



Immediate Release
October 19, 2007

Contact: Kelly Calabria
919-602-1030

Heather Shepherd
919-604-3050

STUDENTS AT A DURHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KICK-OFF NEW ARTS PROGRAM
Program exposes students to dance, physical fitness and desire to excel

Durham, NC – One of the country's acclaimed arts educators, famed dancer and choreographer and founder of the National Dance Institute (NDI), Jacques d'Amboise, today announced the partnership of Fayetteville Street Elementary School to the North Carolina Arts in Action (NC-AIA) family. Fayetteville Street Elementary joins the community-based nonprofit as the second school to incorporate the program's special arts program. The group also announced the hiring of Kay Gayner as the program's new artistic director.

NC-AIA provides in-school dance classes to elementary schools and is a local affiliate of NDI, which is based in New York City. NDI is a nonprofit organization founded by former principal dancer of the New York City Ballet and highly acclaimed arts educator, Jacques d'Amboise.

Fayetteville Street Elementary School is the first school in Durham to launch the NC-AIA program and the school's fifth graders are the first to participate in the school's program. Students from the program demonstrated a preview today of how the classes are conducted and gave a taste of what is included in this year's program.

"Watching my students perform today is validation that bringing the Arts in Action program into Fayetteville Street Elementary School was an excellent decision," said Queen Scarborough, Fayetteville Street Elementary School principal. "I am confident that the students participating in this program will benefit not only physically, but also socially and academically. As a school and community, we look forward to working with North Carolina Arts in Action and believe this is the beginning of a long, beneficial relationship for our students."

The students were introduced and led by NC-AIA's new artistic director, Kay Gayner. Gayner will spend time with the NC-AIA students providing instruction in dance, music and live performance related to this year's theme titled *An African Village*. Gayner is a renowned dancer and choreographer who has studied and taught dance around the world and has worked with d'Amboise for more than 20 years. She has appeared in many stage productions including *A Chorus Line* and *West Side Story*. In addition to directing the NC-AIA program, Gayner also oversees instruction of NDI programs in three New York City schools.

-MORE-

Page 2/FAYETTEVILLE STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONTINUED...

"The creation of the North Carolina Arts in Action program was meant to expose students of all social and economic backgrounds to the arts with the goal of positively impacting their lives," said Lisa Kang, NC-AIA executive director. "We believe our new partnership with Fayetteville Street Elementary School and the addition of Kay Gayner to our team will work to foster our mission and help us reach an important group of children. Providing an outlet for students to experience dance and the arts is crucial as we work to prepare our children for adulthood."

Funded by private donations from the community, the NC-AIA program is designed to provide students with necessary arts programs that are often absent due to the lack of funding schools now receive for cultural programs. The program teaches children self-confidence, self-control, collaboration and even social tolerance. By providing an outlet to move and become active, NC-AIA helps teachers and students build a bond that fosters innovation, a positive learning environment and increased student attendance as well as providing a great physical fitness workout.

"As a life-long dancer, I have experienced and seen the benefits dance and an exposure to the arts can bring to people," d'Amboise added. "It is thrilling to watch these students embrace the North Carolina Arts in Action program and I know they will thrive socially and physically as they progress through the year. I look forward to returning at the end of the year to enjoy the performance these students present to their classmates, parents and the community."

About North Carolina Arts in Action

The mission of North Carolina Arts in Action (NC-AIA) is to transform the lives of North Carolina children through dance. Using dance as a catalyst, NC-AIA seeks to engage children and their communities through participation in the arts. NC-AIA fosters a love of the arts, pride of achievement, social tolerance and belief in themselves that will carry over into all aspects of their lives. Additionally, it provides children with an opportunity for increased physical activity. In January 2006, NC-AIA launched its pilot program in Chapel Hill at the Mel and Zora Rashkis Elementary Schol. Fayetteville Elementary will be its first partner school in Durham. For more information visit, www.ncartsinaction.org.

About Fayetteville Street Elementary School

Fayetteville Street Lab School is a traditional K-5 school that provides a 1:17 teacher/student ratio. According to the states ABC tests, less than 50 percent of the students are at grade level. Eighty-eight percent of the students receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch. The school population consists of 90 percent African American and 10 percent Latino with many single parent households. The school implements an "Exemplary" HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed) Reading Program, which attracts volunteers from the community and the Research Triangle Park.

###