

Director's Message

One Person at a Time

We live in a world where patience is a lost art. Fast food has become the 6th food group. On Demand TV services have us seeking the second season of a show the day after we finished the first. Recently, I even found a way to have my cell phone wait in line for me, because who has time for a line? It is no wonder that collectively we have become less and less patient with the process that sustainable change requires of us.

Real change happens one step and one person at a time.

While this is especially true in the realm of human and social services, it can be a difficult reality to navigate. In addition to developing "process patience", embracing the necessity of one person at a time requires an authentic value of the QUALITY of service delivery versus the QUANTITY of the people served.

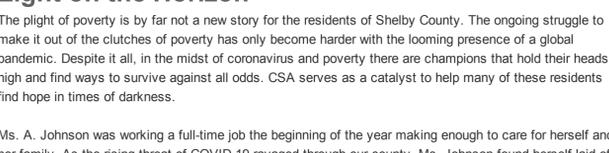
This shift in perspective and action can almost seem to be a stark contradiction during times when the complexity and breadth of needs are simply overwhelming, especially as we continue through the pandemic. Each day we have thousands of people who reach out in crisis and need assistance immediately. While we cannot lose the urgency necessary to provide the assistance needed, it is equally important that we recognize the **value of every unique individual and interaction** that each of us have daily in our work.

When simply focused on the numbers versus the quality of our service, we are likely to miss out on the resulting benefits of efficiency, depth and sustainability, not only for clients, but for ourselves. It has never failed that even on my most challenging days, the moment that I take a breath and focus on one person and their needs and serving that person well, I feel energized and more confident that what I am doing actually matters. Those feelings are what give us the strength to keep serving no matter what.

This month's newsletter gives a glimpse into the ways that the Division of Community Services team demonstrates its commitment to serve one person at a time with the dedication, empathy and focus required to make long-lasting change in Shelby County. We balance urgency and patience. We recognize that we must continue to increase our capacity to meet the need, while also respecting the uniqueness of every person who calls us. I am hopeful that these stories will encourage, inspire and even challenge you to value the ways that you have already, and can in the future, show up one person at a time. I am confident that if we collectively commit to this, we will eventually see evidence of the change we all seek for the community and world around us.

"Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time, and always start with the person nearest you." – Mother Teresa

Yours In Partnership,
Dorcas Young Griffin
 Director of the Division of Community Services
 Shelby County Government



Community Services Agency

Light on the Horizon

The plight of poverty is by far not a new story for the residents of Shelby County. The ongoing struggle to make it out of the clutches of poverty has only become harder with the looming presence of a global pandemic. Despite it all, in the midst of coronavirus and poverty there are champions that hold their heads high and find ways to survive against all odds. CSA serves as a catalyst to help many of these residents find hope in times of darkness.

Ms. A. Johnson was working a full-time job the beginning of the year making enough to care for herself and her family. As the rising threat of COVID-19 ravaged through our county, Ms. Johnson found herself laid off and in need of assistance to make ends meet. After months of going through her savings and receiving help from family, Ms. Johnson turned to CSA for assistance and we were right there, ready and willing to help. Ms. Johnson visited our website, printed off utility and rent/mortgage assistance applications and sent them in with all her supporting documentation. Not even a month later Ms. Johnson received assistance with her MLGW bill and approval for her rent to be paid to her landlord.

"I felt like I was down on my luck and nothing was going good. Then I got a call from Ms. Barnes telling me that I was approved. All my anxiety drained from my body and I could see the light on the horizon once again," said Ms. Johnson.

Ms. Johnson soon found a new job and she can keep pushing forward out of the clutches of poverty, during a global pandemic, and against all odds.

At CSA we take stories like Ms. Johnson's to be our inspiration and motivation to keep making a difference in Shelby County. Visit our website at www.shelbycountycsa.org where you can find all the information you may want to get the support you need. With disconnections beginning again August 3, now is the time to reach out for help. 901-222-4212

Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center

Every Step of the Way

Joseph Smith doesn't want anybody to go through what his family is going through. But if they do, he wants you to know that there's help.

Mr. Smith went to the Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center to file for an Order of Protection on behalf of his daughter, seventeen at the time, after she was attacked by someone she had been dating.

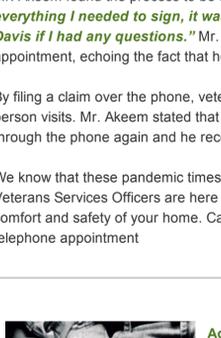


Crime Victim Advocate Gwen Turner

"I would like to give a special thanks to Gwen. It took me forever to have my Order of Protection completed, due in part to COVID-19, but Gwen stood with me every step of the way, she looked up information that I needed, checked with other departments for the information I needed. I knew she was going beyond the call of duty to help with my case. I really appreciate all she did for me, I just wish more people did their jobs the way she does."

CVRCC helps many people in situations such as Mr. Smith's. On average, CVRCC helps 150 people file for an **order of protection** every month. An order of protection is signed by a judge or judicial commissioner and tells someone who is hurting you to stop or else face legal consequences. Whether or not victims ultimately choose to apply, our staff meet or talk with each client and together review any safety concerns and discuss all of their options and resources. If the client decides that an order of protection is the best option for them, our advocates will walk them through the process each step of the way, starting with helping clients file the application for a temporary order in our office. We then electronically submit the paperwork to the judicial officers downtown. If a temporary order has been granted, our advocates will help prepare the client for what to expect in the upcoming court hearing and will attend court with the client to help them navigate the confusing courthouse processes. It is only after the court hearing, where the other party has a right to be heard, that a final order of protection may be granted by the judge or judicial commissioner. Though we are not attorneys and cannot give legal advice during this process (we rely on our partners at Memphis Area Legal Services for that), we are there to support victims each step of the way with compassion and education to help them get through a difficult time in their life.

