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For Immediate Release

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Triad Companies Support Kindergarten Preparation

WINSTON-SALEM, NC— Smart Start of Forsyth County has received grants totaling \$10,000 from the R.J. Reynolds Foundation and the Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation to support the pilot year of a kindergarten preparation class this summer.

First Steps to Kindergarten is a two-week, comprehensive kindergarten preparation class that will be offered each summer to select students entering kindergarten in the fall. It is designed to help acclimate students to the school setting and adjust to a new learning environment. Most, if not all of the students who participate in the program will be those who have not experienced a traditional child care setting prior to entering school. The pilot classes will be held at Forest Park Elementary, Latham Elementary, and Cook Elementary.

The R.J. Reynolds Foundation granted Smart Start of Forsyth County \$9,000 earlier in the year to support two kindergarten preparation classes at Forest Park Elementary. The Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation made a grant of \$1,000 to be applied to classrooms at either of the two remaining schools.

“First Step to Kindergarten will be an important transitional period for many of the students attending,” said Chuck Kraft, executive director of Smart Start of Forsyth County. “Many of these students have not had the benefit of quality early education and are at risk of falling behind their peers in a school environment.”

The first First Steps classroom will begin on July 7 at Forest Park Elementary.

Smart Start of Forsyth County is an organization that administers programs to improve the quality, affordability, and accessibility of child care, as well as provide access to health services and necessary family support to the community. Smart Start of Forsyth County has been in existence since 1994.

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