

**For Immediate Release**

**August 3, 2004**

**UPSTATE FOREVER ANNOUNCES STAFF FOR  
NEW SPARTANBURG OFFICE**

Upstate Forever recently announced that the Mary Black Foundation made a wonderful five-year grant that will enable us to open an office in Spartanburg and to undertake certain "Active Living" initiatives in accordance with the Foundation's guidelines.

We are now delighted to announce a superlative staff for this office: Stephanie Monroe, Office Director; Emily Neely, Program Manager, and Molly Parnes, Administrative Assistant.

Stephanie received our Public Servant of the Year Award in 2002 for her courageous efforts as the first-ever Director of Planning for Laurens County. She drafted a countywide zoning ordinance and then arranged a series of community meetings throughout the county (most of them were in the evening) to explain the ordinance and answer questions. This work would normally take a staff of four to handle, but Stephanie did it by herself. The work was all the more difficult because it was in a county that has a long history of strong opposition to planning and zoning. After the zoning referendum was defeated, she had little to do in Laurens, and she joined the City of Clinton as Director of Planning.

Stephanie holds a bachelor's degree in public affairs management and a master's degree in urban and regional planning, both from Michigan State University. She is also pursuing a master's degree in public administration from the University of South Carolina and expects to earn that degree in May of next year.

Emily is a native of Spartanburg and just completed her master's degree in "arts in folklore" at UNC-Chapel Hill. Her thesis was an oral history project relating to rural life in Spartanburg County in the 1930s. She is a magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of the South where she majored in history.

Molly is a 2003 graduate of Brenau College with a degree in corporate communications. We got to know her when she did great work for us as a volunteer in the Greenville office. She will handle all of the administrative duties in the Spartanburg office.

The office will be focusing primarily on the following “Active Living” goals and objectives for Spartanburg County:

- General education and advocacy efforts for improving “Active Living” conditions in the county;
- An assessment of the ordinances in the City and County of Spartanburg to identify those provisions that impede “Active Living” as relating to the built environment;
- A "Big Box Initiative" that will promote better standards for new big box stores and strategies for dealing with the abandoned ones;
- A "Parks and Open Space Initiative" aimed at establishing a regular and significant source of funding for more parks and open spaces in Spartanburg County; and
- Joining in efforts that are already underway to improve pedestrian accessibility in the downtown area.

Monroe, the new Director, said, “Over the last several years, considerable progress has been made by local governments, nonprofit organizations, business leaders and interested citizens toward improving active living opportunities and conditions in Spartanburg, such as revitalizing the downtown area, constructing the Palmetto Trail and other greenways, promoting ‘walk to school’ activities, and establishing safer pedestrian crossings. Through our office in Spartanburg, Upstate Forever hopes to support, reinforce and expand these exciting efforts.”

The Spartanburg Office is located at 100 E. Main Street in downtown Spartanburg near the intersection of Church and Main Streets.

Contacts:

Brad Wyche, Executive Director, Upstate Forever:  
864-250-0500

Diane Eldridge, Director of Education and  
Advocacy, Upstate Forever, 864-250-0500

Stephanie Monroe, Spartanburg Office Director,  
864-833-2465 (until July 30)

Spartanburg Office, 864-327-0090