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**West Potomac High SHOUT Volunteers Make a Difference
at United Community Ministries**



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UCM was privileged to host a group of 20 graduating seniors from West Potomac High School during the final two weeks of their high school careers. This annual opportunity to volunteer, while also learning, is called SHOUT, or Students Helping Others United Together. Each SHOUT volunteer commits to spending 40 hours with the nonprofit agency.

Pictured at UCM are some of the SHOUT volunteers. From left are graduating seniors (by name and including post graduation plans, if available): Afua Owusuaa (Northern Virginia Community College), Comfort Asamoah (Virginia State University), Amana Bhulyan (Salem College), Evelyn Sorto, Sana Iqbal, Revathi Mohan (University of Virginia), Jency Manzano. Front row: Summer Awad (Northern Virginia Community College), with Ms. Jessica Landon, West Potomac High School Librarian and SHOUT coordinator. SHOUT volunteers not pictured were: Sandra Achai, Akuah Boaheng (Virginia Commonwealth University), Lydia Boateng, Joycelin Chanas (Virginia State University), Jacinda Djossou (Virginia Tech), Maguerite Djossou (Virginia Tech), Natali Gonzalez (Virginia Commonwealth University), Victoria Jones, Jocelyn Mendoza, Mezmure Tesfaye, and Sarah Yankson (Virginia Commonwealth University).

"This was our largest group ever of SHOUT volunteers," says Emily Griffin, UCM Volunteer Coordinator. "The students selected in advance which UCM service area interested them most. We had students helping in the Food Pantry, at our Early Learning Center interacting with the Pre-K students, and with

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marketing and promotion, among other departments. At the end of the two-week period, the students gave presentations to UCM staff about what they had learned and what the experience meant to them. Delegate Paul Krizek (Virginia 44th District) joined us for the presentations and to congratulate the students on their service and their high school accomplishments.”

Feedback from the students indicated their time spent volunteering was also a learning experience. It was meaningful on a personal level to one student who commented, “My mom comes here to get food sometimes for our family. I am very grateful to UCM for helping us.” It was also meaningful on a professional level to others: “All of us want careers interacting with people. And volunteering at the food pantry was good experience for this.” Another shared, “I volunteered at UCM because it creates connections in the community, and you can meet a lot of great, interesting people here. UCM helps others when they really need it. The best part is helping others and answering their questions.”

UCM has many opportunities for groups and individuals of all ages to get involved to volunteer to help neighbors in need, across all program areas and for all talents and schedules. For a list of current priority needs and to register for a Volunteer Orientation session, visit www.ucmagency.org and click “Support Us.” For questions or ideas for volunteer projects, contact Emily Griffin, UCM Volunteer Coordinator, at emily.griffin@ucmagency.org or 571.255.8973.

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.
- **Adult Education.** UCM helps immigrant adults integrate into the community and contribute to and share in its economic growth through financial literacy, English as a Second Language (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 private nonprofit agency in the Huntington-Mount Vernon area.

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