

To Our Dear Partners at Duke Memorial UMC,

Grace and peace to all of you! I write to you today with the good news that Duke Memorial is the chosen recipient of Church World Service's 2019 Ecumenical Service Award.

The award recognizes exemplary leadership and collaborative partnership working towards the eradication of hunger and poverty and the promotion of peace and justice around the world. We at CWS Durham nominated Duke Memorial for your partnership in service.

Officially, CWS recognizes Duke Memorial's commitments to

- Refugee resettlement and welcome, holding classes in English as a Second Language and citizenship, and supporting congregants and the community to get to know refugee families;
- The Durham CROP Hunger Walk for 45 years, as the second top fundraising team in Durham, which is now the nation's largest and highest-earning Walk;
- Housing the offices for Durham Congregations in Action, the local recipient organization of CROP Hunger Walk funds in Durham;
- Standing firmly with the LGBTQ community.

I want to share with you in more detail what Duke Memorial's support means to our Immigration and Refugee Program here at CWS Durham.

In the last year, we've welcomed nearly 200 refugees from 15 different countries. Through Duke Memorial's gift of space and time, all of these folks have been able to start rebuilding their lives. They can attend English class every day at the church, in classes that are heavily supported by volunteers – some of them members of the Duke Memorial community. Because of Duke Memorial's generosity, we can run multiple classes at the same time, which allows us to tailor the lessons to small subgroups of language ability. The greatest result is that refugees who are not literate in their own language can have a special class that suits their unique needs and learning styles. Duke Memorial's generosity also allows for the class attendance of literally dozens of refugee parents – mostly women, including many single moms - who would otherwise be unable to come to class because of childcare conflicts. Thanks to Duke Memorial, these children have a safe place to go while their parent or parents are in class. Duke Memorial also hosts a weekly refugee women's support group and weekly financial literacy classes. These activities are integral as refugees seek to claim Durham as their new home and get their family on the arduous path to upward mobility.

The refugees we welcome to Durham have experienced tremendous emotional upheaval and extraordinary trauma. Duke Memorial is a safe space where these folks can begin to heal and rebuild the lives they want to have, rather than continuing to lead lives forever defined by unfortunate circumstances. In addition to your community generosity, so many of you have given of your time and skills to directly support our work with refugees and immigrants and promote welcome through the Church. You've volunteered, donated and shared your expertise. Many of you have attended press conferences or spoken at those press conferences. Many more have walked, marched, rallied, raised your voices and helped us raise ours. Every year, you invite Durham's refugee and immigrant community to the Christmas Market, and many times over the years you've requested feedback on the Mobile Market to make sure refugees and their families felt welcome. You've even solicited our feedback on the renovations to make sure the Church continues to be a welcoming space for all.

I could go on and on about Duke Memorial's contributions to our Immigration and Refugee Program – this is just scratching the surface - and I haven't even started into everything Duke Memorial and all of you do to support CWS's mission through the CROP walk. I hope this letter helps to convey just a bit of our gratitude for Duke Memorial's support of our mission. On behalf of all of us at CWS Durham, thank you so much for everything you do and all the ways you serve.

All my best,

Ellen Andrews
NC Area Director
Church World Service
Immigration and Refugee Program

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