



## PRESS RELEASE

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### EARLY CHILDHOOD FAITH INITIATIVE SECURES FUNDING FOR FAITH COORDINATOR TO SUPPORT NEEDED SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

*A.J. Fletcher Foundation provided \$10,000 Challenge Grant to the Durham County Early Childhood Faith Initiative to raise \$15,000 from local congregations to hire coordinator*

Durham, N.C. – Durham's Partnership for Children, a Smart Start Initiative, announced Monday that End Poverty Durham led by Pastor Mel Williams of Watts Baptist Church and Ann Stock, a community volunteer, in collaboration with Durham's Partnership for Children raised more than \$15,000 in response to A.J. Fletcher Foundation's Challenge Grant to support an early childhood faith coordinator.

The contract position will be held by Frances Dyer, a longtime Durham resident and retired attorney, who is a member of White Rock Baptist Church and helped develop the White Rock Child Development Center, a 5-star child care facility.

Central to Durham's Partnership for Children's Early Childhood Faith Initiative, Dyer will be educating the faith community on policies, practices, and community priorities to benefit children ages birth to 5. She will also work to engage congregations in placing the needs of families with young children on the top of their agendas of importance.

The need for Dyer's position grew out of the Early Childhood Faith Initiative, a volunteer project supported by End Poverty Durham's birth to 5 workgroup. Over the past two years, End Poverty Durham volunteers in collaboration with the Partnership and Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy's Durham Family Initiative (DFI), surveyed 49 congregations across different faiths in Durham County on how they support families with young children and what kinds of resources they would require to increase support for families with young children.

Durham's Partnership for Children administers the early childhood system in Durham County working with community agencies and nonprofits, public education, the business community, local government and individuals to ensure young children are ready for school.

"People and institutions of faith have long played important roles in American public life. Given the power of religion as a force, we are pleased to partner with the faith community to make our youngest children a priority," said Durham's Partnership for Children's Executive Director Marsha Basloe.

Mary Duke Biddle Foundation also supported this initiative with a \$2,500 grant. A portion of the grant supported the printing of The Early Childhood Faith Initiative Report, a collaborative report through the Partnership, DFI and End Poverty Durham that surveyed 49 congregations about their programming for families with young children. To access The Early Childhood Faith Initiative Report online, visit <http://www.dpfc.net/News&Events/Reports.aspx>

#### **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](http://www.dpfc.net) or call 919-403-6960, ext . 221.

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