



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Patricia Sullivan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEL: 843.339.0819

FAX: 843.339.5928

EMAIL: psullivan@scfirststeps.org

Hartsville Administrative Professionals Give to First Steps Family

Hartsville, S.C.—On December 16, 2015, Hartsville Administrative Professionals (HAP), formally known as the International Association of Administrative Professionals, showed their Christmas spirit early in the giving of gifts to a Darlington County First Steps (DCFS) family.

HAP has not always been the name for these caring group of ladies. Coker College’s Assistant to the Provost and Dean of the College, Marsha Eide said, “In 2014 IAAP (International Association of Administrative Professionals) restructured their focus from local IAAP chapters that would meet regularly to regional groups that would have larger but less frequent meetings at a regional location such as Atlanta.”

Eide stated that as part of this restructuring, all local chapters were disbanded and individual members had the option of continuing with IAAP. Many of the previous members of the Hartsville chapter of IAAP decided to continue meeting as an organized group not affiliated with IAAP. This led to them changing their name to Hartsville Administrative Professionals (HAP). The name is different but their mission and purpose have remained the same.

HAP takes great pride and joy in their community service project which is to “adopt a family for Christmas”. It is described to be a blessing to the members of the group. Once HAP decided to stay together, they chose to continue their community service efforts. This year, HAP chose to make Helen Williams and her grandchildren’s Christmas a little brighter. Williams is the grandmother and legal guardian of 9 year old Markeonna, 3 year old Mariah and 15 month old Marcus.

“I thought she could use the help. She has custody of her three grandchildren and started from scratch. With her situation, I thought she would be a good fit for what HAP does for families in the area” explained Parents as Teachers, parent educator, Linda Bright.

This is the third year this group of ladies have donated to a First Steps family but the first under their new name. “We do this by helping to make a needy family’s holidays brighter by donating gift items of their choice. It does a heart good to help others. We are so blessed” said Eide with much excitement.

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Bright and Williams helped put together a wish list of items for Christmas to present to HAP which included: building blocks, educational toys, baby dolls, stuffed animals, boots, games, roller skates, a tea set, and many more. Aware that the Williams family may not get all of the items wished for, she is thankful for HAP and their deeds.

Full of emotion, Williams said, "I am so overwhelmed and blessed that these ladies are giving us these gifts and that First Steps chose our family. It means so much to be around good people who show love and concern about you and your family. These children are my heart and I know First Steps will always be a part of our lives. It is truly a beautiful experience."

Her youngest granddaughter and grandson are active students in the DCFS' Family Literacy and Parents as Teachers program. Williams said, "What I love about the program is that it really has helped my grandchildren throughout their learning and growing stages. The intimate setting in the Family Literacy classroom allows the children to have one on one attention with staff."

Four hours of free childcare are offered to any parent, grandparent or guardian who participates in any DCFS program, as well as the Darlington County School District Adult Education and BabyNet program, in the mornings and three hours in the evening. This Family Literacy program encourages social and cognitive skills to ensure a smooth transition upon entering preschool and kindergarten.

"DCFS has helped me grow as a grandmother and has helped me learn different things about childcare. I do not ever want to stop learning and growing. First Steps shows pure love to me and my family. I would have never imagined this" Williams said.

For more information about Darlington County First Steps, visit their website at www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org.