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 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASEApril 26, 2017 |

Grant provides Hope for families

Blue Ridge Literacy Council receives $25,000 to pilot family literacy program with Smart Start of Henderson County

Hendersonville, NC April 26, 2017 – Blue Ridge Literacy Council was awarded a NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation grant to launch, in partnership with Smart Start, a Family Literacy program. During the pilot year Blue Ridge Literacy Council and Smart Start will provide a comprehensive family literacy program to Latino families enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is a free service that mails books to children 0-5 years of age with the goal to improve children’s literacy and kindergarten readiness.

“We have children who are receiving the books, but whose parents are unable to read, shared Sonia Gironda, Executive Director of Smart Start, we know that a child’s kindergarten readiness is linked to their exposure to words in their first 2000 days. If a parent cannot read to their child it directly impacts their ability to develop pre-literacy skills.”

Blue Ridge Literacy Council has served the community for over 25 years, helping adults reach their full potential as community members and parents through improved literacy and English Communication skills.

“Many of our English Language Learners seek our free serves to improve their ability to help their children succeed. When Smart Start announced the Imagination Library sponsorship our largest concern was for the mother who wouldn’t be able to read these great books to their children”, states Autumn Weil, Executive Director of BRLC.

This project is focused on advancing the education of two generations within an underserved population. The launch of the program will take place this fall, and its impact will be seen both immediately with the adult population served and in the future as the youth enter kindergarten. Due to the generosity of the NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, Smart Start and Blue Ridge Literacy Council will combat the statistic that children of parents with low literacy skills have a 72 percent chance of being at the lowest reading levels themselves; strengthening our community both today and tomorrow.

For more information or to register for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program contact Smart Start of Henderson County at (828) 693-1580 or visit www.smartstarthc.org. If you would like more information about tutoring adult learners in Henderson County, please contact Blue Ridge Literacy Council at (828) 696-3811 or [www.litcouncil.org](http://www.litcouncil.org).

***About the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation***

*The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation is an independent self-funding 501(c)3 nonprofit organization supporting activities that help meet the educational and health needs of today's society and future generations. Since its creation in 1986, the foundation has granted $71.0 million to support North Carolina projects and programs that emphasize the understanding and application of science, health and education at all academic and professional levels. Visit us at* [*NCGSKFoundation.org*](http://www.ncgskfoundation.org/index.html)*.*

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