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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 439

Offered February 18, 2019

Commending United Community Ministries, Inc.

Patrons—Surovell, Barker and Ebbin; Delegates: Krizek, Sickles and Tran

WHEREAS, for 50 years, United Community Ministries, Inc., has been in the community, of the community, and for the community, with a mission to empower neighbors in need in southeastern Fairfax County to transform their lives; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, members of Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church, Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, and other faith communities joined together to start a food and clothing drive to support families living in poverty in the Mount Vernon area of Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS, United Community Ministries (UCM) was born from this humanitarian community service initiative as an independent, community-based nonprofit organization, with one employee, a \$7,000 budget, and a group of dedicated volunteers that provided food, clothing, and other emergency assistance to poor children, youth, and families; and

WHEREAS, in its 50-year history, UCM has grown tremendously to meet and serve the changing needs of Fairfax County, providing a range of holistic, life-changing services that address the complex challenges of multigenerational poverty, with a \$4.2 million operating budget and more than 70 employees annually serving more than 6,000 vulnerable people, 40 percent of whom are children; and

WHEREAS, in addition to providing food and financial assistance, UCM also works to meet many other essential needs, including providing emergency utility and medical assistance, an early learning center to prepare children for school readiness, a child abuse and neglect prevention program, youth development and enrichment programs at two community centers, English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship classes, immigration services, job readiness services, neighborhood community-building programs, and community schools; and

WHEREAS, with the changing population and increasing community needs, UCM's services and strategic partnerships with other nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government bodies have continued to evolve, leading UCM to serve as Lead Agency of Opportunity Mount Vernon, providing a continuum of services to children, youth, and adults to break the cycle of poverty, while embracing a vision of One Fairfax; and

WHEREAS, over five decades, hundreds of thousands of people in need have benefited from the caring work of UCM; and

WHEREAS, UCM envisions a community where everyone thrives and continues to empower neighbors in need with the dedicated leadership of its volunteer board of directors, the hard work of its team members and volunteers, and the generosity of its many community partners and donors; and

WHEREAS, for 50 years, UCM has been at the heart of neighbors helping neighbors and aspires to leverage this community spirit and work with critical partners to accelerate systemic changes to end multigenerational poverty in southeastern Fairfax County as a core value; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend United Community Ministries, Inc., on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary for its legacy of providing a strong safety net and performing a central role in facilitating a full spectrum of services to break the multigenerational cycle of poverty; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to United Community Ministries, Inc., as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's vital role in southeastern Fairfax County.