



partnershipforchildren
JOHNSTON COUNTY

1406-A S. Pollock St.
Selma, NC 27576
(919) 202-0002

Fax 919-202-0902
Email – hberge@pfcjc.org
www.pfcjc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Heidi Berge (919) 202-0002 Ext. 253

Local Leaders Participate in Smart Investing Forum



Brandy Crocker, Jason Hardy and Crystal Roberts joined Executive Director Dwight Morris and other community leaders in a regional forum to discuss Smart Investing strategies and initiatives to help young children get high-quality early learning experiences in the first five years of life.

Johnston County, N.C. – December 11, 2009 - The Partnership for Children of Johnston County, a Smart Start Initiative, recently participated in a public engagement forum with key community and state leaders to obtain input on investments and issues affecting our state's youngest children.

The Regional Forum, held December 8 in Fayetteville, is part of a new statewide public engagement initiative titled Smart Investing: Communities Thrive When Children Thrive. The goal of the initiative is to establish what North Carolina communities want for their youngest children and the future of the state. Funded by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and with participation from Lt. Governor Walter Dalton and Smart Start, Smart Investing brings together a diverse mix of residents to begin a new dialogue about early education and children's health in North Carolina.

“I know times are tough, but it’s critical that we invest in our children because they are the future of this state,” said Dalton. “This initiative represents a wonderful opportunity to get North Carolina citizens more engaged and involved in issues affecting young children and to strengthen our communities at the same time.”

The Johnston County delegation of existing and emerging community leaders chosen to participate in the Smart Investing Initiative include Partnership for Children Executive Director, Dr. Dwight Morris; Smithfield-Selma Chamber of Commerce Information Specialist, Brandy Crocker; Vice-President of Capital Bank, Jason Hardy; Johnston-Lee-Harnett Community Action Communications Specialist, Crystal Roberts; Johnston Community College Small Business Director, Rosa Andrews; Smithfield Parks and Recreation Director, Tim Johnson; and Johnston County Schools Student Affairs Director, Dr. Oliver Johnson. Of the Initiative, Dr. Morris states, “This is a unique opportunity for us to bring local leaders together to discuss the importance of early childhood education as a community and economic development strategy. Building on this foundation, we will be able to better advocate for investments in young children at the local and state levels.”

The Partnership for Children’s vision is “to be Johnston County’s lead agency in bringing community partners together to provide our children with the best early care and education system in North Carolina”. By working together, we can improve the economic sustainability of Johnston County by ensuring that its future workforce is prepared for success in school and life.

Celebrating over 10 years of making young Johnston County children a priority, the Partnership for Children of Johnston County was founded in 1997. A local nonprofit serving young children birth to age 5 and their families, the Partnership administers the local Smart Start and More at Four initiatives. For more information about the programs and services offered by the Partnership for Children of Johnston County, visit www.pfcjc.org or call 919-202-0002.

* * *