



DURHAM COUNTY
Library



For Immediate Release
July 10, 2017

Contact: Daniele Berman, Community Partnerships Manager
daniele@bookharvestnc.org / 252.497.BOOK

Book Harvest, Durham County Library, and Durham Housing Authority Partner to Celebrate the Importance of Summer Learning

*Event Marking National Summer Learning Day 2017 Will Be One of Hundreds Across the
Nation Aimed at Keeping Kids Learning, Healthy, and Safe this Summer*

DURHAM, NC – [Book Harvest](#), [Durham County Library](#), and [Durham Housing Authority](#), in partnership with the [National Summer Learning Association](#) (NSLA) and [the Book Rich Environments Initiative](#) (BRE), will highlight the importance of summer learning opportunities on National Summer Learning Day, July 13.

Led by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), [National Summer Learning Day](#) is an advocacy day aimed at elevating the importance of keeping all kids learning, healthy, and safe during the summer. On this day each year, the country unites in advocacy efforts and celebrations hosted by hundreds of partner organizations from libraries to parks and recreation centers to civic and non-profit groups – all to promote awareness of the importance of keeping kids healthy and engaged during the summer. This year's goal is to reach two million youth.

In Durham, as part of Book Harvest's Bringing Books Home initiative, children throughout Durham will have the opportunity to select free books to build their own home libraries, and parents will have access to information about how to keep their children learning all summer. Free book and information tables will be available at the Department of Social Services (414 E. Main St.) from 9:00 to 12:00 and Northgate Mall (1058 W. Club Blvd.) from 11:00 to 3:00. The highlight of the July 13 celebration will be at the Liberty Street Community Center (131 Commerce St.), which is hosting library summer programming while the downtown branch is under construction. From 12:00 to 1:30, children will eat lunch, meet reading mascots, interact with the Durham Police Department's Community Resource Unit, and select new books to take home with them to keep them excited about reading all summer long. The celebration is free and open to the public. All of the books have been provided by the Book Rich Environments Initiative, a partnership between the National Book Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), and the Campaign for Grade Level Reading (CGLR).

"Children don't stop learning just because it's summer break," said Book Harvest's Community Partnerships Manager Daniele Berman. "In fact, the research tells us that having access to about a dozen self-selected books of their own over the summer can help kids avoid 'summer slide' and start school in the fall ready to continue their progress from the previous year. Our celebration today is a reminder that summers matter and that if we want children to be

prepared for the school year ahead, our communities need to ensure that all students and families have the support they need to continue learning and thriving over the summer.”

Research shows that summers without quality learning opportunities put our nation’s youth at risk for falling behind – year after year – in core subjects like math and reading. The math and reading skills students from low-income families lose each summer are cumulative and contribute significantly to the income-based achievement gap. A survey conducted by NSLA indicated that two-thirds of teachers said they spend at least a month re-teaching students old material when they return from summer break.

“Ensuring our children are engaged and learning during the summer months must be a national imperative,” said Matthew Boulay, Ph.D., NSLA founder and CEO. “On average, taxpayers invest \$10-12,000 per child during the school year -- then we walk away for two to three months of the summer. We essentially let 20 percent of students’ academic growth be lost over the summer.”

NSLA’s *Smarter Summers, Brighter Futures* [website](#) supports promotion of National Summer Learning Day with an events calendar, summer meals locator, and user-friendly resources for families, summer programs providers, and municipal leaders – all to help keep kids healthy and engaged during the summer break.

About Book Harvest

A nonprofit organization, Book Harvest provides books and literacy supports to Triangle children and families who need them. Growing up in homes that are rich with books helps children start kindergarten ready to learn, combat summer learning loss once they are in school, and fall in love with reading. Book Harvest believes in the power of books to transform children’s lives. Since 2011, children have harvested more than 690,000 books to take home and keep for their very own, forever.

About the Durham County Library

Durham County Library encourages Discovery, connects the Community and leads in Literacy. As a department of Durham County Government, the library furthers Goal 1 of the county’s Strategic Plan by enhancing cultural, educational and creative opportunities. For more information about the library, visit DurhamCountyLibrary.org.

About Durham Housing Authority

The Mission of the Durham Housing Authority is to be a leader for affordable housing in Durham County by serving as a housing safety net, promoting individual self-sufficiency, leveraging core housing competency to support DHA’s mission, managing real estate, and facilitating and participating in mixed income housing development.