



## ***Durham Local Reentry Council Minutes July 16, 2025***

Robin Heath, Assistant Director, Justice Services Department, began the meeting by welcoming everyone, thanking them for their time and participation and had everyone introduce themselves.

Mrs. Heath introduced John Drew from the Durham Rescue Mission.

### **I. Durham Rescue Mission: presented by John Drew, Volunteer Coordinator**

Mr. Drew began by stating that he had the opportunity of giving Rasheeda Royster-LRC Housing Case Manager and Necole Stewart a tour of the Rescue Mission facility recently. Mr. Drew proceeded to share the information given on the tour about the Rescue Mission's history and current services offered to everyone as follows:

- This Mission was started in 1974 by Dr. and Mrs. Ernie and Gayle Mills, Sr.
- The Mills started with a two (2) story house on the corner of Home and E. Main Streets. There they housed 12 alcoholic men on the bottom floor they and their family occupied the top floor
- Currently there are nine (9) different locations:
  - 1) The Men's Campus on E. Main Street
  - 2) The Women's and Children's Campus (aka The Good Samaritan Inn) on E. Knox Street
  - 3) A centralized distribution warehouse off of Alston Avenue and
  - 4) Six (6) different thrift stores (which help fund The Mission's services)
- Currently, The Mission is servicing 540 clients:
  - Approximately 150 at the Women's Campus (50 children and 100 women) and approximately 390 men
- The Mission is a Christian based organization, and abides by this Mission Statement:  
'To meet, through the power of Jesus Christ, the spiritual, educational, emotional, physical, social and vocational needs of the whole person so that those who are hurting may become fully functioning members of society'.
- The services offered are:
  - Long-term shelter (there is no mandatory end date to a client's stay)
  - Vocational training is offered through a sister-organization called Temps to the Rescue
  - The Victory Program is a twenty-four-week, six module, biblical studies course designed to instill life principles in clients from a biblical standpoint .
  - The EDJ Program (short for education) is an adult education program which includes a literacy program and opportunities to obtain a high school equivalency diploma.
  - Free medical, dental and eye care

### The Mission's intake process:

- The Rescue Mission will accept anyone who is 18 years of age or older and
  - Has identification or can get identification within 30 days proving Durham residency
- \*\* Persons who have any sexual related crime history or criminal charges will not be accepted into the Mission.\*\*

Mr. Drew then opened the floor up for questions:

- ? Medications: Potential clients that are on medication can be admitted into the Mission as long as the person has a prescription. Controlled substance medications are distributed to clients on a weekly basis only; this helps to identify whether or not a client has an addiction or not.
- ? Probation needs/requirements: The Mission allows probationary needs to be met, i.e. case workers are allowed access to clients and clients are allowed to meet and keep their probationary required appointments. All visits are and must be documented.
- ? Transitions: The Mission strongly encourages clients to find and join a church outside of The Mission. By teaching clients to model Christ-like behavior fulfills the mission statement in assisting individuals to become productive parts of society.
- ? Client Stay Guidelines:
  - For the 1<sup>st</sup> seven (7) days, clients are restricted to the campus.
  - After the 1<sup>st</sup> seven (7) days, clients are able to leave the campus between the hours of 4am and 9pm.
  - Vocational training is given to clients within the first six (6) months.
  - After those first six (6) months of training, the client(s) can then look for employment. The Mission also makes attempts to match clients' skill levels with places of employment.
  - Although there is no 'end-date' to a client's stay, if a client does not adhere to the rules of the Mission, a conversation is had, and a choice is given to the client as to whether or not they want to continue their stay.
- ? Partnerships: The Durham County Veteran's Services will collaborate with The Durham Rescue Mission to assist veteran clients.
- ? Family Housing/Assistance: Unfortunately, there are no facilities to accommodate fathers with children. However, when a family presents themselves as homeless or in need of assistance, the children are housed with the mother at the women's facility, the father is housed in the men's facility. Once the family has saved a sufficient amount of money to purchase a home, priority is given to them in obtaining one of The Mission's approximately 30 owned properties in the Durham area.

(A raffle drawing was conducted, and prizes were awarded to the winners)

Mrs. Heath introduced Helen Juarez-Ruiz as the next speaker.

## **II. North Carolina State Veteran's Services Office:** presented by Helen Juarez-Ruiz,

Ms. Juarez-Ruiz began by stating that the Durham County Veteran's Services Office basically focuses on providing veterans who are within six (6) months of discharge or who have already been discharged, with services for obtaining compensation, pension and survivor benefits. The office also

services military spouses, dependents (under the age of 26 and/or are still in school) and disabled veterans.

