September 2019 Edition

SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT DIVISION OF
COMMUNITY SERVICES™

Addressing underlining 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

The Art of Self-Care

In recent years, all the buzz seems to be around the concept of self-care as people are recognizing that **you can't give more than what you have within.** Self-care is intentional activities to support our physical, mental, and emotional health. Admittedly, I came to the glaring revelation that I haven't been a prize student in the art of self-care. Thankfully, all it took was a few unsettling numbers on a recent wellness screening to shine a light on my less-than-healthy habits. I don't take for granted that I'm lucky to have a chance to prioritize my self-care moving forward. Based on the nature of our work, I am sure that I'm not the only one who may need to improve in this area. As I work to chart my own course to self-care, here are a few nuggets that have helped me:

Determine your why. For me it was a brutally frank discussion with my medical provider. For others it may be the desire to be your best self for family. It might be because you want the energy to continue to accomplish more at work. Your why is your own. Just get you one.

Go back to the basics. Self-care may be a challenge in practice, but you know what to do. Eat right. Exercise daily. Get regular check-ups. Step away from that desk for a bit. Turn off those emails at night. There are lots of cool and innovative self-care tools. When in doubt, keep it simple, stick to the basics.

Get an accountability partner. When I shared my struggles, co-workers immediately jumped in with real actions to help me achieve my goals. I now have a standing date to walk for a few minutes after work. I'm asked daily, not just what I ate, but did I eat at all. Even my parents have gotten in on holding me accountable by insisting that they "tuck me in" by phone at night, ensuring I get some sleep (a little extreme, but I love their commitment to keeping me honest). Bottom line: there are people who care about you and are happy to motivate you on your path. Use them.

Be intentional. Self-care by definition requires intentionality. There are plenty of excuses to not make the time. Work, family obligations, community involvement. Whenever you go down this path of thinking, remember none of those get done if *you* aren't okay.

This is a journey. The only way that we'll reap the benefits of self-care is to ensure that it's core to daily life. Just weeks of ignoring self-care can have negative consequences. Start with slow, sustainable change rather than doing too much and later abandoning it. Remember, it's a marathon, not a sprint.

I am hopeful that anyone else who is at a crossroads in improving their health will take some real action steps in the right direction. Fortunately, if you need a little inspiration to kick start your journey, the Division is being more intentional about offering opportunities. In the coming weeks, we will share information, host trainings, and provide hands on activities to encourage a culture of self-care here at work. Stay tuned. As we strive every day to support individuals, children, and families towards their goals, we can only do that if we ourselves are whole. I look forward to being on this journey with each of you.

Sincerely,
Dorcas Young Griffin
Director, Division of Community Services

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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: OFFICE OF JUSTICE INITIATIVES

Pursuit Center Opens to Reduce Recidivism

The Pursuit Center is open! The second installation of an Evening Reporting Center (ERC) model within Shelby County, the Pursuit Center is a way to **reduce the rate of recidivism** in juvenile offenders. The Evening Reporting Centers reflect Mayor Lee Harris' commitment to identifying ways to address the needs of justice-involved youth at various points along the continuum of the juvenile Justice system.

At the Pursuit Center, court appointed youth with pending court cases are offered an experience grounded in **shifting the youth's paradigm** on positive social relationships, academic plans, and job readiness skill building. Otherwise detained in the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) within Juvenile Court, the youth at the Pursuit Center will experience programming in small groups in twenty-day cycles. During a cycle, participants meet daily between 3pm-8pm. Youth will be transported to the ERC and home every evening, receive a snack and dinner, and will be exposed to life-altering sessions to further **enhance academic, life, and conflict resolution skills**. The program consists of tutoring in core academic areas such as English and Math; mental health and intensive mentoring services aimed at cultivating positive social interaction; and diverting the students from destructive behaviors.

The Division of Community Services recently attended the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the 'Pursuit Center' at Carver High School in South Memphis, which was attended by our Division Director, Mayor Harris, Judge Dan Michael from Juvenile Court, Shelby County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Joris Ray, and Shelby County Sherriff Floyd Bonner and a host of community supporters.

The Pursuit Center's ERC is a community-based alternative detention site that operates in partnerships established between the Juvenile Court, Memphis and Shelby County Government, and Shelby County Schools Division of Alternative Education (DAE).Managed by Shelby County Schools Division of Alternative Education, the Center is located at G.W. Carver School.

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More Access and Support for Victims

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: CRIME VICTIMS & RAPE CRISIS CENTER

The Shelby County Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center (CVRCC) kicks off Domestic Violence Awareness Month with education and increased access to services.

