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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Peachtree Elementary Receives \$4,000 to Refurbish its Outdoor Classroom

**PEACHTREE CORNERS, GA, January 28, 2015** – Wednesday turned out to be a banner day for Peachtree Elementary School. The Gwinnett County public school was awarded a gift of \$4,000 from CH2M HILL to rebuild and improve its outdoor classroom.

It was a windfall that Principal Kara Dutton was not expecting. “We were hoping for maybe \$500,” said Dutton who has been the school’s principal for just a little over a year.

The funds will be used to restore the school’s outdoor classroom which is located in a wooded area behind the school’s playground. Over the years the area had fallen into disrepair and the money will be used to replace steps and railings, rebuild learning spaces and to construct a work area for students and teachers.

“This is right up our alley,” said CH2M HILL’s Wayne Wright, who presented the check Wednesday morning. “But we want to do more than just provide cash, our staff wants to help make the project a reality.” The City of Peachtree Corners contracts with CH2M HILL to provide a number of the city’s staff and services such as code enforcement, licensing, zoning and public works.

Connecting Peachtree Elementary and CH2M HILL came about from a chance meeting at Peachtree Corners City Hall between Debbie Mason who sits on the Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful board and Alan Kaplan, one of the city’s Planning Commission members and who is also on the school’s council.

“We’re delighted that CH2M HILL was able to provide this grant,” said Mayor Mike Mason. “We want to be involved in the project as much as we can.”

It was Peachtree Elementary School’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher Frank Yelinek, Jr. who began the movement to have the outdoor classroom restored. He envisioned using the space as a learning tool to inspire budding science and engineering students. “Outdoor classrooms have always intrigued me since I started teaching 15 years ago,” said Yelinek who has a background in science, drafting and carpentry.

Yelinek has also proposed using the school’s courtyard area nearby to build a weather station, simple machines for hands on learning and other features including a sundial -- all to be used as learning

opportunities. “Imagine in the near future, an engineer or scientist being interviewed,” said Yelinek, “and they might say it all started at Peachtree Elementary.”

To show appreciation for its generous gift, the school has named the new outdoor teaching area after the company.

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#### [About Peachtree Elementary School](#)

Located in the City of Peachtree Corners, the Gwinnett County public school has an enrollment of 1,774 students and is the only elementary school in the GCPS system with an IB World School classification. The school is located at 5995 Crooked Creek Road.

#### [About the City of Peachtree Corners](#)

Gwinnett County’s newest and largest city, Peachtree Corners was founded July 1, 2012 and is located along the shores of the Chattahoochee River in the southwest corner of the county. The city is home to some 38,500 residents and over 2,300 businesses. City Hall is located at 147 Technology Parkway, Suite 200, Peachtree Corners, GA 30092

#### [About CH2M HILL](#)

Headquartered near Denver, Colorado, employee-owned CH2M HILL is a global leader in consulting, design, design-build, operations and program management for government, civil, industrial and energy clients. The company has 26,000 employees on six continents.