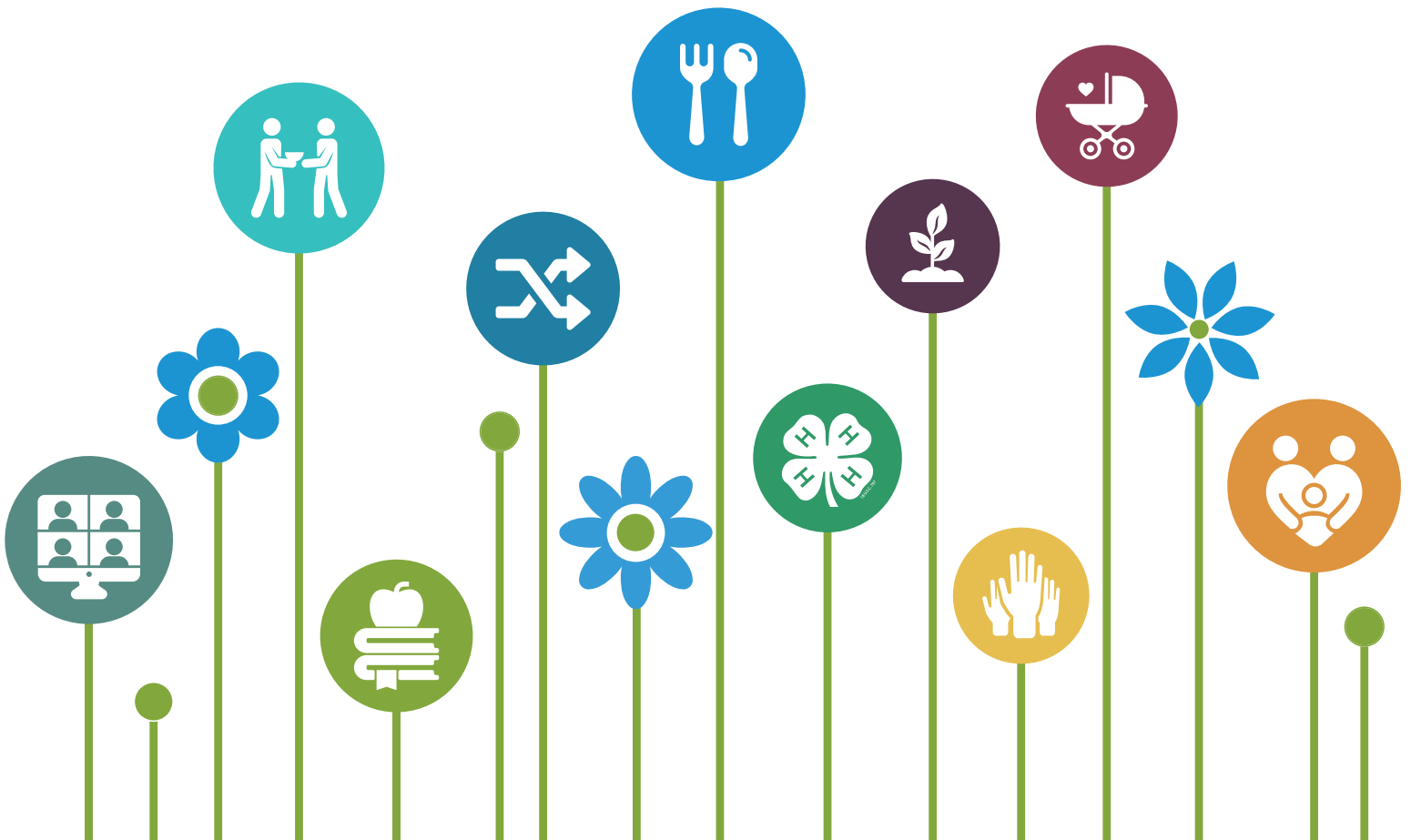


A Season to Overcome



Cooperative Extension



2021 **REPORT**
to the Community

A Season to Overcome

NC Cooperative Extension, Durham County Center creates opportunities for lifelong learning and connects residents with resources that help improve quality of life. We are part of North Carolina Cooperative Extension, an educational partnership between counties and our land grant universities—NC State and NC A&T—and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The mission of Cooperative Extension is to partner with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land, and economy of North Carolinians.

As part of Durham County Government, we serve the Durham community through the Durham County Strategic Plan and its FIVE GOAL AREAS:



**Community
& Family**



**Health
& Well Being**



**Secure
Community**



Environment



**Visionary
Government**



A Season to Learn, Grow, and Lead:

A Letter from Our Cooperative Extension Director, Durham County

Dear Friends,

On March 1, 2020, as I celebrated my first year as County Extension Director, I could not have imagined what the remainder of 2020 would hold in store for our community. COVID-19 was just a story in the news, the County's malware attack was a week away, and our team was energized and excited about the year following our staff retreat.

When I reflect on what this last year has meant for Cooperative Extension in Durham County, I look at it as a season of many challenges and one filled with opportunity – **a season to learn, to grow, and to lead:**

- **Learning by listening and collaborating** with our community and partners; understanding how we can best make a difference;
- **Growing as we built new skills, resources, and systems;** adapting and changing what we do;
- **Leading differently in partnership with our community;** collaborating with others to address our community's challenges.

The pandemic may have changed how we do our work and pushed us to focus more closely on the most critical issues of the day, but it has not changed our research-based educational foundation or our commitment to community service and enhancing economic opportunity for Durham County residents.

