



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Team Chosen to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System



May 25, 2015

A cross-disciplinary team of professionals from Shelby County and City of Memphis governments has been named to a national network of juvenile justice reform fellows based on a project aimed at reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) in the juvenile justice system.

Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell, City of Memphis Mayor A C Wharton and Shelby County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Bill Cash will discuss the launch of this project, *Alternatives to Summons or A2S*, at a news conference on Tuesday, May 26th, 11:00 a.m., at the Emotional Fitness Center of Tennessee. It's on the campus of The Healing Center Full Gospel Baptist Church, 3885 Tchulahoma Drive.

The one-year project will focus on identifying and implementing alternatives to court contact for youth arrested on domestic violence and assault charges in Shelby County. Domestic violence/assault ranks among the highest number of charges for Shelby County youth.

The project was chosen by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) at Georgetown University. The team will receive technical assistance throughout the year from CJJR. Prior to submitting the project for approval, the entire eight-member Shelby/Memphis team was invited to Georgetown University by CJJR to participate in immersion training about the causes and effects of Racial and Ethnic Disparities and introduced to some of the most promising areas of juvenile justice reform. CJJR's acceptance of this work also gives the team access to a national network of juvenile justice reform Fellows.

“By analyzing data to determine which cases can safely be diverted from the juvenile justice system, and by matching youth with appropriate services in the community, this project has the potential to reduce racial and ethnic disparities while also increasing community safety,” said Shay Bilchik, Director of CJJR. **“When sanctions, including diversions, are imposed appropriately, youth are less likely to recidivate and the community is better off.”**

The Shelby/Memphis County team is comprised of professionals from the Shelby County Mayor's Administration, Memphis & Shelby County Juvenile Court, the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, the Memphis Police Department, the Mayor's Innovation and Delivery Team, the Shelby County Defending Childhood Initiative, the Just Care Family Network and the Shelby County Public Defender's Office.

Also during Tuesday's news conference, Mayor Luttrell and Mayor Wharton will discuss the recently opened Universal Parenting Places at the Emotional Fitness Center and its connection to healthier families.

(More)

Juvenile Justice Team Members

Donna Armstard, *Juvenile Defender Unit Supervisor at the Shelby County Public Defender*

A practicing attorney for the State of Tennessee for the last 24 years, Armstard has worked for the Shelby County Public Defender's Office for 23 of those years. She was named supervising attorney of the juvenile defender unit in January 2014.

Kerri Campbell, *Team Manager, Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team and Project Officer for Memphis Gun Down*

A lawyer by trade, Campbell is the project officer for the Gun Down Initiative, a five-prong youth gun violence reduction strategy including: Community Mobilization; Intervention; Organizational Change & Development; Suppression; and Youth Opportunities Provision.

Lisa Marie Hill, *DMC Coordinator, Shelby County Mayor's Administration*

As the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Coordinator, Hill works directly with the Shelby County Mayor's Administration and with the Memphis and Shelby County Juvenile Court as the result of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was entered into on December 17, 2012 between the Department of Justice and Juvenile Court. Her role is to assist Juvenile Court on the DMC and Equal Protection portion of the MOA, which includes identifying where DMC exists and determining the extent to which DMC exists, and then developing and implementing intervention strategies to address the areas identified.

Kimbrell Owens, *Shelby County JDAI Site Coordinator, Memphis and Shelby County Juvenile Court*

For the past 15 years, Owens has worked for Juvenile Court. In November 2013, was named the interim JDAI Site Coordinator. In March of 2014, Owens was promoted to the JDAI Site Coordinator position.

Malrie Shelton, *Project Director, Shelby County Defending Childhood Initiative - Network for Overcoming Violence and Abuse (NOVA)*

The Department of Justice launched the Defending Childhood Initiative to address childhood exposure to violence -- as victims and witnesses. Shelton is a licensed clinical social worker, educator, health care administrator and project manager and consultant.

(More)

Page 3
Media Release
Juvenile Justice Team
May 25, 2015

Altha J. Stewart, M.D., *Director, Systems of Care in the Office of the Shelby County Public Defender and Just Care Family Network*

A psychiatrist, health care administrator, Dr. Stewart is a nationally recognized expert in public sector and minority issues in behavioral health care. Currently directing Systems of Care for the Shelby County Public Defender's Office, she also continues as Director for Just Care Family Network, Memphis' federally funded Systems of Care program for children with serious emotional disorders and their families.

Lt. Col. Michael Williams, *Training Academy Commander at the Memphis Police Department*

A 27-year veteran of the Memphis Police Department, Lt. Col. Williams is the Commander of the Memphis Police Department and has been the MPD representative on the Shelby County Juvenile Justice Board since 2012.

Lt. Freddie Hughes, *Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Patrol Support Services Division, Crime Prevention/School Security Bureau-Advisor to the RED Project*

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University advances a balanced, multi-systems approach to reducing juvenile delinquency that promotes positive child and youth development, while also holding youth accountable. The Center works to focus the nation's juvenile justice and related systems of care on the key principles embodied in an evidence-based juvenile justice reform agenda, utilizing a multi-systems approach.

For more information on the CJJR Fellows Network, visit <http://cjjr.georgetown.edu>

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