



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ACE AWARENESS FOUNDATION TO HOST CELEBRATION FOR FIRST-EVER
'DAY OF THE JOYFUL CHILD'**

Event to include official proclamation by Mayor Mark Luttrell and welcome for new ACE Awareness Foundation Executive Director, Renée Wilson-Simmons

June 26, 2018 (Memphis, TN) — On Tuesday, June 26, the ACE Awareness Foundation will host a free, family-friendly celebration event to raise awareness of intergenerational impact of chronic trauma and toxic stress for Shelby County residents. Held from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at Crosstown Concourse, "[Reclaiming Joy Through Prevention and Healing](#)" will honor the innovative work and collaboration happening around Memphis to help families overcome the trauma associated with adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs.

Founded in 2016, the ACE Awareness Foundation seeks to educate Greater Memphis about adverse childhood experiences, support families in their efforts to prevent and mitigate ACEs, and change local and state systems to support ACE prevention efforts. The foundation provides strategic oversight to the ACE Task Force of Shelby County and the [Universal Parenting Places](#), helping hundreds of citizens of Shelby County each year to break the cycle of trauma through free, supportive therapy.

To recognize the importance of promoting trauma-informed approaches to health and mental health efforts for children and families, Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell will proclaim June 26 the Day of the Joyful Child and encourage members of the community to support efforts to interrupt the cycle of childhood trauma.

"The most valuable asset we have is our children, and it's crucial that we do all we can to raise awareness about the dangers of Adverse Childhood Experiences," said Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell. "I am so grateful for all the hard work the ACE Awareness Foundation does to bring attention to this issue and the solutions they help provide to help the families across our community."

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Other highlights planned for the evening include:

- Performances by [Playback Memphis](#), [Genius Unlimited](#), and music by [DJ Siphne Aaye](#)
- A drawing for autographed copies of [The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity](#) by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, MD
- The premiere showing of a video on the history, mission, and achievements of the ACE Awareness Foundation and the ACE Task Force of Shelby County
- A fully staffed children's area with creative movement, relaxation exercises, and face painting

The event will also serve as the foundation's official welcome of its new executive director, Renée Wilson-Simmons, DrPH. A renowned expert in child and adolescent development, Dr. Wilson-Simmons was selected to head the organization following a nationwide search for new leadership to help position that organization as a leading force in understanding and addressing ACEs across the state and the nation. Dr. Wilson-Simmons joins the foundation from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, where she was director of the [National Center for Children in Poverty](#), a nonpartisan public policy research center, and faculty in the Department of Health Policy and Management. More on that announcement can be found on the [ACE Awareness Foundation website](#).

Registration for "Reclaiming Joy Through Prevention and Healing" is free and open to the public. RSVP information can be found [here](#) or on the [organization's website](#).

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The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Awareness Foundation informs the community about the role of emotional trauma in mental, physical, and behavioral health, and implements innovative models that provide preventable and sustainable solutions to reducing toxic stress in family systems. Visit the ACE Awareness Foundation online at www.ACEAwareness.org. [Like us on Facebook](#) or follow us on Twitter via [@ACEAwareness](#).