



**UNITED  
COMMUNITY  
MINISTRIES**

*At the Heart of Community*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **VENTURES IN COMMUNITY ADVOCATES FOR NEIGHBORS IN NEED**



Photo 1 File name 10-09-15\_UCM\_VIC\_photo1.jpg



Photo 2 File name 10-09-15\_UCM\_VIC\_photo2.jpg  
Photos attached as 300dpi+ with email distributed to media

Ventures in Community (VIC), an organization of faith communities and other nonprofits serving Southeast Fairfax County, hosted its monthly luncheon meeting at United Community Ministries (UCM) on Wednesday, October 7. The program focused on early childhood education and the well-being of children in Fairfax County. Featured speakers were Torria Baker, Director of the UCM Early Learning Center and Anne Cahill, Manager of Economic, Demographic and Statistical Research, Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Attendees were asked to bring children's books to the luncheon to benefit UCM's Mount Vernon Kids programs, which include Healthy Families Fairfax, UCM Early Learning Center, Forward Steps, and Computer Center Learning Partnership. "Our teachers and children so appreciate the generous donation of books," says Baker. "It's especially important for families to have a home library, so we always welcome extra new or used books that our students can take home for their very own."

#### **CAPTION Photo 1**

Torri Baker, Director of the UCM Early Learning Center on Popkins Lane, spoke about the critical need for and impact of quality affordable early childhood education for working poor families.

#### **CAPTION Photo 2:**

Pictured enjoying the luncheon program are Pastor Brent Thalacker (at left) of Nativity Lutheran Church and Pastor Robert Lewis of Messiah Lutheran Church.

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The mission of Ventures in Community is to unite the faith communities of Southeast Fairfax County to advocate for and serve people in need. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of most months at 11.30am. This year's VIC officers are: co-facilitators Keith Davey of the Mount Vernon Stake, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and David Levine of Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services; secretary Barbara Cotter; and treasurer Karen Latta. For more information about Ventures in Community including to receive e-mail notices, contact Cristina Schoendorf at [cristina.schoendorf@ucmagency.org](mailto:cristina.schoendorf@ucmagency.org).

**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 food, financial aid, counseling, and referrals to other resources.
- **Education and Employment.** Services such as job training and coaching, full-day early care and learning, ESL and citizenship classes, and parental education help people achieve stability and self-reliance.
- **Community Engagement.** UCM's neighborhood centers, with after-school programs and leadership training, engage youth and families in skill-building and broader social networks for success.

In Fiscal Year 2015, thanks to generous community support, UCM provided life-changing assistance in the Alexandria portion of Fairfax County to 10,200 individuals in 4,000 families.

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