



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: June 12, 2006

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Durham's Partnership for Children Presents Early Childhood Award to Dr. Ann Denlinger

Durham, NC - **Durham's Partnership for Children**, a Smart Start Initiative supporting the needs of young children and their families, is proud to present Dr. Ann Denlinger with an early childhood award for her long and distinguished dedication to children in Durham County. The award will be presented at Durham's Partnership for Children on June 15th at 3 PM. This award not only recognizes her commitment to Durham County's children, but also her forward-thinking and collaborative work to connect K-12 with "Birth through Five" education. This collaborative vision between the Partnership and DPS seeks to create a "continuum of education" that recognizes the crucial importance of early education in preparing children to be healthy and successful in the public schools. And with the greatest achievement gap existing **before a child reaches kindergarten**, this continuum wisely addresses school readiness as an issue that truly begins at birth.

Dr. Denlinger and her staff's support of the continuum of education led to the appointment of Dr. Deborah Pitman, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services (originally Elementary Education), to the Durham's Partnership for Children board in 2003-2005. Stacey Wilson-Norman, Executive Director of Elementary Education, now sits on the Partnership's Board as Dr. Denlinger's designee. In addition, Dr. Pitman co-chairs the City and County Children's Results Based Accountability Committee with Marsha Basloe, Executive Director for Durham's Partnership for Children. This Children's RBA committee is assigned to address the mission of "Children Ready for and Succeeding in School." One of the indicators of this RBA committee is high quality child care in Durham County, a major focus of Durham's Partnership for Children and its funded partners. "The Partnership is proud and honored to present this early education award to Dr. Denlinger in recognition of these important, collaborative approaches. Together we are affecting change for Durham's youth and the future of our community," said Marsha Basloe.

One of Dr. Denlinger's major accomplishments during her tenure with DPS is the dramatic improvement of third grade reading scores. Denlinger believes that some of this success can be attributed to the spirit of collaboration within her office. "DPS is so pleased to work collaboratively with Durham's Partnership for Children. I value the efforts that this group facilitates because of the children who are affected. Their work has a direct impact on the students and families we serve. It is an honor to be recognized," said Dr. Denlinger. Durham's Partnership for Children is proud to be a collaborator with DPS, and we are optimistic that our work on a "continuum of education" has made its own contribution to the successes of these third graders. As we invest in early childhood, we can see the dividends first-hand as these children grow up to be well-prepared, more 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 contact Jeremy Evans at 919-403-6960, ext. 224. Durham's Partnership for Children is located at 2634 Durham-Chapel Hill Blvd, Suite 102. Durham, NC 27707