In this year's Report to the Community, you will see stories and data reflecting the work of our remarkably talented staff, volunteers, and partners in 2020. You will also see a new or renewed focus in several areas, including:

- **Agriculture Program Expansion**—Our Agriculture Program expanded this year with the addition of a new Agriculture Agent for Small Farms and Local Foods, allowing our existing Agriculture Agent to focus on Commercial and Consumer Horticulture, increasing the range of services available to Durham growers and residents.
- **Food Security Focus**—Cooperative Extension will be the home for the County's first Food Security Coordinator, providing comprehensive support to the challenges of food insecurity that existed before the pandemic and have been magnified by it.
- **Early Childhood Commitment**—The County Early Childhood Coordinator joined our staff as part of the County's commitment to increase its investment in early childhood education and services.

We appreciate our Board of County Commissioners and County leadership for their investment and for believing in the ability of our Durham County Center to nurture and grow this work.

Cooperative Extension is a partnership and a commitment. A partnership between our local government and our land grant institutions, NC State and NC A&T Universities, and a commitment to work together with the communities we serve. I hope you will join us this season as we continue to learn, grow, and lead together.

Be well,

Donna



Donna Rewalt
Durham County
Extension Director



A Season to Serve



The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing hunger in Durham County. According to Feeding America, an estimated **1 in 5 Durham County households and 1 in 4 children have faced food insecurity during the pandemic.** Reduced market demand resulted in some wholesalers and farms having to plow under vegetable crops and dump milk, while at the same time Durham food pantries and other feeding organizations struggled to meet community needs.

Jes Dormady, who operates the Durham Technical Community College Campus Harvest Food Pantry, shared, “We had our pantry regulars before and were still serving them, but we also began seeing folks who have never used a food pantry before. The families who needed food assistance during the pandemic needed it in a big way.”

During this critical time, Durham County Cooperative Extension adapted our work to help meet this most basic human need. Through policy work and day-to-day food provision, our team’s agriculture, family & consumer sciences, and community outreach skills were perfectly suited to step into the fold and support our neighbors.


Durham Cooperative Extension Director Donna Rewalt co-led a COVID-19 Food Security Task Force of over 40 community partners, in collaboration with colleagues from the Durham County Department of Public Health and Durham County’s Strategic Initiatives division. The group met weekly to solve problems, address resource needs, and look at systems changes to address food access and supply. Through this work, **Durham County Cooperative Extension has led the management and distribution of more than one million County dollars to community food security initiatives.**

Cooperative Extension’s agriculture and nutrition experts were also able to help individuals obtain healthy fruits and vegetables. Our Briggs Avenue Community Garden, traditionally focused on gardening education, quickly became a food production and resource center for families in need during the pandemic. Extension Master Gardener Volunteers of Durham

IN 2020...

 **1,424 pounds of produce**

was grown at Briggs Garden and donated to area food pantries.

 **An additional 9 truckloads**

of fresh produce were collected by Briggs Garden volunteers from their personal plots or gleaned from local farms and distributed to area food pantries.

 **165 households**

with 675 individuals were served with food boxes, fresh produce, diapers, toilet paper, and feminine products through a collaboration with the Durham Technical Community College Campus Harvest Food Pantry.

 **1,500 seed packets**

were assembled and distributed to food-insecure families in Durham County through a partnership with Interfaith Food Shuttle, Durham County Department of Public Health, Durham County Public School’s Hub Farm, and other local non-profit agencies.



County, along with other green-thumbed neighbors, tended these crops daily. Other volunteers picked up produce from farms that had food but no market, **preventing waste and feeding those in need.**

At the same time, our team worked to make sure that families were empowered to grow or procure their own fresh produce and groceries. **Family & Consumer Sciences Associate Peggy Kernodle shared easy directions and encouragement with seniors to help them apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.** Volunteers joined Cooperative Extension staff in filling compost bags, creating seed packets, and repotting seedlings for distribution to community, church, home, and pantry gardens.

In further recognition of community need, **Durham Cooperative Extension reopened its building to host two area food pantries,** Feed My Sheep and the Durham Technical Community College Campus Harvest Food Pantry. The logistics and food safety skills of Family & Consumer Sciences Agent Cheralyn Berry helped these groups design safe distribution systems.

“Durham County Cooperative Extension saved our pantry and assisted many of our students over the spring and summer. Cheralyn helped us figure out how to do a safe curbside distribution at the Cooperative Extension office,” shared Jes Dormady.

Food insecurity is obviously not solely a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Cooperative Extension has long focused on improving food chains and agricultural productivity, and helping families access healthy, affordable food options.** The extreme difficulties brought on by the pandemic have opened our eyes to new ways of approaching food equity issues in our County. In response to community advocacy on these issues, the Board of County Commissioners asked Cooperative Extension to support a new County Food Security Coordinator position within our department. This role will work to strengthen the food system year-round. With our increased understanding of our community’s progress and challenges, **we look forward to continued work with partners to address the longer-term, systemic challenges of hunger and food access in our community.**

“From the Extension Master Gardeners of Durham County who put their expertise to use to grow food for those in need, to our team members who pivoted to find creative ways to get groceries and produce in the hands of families, it was amazing to see how our team and volunteers really came together to make a difference for Durham during this difficult time.”

- Donna Rewalt, Durham County Cooperative Extension Director



A Season to Grow

You might not know it when you are driving around downtown, but Durham County has a thriving agriculture scene. With over 240 farms across the county, including animal, diversified crop & vegetable, and ornamental horticulture farms. **Durham County is a hub for local foods and direct-to-consumer agriculture, trends that have only increased as the pandemic has put pressure on national and international distribution chains.**

For many years, Durham County Cooperative Extension has served all of these farmers, along with landscapers, nurserymen, and home gardeners, with just two full-time agriculture agents. With the continued emphasis on sustainability and local foods in the County, **it was time to expand our reach.** The county's agriculture community requested and strongly advocated for a new position. Our Durham County Board of Commissioners listened, citing food and agriculture as pressing concerns, especially during the onset of the pandemic. They approved a new role for Durham County, a Small Farms and Local Foods Agent.

