



## **40 Years – Honoring Dr. King’s Legacy**

April, 2008

Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**[www.wearethebelovedcommunity.org](http://www.wearethebelovedcommunity.org)**

# **we are the Beloved Community**

## ***Our Mission***

The Beloved Community was a dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to create a world in which all persons live in peace and harmony. "We Are The Beloved Community" is an affirmation of who we are as well as a clarion call to better ourselves, our community, our city, the nation and the world. We invite and encourage you to become a participant in the campaign to proclaim and make real The Beloved Community where you live.

## ***History***

'We are the Beloved Community' began in 2006 with organizations that had traditionally honored Dr. King on and around April 4th each year. This original group came together in an effort to not just work as individual groups and organizations, but with the idea of working together to support each other and to bring their events and opportunities to an even wider audience. The first joint events and activities were held during the week of March 29 - April 4, 2007.

## ***News Information***

**For contacts, releases and other information, please contact Ruth Ann Hale at 901-516-0606 or [haler@methodisthealth.org](mailto:haler@methodisthealth.org).**

## **Memphis Partners and Planning Committee**

*(in alphabetical order)*

*as of March 5, 2008*

**Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc.**

**American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees**

**April 4th Foundation**

**Church Health Center**

**Commission on Religion and Racism**

**The Healing Center**

**Memphis Public Library and Information Center**

**Memphis Theological Seminary**

**Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association**

**Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare**

**Mid-South Peace and Justice Center**

**National Civil Rights Museum**

**Rainbow PUSH Coalition**

**Shelby County Government**

**Southern Christian Leadership Conference**

**The University of Memphis**

**Volunteer Memphis/Hands on Memphis**

### **2008 Sponsors**

**Clear Channel Outdoor**

**Memphis Light, Gas and Water**

*each of these organizations can be contacted through our website:*

**[www.wearethebelovedcommunity.org/Partners.html](http://www.wearethebelovedcommunity.org/Partners.html)**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life continues to illuminate hopes for justice in communities across the globe. But his life—and most painfully—his death have special power for those of us hoping to lend our lives to the service of justice here in Memphis. His death is still palpable here in its tragic and shameful loss that we feel as a present reality. But his hopes are present, too, especially his central driving vision of a “beloved community.”

Especially on this bitter soil it is significant that a group of organizations are finding a way to help each other stay accountable to that dream and mostly not from the microphones, but on the streets and in the lives of those who need justice the most. The stories that follow are simple ones and none will by itself change the world. Those of us working on this tough ground know quite well that the arc of history bends only slowly toward justice. But we hope the stories—and the collaboration the booklet represents—do serve as a witness that the arc continues to bend. This collaboration, which includes an unlikely and interesting assortment of organizations, was not formed to observe the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The work of the beloved community coalition is unlikely to be finished on the 50<sup>th</sup>. But we will not be moved. Memphis is sacred ground because of the blood shed here. And it is beloved ground because of the dreams that life here. In that spirit of accountability to both blood and sweat, we offer you our witness of the work of building the beloved community.



Henri Brooks  
Chair, Beloved Community  
Commissioner  
Shelby County Government



Gary Gunderson  
Co-Chair, Beloved Community  
Sr. Vice President  
Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare

## **Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc.**



Alpha Phi Alpha, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for African-Americans, was founded December 4, 1906 at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York by seven men who recognized the need for a strong bond of Brotherhood among African descendants in this country. The fraternity has been built on a foundation of scholarship, fellowship, good character, and the uplift of humanity. Many national and local leaders have been a part of the Alpha brotherhood such as Andrew Young, W.E.B. Dubois, Thurgood Marshall, Mayor A C Wharton, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Today there are over 650 college and alumni chapters and more than 150,000 members. The fraternity is now both interracial and international. The local chapters in Memphis are Alpha Delta Lambda Alumni Chapter established on June 5, 1930, Beta Xi Chapter at LeMoyne-Owen College established April 28, 1934, and Kappa Eta Chapter at the University of Memphis established February 2, 1975.

