

## **Resolution Concerning Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Durham**

WHEREAS, there has been a recent dramatic increase in children and minors traveling to the U.S. without their parents from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and other parts of Latin America largely as a result of rising rates of poverty and violence in their home countries; and

WHEREAS, more than 300 of these children have settled in Durham according to statistics from Durham Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, gang and drug trafficking violence has driven Honduras' murder rate to the highest in the world and El Salvador's murder rate to the fourth highest; and

WHEREAS, there are tens of thousands of unaccompanied children in the custody of federal government agencies; and

WHEREAS, children are always among the most vulnerable in any emergency; and

WHEREAS, many of the unaccompanied children arriving at the border are suffering from physical illnesses, exhaustion, hunger, dehydration, and emotional trauma, and some have been victimized during their long and difficult journey and are in urgent need of protective adult care, legal services, medical care, supportive supervision, nutritious food and safe housing; and

WHEREAS, many of these children are reuniting with their North Carolina families or other sponsors who can care and provide for them; and

WHEREAS, these families or other sponsors are an important part of the Durham community that should be welcomed and supported; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has called the flood of unaccompanied migrant children seeking refuge from violence and poverty in Central America a “humanitarian crisis;” and

WHEREAS, from October 2013-September 2014, the Office of Refugee Resettlement has reported that 2,064 of these children have been placed in North Carolina alone; and

WHEREAS, the City of Durham is a welcoming, compassionate and caring community with the goal of creating a welcoming atmosphere for all; and

WHEREAS, the Durham City Council has demonstrated that the immigrant community is integral to the City of Durham by its actions including, but not limited to, its passage of Council Resolution #9724, passed on June 21, 2010, which states that immigrants “make valuable contributions to our city, state, and nation in every area of endeavor and sector of the economy;”

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Durham City Council expresses its commitment to welcome unaccompanied children from Latin America and expresses its support for local government departments as well as Durham’s churches, businesses and non-profit agencies in their efforts to provide services to these children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council offers special appreciation to Durham Public Schools for educating more than 300 of these children in the current school year without regard to immigration status, an obligation that is required by federal law and is supported by the Council; to Durham’s Family Court which is dealing humanely with the needs of some of these children; and to non-profits and churches such as Immaculate Conception, El Centro Hispano, Catholic Charities, Carolina Outreach, Church World Service and El Futuro which are working diligently to support these children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council encourages the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies to ensure that the minor children seeking safety in the United States and being apprehended by Border Patrol receive due process and legal representation in court hearings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council directs the City Clerk to forward this Resolution to the chairpersons of the Durham County Board of Education and the Durham County Board of County Commissioners, to all members of Congress that have Durham County within their jurisdiction, to our State legislative delegation, and to the North Carolina League of Municipalities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council encourages City staff to work in concert with other agencies as they pursue resources for support of these children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council urges all Durham residents, businesses and government entities to make unaccompanied children welcome in our city and invites the help of our churches, non-profits, businesses and government agencies in this humanitarian work.