"Our County Commissioners and our residents place so much value on supporting local businesses, and local farmers in particular. We were so excited to be able to grow the technical expertise available to these important parts of our community and our food infrastructure."

-Ashley Troth, Durham County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent

Dr. Janel Ohletz was hired to the new role in 2020, **giving Durham farmers a stronger voice for a more resilient and inclusive food production system.** Janel's hire has allowed our veteran agent, Dr. Ashley Troth, to focus on providing more support for landscapers, nurseries, and home gardeners. Darnell Parker, a long-standing member of the Durham County Cooperative Extension team, will continue to share his talents for business planning and technology with farmers. Darnell is currently working to create the list that will be included in the Visit NC Farms app for Durham County. **Durham's inclusion in this statewide service will create a one-stop shop for anyone looking for farmers, farmers markets, or locally-sourced restaurants in Durham County.**

Janel has swung into action with a series of seminars on topics including small fruit and soil health, and has also begun publishing a regular newsletter for farmers. Her enthusiasm and talents make it clear that she'll be an excellent support for Durham County farmers. Staff and farmers are proud of what has been accomplished.

As Samantha Gasson of Bull City Farms shared, "Janel Ohletz has been a wonderful addition to an already fantastic Durham County Cooperative Extension team. She jumped right in and got to work from day one and was well settled in soon after. After only a few months of starting she had already visited our farm and helped us to get our Ag Ventures grant in order-which we were awarded. Much like the established agriculture team, Janel is friendly, knowledgeable, and a joy to be around. When the Durham Ag team doesn't know the answer, they will do the research to find someone who does."



IN 2020...

 **4,000**
plants

donated by the Duke Biology Department were distributed to home gardeners.

 **677**
attendees

of the Durham Garden forum learned monthly what they can do to have more sustainable, healthier gardens. By moving online, the Forum was able to greatly expand its regular reach and attract larger profile speakers.

 **64**
farmers &
landscapers

attended Pesticide Safety School to receive their private and commercial pesticide applicator licenses.

 **131,697**
people

were reached by the Extension Master Gardeners of Durham County via Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and their blog.



A Season to Support



The pandemic caused anxiety for most of us, and particularly for parents with young children who were suddenly cut off from their usual sources of external assistance. This was the case for 'Lara', a mother of four who came to the Durham County Cooperative Extension Welcome Baby program in need of support.

"Lara was experiencing high levels of anxiety about her ability to care for her kids, two of whom have received autism diagnoses. She signed up for our virtual Incredible Years Basic class and we were able to connect her with many different means of support," shared Patience Mukelabai, Welcome Baby Program Coordinator.

Incredible Years is just one of many programs offered to parents of children ages zero to five through the Welcome Baby program at Durham County Cooperative Extension. Welcome Baby's services range from classes to clothing distribution and much in between.

"Welcome Baby is designed to offer emotional and practical support, child development education, and prevention services to strengthen families and caregivers," Patience said. "During the pandemic, though, we were all faced with challenges that we had never faced before."

As Durham County government closed its buildings to external visitors, Welcome Baby's in-person services had to stop temporarily. The team immediately shifted to social media where they were able to continue offering daily parenting tips to families, both in English and Spanish through Facebook Live. **The Welcome Baby 'Daily Dose of Parenting Wisdom' reached record numbers of families across the world, with an average of 700 live views per session.**

Many parents were also in need of the basics for their young children—including diapers and formula. To help parents facing this challenge, our Welcome Baby program moved quickly to set up an emergency diaper

IN 2020...

 **252,978**
diapers were
provided

to 4,500 Durham County families in need.

 **140**
parents

were trained in how to install a car seat and provided with a safe, affordable car seat for their use.

 **102**
parents

were trained in important parenting skills. 96% of these parents reported having gained useful parenting skills, such as reduction in harsh discipline, understanding child behavior, and use of positive discipline tools.

 **109**
infants

received a safe sleep environment through the Welcome Baby Cribs for Kids program.

distribution program. Even amid the chaos of the early days of the pandemic, the team did not miss a single week of providing diapers to families. The team served an average of 160 families each Friday via a drive-through, contact-free process in the Durham County Cooperative Extension parking lot.

Other direct services that Welcome Baby offers, such as teaching parents how to safely install car seats and use cribs, were offered by appointment through one-on-one, socially-distanced, brief instructional sessions. Parenting classes, such as the Incredible Years class from which Lara benefited, were offered through Zoom.

For her part, Lara attended every one of the 14 weekly class meetings, turned in homework for each class, and even invited her mother to attend classes to build a system of support for her parenting needs. She has since signed up for additional parenting workshops, such as our Incredible Years Autism course, and received coats for her children and other incentives. **She shared that her stress levels have gone down due to the support she received from the Welcome Baby team.**

"We know that with reduced stress and improved skills, caregivers are able to be the parents that they want to be. The Welcome Baby team feels so lucky to have been able to continue this important work throughout these difficult times."

-Patience Mukelabai, Welcome Baby Program Coordinator





A Season to Nurture

The pandemic has shown us just how important it is for children and their parents to be surrounded by a **network of support**. Investment from local government is an important part of building a strong foundation for healthy development in the early years. **The Durham County Commissioners have made substantial investments in early childhood, including in Durham PreK, our high-quality, universal pre-k program in Durham.** In April 2020, their support resulted in the hire of Durham County's first Early Childhood Coordinator, Cate Elander, at Durham County Cooperative Extension. Cate will improve internal alignment of early childhood initiatives within the County, while also bolstering Durham County Government's collaboration with community-led efforts.

Cate started her new role two months into the pandemic. Like many others, her family had lost child care. While simultaneously working and caring for her child, Cate began meeting with stakeholders and identifying COVID-specific needs in our early childhood systems. Opportunities for advocacy, information-sharing, and problem solving soon emerged.

