



5th Annual Race for Recovery 5k is Scheduled!

The Shelby County Drug Court Foundation is pleased to announce the 5th Annual Race for Recovery 5K has been scheduled for Saturday, April 28th at 10:30am. The event will be held at the historic Overton Park in Midtown. All proceeds from the 5K will go toward providing much needed services for drug court participants.

Runners and walkers of all ages are welcomed to participate in the race. Plan on gathering at the East Parkway Pavilion in Overton Park before the race starts, at 10:00am. A brief awards ceremony will be held after the race. Packet pick up will be held at Judicare (300 North Bellevue) Friday, April 27th from 4:00pm-6:00pm. Register anytime by clicking the 'Registration' link below.

We would love to have you or your organization sponsor the race! All sponsors will have their name or logo included in the registration packet and the opportunity to advertise inside the runners' registration packets. There are four sponsor levels available. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor please email Bryan Owens at bryan.owens@shelbycountyttn.gov.

Registration Link: <https://www.racesonline.com/events/race-for-recovery>

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SCDC Connects with Forklift Training Program

A handful of SCDC clients are now certified forklift operators thanks to a local program called 2nd Chance Forklift Training. The program, located on 3041 Getwell Road, offers a four-hour same day training course on forklift operation. Clients only need to schedule an appointment and pay a training fee. Once completed, clients leave with a personalized OSHA certificate and their training fee is then reimbursed by the SCDC.

A total of five clients have currently gone through the training program, which also helps place clients as forklift operators at area business. Client Charles L. recently completed the program, saying, "It was a good experience; it gave me a new trade, I learned a new skill. The people who trained us were great and they gave us plenty of time on the lifts so we could get comfortable." Charles has been in contact with 2nd Chance about job placement and hopes to get a position as a forklift operator at FedEx or another area business in the near future. Judge Dwyer and the drug court team are excited about the new partnership.

"We're always thrilled to connect with local programs that can get our clients trained and employed. We love supporting clients who are proactive and willing to work hard," Dwyer said.

For more information:
2nd Chance Forklift, LLLC
3041 Getwell Road, Suite #108
901-690-5677

A Familiar Face

Every few months, a man wearing a red collared shirt and baseball cap walks into Division 8. “I’m just here to say hello to the Judge,” he says. The man has been coming around for years. In fact, in 2011, he was inducted into the Shelby County Drug Court Hall of Fame. He is one of several graduate inductees who is recognized for his accomplishments in and after their term in Drug Court.

Joel Weiss entered Drug Court in 2000 after his 13th charge for Theft of Property under \$500. He had had enough. What started out with partying and recreational drug use in college in the 70s, Joel quickly graduated to the regular use of Quaaludes, a synthetic, barbiturate-like depressant that his father would prescribe to him. His mother had finally given him the tough love he needed. After years of enabling him, she finally kicked him out of the house and did not allow him to return. He had gone to over 25 different treatment programs, but change did not occur until he began Drug Court.

While in Drug Court Joel knew he had to work the program to prove to everyone that he could recover from his addiction. “I made 200 meetings in 90 days – God, that was amazing. What I didn’t realize was that was God talking to me.” He maintained his sobriety in the program and graduated in 13 months. For him, it was rigorous, but it was worth it in order to get him to where he is today.

Today, Joel can be seen across the street from 201 Poplar. He is responsible for monitoring and maintaining one of the many parking lots that service the clients of the Criminal Justice Center. “I thank God every day that I’m clean and sober. I pray every morning for about 10 minutes. I want to keep going with what I’ve got.”



Joel Weiss in Division 8, paying his quarterly visit to see Judge Dwyer

Double Perspective

Mark McDaniel Jr. has an edge when it comes to his practice as a criminal defense lawyer. With the experience as a Drug Court participant under his belt, he offers a different perspective for his clients looking to be accepted into the program. Now on the other side as an attorney, Mark utilizes his past experiences in Drug Court to understand and empathize with his clients who suffer from substance abuse.

Growing up in a legalistic home, where alcohol was forbidden, Mark found himself estranged from his family due to his alcohol addiction. “I had this sense of rebellion,” he said. After leaving a club one night, Mark drove drunk and got into a serious accident, ultimately, landing himself into the 18-month Drug Court program in the fall of 2010.

For Mark, motivation was key in accomplishing his endeavor to practice law; he knew he wanted to be a criminal defense lawyer his entire life. So while in Drug Court, he focused on his goals, managing to work fulltime, attend University of Memphis

fulltime and comply with all Drug Court requirements. Drug Court did a lot more than how to simply handle his addiction. “It taught me discipline, accountability and to understand what it felt like to be on the other side of the BAR.”

Mark graduated from Drug Court in June 2012, finished his undergraduate work at University of Memphis, then started law school in the fall of 2014. After graduating from law school in May 2017, he passed the BAR after his first attempt in July 2017. Judge Dwyer swore him in when he obtained his license to practice.

Today, Mark practices law alongside his father, Mark S. McDaniel Sr., who has been an attorney for 35 years. He was recently married to his wife, Hannah, in August 2017.

“[Here’s] the good thing about Drug Court. Judge continues to give you chances because we are dealing with a disease. When you’re doing the right thing he’s for you. He’s like a father figure – someone you can share things with. But if you cross him, he can be your scariest enemy.”



Former Drug Court participant, Mark McDaniel Jr., passed the BAR in July 2017