

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Civitas Institute Has It All Wrong!

The Civitas Institute and Andrew Henson have it all wrong. Their recent press release and article have unjustly vilified Child Care Services Association (CCSA), a private not-for-profit agency working to improve access to high quality child care.

CCSA has always managed its child care scholarship programs with integrity. Our mission is solely focused on helping young children and their families. Unfortunately, funding was just not available to continue all of the families served in the previous fiscal year in its Smart Start Scholarship Program in Durham. Smart Start funding had been cut. State subsidy funds had been cut. Durham's Partnership for Children faced an expanded population of vulnerable children. CCSA employed a number of strategies to decrease expenses. But this was not enough.

"We could have terminated scholarships for half of the families in July, or we could try to cut costs, work to find families other sources of funding, see if new funds became available and wait until mid-year. Our experience tells us that families would rather have six months of child care than no months of child care. It is a draconian choice," said Sue Russell, President of CCSA. However, no new funds became available and the number of families needing assistance remained high.

Mr. Henson states that the termination of scholarships forced "many child care centers to close." No child care program enrolled in the scholarship program has notified CCSA of closure of its program. As of February 16, 2011, all of the child care centers that enrolled children on the scholarship program continued to have active licenses for service from the NC Division of Child Development.

CCSA has worked hard to find other sources of funds to help these families. Appeals to community agencies have resulted in both cash and in-kind donations. Some child care programs have allowed families to continue in their programs. The First Presbyterian Church used donations at its Christmas Eve service to help 5 children remain in its child care program. CCSA appealed to the United Way of the Greater Triangle for help and was awarded a challenge grant. This collective effort has raised over \$10,000. The Board of Durham's Partnership for Children donated \$10,000 as part of its annual giving campaign. In addition Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church donated \$1,738.

CCSA does not fall under the Public Records Law, but complies with all reasonable requests for information. CCSA responded to numerous requests from various media outlets in December. Stories ran on WRAL and in The Herald-Sun and The Triangle Tribune. Mr. Henson made no attempt to involve himself or The Civitas Institute at that time. CCSA also follows requirements for program and fiscal audits and reports to funders and the state auditor. CCSA has consistently been awarded a clean bill of financial health.

Mr. Henson used aggressive, inappropriate and threatening tactics to bully CCSA into handing over documents. "His behavior became so aggressive and inappropriate that he had to be asked to leave our premises," said Russell. "He became very demanding and loud. He did this in the waiting room where families with young children come to seek our assistance." Mr. Henson had already received much of the information he sought about CCSA from the Durham's Partnership for Children.

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