Cate and partners at Book Harvest and Durham's Campaign for Grade Level Reading heard that in-person child care sites were seeking new ways to maintain normalcy for children experiencing the trauma of the pandemic. Books provide an important opportunity for connection between children, their parents, and caregivers, and Cate worked with her partners to deliver 8,470 books to children at these sites.

With other partners from the Durham County Library and the City of Durham Office on Youth, Cate helped redesign the County's nonprofit grant program to better meet the rising needs of the Durham community during COVID. The new funding opportunity focused on wellness and learning with young people and their families. Funded projects demonstrated responsiveness to community-identified needs emerging from the pandemic and provided leadership opportunities to the organizations' constituents.

Tameka Brown, Executive Director of HEARTS NC, leads one of the organizations that received a County grant. "With this County funding, **we will provide new programming to young parents that focuses on self-care and**

IN 2020...



Over 1,000
parents and stakeholders

contributed perspectives to Durham's Early Childhood Action Plan.



8,470
books

were provided to 847 children attending 36 child care sites.

peer support, which are so important during this pandemic. As the director of a small organization, I will also be able to focus more of my time on developing partnerships to help our organization grow.”

In addition to highlighting the need for direct support to families, **the pandemic has provided an opportunity to examine how Durham County’s early child systems operate and to reimagine them toward a more equitable future for our youngest children.** Durham County has contracted with the Durham Children’s Initiative to develop an Early Childhood Action Plan for Durham to guide investment and action in our early childhood system. Over the course of the year, over 1,000 parents and stakeholders have contributed to a plan that will be finalized in June of 2021.

“We hope that by engaging many people with different perspectives and experiences and by lifting up the voices and solutions of parents and community-rooted organizations, this plan will reflect our community’s priorities for strengthening our early childhood systems. I’m looking forward to seeing the plan come to life.”

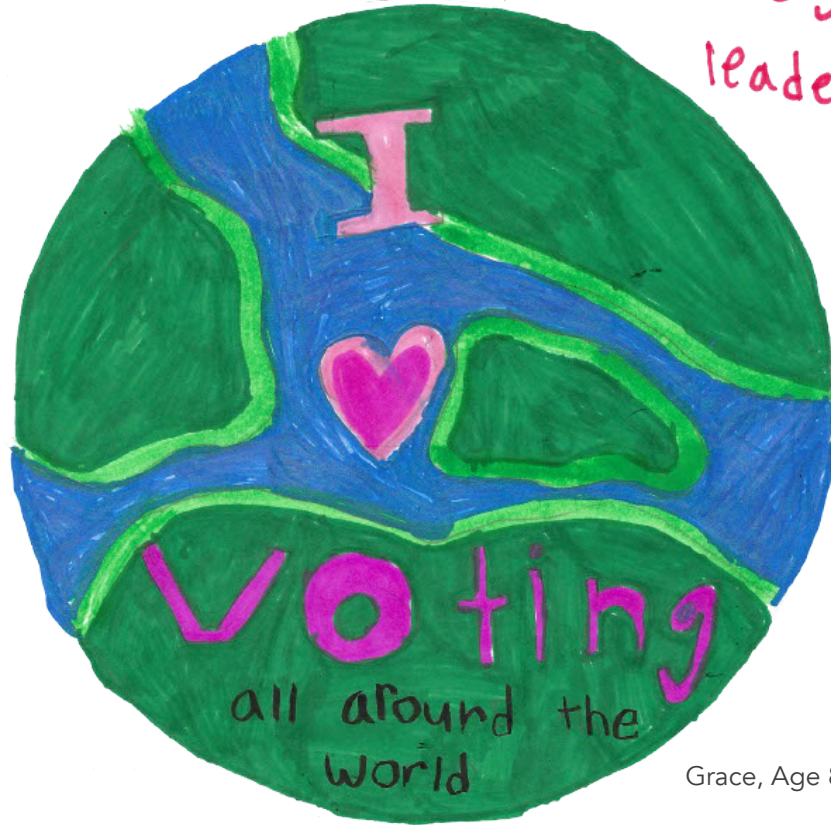
-Cate Elander, Durham County Early Childhood Coordinator





A Season to Engage

it's important to vote because
it's important to choose your
leaders.



Grace, Age 8

IN 2020...

25 youth leadership interns

took part in the Kids Voting Durham summer program.

Over **25,000** youth

engaged in the Kids Voting Durham election.

95% of Durham Public Schools

participated in the Kids Voting Durham election.

The US saw record voter turnout in the fall 2020 election. In Durham County, this was true not just for adult voters, but also for youth, over 25,000 of whom participated in the election through Kids Voting Durham.

Kids Voting Durham is a non-partisan, youth-centered program that helps youth 18 and younger from across the county understand the power they have as engaged citizens and informed voters. The program, which is affiliated with Kids Voting USA, usually strives to replicate the adult vote as closely as possible, with ballots and voting booths that, while kid-sized, resemble their adult counterparts. This year, however, kid voting was 100% online to keep youth safe during the pandemic- with the surprising result that participation shot through the roof.

The increased participation started with the Kids Voting Durham annual youth internship program, which went virtual. As a result, Durham County Cooperative Extension was able to host 25 student leadership interns. These interns created materials for virtual learning, even developing an Instagram version of Kid's Voting Durham's highly-acclaimed youth election guide.

Community partnerships provided an additional boost, with IBM volunteers leading educators, youth, parents, and local tech volunteers in visioning how to adapt Kids Voting Durham election materials for the virtual classroom environment. A grant from an anonymous community foundation allowed the program the extra staff time required to support the leadership interns and actualize the adaptation of materials for the virtual space.