The organization has many programs which work to create the Beloved Community both nationally and locally. The national organization is providing leadership and fund raising for the building of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington D. C. Locally, Alpha Delta Lambda Chapter sponsors voter registration drives, supports and provides mentors to the Big Brothers Program. Local graduate chapter member Sylvester Fulton was named 2006 “National Big Brother of the Year.” In 2007, the chapter established the first Sickle Cell Walk-a-thon.

One of Alpha Phi Alpha’s longest standing commitments to the Beloved Community in Memphis is to the Youth Leadership Development Institute. The Institute has been a part of the Memphis community for over 30 years. The goal of the program is to develop male and female leaders. It is an especially critical one as the 21st century presents new opportunities for leadership in more diverse and global environments. The participants are instructed in parliamentary procedures, conflict resolution, models of leadership, public speaking, community and civic engagement, and skills vital to educational enhancement. The definitive goal is to create leaders who will bring Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dreams to reality.

The fraternity’s annual Wreath Laying Ceremony at the National Civil Rights Museum on April 4th is the fraternity’s symbolic reminder to keep the dream and to create the Beloved Community.



## **American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees**

Although the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) has been a catalyst for social justice since 1936 in 32 states and 286 cities across America, we also have been an advocate for working families and a voice in their workplace and communities.

Over the past decade, we have been out front fighting to preserve and strengthen social security, affordable and universal healthcare, improving public education, and keeping jobs in America with real wage improvements for over 1.4 million workers.

In 2005, AFSCME Local 1733 was instrumental in organizing almost 400 low wage Shelby County Head Start Employees; these employees from our communities are entrusted with our most valued resource — our children. For our children to receive the early childhood nurturing, we must also take care of the employees that provide them with the guidance and growth that is necessary. We are proud to be a voice for Shelby County Head Start employees and the communities they serve.

In commemoration of the 40th year since Dr. King made the commitment to come to Memphis in support of 1,300 striking AFSCME Sanitation Workers, AFSCME Local 1733 proudly made another commitment to the children at three deserving Shelby County Head Start Centers in our communities. Local 1733 and our national headquarters made a cooperative donation of over \$15,000 in learning resources and soft goods to the Gaston, Bickford, and Hanley sites on January 17, 2008, that will assist the children in our communities to become our leaders of tomorrow, a tomorrow that will be brighter because of our continued commitment to our youth and the working families that constitute our Beloved Community.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Beloved Communities across Memphis and the United States that he and others helped unite, we are proud to carry on his dream of social and economic justice in our communities, moving forward until we all reach that mountaintop together.

Dr. King once said “unlike nature, mankind has a choice, chaos or community”.



## **April 4<sup>th</sup> Foundation Carries On Dr. King's Beloved Community**

The realization came rather quickly to Johnson E. Saulsberry, Jr., founder of the April 4<sup>th</sup> Foundation, Inc.: the Foundation's purpose and goal should be not only to honor the legacy and life's work of Dr. King but to continue his work through the youth of the Beloved Community. So the mission of the Foundation was expressed in this wise saying: *"Tell The Story...Pass It Own."*

The Foundation's thrust then became to develop a program that would achieve this goal. The result is a two-week summer study program titled **"Footsteps Tell The Story...Pass It On."** The program is aimed at high school juniors and seniors to supplement their traditional school curriculum. It will be a tool to develop the student's leadership potential by empowering each student with historical knowledge of the persons, events, and sacrifices that formed the foundation for where they "now stand" and informed the future they hope to possess.

It is both fitting and proper on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King that the Foundation inaugurate the **Footsteps** program. Through this commemorative event, the April 4<sup>th</sup> Foundation salutes and continues Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Beloved Community.

Our Beloved Community...”Touching thousands of lives daily.”

## **Dr. Scott Morris and the Church Health Center**



In 1987 Dr. Scott Morris, M.D., a family practice physician and ordained United Methodist minister, founded the Church Health Center (CHC) at 1216 Peabody Avenue.

