



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**YWCA High Point and Parents As Teachers Guilford County  
Join Forces to Strengthen Needed Programs for Home Visiting**

HIGH POINT, N.C., June 29, 2022 – Today, YWCA High Point and Parents as Teachers) Guilford County (PATGC) announced that they would merge effective July 1, 2022. The Parents as Teachers program will come under the umbrella of YWCA High Point's Parents as Teachers affiliate.

The employees of the Parents as Teachers Guilford County will all become employees of YWCA High Point. Executive Director Heidi Majors will continue to lead the organization and the offices in Greensboro will be maintained to serve the Greensboro families.

"The best time for a merger is while you are focusing on strengths, not weaknesses," says YWCA Executive Director, Heidi Majors. "Parents As Teachers Guilford County has been serving the community for over 21 years and in our time as being an affiliate we have worked closely together to serve Guilford County. We believe that this merger will allow the provision of programming across Guilford County in a more effective and efficient way."

Both organizations are funded by Smart Start through Guilford County Partnership for Children and the funds will continue to support Parents as Teachers programming across the county. Ann Vandervliet Stratton, Executive Director of Partnership for Children states: "The YWCA of High Point has prior experience with home visiting programs. The staff has prepared diligently to transition existing families served by Parents as Teachers, and to prepare for new ones. The Guilford County Partnership for Children is committed to working with the YWCA to expand capacity for home visiting in Guilford County. Many families with young children benefit from one-on-one coaching, and the sense of community that is created."

Patti Learman, Parents as Teachers Guilford County states "I have been honored to be a part of the Guilford County home visiting community for the last 21 years as a founder and Executive Director of Parents as Teachers Guilford County. It is now time for me to share the joy I have had nurturing this program and the families it serves. I could not be more pleased that the YWCA of High Point is going to add PATGC into their already strong family support program offerings. This organization has demonstrated a commitment to supporting teen families in the greater High Point area and now will be serving families throughout all of Guilford County too.



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Patti Learman will continue with YWCA High Point and PAT Affiliates throughout the state of North Carolina as PAT State Leader. Patti states, "I look forward to providing implementation and fidelity support to the 41 PAT affiliates across the state. I will not be leaving the PAT family! I would like to say thank you to all of the families that have allowed me to participate with you on your parenting journeys over the years, I am sure I have learned more from you than you from me!"

Parents As Teachers Guilford County (PAT GC) was founded when in 1999, a group of young Greensboro moms and their children met regularly. While the children played, the moms discussed parenting successes and challenges. Out of these discussions grew the idea that all parents could use the kind of support that grew from these gatherings. This group realized how difficult parenting can be and that it is easier when encouragement and support is readily available. Since this group could not stop in at a new parent's house and say "We are here to support you in your parenting role" without some kind of credentials or program they did a little research. With that, the National Parents as Teachers model was discovered.

The concept for Parents as Teachers was developed in the 1970s when Missouri educators noted that children were beginning kindergarten with varying levels of learning readiness. Research showed that greater family involvement in children's learning is a critical link in the child's development of academic skills, including reading and writing. Early childhood professionals suggested that a program to help parents understand their role in encouraging their child's development right from birth could help prepare children for school and life success. Such a program, available to all families, would help level the playing field for all children.

Research indicates there are "windows of opportunity" during the early years of a child's life when learning takes place more easily. Through collaboration with a team of neuroscientists from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Parents as Teachers developed a comprehensive neuroscience-enriched curriculum. With this research-based curriculum, Parents as Teachers focuses on the early years, throughout pregnancy to kindergarten entry, to help parents understand what to expect during each stage of their child's development.

With funding from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and The Danforth Foundation, Parents as Teachers began in 1981 in Missouri as a pilot project for first-time parents of newborns. Convinced of the program's benefits and cost effectiveness, state funding was provided in 1985 to implement the PAT program in all Missouri school districts. Since 1985, the program has expanded to all 50 states and to other countries.

In 2001, the idea for a Greensboro PAT affiliate, St. Andrew's Parents as Teachers, was presented to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church's vestry. St. Andrew's supported this and in 2002 the first two parent educators were trained and an advisory board was formed. In 2004, the local program was renamed the "Parents as Teachers Faith Community Network" and federal 501 (c) (3) status was granted.

2011 was a busy year! The local program moved offices from the space provided by St. Andrew's Episcopal Church to rented office space at 415 N. Edgeworth Street. Parents as Teachers Faith



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Community Network became Parents as Teachers Guilford County with a Faith Community Network Committee added as a standing committee of the board of directors. The PAT National Affiliate logo was adopted in order to promote national affiliation and program fidelity.

During that same year, the national center updated the PAT Curriculum. It incorporated the needs reported from the field around the idea that families are a system and the environment is a tremendous influence on the health and development of children. In other words, a more family systems approach was developed that included building parent-child interactions, helping parents understand and implement development centered parenting and focusing on family well-being and especially how it impacts the child.

In addition to curriculum enhancement was a new Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process. PAT Program Affiliates must now meet minimum essential requirements in order to be model certified. Every five years, program affiliates participate in the Quality Endorsement and Improvement Process which in addition to the minimum essential requirements, measures how well the program is meeting program quality standards. Those programs meeting all essential requirements and 80% of the program standards are awarded Blue Ribbon affiliate status indicating they are providing services at an enhanced quality level. PATGC achieved Blue Ribbon status in 2020 and continues to maintain a strong reputation in Guilford County, not only with their work completed with families but as a strong partner in the many community initiatives that address the issues faced by our young families.

YWCA High Point has been providing support within Maternal Health since 1990 to see that parents receive the support and resources to reduce disparities among infant mortality, birth rates and children reaching milestones before the age of 5. YWCA offers three core program areas within Maternal Health: Healthy Beginnings, Parents as Teachers and a new doula pilot program. In 2020, YWCA High Point became a Parents As Teachers Affiliate and has expanded from one parent educator to six parent educators in 2021, with support of Smart Start funds and NCDHHS grants.

### **About YWCA High Point**

*From its beginning and throughout its over 102-year history, the YWCA High Point has been providing programs and services which have enriched and enhanced the lives of women, children and families in our community.*



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