These online materials, plus a valuable partnership with Kelly Stevens, K-12 Curriculum & Instruction History & Civic Engagement Specialist for Durham Public Schools, **resulted in a record 95% of Durham Public Schools participating in the Kids Voting Election this year,** in addition to youth organizations, and home, charter, & private schools. The program had extra reach through partnerships with North Carolina Cooperative Extension's 4-H program and MomsRising, which both allowed kids from across North Carolina to vote in the state and national races.

"We were so excited by these relationships, which we hope will allow Kids Voting Durham to expand and extend our reach to more youth," said Carolyn Kreuger, Kids Voting Durham Program Coordinator. **"While the pandemic presented a number of challenges, one silver lining is that more youth had the opportunity to learn about our electoral system and what it means to be an engaged citizen."**

"This year we have had more youth than ever before involved in and leading our work here at Kids Voting Durham—their innovation and dedication shapes the future of our democracy!"

-Shirley Garrett, Kids Voting Durham
Advisory Board Co-Chair

Cover Art by Linden James, Age 15



KidsVotingDurham.org
For Youth, By Youth!



A Season to Cultivate

The unique challenges of COVID-19 intersected over the summer to prevent much of the traditional programming 4-H families have come to love. Not only were families largely restricted to their homes, but the early months of COVID had a large impact on finances and access to food.

Combining suggestions from fellow agents and community members, 4-H Agent Mac Hulbert began to consider alternative summer programming. **“COVID-19 forced us to completely restructure our lives in 2020, and likewise significantly impacted the way we deliver 4-H programming. However, it also provided us with new tools for connecting with our families, community, and planet.”**

Mac and his colleagues, Horticulture Agent Ashley Troth and Family & Consumer Sciences Agent Cheralyn Berry, as well as the Extension Master Gardeners of Durham County, **came together to create a Victory Garden program for youth, through which kids learned to grow their own home gardens.**

With a Duke-Durham COVID-19 Community Grant, the team acquired all of the materials needed to provide families with kits to grow tomatoes, peppers, and basil, either in-ground or in container gardens. They distributed the plants to families using a safe, socially-distanced drive-through system reaching over 90 families in the summer. Funding from the grant was also used to purchase a greenhouse cooler for our Briggs Avenue Community Garden, which allowed the team to start plants for a fall distribution to families. This equipment will continue to impact our community in the long-term.

To help the young gardeners, the team filmed seven videos on how to care for the plants. They also created a texting system so that youth could get their gardening questions answered by the Extension Master Gardener Volunteers of Durham County.

The project was so successful that the team expanded it into the fall, distributing an additional 110 kits to families and to the Reaching All Minds Academy to kickstart their school gardening program. Trees Durham also partnered with the program to provide 29 fig trees to the same families who participated in fall and summer gardens.

Kids and their families loved the program, and many shared their excitement and joy at being able to watch their plants flourish at home.

IN 2020...



Over 70 youth participated

in virtual 4-H Club meetings.



Over 600 food producing plants

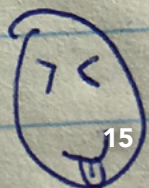
were provided to families through 4-H Victory Gardens. Over 50% of these kits were provided free of charge to families requesting financial assistance.

