

Hearts Beat as One Foundation, Smart Start of Mecklenburg County to expand the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Charlotte with Habitat for Humanity Partnership

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charlotte, NC, December 11, 2015 – After a successful launch in the 28205, 28206 and 28208 zip codes in 2015, The Hearts Beat as One Foundation (HB1) and Smart Start of Mecklenburg County are excited to announce The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is expanding to include eligible families (with children ages birth to five years) in the over 1,200 homes built by Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte.

“Smart Start of Mecklenburg County is privileged to partner with the Hearts Beat as One Foundation to administer the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Smart Start’s mission *‘Every child reaches his or her potential and is prepared for success in a global community’*, guides our organization and priorities,” said Jane Meyer, Executive Director of Smart Start of Mecklenburg County. “This literacy partnership embraces Dolly Parton’s vision of fostering a love of reading among preschool children and their families by providing them with the gift of a specially selected book each month. By mailing high quality, age-appropriate books directly to their homes, we want children to be excited about books and to feel the magic that books can create. Moreover, this program insures that every child can have books, regardless of their family’s income.”

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is currently active in over 1,600 communities, delivering over 8.3 million books free of charge to nearly 700,000 children across the United States, Canada, the UK, and Australia. HB1 and Smart Start look to expand the program countywide (Mecklenburg) in coming years with the intermediate goal of servicing eight of the most at-risk zip codes.

“We are thrilled to partner with, and support the Habitat for Humanity families, and look forward to expanding into new partnerships as we move our literacy initiative forward,” said Joe Davis, Chairman/Director of the Hearts Beat as One Foundation. “Our goal is to be part of the solution. Currently, testing scores indicate that only 39 percent of students in our community are reading at appropriate levels. We hope to help move the needle upward of 80 percent within a 10-year time frame with the assistance of our funders and partnerships with other organizations in our community.”

The Hearts Beat as One Foundation and Smart Start of Mecklenburg County are also joined by key community partners to launch the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Charlotte: Novant Health, Carolinas Medical Center, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, NoDa Brewing Company, Truiliant Federal Credit Union, and Ivy’s Diaper Service.

Please visit www.heartsbeatone.org for more information on how you can participate.

About the Hearts Beat as One Foundation

Started in April 2014, the Hearts Beat as One is a new non-profit and community-driven organization that is striving to raise funds and awareness for organizations and people based in and around the Queen City. Through exciting and fun events, this foundation represents a diverse and talented combination of individuals who are coming together for the betterment of our entire city-wide community. Hearts Beat As One Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. A portion, if not all, of your tangible donations may be tax deductible. Please consult your financial advisor for more information. Please visit us on the web at www.heartsbeatone.org.

About Smart Start

Smart Start, a network of nonprofit local partnerships led by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC), creates innovative solutions to measurably increase learning and the healthy development of children birth to five. Smart Start gives local communities the freedom and responsibility to determine how to increase the health, well-being and development of their children based on the needs and resources of their local communities. For more information, visit www.smartstartofmeck.org.

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