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Two Triangle Professionals Honored for Work with Children

RALEIGH, N.C. (October 25, 2007)—Although the paths they've taken to enhance the lives of area children are different, Kathy Higgins and Liliana Berman share a common vision: building a community where children have access to health resources and the opportunity for prosperity. Both women were honored Oct. 23 at the John Rex Endowment's fourth annual Hands of Health Award Breakfast at the Marbles Kids Museum. Their innovations will leave a lasting impact on area families.

Higgins, president of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, was recognized for her leadership and motivation in opening doors to health care and health education for area families. She helped organize and create the "Be Active Kids" program that teaches children the importance of eating well and being active. She worked hand-in-hand with The Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina in the creation of the "Kids Café" program that offers tutoring, nutritious meals and physical activity to children at risk of hunger. Higgins also partnered with the YWCA of the Greater Triangle to create the "All the Right Moves" program, which, over the past four years, has helped more than 500 girls become more physically active.

"I am grateful for this honor," said Higgins. "I cannot overstate how much I value and appreciate my selection."

Berman, a Wake County family nurse practitioner, was honored for her concentrated efforts on behalf of children and families in southern Wake County. Her work with the Wake County Human Service's program ECHO (Education, Community and Health Outreach) has increased access to health care for low-income families. She has created screening clinics at the Fuquay-Varina Methodist Church and St. Bernadette Catholic Church and worked tirelessly on breaking down language and cultural barriers.

"This is a wonderful recognition," said Berman. "It will inspire me to continue with my efforts for area children."

Higgins and Berman were presented a specially commissioned bronze sculpture from the John Rex Endowment. In addition, the Endowment will contribute \$10,000 to each recipient's charity of choice.

"Kathy and Liliana have worked vigorously to enhance the lives of area children," said Kevin Cain, president and CEO of the John Rex Endowment. "We're proud to recognize them for their efforts."

A committee of the Endowment's Board of Directors chose the Hands of Health award winners. To be eligible, nominees had to be paid staff or volunteers who live or work in Wake County and have found new and innovative ways to address the health care needs of underserved children or youth in Wake County.

Past winners of the award include Peter Morris, MD, Don Rosenblitt, MD, Mark Piehl, MD and Yo Sobha. On their behalf, the Endowment has made donations to the North Carolina Pediatric Society Foundation, the Lucy Daniels Center for Early Childhood, the Durham Rescue Mission/Good Samaritan Inn, Camp Challenge Diabetes Camp at Camp Oak Hill and Camp Grace at A.E. Finley YMCA.

About the John Rex Endowment:

The Endowment supports visible and measurable improvements in the health of children and youth by improving access to health services, by promoting healthy behaviors and by providing opportunities for growth and development. For more information, visit: www.rexendowment.org.