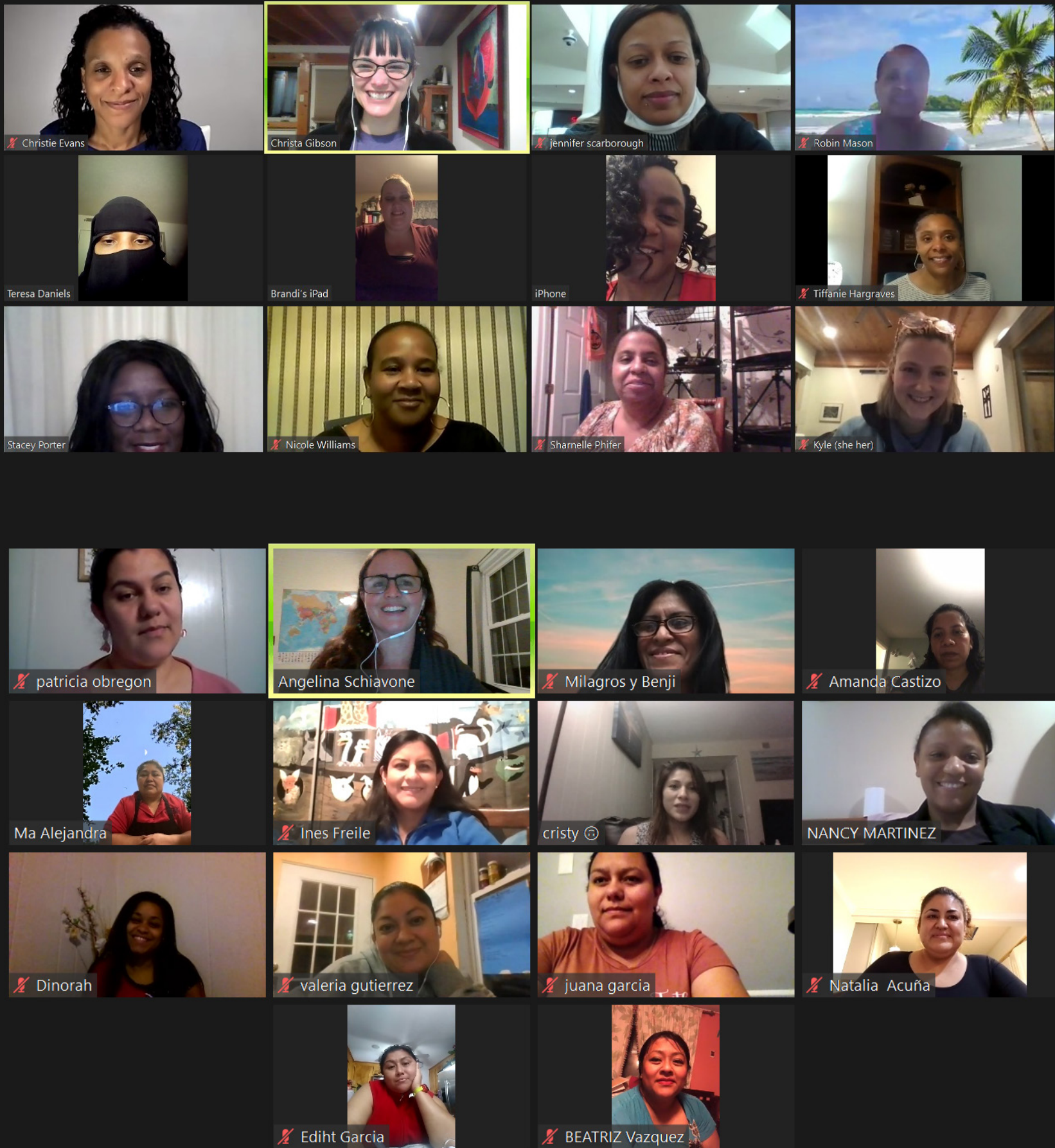


Hi, I'm Hazel, and I got the Victory garden.
When I got my first pepper I was shocked.
now it's about 4 inches long ~~and~~ and
we have so many little peppers and tomatoes!
my biggest tomato is about ~~as~~ as big
as my palm. (its about ~~2~~ 2 1/2 inches
by 2 inches) I also love picking basil when
ever my mom needs it. Some times I pick
Basil to put in my room then overnight
my ~~whole~~ whole room will smell like basil
~~and it will be so good~~

Sincerely,

Hazel (Smiley
face emoji)







A Season to Learn

When Taquoia Street joined a Parent & Family Advocacy and Support Training (PFAST) group, she was a young mother whose only daughter was about to enter kindergarten. "I didn't really know a whole lot about how schools work and different things just to look out for." Milagros Francia Garnique felt the same way when she joined the Spanish language Latino Parent & Family Advocacy and Support Training (LPFAST). She shared, "I didn't go to school here, so I knew absolutely nothing about the types of schools. I was not able to access the educational system, to know how it worked, and what my rights and duties were."

As hundreds of parents like Taquoia and Milagros will attest, the Durham County Cooperative Extension Parent & Family Advocacy Program, which helps parents and caregivers learn to navigate the public school system in Durham, has been **helping families transform their children's educational experience** since it was created. However, in 2020, the year of virtual learning, **many parents have seen the program as a lifeboat.**

As schools shut down almost overnight in March, the Parent & Family Advocacy team realized that **parents needed more information and more support.** They created a weekly newsletter, which covered a different topic related to virtual learning each week. They also started an online parent learning and support group, where parents could share resources and support to help their children cope with being stuck at home. Taquoia was an early member of this group.

She shared, "We had a chance to get to know one another, to share experiences, and just sharing those experiences makes you feel like you're not alone. Like sometimes you get so wrapped up in what you're doing, and you feel like, 'Man, I wonder if anybody else is going through this. I wonder if anyone else doesn't quite understand what's going on'. And so just being able to chat it up with people and talk about those shared experiences really brought a sense of community."

The next step was to revamp the PFAST and LPFAST courses so that they could be offered virtually and so that they addressed the new issues of virtual education. The newly designed courses were launched in September of 2020 and had unexpectedly high enrollment.

"I like our classes to be small, so that parents all have the opportunity to share their experiences and ask their specific questions. With the demand from parents who were struggling with virtual learning, we ended up having to break the classes into four groups to accommodate everyone," shared Christa Gibson, Community Outreach Coordinator.

As the pandemic and virtual learning drag on, **the classes, parent learning group, and newsletters have continued to be a source of support and of inspiration for parents** like Taquoia and Milagro.

Milagro has become so involved at her child's school that she was asked to join the advisory board. Taquoia, for her part, was so inspired by the lessons that she learned in her PFAST class that she is starting a nonprofit to support children's education and build community. **"PFAST kind of helped start that journey that's just been shooting, shooting up for me."**

"We had a chance to get to know one another, to share experiences, and just sharing those experiences makes you feel like you're not alone."

-Taquoia Street, Parent and Family Advocacy Program Participant



A Season to Connect

The isolation that many of us have felt during the COVID-19 pandemic has been especially difficult for many of Durham’s seniors. The virus placed older adults at higher risk, and the need to shelter in place left some seniors alone. Others were less isolated but were faced with challenges such as raising grandkids who were also at home while attending school online. Food insecurity and nutrition deficits, already a challenge for many seniors, were only exacerbated by the pandemic.

Thankfully, Durham County seniors have a strong advocate in Family & Consumer Sciences Associate Peggy Kernodle. Peggy realized early on that her approach to supporting her clients would need to change to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic.

“Seniors, some raising children, **were seeking resources for food, family stress, communications with schools, child safety, and diet questions,** such as types of fat, decreasing sodium, or sugar during pandemic stress,” Peggy shared.

Peggy reached out individually to her clients to teach them how to use video conferencing tools such as Zoom, opening up a new world where the group could provide emotional support to one another as well as learn more information about nutrition, community resources, and even how to support their grandkids in school.

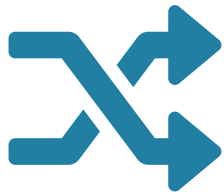
Peggy shared, “As socializing was a real limitation and concern for seniors, virtual interaction was a gift to those who could access it.”

