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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Council for Children's Rights receives \$377,000 grant from The Duke Endowment

Charlotte, NC – December 18, 2015: Council for Children's Rights, a non-profit based in Charlotte, North Carolina, is pleased to announce it has received a \$377,000 multi-year grant from The Duke Endowment to fund the work of its Custody Advocacy program.

Council for Children's Rights works to improve the lives of nearly 2,500 children and families in the greater Charlotte community each year, providing legal representation and advocacy for some of our community's most vulnerable citizens. In addition to these direct services, the Council works to reform child-serving systems; identifying gaps in services and promoting public policies based in researched best practices that address children's needs and futures. The Council's lawyers and advocates work primarily in the areas of education, health, mental health, contested custody and juvenile justice.

The Duke Endowment grant was awarded to support the Council's Custody Advocacy Capacity Building Project. This work is designed to help children remain in safe, stable and supportive relationships by representing their best interest in high-conflict custody disputes. Such cases can threaten family stability and have a lasting, adverse impact on the children involved. No other non-profit in Mecklenburg County provides best interest legal representation for children caught in these high-conflict cases.

Funds from The Endowment will allow the Council to hire an additional attorney for the Custody Advocacy Team to help meet the growing demands for this service, ensuring that more children are represented and are given an outlet to express their thoughts, fears and custody preferences.

"We are pleased and grateful that The Duke Endowment has awarded this substantial grant to support the Council's custody advocacy work," said Bob Simmons, the Council's executive director. "The Endowment's investment will help us to meet a growing community need. This multi-year commitment provides us the confidence to increase our capacity so we can protect more children from the traumatic uncertainty of high-conflict custody disputes. We are proud to have The Duke Endowment as a partner in the stabilization of family homes for the best interests of our community's children."

"We support efforts that help organizations meet the needs of vulnerable children," said Rhett Mabry, vice president of The Duke Endowment. "Through this grant, the Council will be able to make sure that specialized services are available for more children who need them in Mecklenburg County."

About The Duke Endowment:

Based in Charlotte and established in 1924 by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke, The Duke Endowment is a private foundation that strengthens communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits. Since its founding, it has distributed more than \$3 billion in grants. The Endowment shares a name with Duke University and Duke Energy, but all are separate organizations.

About Council for Children's Rights:

The Council for Children's Rights (CFCR) is one of the most comprehensive advocacy and legal services programs for children in the Southeast. In our pursuit of solutions to the complex issues affecting children, we are committed to the premise that every child has the fundamental right to be safe, healthy and educated. We do that through individual advocacy, legal representation and addressing broad, community-wide issues through research and policy work.

For more information on the Council or how you can support this work, please contact LuAnn Ritsema, Director of Communication, at 704-943-9611/luann@cfcrights.org or visit our web site at www.cfcrights.org.

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