnership for Children Partners with Barnes & Noble – Southpoint to Collect 2,880 Books for Children Across Durham County

Durham, NC—Durham's Partnership for Children, a *Smart Start Initiative*, announced Wednesday that generous Barnes and Noble Streets at Southpoint customers purchased more than 2,800 new books for Durham County disadvantaged children during the **2011 Annual Barnes and Noble Holiday Book Drive** that ran from Nov. 1 through Dec. 31.

Durham's Partnership for Children (the Partnership) works collaboratively across Durham County with community agencies and nonprofits that serve young children and their families. Over the eight week book drive, the Partnership distributed many of the books to more than 15 community agencies serving children in home visiting programs, social services, medical facilities, and a variety of family support and family literacy programs. The Partnership will continue matching these generously donated books up with the children and families that need them most.

"From across the community, the support we have seen for the book drive has been phenomenal," said Cheri Hodges, Community Relations Manager at the Barnes & Noble store. "Those who purchased and donated books to this year's drive have a big heart for Durham's young children and have provided the gift of literacy to those in need."

In addition to distributing books through Durham's early childhood system, the Partnership worked with other organizations, such as the Durham County Guardian ad Litem Program, the East Durham Children's Initiative, and the Salvation Army to distribute books to older children. Family literacy is essential to the Partnership's mission. The book drive gives the Partnership an opportunity to connect with the broader Durham community and build awareness of its work to ensure children are better prepared for future learning and success in school.

"The immediate result of these book donations is that a young child is provided with the tools for developing early literacy skills," said Melanie Busbee, Communications Manager with the Partnership. "Each and every book helps to advance a child's curiosity for words, language and stories. We are grateful to have a community that comes together to make this book drive a success."

About Durham's Partnership for Children - Making young children a priority.

Founded in 1994 and first funded in 1995 to administer the Smart Start grant in Durham County, the Partnership works as an independent, local nonprofit that serves young children birth to age 5 and their families to ensure that all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. For more than 16 years, the Partnership helps working parents pay for child care, improves the quality of child care and provides health and family support services to thousands of Durham County families with young children. The Partnership leverages the public and private sectors to achieve its mission: *To mobilize and unify the Durham community to create and support innovative and successful approaches to serving the needs of children birth to age 5 and their families.* The Partnership administers Smart Start, NCPRE-K, and Early Head Start in Durham County. For more information about the Partnership, visit www.dpfc.net or call 919-403-6960, ext. 221.