

DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Proclamation

- WHEREAS,** created in 2002 by the Harvard School of Public Health and MENTOR: the National Mentoring Partnership; January 2021 marks the 19th anniversary of National Mentoring Month, an annual campaign to focus attention on the need for quality, consistent and competent mentors, and;
- WHEREAS,** a mentor is a caring, dependable and authentic person that provides a consistent presence, guidance and devotes time to a young person to help that youth discover personal strength to persevere and achieve their potential through a structured and trusting relationship; and
- WHEREAS,** quality mentoring encourages and empowers youth to make positive choices, promote self-esteem and character development, support academic achievement, leadership and professional development, career exploration and introduce youth to new ideas; and
- WHEREAS,** the goals of National Mentoring Month are to raise awareness of mentoring, recruit individuals to mentor, encourage organizations to engage and integrate quality mentoring into their efforts with a focus on academic support, life skills training, and career readiness/workforce preparation to motivate youth to excel; and
- WHEREAS,** during the COVID-19 pandemic, mentoring programs have stepped up to fill gaps for youth and families, connecting them with resources and ensuring that mentoring relationships continue virtually to prevent social disconnection and mitigate learning loss; and
- WHEREAS,** positive youth development theory understands adolescence as a distinct developmental phase where boundary testing and individual identity development are critical steps on the path to adulthood, steps that need to be supported, nurtured and cultivated by patient and caring adults in safe environments; and
- WHEREAS,** research shows that youth who meet regularly with their mentors are more than 52 percent less likely than their peers to skip a day of school, youth who face an opportunity gap but have a mentor are 55 percent more likely to be enrolled in college than those who did not have a mentor; youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46 percent less likely than their peers to start using drugs and 27 percent less likely to start drinking; and
- WHEREAS,** mentors serve a critical role in helping youth successfully complete high school and gain admission to college, equipped with the skills and competencies they need to succeed in college and build new in-demand skills, prepare for the future of work and succeed in an ever-changing workforce; and
- WHEREAS,** mentoring programs must incorporate work-based learning to prepare and connect youth with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic, technical and soft skills and develop their employability while exploring career pathways; and
- WHEREAS,** National Mentoring Month is the time of year to celebrate, elevate, and encourage mentoring in Durham County;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Brenda A. Howerton on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners do hereby proclaim the month of January 2021 as

“NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH”

in Durham County, and hereby call upon public officials, business and community leaders, educators, and citizens to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities and programs in order to:

- recognize the men and women who serve as staff and volunteers at quality mentoring programs and help our youth find inner strength and reach their full potential;
- acknowledge that mentoring is beneficial because it facilitates healthy identity development, encourages educational achievement, reduces juvenile delinquency, expands career readiness, improves life outcomes, and strengthens communities;
- promote the creation, expansion, sustainability, and funding of quality mentoring programs across Durham to equip youth with the tools needed to lead healthy, productive and meaningful lives; and
- support initiatives to close the academic, achievement, opportunity and mentoring gaps and promote critical mentoring to support boys of color with mentors who perceive and understand social, political and economic racism and oppression and to take action against racism and oppressive elements of society.

This the 11th day of January, 2021

Brenda A. Howerton, Chair
Durham Board of County Commissioners

