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Shelby County Residents Asked to “Answer the Call”

Upcoming Countywide Phone Surveys Will Help Create a Trauma-Informed Community

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – A task force made up of more than 40 community leaders is asking randomly selected Shelby County residents to “Answer the Call” this summer by participating in a confidential phone survey, which will gather information to help develop tools to assist parents in protecting their children’s emotional and behavioral health.

[The ACE \(Adverse Childhood Experience\) Center Task Force](#) of Shelby County recently was established to create a trauma-informed community, engaging residents in understanding the costly and harmful outcomes of toxic stress on all families that arises from adverse childhood experiences.

The Task Force is implementing a two-pronged approach to involve residents in understanding the profile of stress in our community. First, the countywide phone surveys will begin in July to gather pertinent data.

“As a parent and a grandparent, I understand the challenges of childrearing,” said Barbara H. Nixon, LCSW and Founding Chair of the ACE Center Task Force of Shelby County. “As a professional for 45 years, I understand the critical importance parenting plays in our community wellbeing. This confidential survey will help build a solid foundation for addressing these commonly experienced challenges. I hope fellow citizens will ‘Answer the Call.’”

Secondly, two state-of-the-art parenting sites will open in January of 2015. The sites will offer Shelby County families access to professional guidance to identify

and address symptoms of toxic stress.

Shelby County has long experienced high levels of ill health, obesity and violence. We now know, thanks to research in brain science and genetics, that the most effective time to intervene in these problems is as early as possible in childhood.

Porter-Leath will administer the parenting sites, while partners Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women and Knowledge Quest will serve as the host locations.

“The ACE Survey results will show the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences in our county and their impact on poor health outcomes,” said Gwen Price, Parenting Initiative Director at Porter-Leath. “This information will be used as a baseline as we strive to help our community become trauma-informed.”

The initiative is based on the work of international speaker Robin Karr-Morse, author of "Scared Sick: The Role of Childhood Trauma in Adult Disease" and founder of the Parenting Institute based in Portland, Oregon. She will serve as a consultant for the Memphis pilot initiative, along with Vincent J. Felitti, MD, international speaker and co-investigator of the original Adverse Childhood Experiences Study.

For more information about “Answer the Call,” please visit www.acecentershelbycounty.com.

ABOUT THE ACE CENTER TASK FORCE

The ACE Center Task Force of Shelby County is a team of local leaders dedicated to raising community awareness of the costly and harmful outcomes of toxic stress arising from adverse childhood experiences. It strives to provide all Shelby County families preemptive access to professional support to reduce challenges to their children's emotional and behavioral health at the earliest possible point in their development. Our two-pronged approach is rooted in the latest science of neurobiology and genetics, and is unique due to its focus on how family dynamics impact children's health.

Members of the ACE Center Task Force of Shelby County include:

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Chair Early Childhood Consultant

Cynthia Allen

Co-Chair System Community Involvement Manager Baptist Memorial Health Care

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