



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **MAYORS ASK FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY TO HELP END HOMELESSNESS, ONE FAMILY AT A TIME**

Initiative aims to help long-term improvements in local homelessness rates

As part of the Mayors Action Plan to End Homelessness, the Community Alliance for the Homeless is working on faith.

Memphis Mayor A C Wharton, Jr., and Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell Jr., in collaboration with the Community Alliance for the Homeless, are asking local churches and congregations to join a Faith-Based Partnership to End Homelessness. As part of the initiative, each of the churches or congregations would be asked to end homelessness for one family.

“During this term, my administration is narrowly focused on four priorities, including growing prosperity and opportunity for all, not just some,” said Mayor Wharton. “As we work to put families on the path to permanent housing, we want to make sure that our limited resources are put to their best use. With the Faith-Based Partnership to End Homelessness, we truly will be one congregation, one family.”

“The Faith-Based Partnership is unique in that it specifically addresses family homelessness,” said Mayor Luttrell. “Hopefully, through the Faith-Based Partnership, vital community resources can be stretched further to reach more families than ever before.”

Each participating faith-based partner will provide a team of mentors for their adopted family. The mentors will help the families with financial literacy, parenting, relationship building, and overall community support.

Faith-based partners will also be asked for a \$2,000 sponsorship to the program; those funds will be used for emergency rental assistance for homeless families and program delivery.

“Our local congregations are called upon each and every day to help with overdue utilities, hotel

stays, and delinquent rental debt, and they answer those calls with generosity and kindness,” said Katie Kitchin, the executive director of the Community Alliance for the Homeless. “This initiative will move us from a case-by-case Band-Aid approach to a more systematic way of helping those who need it most.”

The Faith-Based Partnership to End Homelessness will provide training and professional support to each of the mentoring teams, and will seek to connect each family with the community resources they may need.

**In January of 2011, the Mayors’ Action Plan to End Homelessness was introduced.** The Community Alliance for the Homeless was designated by the Mayors with the responsibility for implementing the plan. The first event associated with the Plan, Project Homeless Connect was held in September of last year, included more than 900 homeless participants and over 1,000 volunteers. Hundreds applied for housing and disability, 2100 meals were served, 200 food stamp applications were processed, and 300 medical and dental screenings were completed.

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