Throughout the 2020 pandemic, **Peggy was able to support over 700 clients, sharing research-based information about nutrition and health concerns and often just providing a listening ear.**

“With quarantine, seniors felt that Zoom was a gift once mastered! Attendance was easier with no need for transportation and the ability to connect virtually made such a difference.”

-Peggy Kernodle, Durham County Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Associate





A Season to Adapt

Like most organizations, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Durham County Government had to rapidly adjust as employees were told to work from home. Many Durham County workers had barely heard of Zoom, Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, or any of the other technologies that facilitate online collaboration.

Durham County Cooperative Extension's Director, Donna Rewalt, and her colleague Michael Davis, who leads Durham County's Strategic Initiatives division in the County Manager's Office, quickly recognized that **staff across the County could use meaningful training to enable them to have more productive virtual meetings.**

"As the world rapidly changed, we wanted to help County staff make the transition to virtual meetings. We leveraged the skills and talents of our countywide Facilitation Network, partnering with Extension colleagues and others across the County, to support our employees so that they could develop greater comfort and competence in using virtual tools and navigating this new landscape."

-Michael Davis, Durham County's Strategic Initiative Manager

Donna, Michael, and County staff from other departments began to plan a 'Facilitating in the Virtual Environment' training and opened it up to all Durham County employees.

Chasity Stanfield, Children's Librarian at Durham County Library, was one of these participants. The training came at just the right time for her. "This was a new area for everybody," Stanfield said. "COVID is something we didn't expect, something that everybody was going to have to adjust to. We didn't know what being back to work would look like, so I took the training to get some kind of idea or clarity: What are our options and possibilities for getting to a new kind of normal for work?"

The initial workshop was so well received that the team quickly followed up with a second training. **More than 150 participants joined the two workshops and many others viewed recordings of them later.** Facilitators held 'office hours' where employees could take control of a virtual meeting themselves and experiment with the settings and functions.

As the pandemic dragged on, **the skills learned in these workshops proved not just valuable, but necessary.** Workers at all levels of County government are participating in virtual meetings, and many County employees' work remains 100 percent remote. **Thanks in part to the training, these employees are able to continue serving Durham County residents at a time when government services are needed more than ever.**

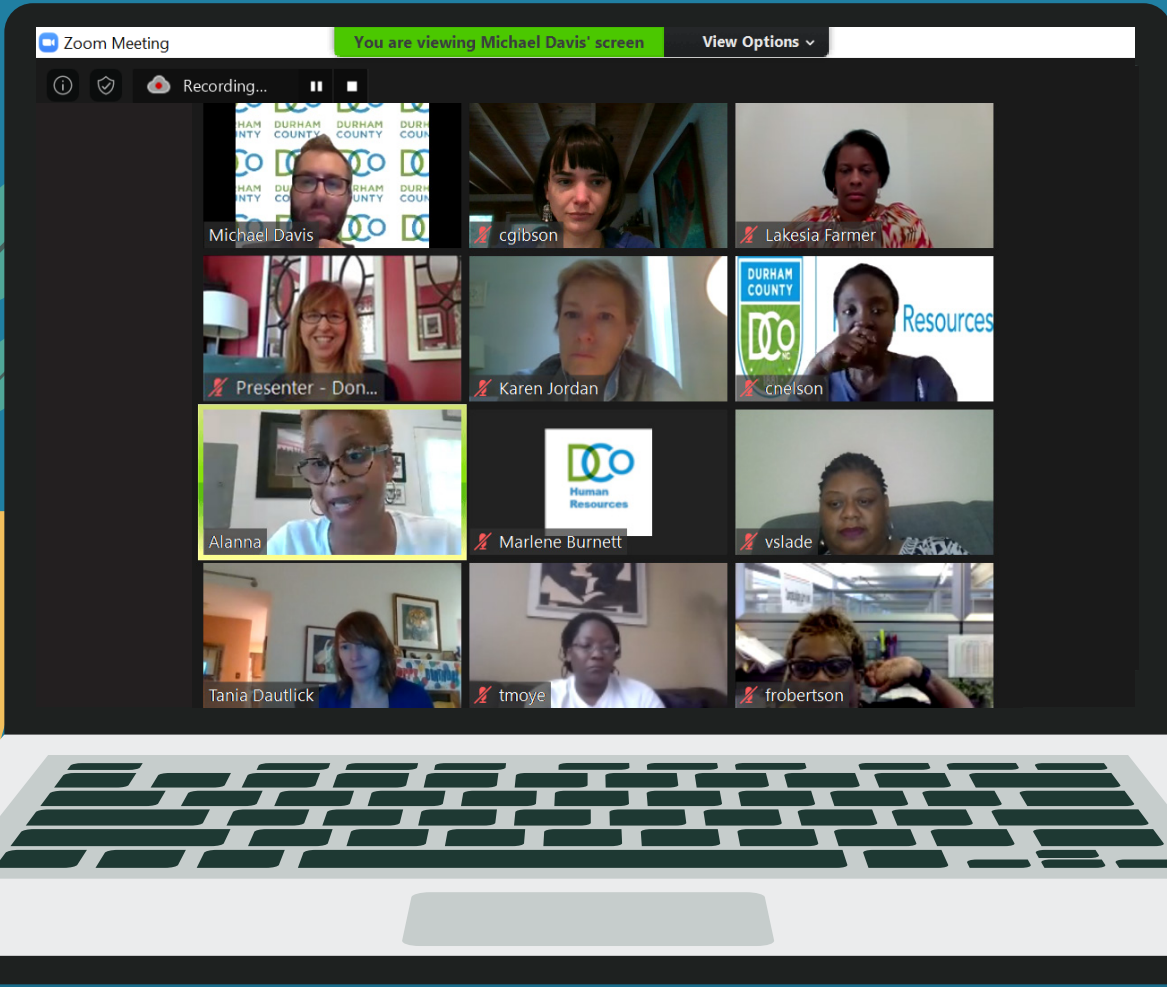


Questions

What tips can you share?

