



**Joint statement from the YWCA of Asheville and Duke Energy regarding the trees that were cut down on the YW property near the corner of Charles and Timothy Street:**

September 19, 2019, Asheville, NC: On August 29, 2019, tree crews, working on behalf of Duke Energy, cut down mature trees at the YWCA of Asheville that should not have been removed. Over the past few months, Duke Energy worked with YWCA staff to obtain an easement to trim these trees for a new power line being extended to Asheville Middle School. During these discussions, YWCA leadership made it clear that the trees could be trimmed, but not removed. Although Duke Energy communicated this to the contractor, the trees were completely removed in the process.

These trees were special. Teachers used their shade for daily lunches and reflection. They served as backdrops for pictures. They were a part of the morning greeting for students riding the bus. They were a part of the YWCA's history.

YWCA CEO Libby Kyles understands the grief experienced by many of the loss of these trees. "Our community is deeply saddened that these beautiful and majestic trees are gone. Duke and YWCA are committed to creating another special place at the YWCA. The YWCA will engage our neighbors, members, and the broader community to beautify the space where the trees once stood."

Over the years, Duke Energy has partnered in the important work of the YWCA through financial support, volunteerism and sponsorship. In addition to replacing the trees and beautifying the space, Duke has agreed to renew the company's financial support, sponsoring the YWCA Mission and making a substantial gift to our Women's Empowerment Program, Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' by World.

In an email to the YWCA, Jason Walls, District Manager, voiced his support. "The YWCA's mission to Eliminate Racism, Empower Women and Promote Peace, Justice, Freedom and Dignity for all is clear, powerful and never-ending. The YWCA is a special place to the Asheville

community – it's a special place to Duke Energy, that's why we are working with the Leadership at the YWCA to make this right.”