



Durham CAN
(Congregations, Associations and Neighborhoods)
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Affirming Our Commitment To Action

DURHAM, North Carolina, June 18, 2020 --The organizing community of Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations, & Neighborhoods) has recoiled in moral outrage at George's Floyd's brutal death while subdued in police custody, Rayshard Brooks' unnecessary shooting, and the horror of Breonna Taylor shot in her own bed; images of police violence directed at peaceful protesters; and the countless examples of moral/political chicanery by public actors at the expense of truth regarding our nation's historical alignment with systemic racism. Indeed, these violations of human life and rights are not isolated, not the work of a few bad actors. Instead, they are moral evidence that the greed of our economy and the goals of dominant power in our society have long been entwined with the optics, structures, and policies of racism.

Our work is to gather the power to oppose those forces in our city and to partner with so many who work for justice statewide and across the nation. Our anger is also accompanied by profound hope inspired by so many who have expressed their own outrage in protest. This is a time to work — to build relationships, to share interests, and to gather the resources necessary to oppose the dominant powers of economic/political greed, inequity, and racism in our society. We believe these steep and faithful goals can be accomplished.

In 2014, we acted with many partners in the face of stark racial disparities regarding police stops and automobile searches in Durham to establish the municipal policy of mandatory written consent for all automobile searches by Durham Police. In 2019, we acted again with community partners and elected officials, such as District Attorney Santana Deberry, to minimize the use of cash bail in Durham courts. In each case, our organizing originated in listening to countless stories of painful racial inequities in every aspect of policing from surveillance to interdiction to punishment. We are also acting across the web of racial injustice and inequity by developing affordable housing in several city/county sites like Jackson St., the county lots of 300 and 500 East Main St, and the twenty-acre site of the former Fayetteville St. Apartments; standing with our neighbors who reside in Durham Housing Authority properties for their quest for relief in the face outrageous failures to provide safe, adequate housing; and working to provide living wage jobs in Durham for all our neighbors including returning citizens.

Our rhythm of organizing always begins relationally by listening through local house meetings. We have just started another cycle of these listening sessions this summer. We encourage our institutions to work diligently to hold house meetings both inside and outside of their institutions.

We encourage our neighbors affected by racial injustices in housing, wages, job procurement, and the treatment of the criminal justice system to seek and attend our listening sessions and speak openly of your wounds, dreams, and aspirations. While lamenting the ever-accumulating public evidence of racism and the powers that benefit from systemic racism, we will be unyieldingly at work. We urge our elected officials and corporate sector to share that same urgency — to see the unemployed, the inadequately and unsafely housed, and victims of the criminal justice system not just as neighbors, but as beloved family members and to act accordingly. This is not a season for merely shock or good intentions. We must immediately construct a living, hopeful counternarrative to the embodied story of structural racism that has shaped our community's history.

Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations and Neighborhoods) is a broad-based, non-profit organization that works to coalesce, train, and organize communities in Durham across religious, racial, ethnic, class, and geographic lines for the public good. Durham CAN is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation, the nation's largest and longest-standing network of local faith and community-based organizations.

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