



**UNITED  
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MINISTRIES**

*At the Heart of Community*

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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**UCM PROGRESO CENTER VOLUNTEERS EMPOWER NEW CITIZENS**



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Pictured enjoying the Valentine Dance and Dinner on Feb. 6, hosted by Good Shepherd Catholic Church, are UCM Progreso Center volunteers (from left) banker Ruth Esum, her sister attorney Joyce Williams, and attorney Janet Smith.

The annual event is a fundraiser for the Progreso Center for Literacy and Citizenship, which has been providing ESL and citizenship services for almost 15 years. "We are so grateful to Good Shepherd Catholic Church for hosting this annual family fundraiser to benefit our services that help immigrant families attain self-sufficiency," says Cristina Schoendorf, UCM Director for Workforce and Literacy.

The success of the Center and its many students depends on the caring expertise and tireless dedication of close to 30 volunteers who teach ESL and citizenship classes all year round. "Our volunteers inspire life-long changes by helping our immigrant families gain access to skills and programs that reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency," she continues.

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Pro bono immigration attorneys like Williams and Smith help families with the required paperwork and often assist to expedite citizenship cases with US Citizenship and Immigration Services. "Accurate information and assistance is crucial so immigrants can access the appropriate benefits for themselves," explains Williams. "I thank our UCM supporters and invite others to help by volunteering or by making a donation to further our impact to help immigrant neighbors create better futures for themselves."

The Progreso Center for Literacy and Citizenship is just one of the many programs UCM provides to equip, educate, and empower people to improve their lives. Day and evening classes are conducted at the Center's main office at 4100 Mohawk Lane, Alexandria VA – as well as at other convenient locations including Gum Springs Community Center, Good Shepherd Catholic Church, and the Sherwood Hall Library. For questions, visit [ucmagency.org](http://ucmagency.org) (click "Our Program" for 2016 class schedule), or call 703. 799.8830.

**United Community Ministries (UCM)** mobilizes the power of community to equip, educate, and empower people to measurably improve their lives. For more than 46 years, UCM has provided a vital connection between people in need and the people committed to helping them thrive. Services include:

- **Immediate Help.** For families and individuals in crisis, UCM provides counseling, food, financial aid, and referrals to other resources.
- **Children's Programs.** UCM provides the next generation with essential education and enriching experiences, including full-day early care and learning, new parent education, and after-school programs for youth leadership development and computer access.
- **Workforce Development.** UCM helps adults increase their employability, with job counseling and computer training and with ESL and citizenship classes.

In Fiscal Year 2015, thanks to generous community support, UCM provided life-changing assistance to 10,200 individuals in 4,000 families in the Alexandria portion of Fairfax County. This included 5,000 children – more than any other agency in the Huntington-Mount Vernon area.

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