"Not only have they been victimized, but previously, they had to also suffer a loss of income just to seek the services they needed.

Not anymore."

— Sandy Bromley

SERVICES EASIER TO ACCESS FOR ALL VICTIMS OF CRIME WITH EXTENDED HOURS.

By increasing hours of access for all victims of crime, CVRCC is lightening the burden for crime victims. "Not only have they been victimized, but previously, they had to also suffer a loss of income just to seek the services they needed. Not anymore," says CVRCC Director Sandy Bromley. "We have done the research that says our clients are looking for a more convenient schedule and we are working to better accommodate those who found it difficult to seek services before." Many victims of crime are busy working parents or students who are excited about this increase in hours. The CVRCC is now open Mondays through Fridays, 8am—6pm.

WAKE UP CALL CONFERENCE EDUCATES THE COMMUNITY ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

It's time for a Wake Up Call! Domestic violence is often only viewed as occurring between intimate partners, however family violence or elder abuse are also prevalent in our community. On September 28, the **Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center** joined with the Memphis & Shelby County Domestic and Sexual Violence Council and First Baptist Church-Broad to host a one-day conference on domestic violence. This one-day conference aimed at educating the community about the wide range of types of domestic violence and increasing awareness about the dynamics of those forms of violence and how we can all work to address it across Shelby County.

The conference included a panel discussion with leaders in the field on understanding Orders of Protection, hate crimes, grief and relationships, domestic violence and homelessness, men and violence, and family violence.

SAFE AT HOME SUPPORTS VICTIMS' CONFIDENTIALITY

For many victims of domestic abuse, stalking, and similar crimes, escaping abusers is no easy task. Through the Safe at Home program, victims will be able to ensure that their residential address, which will be made confidential, will not be subject to public records request disclosure.

Victims may need to move to other towns, switch jobs, move their children to different schools or even change their names just to escape their abusers. Even then, abusers may still easily find them by searching public records online. **CVRCC Victim Advocates are certified Safe at Home providers** and can help you with the support you need. For more, Sos.tn.gov/SafeAtHome

Safe at Home
Address Confidentiality Program
Tennessee Secretary of State

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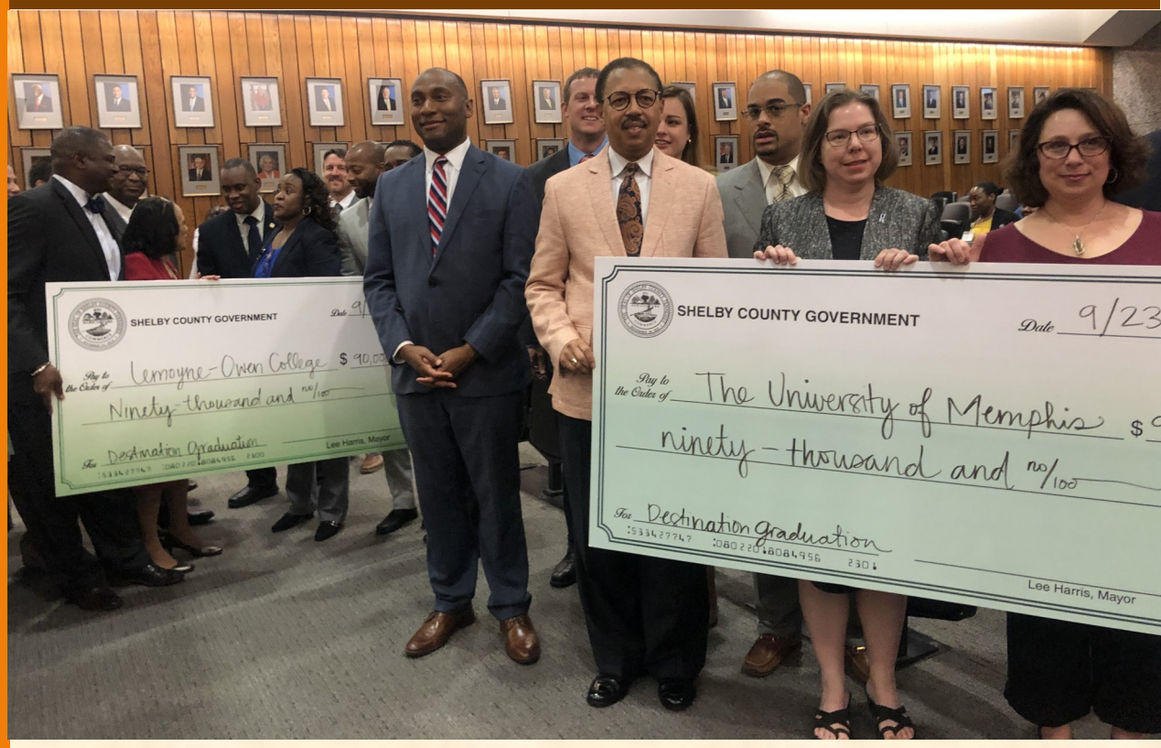
DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY

Scholarships and Assistance Continue to Help



DESTINATION GRADUATION

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris and the Shelby County Commission were proud to announce the "Destination Graduation" scholarship, organized by the **Community Services Agency** (CSA), which provided support for local college students to graduate successfully in the 2019-2020 academic year. University of Memphis and LeMoyne-Owen College each received a scholarship of $90,000 to **assist undergraduate and graduate students who are at financial risk** of not earning their degree. Students in their last year of schooling, who met the financial criteria, were selected by their school to receive a one-time "Destination Graduation" grant for up to $4,500 for tuition and books.

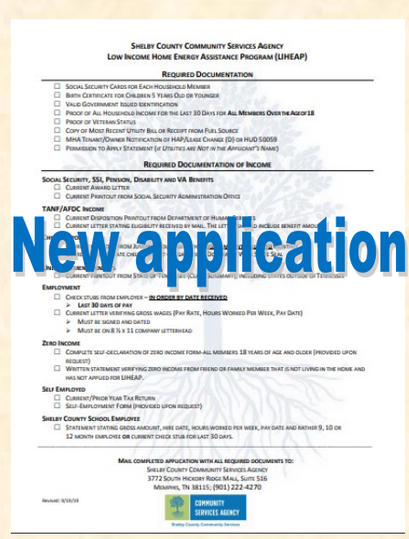
"Many students make it to the last year in their educational program and find they are unable to graduate due to lack of funds. As an agency, we are so pleased that we have been able to **alleviate some of the financial stress for over 40 students**, so that they can focus their energies on attaining their degrees," says CSA Deputy Administrator, Cherry Whitehead-Thompson.

ASSISTANCE BEGINS AGAIN FOR UTILIY, RENT, AND MORTGAGE

The Community Services Agency (CSA) thanks all residents and partners for a successful year. On October 1, a new program year started with a NEW APPLICATION. Previous applications for utility and rent/mortgage assistance will not be accepted.

Visit www.shelbycountytn.gov/csa or

Www.shelbycountytn.gov/utility



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DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Serving Those Who Served Us

"Approximately 50,000 veterans reside in Shelby County and many aren't aware of the services and benefits they're entitled to. Some know but haven't had easy access to a Veterans Services Officer and we're here to change that," says Dr. Michael Ellis, Veterans Services Officer.

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, Commissioner Amber Mills (District 1), and Dr. Ellis, were excited to announce the Grand Opening of a **new Veterans Services Office in Millington** on September 30. The new location will be open the last Wednesday and Thursday of every month, 8am – 4:30pm.

The majority of claims submitted for VA benefits come through county veterans services offices. Staffed by an accredited veterans services officer, the main office at 1060 Madison Avenue and new satellite office in Millington are equipped to assist veterans and their families navigate the complex bureaucracy to obtain the services they need and deserve.

Commissioner Mills has been there from the start. "Providing access to our veterans in District 1 was the first request I presented to Mayor Harris' administration. I am elated to see it come to fruition so quickly because our veterans deserve nothing but the best!"

AT YOUR SERVICE:

- Compensation and pension
- Disability and increases
- Upload evidence to support your claim
- Claim status and appeals
- Burial benefits
- Service and medical record requests
- Change of address
- Add a dependent
- Request forms

For more information, call 901-222-4237 or visit www.shelbycountytn.gov/veterans

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Community Services in Your Area

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & 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.

Southwest TN Community College Fair
At Macon Campus
October 3, 11am—2pm

Jerusalem MB Church Fair
At Jerusalem MB Church
October 5, 1am—1pm

Gateways for Growth
October 8, 4-6pm

Service Fair for Veterans
At Veterans Administration Hospital
October 9, 10am—2pm

Lighthouse Victory Temple Church Health Fair
At Lighthouse Victory Temple Church
October 12, 1-4pm

National Leadership Conference Career & Counseling Fair
At Sheraton Downtown
October 18, 8:30am—4:30pm

Vietnam Veterans Information Fair
At First Baptist Church Millington
October 19, 10am

Oak Grove MB Church Senior Day Conference and Health Fair
At Oak Grove MB Church
October 23, 8am—1pm

Workforce Summit Career Fair
At Pipkin Building at Tiger Lane
October 30, 8am—3pm

Don't be left out.
www.shelbycountytn.gov/Community-Services