



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2008

Contact: **Karine Stallings**
Durham's Partnership for Children
Community Development Manager
403-6960 x221 599-5855 (mobile)
Karine@dpfc.net

THE MERCK COMPANY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS HEALTH INITIATIVE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
\$10,000 GRANT TO DURHAM'S PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN WILL HELP FUND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO EDUCATE PUBLIC ABOUT NEEDS OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

Durham, N.C. – Durham's Partnership for Children, a Smart Start Initiative, Wednesday, announced that The Merck Company Foundation donated \$10,000 to the Partnership for the Docs For Tots NC initiative.

Docs For Tots NC is a civic engagement program aimed at health professionals, particularly pediatricians and pediatric residents, to become involved in activities to support the healthy development of young children and families through educational activities.

Durham's Partnership for Children works with community agencies and nonprofits, the public schools, the business community, local government and individuals to close the preparation gap for young children beginning at birth. Docs For Tots NC is a state affiliate of the National Washington, D.C.-based Docs For Tots initiative.

The Docs For Tots chapter in North Carolina will be implemented at the Pediatric Resident Program at Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center. Through a partnership with Durham's Partnership for Children and Duke University Children's Hospital and Health Center, plans call for building a county-wide network of physicians in clinical practices as well to speak to policies and practices that improve the health and development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

"The \$10,000 grant from The Merck Company Foundation demonstrates the community commitment to build better connections between early childhood education and preventive health care that can collectively change conditions for Durham's families with young children, birth to age 5," said Durham's Partnership for Children Executive Director Marsha Basloe. "We appreciate the support of Merck, a true Corporate Champion for Children, and look forward to future opportunities to partner for efforts that benefit young children."

The Merck Company Foundation is a US-based, private charitable foundation. Established in 1957 by Merck & Co., Inc., the Foundation is funded entirely by the Company and is Merck's chief source of funding support to qualified non-profit, charitable organizations.

"The Docs for Tots NC initiative fits with the foundation's vision to help improve the health and well-being of families," said Agnes Speight, Public Affairs Manager for Merck. "By arming doctors with engagement opportunities to educate the community about young children's health, this program has the ability to reach parents, early childhood educators and Durham residents from all walks of life."

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 221.

About Merck & Co., Inc.

Merck & Co., Inc. is a global research-driven pharmaceutical company dedicated to putting patients first. Established in 1891, Merck currently discovers, develops, manufactures and markets vaccines and medicines to address unmet medical needs. The Company devotes extensive efforts to increase access to medicines through far-reaching programs that not only donate Merck medicines but help deliver them to the people who need them. Merck also publishes unbiased health information as a not-for-profit service.