



SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES™

Addressing underlying conditions of wellbeing and justice, for all to reach their full potential

Community Connections

A Newsletter of the Shelby County Government's Division of Community Services

R-E-S-P-O-N-D is the New R-E-S-P-E-C-T

This month marked one year since the passing of the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin. With her Memphis-born roots and history, Ms. Franklin has a special place in the hearts and culture of this community. As I have been honoring her legacy all month long with random shower karaoke concerts (don't judge), I cannot think of any other song that cements her iconic status more than the song *Respect*.

Speaking of Respect...

It can be tough being in a role of public service, especially one where people are seeking services and information to meet what many times are essential needs. There is never enough money to serve everyone who might need help. Even when there is money, the rules around funding might help with one issue, but not another equally important one. We could work 24 hours, 7 days a week, and there still just wouldn't be enough time to get it all done.

In spite of the barriers to being able to "solve" every issue presented to us, I would pose that perhaps that is not the highest calling of our work. **I believe that our highest calling is to respect each and every person that we encounter each day.** While there are many elements of respect, probably one of the most overlooked, is the value of responsiveness.

Responsiveness does not mean that we always have the answers or resources that someone is seeking. What it does mean is that we **respect people enough to respond.** Return the email or phone call. Be honest about the help you can provide and what you can't. Give a person some leads on possible partners that may be able to help. Tell people you don't know the answer, but will find out what you can...and call them back with a follow up. Take time to just listen. All of these things are ways that we can and should be responsive to those we serve.

I am sure that you are reading this and thinking "Okay, I already know this." Well I know it too, but if you are like me, sometimes my theory doesn't quite measure up to my practice. I get overwhelmed with emails. I get stuck because I don't have a solution for the most dire of circumstances. I sometimes have not been as responsive as I should have been. In these instances, I have also made situations worse than they would have been had I just practiced what I preached above. On the flip side, when I have just taken the time to respond regardless of whether I had the answer or not, people may not have been happy that the issue still exists, but they have expressed feeling a sense of respect that at least I was responsive.

My challenge to all of us this month is simple, let's all **be more intentional** about responsiveness. This doesn't mean that you will solve every problem or have all of the answers, but it does mean that we all ensure that we have done our best in treating folks with the respect that they deserve. I think you will find that "just a little bit" of respect and responsiveness goes a long way.

Sincerely,
Dorcas Young Griffin
Director, Division of Community Services



Inside this Edition

- ◆ Director's Message 1
- ◆ Mayor's Summer Work Experience 2
- ◆ Salon Professionals Join the Fight 3
- ◆ Barbershop Talk 3
- ◆ A Step Ahead 4
- ◆ Addressing Diaper Needs 4
- ◆ New Transportation Options 5
- ◆ Community Services Around the County 6

Vision Statement

The Shelby County Division of Community Services strives to be a highly organized team and partner, dedicated to promoting a strong community where all people are able to reach their full potential.

Mission Statement

The Division of Community Services promotes ongoing economic security and independence for the people of Shelby County. We do this by promoting, coordinating and delivering services that address the underlying conditions for wellbeing and justice.

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DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT &
OUTREACH

Mayor's Summer Work Experience

There are more than 25,000 high school students and nearly 100,000 pre-career young adults who reside in Shelby County each summer. These young people face limited opportunities to learn new skills, make new friends, and create unique memories. The Mayor's Summer Work Experience provided a safe environment for students and young adults to achieve all three goals – all while being paid in two specialized programs: the Youth Conservation League for youth, and the Youth Workforce League.

"We are more than grateful for the opportunities and the doors that were opened to us this summer and we look forward to bringing our talents back to Shelby County."

— Caleesha Body, participant

The **Division of Community Services** was proud to coordinate the **Youth Workforce League**. For seven-weeks, young adults selected by lottery, were placed in 24 different Shelby County Government offices and eleven nonprofits to work and gain valuable professional experiences.

Each Friday, the workers would meet to devel-

op the soft skills necessary for future success. The series included an impressive array of Memphis' industry leaders and change-makers, including Johnny Moore, Sabine Langer, Josh Spickler, and Raushanah Morgan, who willingly shared their vast knowledge. In addition, there was "hands-on training" on resume writing and interview skills facilitated by the American Job Centers staff.



