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IBM donates 18 “Young Explorer” Computers to Local Child Care Centers in Durham County

Durham, NC –During a guided tour of a local child care center hosted by Durham's Partnership for Children, Tina Wilson, Program Manager of Corporate Community Relations at IBM, noticed an older learning computer in one of the early childhood classrooms, which spurred the company into action.

IBM has donated 18 kid-friendly computers, known as “Young Explorers” to Durham’s Partnership for Children for use in non-profit child care centers across Durham County. These specially designed computers have big, bright screens that are easy for more than one student to see and the computers are sturdy enough to allow lots of little fingers to punch the keys for tactile learning. Big and colorful, the computers naturally attract curious preschoolers to investigate. Even more, the award-winning education software is designed for young children to develop the cognitive and social skills they’ll need to succeed in school. In collaboration with IBM, the Partnership arranged for these 18 computers to be distributed to early childhood education centers across Durham County and directly into the curious and excited hands of our community’s youngest students.

For the last 11 years, Durham's Partnership for Children has been committed to improving the early education environment in Durham County so that young children will enter school healthy and ready to succeed. Corporate partnerships, like those with IBM, are a key part of that strategy. “IBM has been a wonderful partner and a model of corporate leadership in Durham County; we applaud them for their generosity and commitment to young children,” said Marsha Basloe, Executive Director of Durham's Partnership for Children.

In collaboration with the Partnership, IBM has engaged the early childhood community from both ends of the spectrum. They have supported the use of computer technology by young children, as well as by the educational professionals who teach young children. Last year, IBM donated seven new laptops to the students in “Learner Link-Durham County,” an online program through Durham Technical Community College designed to increase teacher education levels by improving the availability of early childhood coursework offered through distance learning. Those computers continue to provide a great benefit to the early education infrastructure of Durham County, as it allows students to pursue online coursework in early education while remaining employed in Durham’s child care community. As the demand for flexible education

opportunities continues to increase in the early childhood community, IBM's computers will provide a practical solution to our community's needs.

This latest donation of 18 new "Young Explorer" computers is further evidence of IBM's commitment to early childhood and their recognition that early learning is critical to life success. "IBM has extended its commitment to quality education into the early childhood setting, where we have great opportunity to enhance teaching and learning," stated Tina Wilson, Program Manager of Corporate Community Relations at IBM.

The Partnership continues to look for opportunities to engage the corporate community in support of early childhood. Our strategy is to demonstrate how an investment in young children has a direct impact on our local workforce and the safety and prosperity of the entire county. IBM's continued support is a testament to that strategy and an important step toward creating healthy and successful students.

About Durham's Partnership for Children

Durham's Partnership for Children was founded in 1994 and first funded in 1995 to administer the Smart Start grant in Durham County. Smart Start is North Carolina's nationally recognized initiative to ensure all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. Smart Start helps working parents pay for childcare, improves the quality of childcare and provides health and family support services in every North Carolina County. The Partnership works with funded partners (affiliated organizations) 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 0-5 and their families." Durham's Partnership for Children also administers the Governor's More at Four Program in Durham County.

For more information about Durham's Partnership for Children, visit www.dpfc.net or call 919-403-6960, ext. 234..