



For Immediate Release

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Nation's First 'Universal Parenting Places' Open in Memphis

*Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women and Knowledge Quest
to provide families with proactive parenting support*

Memphis, Tenn. – Two Universal Parenting Places (UPPs), judgment-free zones where parents can receive professional counseling, information, and emotional support for family-related issues, were dedicated today at Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women and Knowledge Quest. Attendees included Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell, Jr., Memphis Mayor A C Wharton, international speaker and author Robin Karr-Morse and a host of community leaders, advocates and families.

The dedication ceremony of both UPP locations included site tours and performances from Memphis' creative community, illustrating a few of the nontraditional and diverse support programs the centers offer.

"Everyone is susceptible to the challenges and related consequences of parenting, which is why everyone is welcome at UPP," Mayor Wharton said. "Today, Memphis proudly becomes a national leader in the growing movement to use adverse childhood experiences data to proactively address parenting support and health outcomes."

In January, the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Center Task Force of Shelby County released data showing a direct link between chronic exposure to traumatic events throughout childhood and negative behaviors and health conditions as adults. At that time, the group also announced its intention to prevent those traumatic childhood experiences by opening two pilot UPP centers.

"Each UPP reflects the understanding that trauma affects all families, and crosses all backgrounds and incomes," said Karr-Morse, whose Oregon-based "Parenting Institute" provides the founding vision and staff training components for the Shelby County UPP project.

"The hope is to move Memphis and ultimately the nation from a remedial and stigmatized approach focused on treatment, to a proactive and welcoming method that builds healthy relationships from the beginning of life," she said.

"Universal Parenting Places will help all parents get to the root of common child-rearing challenges, which will build stronger, empowered families," said Baptist Women's Hospital CEO Anita Vaughn. "We often say that our facility is designed to meet the needs of women at every stage of their lives, which makes us a natural and effective UPP champion and host."

Each UPP is designed to be inviting, upbeat, therapeutic and supportive. Offerings include educational groups, parent coaches, arts therapy and one-on-one, private support sessions.

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“Our mission has long been to serve as a tie that binds our diverse community,” said Knowledge Quest founder and executive director Marlon Foster. “This UPP collaborative has the potential to completely transform the way families, and community and business leaders, address medical systems and health policy—and we are just getting started.”

Universal Parenting Places will officially open to the public on **Monday, April 20 at 9 A.M.**

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About Universal Parenting Places

Universal Parenting Places are judgment-free zones where parents can receive professional counseling, information and emotional support for family-related issues or concerns, no matter how small. Our sites are open to ALL parents at no cost. More at www.shelbycountyupp.com, on Twitter [@uppselbyco](https://twitter.com/uppselbyco) and on Facebook at www.fb.com/uppselbycounty.

About the ACE Center Task Force of Shelby County collaborative

The ACE Center Task Force is a group of 40+ local leaders dedicated to transforming the way our medical systems and policies address health and behavioral outcomes for all citizens. The opening of the first two Universal Parenting Places is made possible through the founding partnership of Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women, Knowledge Quest and administrative agent, Porter-Leath. More at www.acecentershelbycounty.com.

About The Parenting Institute

The Parenting Institute is a non-profit consulting organization founded to provide communities with a proactive model for family emotional health and wellbeing. The Parenting Institute seeks to further a new norm for all parents to protect children’s emotional health through regular professional consultation much in the same way that they currently ensure physical health with regular pediatric visits. More at www.theparentinginstitute.com