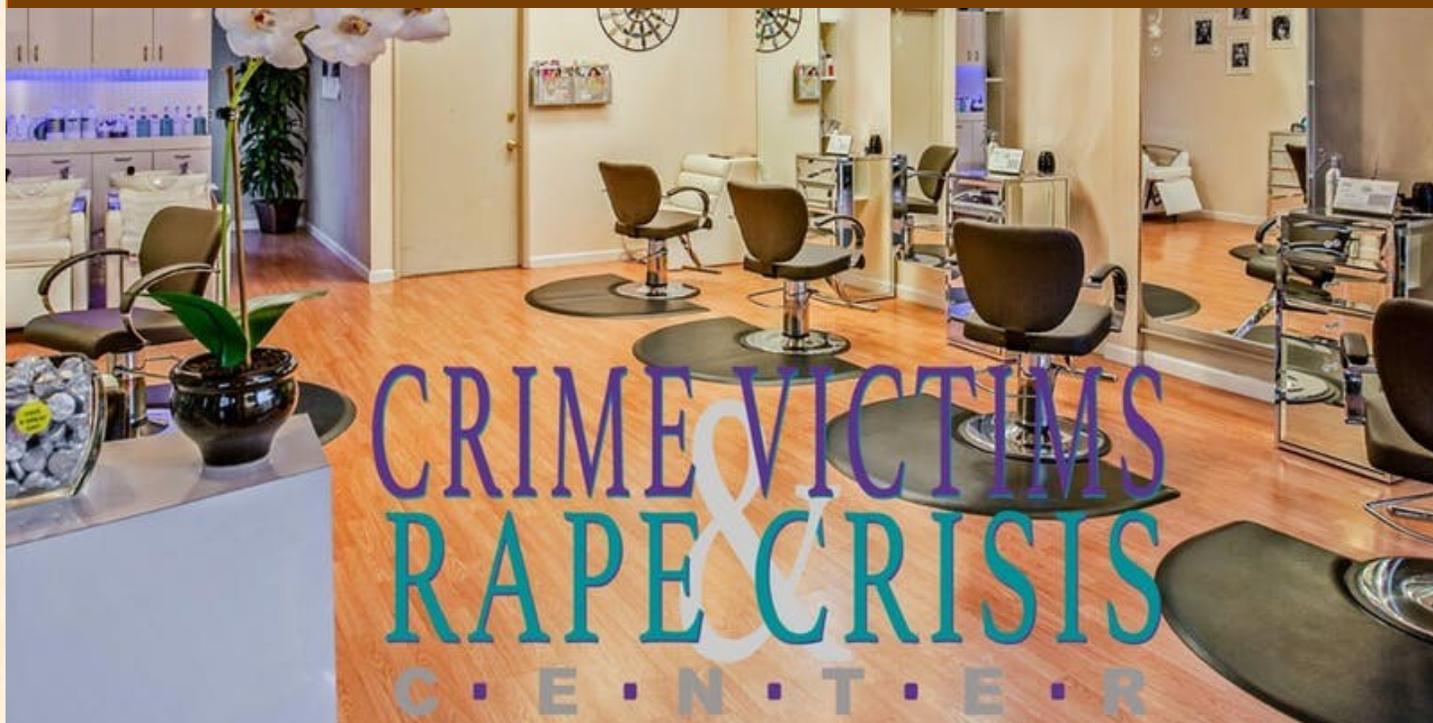
Shelby County Government Division of Community Services
Shelby County Mayor's Administration
Dorcas Young Griffin, Director
www.shelbycountyttn.gov



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Cut It Out: Salon Professionals Join the Fight



DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
CRIME VICTIMS &
RAPE CRISIS CENTER

Salon professionals are in a **unique position to recognize the signs** and symptoms of abuse in their clients and coworkers. Because of the intimate and nurturing nature of the relationship between salon professionals and their clients and co-workers, salon professionals can often spot signs of abuse that others may never see.

Hairstylists, barbers, nail technicians, make-up artists, and other professionals in the field are invited to join this unique series to bring awareness to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Come learn about how you can help recognize and **prevent violence** in you community by joining us for the first session on:

Monday, September 23, 10am—noon,
at Methodist Le Bonheur Community
Outreach space. For more info go to
www.eventbrite.com.



Barbershop Talk: Free Food & Cuts for Men

University of Memphis' Barber Shop Talks are educational experiences that allow for men to talk about **manhood, fatherhood, self-development,** and what it looks like for a man to work toward becoming his best self. Breakfast, haircuts, discussion, and drumming are free for all.

Saturday, September 29, 9:30am—1pm. Contact 901-678-1615 for questions.





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A Step Ahead Foundation: Empowering Women

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
CRIME VICTIMS &
RAPE CRISIS CENTER

Claudia Haltom founded **A Step Ahead Foundation** in 2011, driven by years of experience as a Juvenile Court Judicial Magistrate. Haltom ruled on cases in which a single mother who had become pregnant while she was in school, dropped out, and had one or more babies before she was emotionally, physically, or financially prepared to provide for her children.