Where else do you need support?

What else do you want to see covered?





IN 2020...



2,430
masks

were sewn by volunteers and distributed to Durham families to help keep them safe and healthy.



9,692
hours

of service were contributed to the Durham community by volunteers through their work with Durham County Cooperative Extension.



7,272
clients

were reached by Durham County Cooperative Extension volunteers through their service. The dollar value of these volunteer contributions equaled \$246,469.



16 hour
National
Certification
Training

was completed by four staff representatives from Durham County Cooperative Extension as part of the Service Enterprise Initiative, to enhance and streamline our volunteer program.



A Season to Share

When the COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to most in-person meetings, **Durham County Cooperative Extension volunteers quickly adapted to the new world.** Thanks to their flexibility and desire to support our community, we were able to maintain continuity of services and expand our reach remotely. Our volunteers donated a wide variety of meaningful work in 2020. From graphic design to administrative support and much in between, they made a difference.

Case in point: **Our volunteers sewed 2,430 adult and children's masks for Durham families.** At the beginning of the pandemic, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began recommending that the general public wear face masks, many of us didn't know how or where to find these new accessories. Durham County Cooperative Extension volunteers rose to the challenge, pulling together sewing experts from universities, high schools, and other community agencies in a collaborative response to the pandemic.

At the same time, many in our community were facing food scarcity and poor nutrition because of the economic downturn from the pandemic. **Durham County Cooperative Extension volunteers came together at our Briggs Avenue Community Garden to grow and harvest produce to make food boxes for neighbors in need.**

Kathryn Hamilton, a long-term Extension Master Gardener of Durham County, was one of these gardeners. Through her volunteer labor, she not only had the chance to pursue her passion for gardening but was also able to join a team effort to address food insecurity in Durham. Kathryn shared, "In addition to gardening for myself, I feel compelled to fill every last empty space with seeds that could feed someone else. I was happy to participate in a larger effort that the garden made to reach out beyond its fences into the community."

A gardening couple, Steve and Kaisong, joyfully received food boxes from Briggs Garden bi-weekly. They emphasized that the fresh vegetables were a huge help nutritionally, but also mentally as a connection to the community during the devastating COVID crisis. Steve highlighted that, "The boxes were physically and mentally nourishing." Kaisong agreed, "It was positive for the community. We were able to share some of the vegetables with some members in our own community too."

The over 1,000 volunteers who pitched in to help in 2020 exemplified the true definition of 'community'. We at Durham County Cooperative Extension are so thankful for the collaboration and commitment of these generous souls.

"The Extension Community Association volunteers, among many other community volunteers, were so passionate about getting these masks into the hands of those who needed them when there was a national shortage. They worked tirelessly to get materials from across the region and sew them into beautiful, useful masks."

-Cheralyn Berry, Durham County Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Agent



Our Partners

We would like to extend a special thanks to the partners, donors, and contributors below who worked with us in 2020 to better serve our community.

- Autism Society of North Carolina
- Bloomin' Onion Farm
- Book Harvest
- Born in Durham, Healthy for Life
- Busted Bucket Farm
- Butner Federal Correctional Complex
- Carolina Arbors Retirement Community
- Center for Child and Family Health
- Century Farm Orchards
- Child Care Services Association
- City of Durham Office on Youth
- Code for Durham
- Craig LeHoullier
- Croasdaile Garden Club
- Curamericas
- Diaper Bank of NC
- Duke Children's Primary Care
- Duke Health
- Duke University including the Offices of Civic Engagement, Durham and Community Affairs, and Sustainability
- Durham AARP
- Durham ACEs and Resilience Taskforce
- Durham Center for Senior Life
- Durham Children's Initiative
- Durham County Beekeepers' Association
- Durham County Board of Elections
- Durham County Department of Public Health, including the DINE program
- Durham County Department of Social Services
- Durham County Library
- Durham County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Durham Head Start
- Durham Housing Authority
- Durham Parks & Recreation
- Durham Partnership for Seniors
- Durham Public Schools, including the HUB Farm
- Durham Public Schools Foundation, HOPE Network
- Durham Skywriter
- Durham Special Needs Advisory Council (D-SNAC)
- Durham Technical Community College, including the Center for Student Involvement and the Harvest Food Pantry
- Early Childhood Mental Health Taskforce
- El Centro Hispano
- The Endayo Company
- End Hunger Durham
- Eno River Ruritan Club
- Equity Before Birth
- Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
- Family Connects Durham
- Feed My Sheep Food Pantry
- First Fruits Farm
- First Presbyterian Church
- Grow at Home/ EAT
- Guardians As Parents
- HEARTS NC
- Hillside New Tech High School
- Hosiery Mill Senior Residence
- IBM
- Immaculata Catholic School
- Interfaith Food Shuttle
- JFK Towers Residence
- JJ Henderson Senior Residence
- Junior League of Durham
- Latino Community Credit Union
- Lincoln Community Health Center
- Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC)
- MAAME
- Maureen Joy Charter School
- McGill Compost
- Meals on Wheels
- MomsRising NC
- Museum of Life and Science
- North Carolina Central University, including Eagle Dining
- North Carolina Raleigh Mission
- North Carolina School of Science and Math
- Orange County Beekeepers' Association
- Reach Out and Read
- Reaching All Minds Academy
- Ready Project Young Child Wellness Council
- Refugee Community Partnership
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Durham County
- Safe Kids Durham
- Samaritan Health
- SEEDS
- Senior PharmAssist
- Sodexo
- Stone Bros and Byrd
- Town and Country Garden Club
- Trees Durham
- Triangle Nonprofit & Volunteer Leadership Center
- UNC APPLES Service-Learning Program
- Urban Community Agronomics







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