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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH AND THE HUMAN BRAIN: The Alice Aycock Poe Center for Health Education (Poe Center) will host their 2012 Annual Meeting and expert panel discussion on adolescent brain development.

Raleigh, NC - July 2012 – On Wednesday, September 19, 2012, the Poe Center will host their 2012 Annual Meeting: Health and the Human Brain, with a breakfast and panel discussion at their 224 Sunnybrook Road facility in Raleigh.

From 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., the Poe Center will honor North Carolina educators, outgoing and new members of Poe's Board of Directors, and award outstanding supporters of health education in the community. An expert panel discussion on adolescent brain development will follow an overview of the Poe Center's 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Event sponsors include: WakeMed Health & Hospitals, North State Bank, Thomas J. Rollins-Certified Public Accountant, PotashCorp and AlSCO. Whole Foods of Wade Avenue in Raleigh will provide light breakfast fare for all attendees. Guests will include past, current and incoming members of the Poe Center's Board of Directors; corporate and individual supporters of the Poe Center's health education programs; partnering community and professional organizations; healthcare providers; and members of the media.

Created by the Wake County Medical Society Alliance (WCMSA) and incorporated in 1985, the Poe Center opened its flagship facility in Raleigh in 1991 and has since served over 850,000 North Carolina children, youth and their families through in-house and off-site health education programs. Poe addresses the following health-related topics and issues: family life and puberty; nutrition and physical activity; general health and the human body; drug, alcohol and tobacco use prevention; dental health; and bullying prevention and bystander empowerment.

Poe's facility is unique in that it offers visitors the only fully accessible, health education-focused playground in Raleigh. Program participants experience the lessons they learn in Poe's interactive teaching theaters while they play in the Healthy Choices Maze, slide down a giant artery, pick vegetables at the POE and Grow Garden, or navigate up and down the Rib Rise and Nerve Net.

The Poe Center is also the only facility in North Carolina to house a *Cranium Connection*. This floor-to-ceiling giant head exhibit ushers visitors in through oversized ears and ear hairs, where they are welcome to enjoy a theater-style seat. The *Cranium Connection's* brain lights up and guides the audiences on a tour of the many wonders of the human mind.

With new research from Duke University about the effects of bullying on the ageing of the human brain, coupled with a plethora of information on the effects of substance use and abuse on the adolescent brain, the Poe Center believes that this panel discussion is timely, relevant and an area of critical concern to community members who many not realize the lifelong effects of

risk-taking behaviors during childhood and adolescence. Poe also wanted to provide attendees with a greater insight into the need for such health education programs that promote safe, healthy behaviors.

Panelists include:

Dr. Madeline Hogan Meier, Ph. D.

Duke University

Madeline Meier was awarded her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Missouri in 2010. She completed her clinical residency at the Durham Veterans Affairs Medical Center, where she specialized in the assessment and treatment of addictive behavior and neuropsychological problems. She is currently a postdoctoral research associate at Duke University and holds an appointment with the Duke Transdisciplinary Prevention Research Center. Dr. Meier's research focuses on the causes, course, and consequences of problematic substance use and criminal behavior across development. She has published articles on topics ranging from familial influences on criminal behavior to neuropsychological consequences of persistent cannabis use.

Dr. Donita Lynn Robinson, Ph.D.

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

Dr. Donita Lynn Robinson began research on the neurobiology of addictive drugs as a graduate student at the University of Michigan and the University of Texas. She moved to Chapel Hill in 2000 for postdoctoral training and joined the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies and the Department of Psychiatry in 2004. Her lab currently focuses on dopamine release and neural activity in rat models of alcohol drinking, binge eating and adolescence. By revealing how the brain processes information about drug and natural rewards, her research is helping us to understand the neural mechanisms of drug-taking and relapse, how pharmacotherapies affect those mechanisms, and why adolescence may be a particularly vulnerable stage in development.

Barri Braddy Burrus, Ph.D.

Research Triangle Institute

Dr. Barri Burrus is a senior research psychologist in RTI's Psychology of Health Behavior program. She has extensive experience designing, implementing, and analyzing evaluation research at the international, national, state, and local levels. In addition to her role of Project Director to provide evaluation technical assistance for the Evaluation Technical Assistance for Adolescent Family Life Demonstration Project, she provides evaluation and technical assistance to states funded through CDC's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases and to the American Legacy Foundation Tobacco Use Cessation and Prevention Initiative. She has directed numerous other evaluations for CDC, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and, in Indonesia, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Dr. Burrus

served for 10 years as Adjunct Associate Professor in the Psychology Department at North Carolina State University Family Life Demonstration Project.

Caley Burrus

Duke University

Caley Burrus is an undergraduate psychology major/neuroscience minor at Duke University. She has worked extensively on various research projects attempting to elucidate an underlying biochemical cause of autism, and has worked directly with Time's Top 100 Most Influential People and leading neuroscientist, Dr. V.S. Ramachandran, on several autism research projects. She has helped to develop a mathematical model of autism used to assess various treatments for the disease and explain why some are more effective than others, with funding from the National Science Foundation. She has also worked with RTI International and the North Carolina State Health Department as a volunteer neuroscience consultant. She volunteers at Central Regional Psychiatric Hospital and plans to pursue a career in pediatric neurology.

To learn more about the Poe Center and the 2012 Annual Meeting Breakfast and Panel Discussion, please contact Ashley Orlovich, M.A., Development Director, at (919) 231-4006 ext. 306 or send an email to a.orlovich@poehealth.org.

For additional information on event sponsors, please visit:

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