



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Local Children Collaborative Supports Moral Monday

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**Charlotte, NC, August 19, 2013** --- The Children's Alliance stands up for children and because we do, we are excited to join Moral Monday when it makes its stop in Charlotte on Monday August 19<sup>th</sup>. The Children's Alliance is a collaborative of 40 non-profit and service agencies here in Charlotte/Mecklenburg who are dedicated to making sure each child in our community has the opportunity to succeed. Our member organizations work daily with our most at risk and in need children.

The members of the Children's Alliance are concerned that many of the policies passed by this 2013 General Assembly will harm the most vulnerable members of our society – our children. We believe that every child should be given every opportunity to reach their fullest potential but the dramatic cuts to public education will make that more difficult because of the impact on our schools and our classrooms. Specifically, the teacher assistant budget was cut by 21% resulting in CMS losing 214 teacher's assistants at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year and teacher pay remains stagnate for the 5<sup>th</sup> year. Consequently, North Carolina's average teacher salaries will drop to 48th in the nation meaning that for our best teachers, there are 47 better options. All our neighboring states pay first year teachers significantly more than we do, Virginia \$15,000 more a year, Tennessee \$11,000 more and South Carolina \$1,500 more. All of this means our teachers are asked to do more with less and we are not investing in our most precious resource – our children.

"Reduced funding will only continue to damage our local schools, reduce diversity, divide communities, force more cutbacks in classrooms and extracurricular activities, and fail to provide each and every child with the education necessary for success in life," Bill Anderson, Executive Director of MeckEd stated.

On a positive note, we support the decision to continue to fund statewide Pre-K by adding 2500 slots bringing the total to 35,000 children. But that number is still far less than the 65,000 children eligible each year for this critical early intervention. Children who start school behind are often unable to catch up.

In addition, the members of the Children's Alliance are acutely aware that many of our community's children are suffering because of the struggles faced by their parents. Decisions to eliminate the earned income tax credit for families, to end federal unemployment insurance to thousands in a state with the 5<sup>th</sup> highest unemployment in the country and to reject Medicaid expansion, while not directly aimed at children, will have a significant, negative impact on the adults in their lives trying to care for them. When the parents are struggling, it has a trickle-down effect that harms our children too.

Moral Monday has been a series of ongoing, peaceful demonstrations at the North Carolina General Assembly that have been happening every Monday since April 29. The protests are in response to the flood of policies pushed through by this General Assembly. Charlotte is the second stop on the statewide tour of the 13 voter districts and we will be there to represent the children.

Our organizations work tirelessly every day to make sure every child in our community has an opportunity to grow up healthy and safe. This year our legislators in Raleigh have made our work harder

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**The Children's Alliance** is a collaborative of 40 diverse local non-profit agencies that was created in 2002. Our vision is to provide a voice on behalf of each and every child in Mecklenburg County. We recognize the power of working together by sharing information and connecting services. Our goal is that each child of our community receives the best opportunity to live a healthy and productive life.

**OUR MEMBERS:**

A Child's Place • Alexander Youth Network • Bethlehem Center • Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Charlotte • Child Care Resources Inc. • Children's Home Society of NC • Communities in Schools • Council for Children's Rights • Freedom School Partners • Jewish Family Services of Greater Charlotte • Junior League of Charlotte • Kids Need 2 Parents • MeckEd • Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center • Presbyterian Community Care Cruiser • Right Moves for Youth • The Relatives, Inc. • United Family Services • YMCA of Greater Charlotte • Youth Village