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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Durham's Partnership for Children celebrates 20 years of preparing children to succeed Anniversary event on April 23rd features Nnenna Freelon and Governor James B. Hunt, Jr.

Durham, NC – Durham's Partnership for Children (the Partnership), a Smart Start Initiative, will host its 20th Anniversary celebration at the Museum of Life and Science on Thursday, April 23, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm.

For 20 years, Durham's Partnership for Children has served as the convener and facilitator of Durham's early childhood system. This event, with lead sponsorship from PNC, Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC, and the Duke Office of Durham and Regional Affairs, honors the comprehensive system that has evolved from the early days of Smart Start.

The celebration, entitled *Kids Rock!*, will feature a musical performance from special guest Nnenna Freelon, a world-renowned, Grammy®-nominated local resident, and a video greeting from Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. An ensemble of children from Kidznotes will perform during the event, with additional jazz music provided by a faculty trio from NC Central University. A silent auction of children's rocking chairs will take place throughout the evening with prizes from a variety of local businesses and organizations.

"As a result of our work over the past two decades, Durham's youngest children are healthier, safer and better prepared to succeed in school and in life," says Partnership Executive Director Laura Benson. "This event gives us the opportunity to honor our leaders, community partners, staff, volunteers, and everyone who has contributed to this important work and is committed to supporting young children and their families."

The Partnership was founded to lead the nationally-recognized Smart Start Initiative, which supports comprehensive programming to promote healthy development and learning and enhance access to high-quality care. The Partnership also administers NC Pre-K and Early Head Start in Durham County and has developed a host of other innovative initiatives that convene the school system, faith community, parents, volunteers, and service providers to make sure children enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

To learn more about the 20th Anniversary event and to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.dpfc.net/>

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 to ensure that all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. For 20 years, the Partnership has helped parents pay for child care, improved the quality of child care and provided health and family support services to thousands of Durham County families with young children. The Partnership leverages the public and private sectors to achieve its mission: *To ensure every child in Durham enters school ready to succeed, we lead community strategies for children birth to 5 and their families that promote healthy development and learning and enhance access to high quality care.* The Partnership administers Smart Start, NC Pre-K, and Early Head Start in Durham County. For more information about the Partnership, visit www.dpfc.net or call 919-403-6960, ext. 221.