Ms. Ruiz went on to detail the responsibilities of the NC State Veteran's Services Officers as follows:

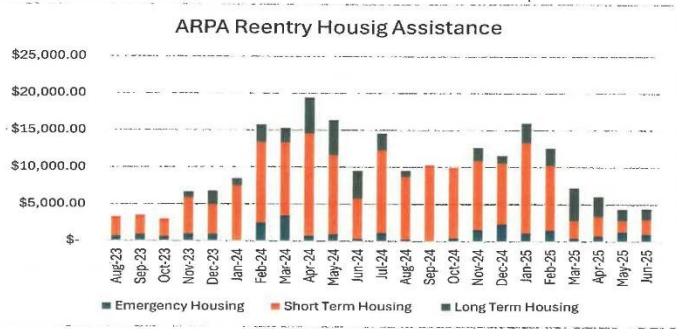
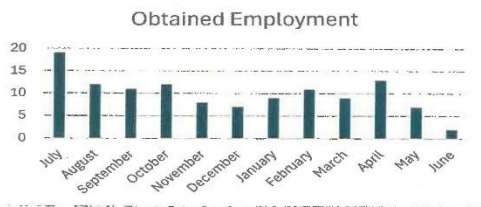
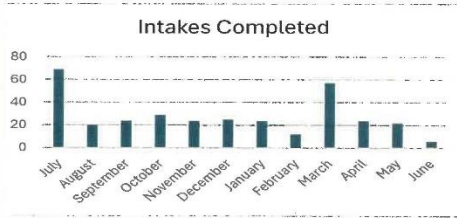
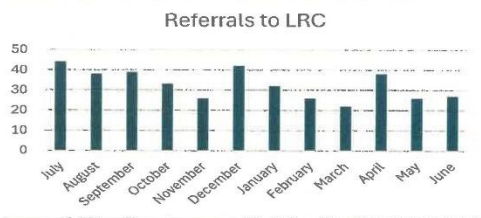
- Officers are accredited by the state of NC and attend biannual, intense training conferences to keep abreast of the voluminous changes in entitlements for veterans.
- Officers are Durham County constituents and can only service Durham County veterans. Out of 100 counties in NC, only 91 have veterans' services.
- There are no charges for services provided by this office.
- In addition to the aforementioned federal compensatory benefits, the State-level benefits provided are:
  - Disabled state license plates
  - Scholarships for children of war veterans
  - Lifetime hunting and fishing licenses (100% disabled vets receive this benefit for free)
  - Home Loan benefits
  - Burial benefits
  - Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance
  - Incarcerated Veterans' Benefits
  - Education Benefits
  - Employment Benefits (via NC Works)
  - Veterans Homeless Assistance (via the Local Reentry Council)
  - PACT ACT – health benefits for veterans who have been exposed to toxic elements i.e. Agent Orange
  - Contaminated Water Benefits (veterans affected by Camp Lejeune)

Ms. Ruiz then opened up the floor for questioning:

- ? Incarcerated Veterans: The Veterans Office collaborates with outreach social workers who will visit incarcerated veterans to assist in their transition back into society.
- ? Homeless Veterans: The Veterans Office will assist with financial compensation as previously noted, however, the office is not equipped to assist with achieving resident status.

(Another raffle drawing was conducted, and prizes were awarded to the winners)

Mrs. Heath presented the FY '24-'25 LRC updates as follows



Totals FY 25	
Referrals	393
Intakes	336
Obtained Employment	120
Referrals for Education/Vocational Trainig	118

Meeting ended at 4:20pm

## Attendees:

Robin Heath – JSD, Asst. Director – [rheath@dconc.gov](mailto:rheath@dconc.gov)  
Roshanna Parker, JSD, Director – [rparker@dconc.gov](mailto:rparker@dconc.gov)  
Rasheeda Royster – LRC Housing Case Manager - [rroyster@dconc.gov](mailto:rroyster@dconc.gov) – 919-560-0543  
Necole Stewart – JSD – [nstewart@dconc.gov](mailto:nstewart@dconc.gov)  
Janice Williams – JSD – [jangwilliams@dconc.gov](mailto:jangwilliams@dconc.gov)  
Brad Allen – Restorative Transitions (no email given)  
Alexis Hockaday – Soft Life Co., Transitional - [ahockaday@gmail.com](mailto:ahockaday@gmail.com)  
Devon Jenkins – Empower Transitional – [devonjenkins912@gmail.com](mailto:devonjenkins912@gmail.com)  
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