



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – (Raleigh, NC)

2021 marks the 40th year of service to our community for Urban Ministries of Wake County. Our first building, The Urban Ministry Center, was dedicated on March 22, 1981. We started out as a small organization, staffed by volunteers from twelve congregations in Raleigh.

Since then, we have grown into one of the largest and most respected non-profits in our community with three programs which serve our neighbors in need.

We operate one of North Carolina's first free and charitable clinics with a licensed pharmacy. The clinic serves 1600 uninsured adults each year. We almost exclusively help patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and even Hepatitis C.

We also operate one of Wake County's largest food pantries which provides nutritious groceries to more than 30,000 adults, families and children every year. Our own urban garden brings thousands of pounds of produce into the pantry each season.

Finally, we operate the county's largest shelter for single women experiencing homelessness, the Helen Wright Center for Women. We now help over 400 women with emergency shelter, finding permanent housing, and job skills training so they can afford to live independently.

When COVID-19 struck we adapted our programs to continue serving our neighbors changing needs in the face of the pandemic. We saw patients via telehealth, we switched our client-choice pantry to curbside, and we opened three shelter buildings, with the help of Wake County, to maintain safety and social distancing to protect the women of Helen Wright.

"We have used this time to listen and respond better to our neighbor's needs, to not see a lock down as confining, and to be more intentional in our all our programmatic directions," says Executive Director Peter Morris.

We saw the largest increase in our pantry services in 2020. We gave a week's worth of food to as many as 1,440 families or individuals each month. We partnered with other organizations to bring COVID-19 testing and vaccines to our patients and members of the public.

As we enter our 40th year, we want to thank our generous donors and volunteers who have sustained us all this time. The need was great. The response was greater. Without our sustainers we could not have provided quality food, shelter, and healthcare to tens of thousands of Wake County residents in need.

