



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Darlington County First Steps Receives Grant from The Duke Endowment

HARTSVILLE, SC---Darlington County First Steps is honored to announce a \$57,500.00 grant from The Duke Endowment to support our neediest families in Darlington County. Darlington County First Steps took a close look at the needs presented by families served since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and identified critical areas including: physical health, mental health, and concrete supports. The funds received from The Duke Endowment will be used to address needs these critical areas with a priority focus on families of color and economically, disadvantaged families. The goal of this project is to support these needs of families to minimize adverse and long-term effects.

Support will be provided through a variety of strategies including the following: creating an online Virtual Family Assistance Center to keep families informed and up-to-date on current news and information regarding COVID19 and resources available; supply basic necessities such as hand sanitizer, masks and disinfectants to help families prevent the spread of COVID19; provide opportunities through referrals for Mental Wellness Services; distribute concrete supports such as food boxes, diapers and wipes, gas and food cards and other needed household items. In addition, this project will focus on expanding services to our Hispanic/Latino communities including the addition of bi-lingual Community Outreach Worker.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has changed the lives of many and none more so than those of our most vulnerable families. While none have remained untouched, research indicates families of color and economically, disadvantaged families with children are suffering the worst of the pandemic's effects. The Duke Endowment created special funding opportunities to address the unparalleled needs of our most vulnerable families.

The Duke Endowment grant supports Darlington County First Steps' vision: Strong families in Healthy Communities. For more information about Darlington County First Steps, visit www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org.

Based in Charlotte and established in 1924 by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke, The Duke Endowment is a private foundation that strengthens communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits. Since its founding, it has distributed more than \$4 billion in grants. The Endowment shares a name with Duke University and Duke Energy, but all are separate organizations.

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