



Media contact:

Elaine Erteschik
Communications Manager
Durham's Partnership for Children
919-403-6960, ext. 221
elaine@dpfc.net

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Durham's Partnership for Children partners with Barnes & Noble – Southpoint to collect nearly 3,500 books for children across Durham County

Durham, NC – Durham's Partnership for Children (the Partnership), a Smart Start Initiative, announces that generous customers at Barnes & Noble - Southpoint purchased 3,484 new books for young children in Durham County during the Barnes & Noble Holiday Book Drive that ran from Nov. 1 through Dec. 31. This was the tenth year that the Partnership has teamed up with Barnes & Noble to collect books for young children who might not otherwise have access to reading materials.

“For 10 years, Barnes & Noble customers and employees have embraced our annual Holiday Book Drive benefiting Durham's Partnership for Children,” said Cheri Hodges, *Community Business Development Manager* for Barnes & Noble, Southpoint. “Thanks to the generosity of our customers and the exceptional passion of bookseller Patricia Clemons, who collected 1,060 books, we were able to exceed our goal of gathering 3,000 books. We are thrilled to be able to help so many children this year!”

The Partnership works collaboratively with community agencies and nonprofits in order to give these generously donated books as soon as possible to the children and families who are least likely to have books of their own. During the eight week book drive, Partnership volunteers sorted, packed and distributed the books to nearly 20 community agencies serving children in home visiting programs, social services, and a variety of family support and family literacy programs. Additionally, each family applying this season for 2016-17 school year programs that serve 4-year-olds will receive a book from the drive.

Ensuring that children are ready to enter school is central to the Partnership's mission, and the book drive offers a chance to connect with the larger Durham community and build awareness of the extensive need for books. Early literacy is a crucial part of a child's development, as it enhances vocabulary, builds important communication skills, and gives them the tools they need to be successful in school and in life.

About Durham's Partnership for Children – Preparing our children to succeed.

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.

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