

**From:** [Mayme Webb-Bledsoe](#)  
**To:** [BankMergerApplication](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL MESSAGE] Community Comments  
**Date:** Friday, May 03, 2019 9:04:11 AM

---

To: Whom It May Concern

Duke University launched its Southside Housing Incentive Program in 2013 to incentivize Duke Employees to seek homeownership in the revitalized Southside neighborhood. The goal of the program was to encourage Duke Employees to become some of the first stable homeowners. The initiative offered employees with a minimum of 5 years of service, meeting certain income qualifications was one of several ways that Duke partnered with the City of Durham and Self-Help to support the restoration of historic Southside. The call for applications yielded a pool of employees who were interested but not quite ready to buy a home because of credit and other personal finance issues. In response, a unique support network, the Duke Homebuyers Club, was developed to assist these employees.

The Duke Office of Durham Affairs in partnership with Sun Trust Bank, and Reinvestment Partners designed a training program to help Duke applicants repair their credit and build personal wealth. They produced an eight week homebuyer curriculum to move employees into homeownership. For the last two years we average 65-70 club members with an average of 25 members completing their 8-hour Homebuyer Education Certificate yearly. Duke Home Buyer Club members reported success, include:

- 4 Duke Homebuyers bought homes in 2014
- 4 Duke Homebuyers bought homes in 2015
- 7 Duke Homebuyers bought homes in 2016
- 7 Duke Homebuyers bought homes in 2017
- 7 Duke Homebuyers bought homes in 2018

One of our new additions to the Homebuyer program is the creation of a series of podcasts featuring Autrice Campbell Long. The podcast is an alternative for Duke Homebuyer Club members that are unable to attend the regular meetings.

The creation of the Duke Homebuyers Club was possible due to our partnership with Sun Trust Bank. Their willingness to “think out of the box” to co-create a program supportive, and committed to helping the Duke employees repair their credit is a wonderful example of the difference a local partnership can make. We want to recognize and applaud this partnership with Sun Trust for the Duke families this program has helped since 2013.

Thanks for the Support

Mayme Webb Bledsoe  
Senior Neighborhood Coordinator  
Duke Durham Affairs