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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 855

Offered February 7, 2019

Commending Action in Community Through Service.

Patrons—Torian, Ayala and Roem; Senator: McPike

WHEREAS, in 2019, Action in Community Through Service celebrates 50 years of providing support to residents of Prince William County struggling with homelessness, hunger, domestic violence, mental health issues, and other crisis situations; and

WHEREAS, Action in Community Through Service (ACTS) traces its roots to early 1969, when 13 Prince William County churches came together to help a family whose home was destroyed by fire; and

WHEREAS, those 13 churches—Good Shepherd Lutheran, Concordia Lutheran, Lutheran Church of the Covenant, Grace Lutheran, Dumfries United Methodist, Cokesbury United Methodist, St. Paul United Methodist, Ebenezer Baptist, Mt. Olive Baptist, Triangle Baptist, Our Lady of Angels, Woodbridge Church of the Brethren, and Covenant Presbyterian—officially formed ACTS on February 10, 1969, with a mission to alleviate human suffering throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, ACTS immediately began to address the need for food and housing in Prince William County by setting up a food bank and a shelter; in its early years, the organization provided emergency financial assistance for food, housing, utilities, and prescription medications through its network of volunteers working over the phone and opened a day care center for at-risk children from low-income households; and

WHEREAS, throughout the 1970s, ACTS partnered with the United Way of the National Capital Area and launched school food drives, holiday assistance programs, and the Behavioral Intervention Program; in 1979 alone, the organization hired its first executive director, opened a 15-bed homeless shelter in Dumfries, and launched a thrift store program that has grown and expanded over the years; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, ACTS established the Women's Aid domestic violence program to provide education, advocacy, and support to local women in need, the Transitional Living program to help families achieve independent living, and a second day care center; and

WHEREAS, ACTS moved to a new administrative office on Acts Lane in Dumfries in 1997 and continued to expand its other facilities in the new millennium, opening the West Safe House in Manassas and reopening the East Safe House, now known as the Women's Empowerment Center, in a newly built house in Triangle; and

WHEREAS, with programs and services still expanding, ACTS opened the Family Service Center in Dumfries in 2008 to better meet its clients' needs, and by 2010, the organization had purchased two townhomes for use as part of an affordable housing program; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Sexual Assault Advocacy Service became part of ACTS; it is the only sexual assault crisis program serving Prince William County, offering individual and group counseling for children and adults, court advocacy, hospital accompaniment, and education; and

WHEREAS, more recently, ACTS opened a satellite office in Manassas and completed the Hunger Prevention Center, which distributed more than 679,000 pounds of food to 7,600 households in 2018; and

WHEREAS, ACTS operates several 24/7 call lines, including the Surviving After Suicide line, Senior Link, and the Helpline, an information, referral, and crisis listening hot line that works with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and answered 20,493 calls in 2018; and

WHEREAS, ACTS supported more than 3,000 domestic violence victims and 612 sexual assault victims in 2018, and more than 13,000 individuals attended community education courses on the prevention of and recovery from domestic or sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, throughout its history, ACTS has fulfilled its mission with the dedication and hard work of countless volunteers, the leadership of its board of directors and executives, and the support of local businesses, government agencies, faith communities, and other nonprofit organizations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Action in Community Through Service on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Action in Community Through Service as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's legacy of excellence in service to the residents of Prince William County.

INTRODUCED

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