Before A Step Ahead Foundation was founded, these young women did not have **easy access to the most effective methods of reversible birth control**. Haltom resolved to making sure these young women had access to birth control so they could plan their futures and achieve their full potential.

A Step Ahead Foundation’s goal is, and continues to be, to **reduce the number of unintended pregnancies** in Memphis and Shelby County. They have 24 partner clinics, established partnerships, and collaborate efforts with other local agencies and organizations to share resources to better serve Memphis and Shelby County.

Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center is proud to work with A Step Ahead on *Healthy Relationships* and *Girl Talk*, a fun six-week program for girls ages 11-18 who want to learn about planning their lives, futures, and families.

A Step Ahead’s mission is to remove the geographic and economic barriers for women to have access to the most effective methods of contraception at no cost to them. When women can plan their lives, plan their future, and plan their babies, they are better able to achieve their hopes and dreams.



Bundles for Babies: Addressing Diaper Needs

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
COMMUNITY
SERVICES AGENCY

Diapers cost over \$100 every month for one baby and adult incontinent products can cost over \$160 monthly for one person - a necessary, albeit burdensome expense for low-income families in Shelby County. The lack of these products impacts the physical, mental, and economic well-being of low-income families, taking up over 11% of monthly income and taking a toll on a family’s independence and our community.

The **Bare Needs Diaper Bank**, a program of Mid-South Food Bank, works to alleviate the cost by providing diapers in all sizes. These products are classified as luxury goods, so there are NO governmental assistance programs that cover them. The Diaper Bank also distributes period products to help women and girls have these necessary monthly supplies. The Diaper Bank distributes baby diapers, period supplies and adult incontinence products through our network of Partner Agencies, and diapers-only agencies.

Please join us Saturday, September 21, 1-4pm for a fun-filled day of games, refreshments, and music at the Diaper Drive Kickoff for Diaper Need Awareness Week.





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We Get Around: New Transportation Options

MATA AND SCS PARTNERSHIP

Shelby County Schools strives to provide equitable opportunities for all students. During a recent community forum, students expressed the need for more access to public transit. They believe this access will help address challenges such as poverty, absenteeism, and academic performance. After hearing these sentiments, the School Board took action by investing in an initiative that aims to improve transportation access for high schoolers. In partnership with Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA), SCS will provide free bus passes to high school students during the 2019-20 school year based on eligibility and availability.

3,000 passes are available to 9-12 grade students who apply. Parents of recipients are also eligible for a pass. To find out more, go to: www.scsk12.org/matabuspass/



901RIDECHOICE is a free phone service for older adults and people living with a disability who need local, reliable transportation options to get to their destinations.

Powered by Innovate Memphis and funded by the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) and the City of Memphis, 901RideChoice is designed to give vulnerable populations **transportation options to help regain their independence**. The call to RIDE-901 is free, but services will need to be paid for by the patient.

"Lack of transportation may result in patients missing medical appointments which disrupts the continuity of their care," Courtney McNeal with Innovate Memphis said. Innovate Memphis found 20 percent of calls to Memphis EMS were non-emergency and amounted to some people who needed some sort of transportation to services.

For more information, go to 901ridechoice.com





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Community Services in your area

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
COMMUNITY
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OUTREACH

The best way for residents to learn about Community Services and access programs is to be in touch with someone from our incredible team. Join us for an upcoming event all around Shelby County.

Halal Food Pantry—CSA
At Masjid Al-Mu’Minum
August 31, noon—3pm

Mid-South Food Bank’s Annual Agency Conference—CSA
September 4, 9am—2pm

Delta Fair—Aging
September 4, 9am—3pm

Grace Baptist Church Community Health Resource Fair—Aging
September 10 and 11, 8am—3pm

Kingdom Fellowship Baptist Church Outreach Ministry—Community Services
September 11, 9:30am—2:30pm

Northlake Assisted Living Health Fair—Aging
September 12, 1-4pm

Cooper Young Festival—Aging
September 14, 9am—2pm

Bickford Community Center—Aging
September 17, 10am—1pm

Southwest TN Community College—Aging
September 27, 9am—1:30pm

Barrier Buster—Excel Event for Adults—Community Services
September 27, 9-11am

Pink with a Purpose: Annual Family Health & Wellness Event—Community Services
At Orange Mound Community Center
September 28, 10am—2pm



We have grown our followers by 400%.
Don't miss out.

www.shelbycountyttn.gov/Community-Services

