History of DCIA

In 1969, four congregations in downtown Durham, NC, organized the Center City Church Council to address together needs for transportation and visitation for the elderly, and soon also started programs for children and youth. It incorporated in 1972 and, during the next six years, membership grew to 12 congregations. In 1976, the group’s name changed to Durham Congregations In Action, and its membership continued to grow over the years to include dozens of congregations of Christians, Jews, Muslims, and others cooperating together in service.

DCIA ORGANIZES INTERFAITH LEARNING AND COOPERATION AGAINST POVERTY, RACISM AND VIOLENCE. For decades, DCIA congregations have learned from the best information available about community needs and challenges. And during those decades, DCIA has built a history of initiating cooperative programs among people of faith to address those issues. Programs serving the Durham community that were launched or cosponsored at their start by DCIA have included:

- Meals On Wheels, Host Homes, Families First,
- Urban Ministries of Durham, DSS Emergency Energy Fund, Genesis Home, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Interfaith AIDS Alliance,
- Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham, Capital Restorative Justice Project, Durham Economic Resource Center, One World Market, Partners for Youth Opportunity,
- Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA), Youth Summer Service Week, Strong Fathers, REAL Durham
- and MANY other shorter-term projects over the years. From the beginning, DCIA has created space and opportunity for people of different traditions and ethnicities to share and to grow from each other’s strengths and experience, putting shared values to work. The shape of DCIA’s services over the years has changed, but it has continued to build bridges among its members and to the most vulnerable and forgotten in our community, planting seeds in new initiatives to change lives in Durham.

2019 Officers and Board Members

Dr. Warren Herndon, President, City of Joy Ministry
Gordon Whitaker, Vice-President, Watts St. Baptist
Rebecca Barnes, Secretary, Mt. Bethel Presbyterian
Bob Newlin, Treasurer, Parkwood United Methodist
Rev. Donna Banks, McMannen United Methodist
Larry Brown, Bahá’í Community of Durham
Elizabeth Brownrigg, Shambhala Buddhist Center
Marilyn Christian, Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Jessie Giles, Fisher Mem. United Holy Church
Hope Hartman, Beth El Synagogue
Rev. Joe Harvard, Covenant Presbyterian
Rev. Michael Page, Antioch Baptist Church
LaNella Smith, New Creation United Methodist
Imam Abdul Waheed, Duke Center for Muslim Life

Rev. Spencer Bradford, Executive Director

Durham Congregations In Action
504 W. Chapel Hill St., Durham, NC 27701
919-688-2036  dcia@dcia.org
www.dcia.org

DCIA’s office is on the top floor of Duke Memorial United Methodist Church.
Please enter at rear door of church facing Memorial St., under brown canopy.

The DCIA Assembly meets publicly on the third Tuesday of each month, except for January and July, at a different house of worship or spiritual gathering each month.

The date, time and venue of the upcoming meeting is posted on the dcia.org home page.
CURRENTLY SPONSORED MINISTRIES

END HUNGER DURHAM

End Hunger Durham (EHD) is a network of organizations and individuals working to promote food security and access to healthy food for all Durham residents. EHD builds capacity of hunger-fighting programs and individuals by facilitating communication and collaboration, with focus on the perspective of patrons of their services. EHD collects and shares reliable information about hunger to strengthen hunger-fighting organizations in their mission, to build community commitment to their work, and to advocate for just food policies that will address long-term solutions to hunger.

CROP HUNGER WALK

Since 1975, DCIA has sponsored this premier walkathon for world hunger and disaster relief through Church World Service, which uses 75% of the funds raised for relief and development work around the globe. DCIA distributes 25% of the funds raised to various local hunger relief programs, recently averaging between $35,000 and $50,000 per year. Since 1975, the Durham CROP Hunger Walk has raised more than $4,000,000, and DCIA has distributed over $900,000 locally. DCIA also administers federal funds for hunger relief and homeless services by local direct service programs.

HOMESHARE DURHAM

HomeShare Durham matches and connects home-providers and low-income home-seekers to facilitate a mutually beneficial home environment where sharing reduces housing and utility expenses for both parties. The Coordinator conducts a selective matching and screening process, including a background checks and a lifestyle suitability questionnaire, a two-week trial period, and provides support and guidance in forming housekeeping and rent agreements, sometimes incorporating in-kind services as part of the arrangement.

INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

DCIA organizes inter-religious events and meetings, including a community Thanksgiving celebration, community ceremonies around particular topics such as homelessness and domestic violence, text studies and topical dialogues, shared service events, and social meals. These deepen participants’ experience of their own faiths and that of others. DCIA organizes "Sacred Visitations" when leaders from a congregation host guests from other traditions at their site and ceremonies, to provide an introduction to and discussion about the host tradition. DCIA also connects Partner Congregations of different traditions and ethnicities for longer-term relationships of presence and participation with one another.

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION & ORIENTATIONS

DCIA connects Durham ministries with their colleagues for networking and sharing to strengthen their ministries in the community. Our monthly assembly meetings inform leaders about important community developments, and we also hold relational and group meals. To equip ministers and lay leaders for effective work, we offer orientations and tours of different service networks (hunger-relief, homelessness and housing, and mental health services). We connect congregational leaders with leaders of community service agencies to discuss needs and strategies related to poverty relief. DCIA maintains community resource guides to programs providing emergency food, shelter, clothing, and financial assistance. DCIA also provides consultation to individual congregations on organizing social ministries.