



NEWS RELEASE

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Don't turn the page on community need this holiday season Durham's Partnership for Children seeks bi-lingual books during this year's Barnes & Noble Annual Holiday Book Drive

Durham, NC – Durham's Partnership for Children, a Smart Start Initiative, is in its fifth year of collaboration with Barnes & Noble at Southpoint Mall to reach out to our youngest readers through our Annual Holiday Book Drive. Last year alone community members donated more than 4,150 books through purchases made at the Southpoint retail location. The Partnership successfully distributed all donated books to 22 community agencies that serve children who might not otherwise have access to these books.

For the 2010 holiday season, the Partnership is seeking the help of the community once again. At the top of the Book-Drive wish list this year are Spanish-language and bi-lingual books. "In this time of globalization, having bilingual books will do far more than benefit only children whose first language is Spanish," says Pilar Rocha-Goldberg, President of El Centro Hispano, a Durham-based Latino organization whose outreach areas include family literacy. "Giving all children the opportunity to be exposed to a language that is spoken more and more often in the community will motivate them to read more and will open better opportunities for their future."

With Hispanic births accounting for approximately 1 in every 4 births in Durham County, clearly there is a need for Spanish-language literature. And while English proficiency is critical for academic success, research indicates that children whose parents do not have English as a first language should first establish a foundation in their native language before embarking on the beginning-to-read process.

"Non-English-speaking children are thereby faced with tremendous challenges, but we have the tools to positively impact their language and literacy development," says Rocha-Goldberg.

Through collaborative initiatives, the work of our funded partners and community events such as the book drive, the Partnership hopes to serve as many at-risk children as we can to help ensure they are socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for entrance into kindergarten. Far too many of Durham's young children lack high-quality education opportunities including access to literature. Providing books and one-on-one reading time is a crucial step toward positively impacting future literacy skills and closing the achievement gap among children, which continually shows Latinos lagging behind in school readiness.

According to Catherine Snow, chairperson of the Department of Human Development at Harvard University, the most important thing we can do to promote early literacy skills is to provide a language-rich environment in which our children can thrive. Such an environment provides a space for conversation around everyday activities of interest to children and a space where children can see how print is used for a variety of purposes. Language-rich environments have a positive impact on children's early vocabulary, which can be an important predictor of reading comprehension skills. The more words a child learns before he or she enters kindergarten the better.

In years past we have witnessed an outpouring of community support from those who recognize the need these early readers have. Every single book placed in the hands of young children makes a significant impact. By shaping our young children into readers today we might be able to affect the shape of their academic futures tomorrow.

To participate in the book drive, visit the Barnes & Noble Southpoint Mall location anytime before December 31, 2010 to purchase books for young children. Books can be found on display behind the checkout counter and in the Children's Section. Southpoint Mall location store hours are Monday – Thursday from 10 am - 10 pm, Friday - Saturday 10 am - 11 pm, and Sunday from 10 am - 9 pm.

Suggested Spanish book titles appropriate for infants and early readers (Birth to Pre-K) include:

Big Dog...Little Dog/Perro Grande...Perro Pequeño by P. Eastman
How Do I Love You?/¿Cómo te amo? By P. Hallinan
Hairs/Pelitos by Sandra Cisneros
Margaret and Margarita by Lynn Reiser
The Story of Ferdinand/El cuento de Ferdinand by Robert Lawson
In My Family/En Mi Familia by Carmen Lomas Garza
Peter's Chair/La Silla de Pedro by Ezra Keats
Moon Rope/Un Lazo a la Luna by Lois Ehlert

Suggested English titles include:

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See by Eric Carle
The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
Good Night Moon by Margaret Brown
The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
My First Animal Board Book
My First Colors Board Book
My First Numbers Board Book
Dora's Potty Book

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 under North Carolina's nationally recognized initiative to ensure all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. For more than 15 years, the Partnership has helped working parents pay for child care, improve the quality of child care and provided health and family support services to thousands of Durham County families with young children. The Partnership works 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*, by working with funded partners, groups and organizations in Durham County to support and coordinate efforts impacting young children and their families. The Partnership also administers the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program in Durham County serving more than 400 children and the new Early Head Start Grant serving Durham infants and toddlers. For more information about the Partnership, visit www.dpfc.net or call 919-403-6960, ext. 219.