In just the first three months of the pandemic, CVRCC handled 924 calls, 42 online submissions, 216 in-person appointments, just for orders of protection alone.



Veterans Services Office

In-Person or Virtual

In response to the safety precautions of COVID-19 and the CDC guidelines, our office now offers two ways to get a claim filed; over the phone and in person. With these new adjustments, our office has continued to put our Veterans first, making sure we serve our clients as efficiently, and safely as possible.



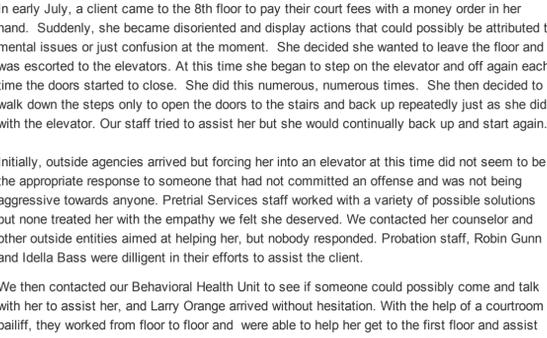
Below: Information Specialist Wesley Henry who helped the Alton family.

Aging Commission of the Mid-South

Treatment Like Family

Early July, the Aging Commission of the Mid-South received a call from Mr. F. Alton informing us that he needed assistance with finding care for his 93 year old mother that was showing symptoms of the COVID-19 virus with a temperature of 100+. When our office reached out to Mr. Alton, he initially wanted to setup hospice for his mother. It was explained to him that hospice services would require his mother to be diagnosed with a terminal illness, and he was encouraged to visit the emergency room so that his mother could see a doctor and be tested for the virus. Having difficulty reaching her physician's office, he expressed frustration and a sense of helplessness and reached out for help. We contacted her doctor's office and were able to reach the Nurse Practitioner who confirmed that she needed to get to the emergency room. When we contacted Mr. Alton and explained to him why it was important to take her to the ER, we learned that he was sick himself, and not able to transport her. After numerous conversations, an ambulance was dispatched to their home. Eventually, the client thanked us for our help and shared that she was doing okay and was at the hospital.

Information Specialist Wesley Henry went out of his way and displayed a caring as he does for each client, treating them like a family member. We are in a fight against the virus but we have the gear, resources, and the know-how to continue to help people in need. 901-222-4111



Office of Justice Initiatives

From Crisis to Calm

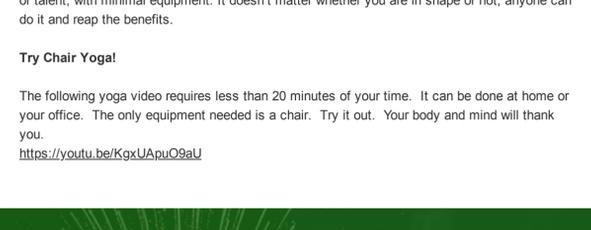
In early July, a client came to the 8th floor to pay their court fees with a money order in her hand. Suddenly, she became disoriented and display actions that could possibly be attributed to mental issues or just confusion at the moment. She decided she wanted to leave the floor and was escorted to the elevators. At this time she began to step on the elevator and then again each time the doors started to close. She did this numerous, numerous times. She then decided to walk down the steps only to open the doors to the stairs and back up repeatedly just as she did with the elevator. Our staff tried to assist her but she would continually back up and start again.

Initially, outside agencies arrived but forcing her into an elevator at this time did not seem to be the appropriate response to someone that had not committed an offense and was not being aggressive towards anyone. Pretrial Services staff worked with a variety of possible solutions but none treated her with the empathy we felt she deserved. We contacted her counselor and other outside entities aimed at helping her, but nobody responded. Probation staff, Robin Gunn and Idella Bass were diligent in their efforts to assist the client.

We then contacted our Behavioral Health Unit to see if someone could possibly come and talk with her to assist her, and Larry Orange arrived without hesitation. With the help of a courtroom bailiff, they worked from floor to floor and were able to help her get to the first floor and assist her to the exit safely and with confidence. Throughout the entire ordeal, LaQuitta Nelson was able to manage major efforts while ensuring the safety of all involved during the coronavirus. Pretrial Services is considered a neutral entity within the criminal justice system, working on behalf of the community as a whole to promote safety, accountability, and restoration. But we are not neutral in our care for the clients we serve.

Where Human Needs and Government Intersect

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 well-being and justice. We strive to be a highly organized team and partner, dedicated to promoting a strong community where all people are able to reach their full potential.



Lifelong Season of Self-Care

We need self-care now more than ever. This quarter, add yoga to your self-care routine. Multiple studies have shown the physical and mental benefits of yoga. By practicing yoga only a few times a week, you can see a difference in your health and the practice requires no special skill or talent, with minimal equipment. It doesn't matter whether you are in shape or not, anyone can do it and reap the benefits.

Try Chair Yoga!

The following yoga video requires less than 20 minutes of your time. It can be done at home or your office. The only equipment needed is a chair. Try it out. Your body and mind will thank you.
<https://youtu.be/KgxUApuO9aU>