Dr. Morris' introduction to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was as a young boy growing up in Atlanta, GA during the Civil Rights struggle. Even though he was only in the 8th grade when Dr. King was assassinated, that event triggered the desire to work to change things through the church. Dr. Morris worked in his church youth group with a number of projects to bring about racial equality and has subsequently written an unpublished manuscript on the subject.

Dr. Morris completed seminary at Yale in 1979 and Emory Medical School in 1983. He completed his residency in 1986. After attending medical and seminary schools, he decided to move to Memphis, which he felt was “one of the poorest cities in the south.” When Dr. Morris arrived in Memphis, he found that many hard working men and women did not have adequate healthcare. A lack of benefits for workers and their families was a complaint during the Sanitation Workers strike, and healthcare benefits remained an issue. In response to this need, and through his relationship with Frank McRae, who was then Senior Pastor of St. John United Methodist Church and a Civil Rights activist in the city, Dr. Morris opened the Church Health Center to provide health coverage to the working uninsured.

Today, as part of the Beloved Community, the Church Health Center seeks to reclaim the church's biblical commitment to care for our bodies and spirits. In uniting churches and synagogues with healthcare professionals and the Memphis Community, the Church Health Center cares for more than 50,000 patients of record. In the twenty years of its existence, the Church Health Center has grown from one doctor and one nurse to having eight physicians, two dentists, one eye doctor, and counselors on staff and up to 400 volunteer doctors. Dr. Scott Morris continues to see patients in the CHC clinic and has developed a state-of-the-art sanctuary of health wellness facility called Hope & Healing to cultivate healthier spiritual and physical lifestyles for the entire Memphis Community.

There is a place at the Church Health Center for everyone who wants to lend a “helping hand” from funding major programs to sorting medicine in the clinic. The Church Health Center is involved in the Beloved Community and encourages others to be a part of this vision.



## **The Library, a Part of Our “Beloved Community”**

Embracing diversity is a key to a Beloved Community. That is why the Memphis Public Library & Information Center carefully selects the materials and services it provides. Books and reference materials should not only be accurate, but collections should reflect and encourage a better understanding of co-workers, friends and neighbors.

The African American History and African American Popular Collections are examples of how the Library strives to celebrate the vivid history and experience of African Americans. Housed in the History Department at the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library, both collections offer an astounding selection of materials to educate and inspire.

Verjeana Hunt, History Department Librarian, says as a ‘curator’ and consumer of the collection she has found the materials personally uplifting. “One’s history should be celebrated 365 days of the year. Grandma Moses stated ‘What a strange thing is memory and hope; one looks backwards, the other forward. The one is of today, the other is of tomorrow. Memory is history recorded in our brain; memory is a painter, it paints pictures of the past and of the day.’ The poplar African American Collection allows me and our customers to acquire new memories of the past, hope for the future and an insight into my culture.”

### ***African American History Collection***

Ranging from African history and culture, to the Harlem Renaissance, to local sources that include genealogy records, oral history interviews, and collected papers of several renowned figures such as George W. Lee, Maxine A Smith, and Blair Hunt, the collection provides a vast perspective. Rare biographies and multi-volume indexes like *The American Slave*, *The African American Encyclopedia*, and *Contemporary Black Biography*, offer a textured look at the people and events that have influenced our community and American society as a whole.

### ***African American Popular Collection***

Featuring the best of the best, more than 300 of the most-requested videos and books for and about African Americans, this collection samples the best materials from such varied subject areas as art, business, health and beauty, literature, religion, science, and technology. This is a supplemental collection and does not replace general reference or circulating materials in the various subject departments and area branches of the library. Instead, it enhances the general collection offering multiple copies of popular works for maximum enjoyment.

The Memphis Public Library & Information Center has a 115-year historical mission to satisfy the customer’s need to know. From its beginnings, that has been our mission. It is a commitment we take seriously. Always aware that knowledge empowers, the Library serves as a ‘knowledge broker’— an agent of self-discovery and community development.

## Memphis Theological Seminary: A Leader in the Spirit of Reconciliation



Memphis Theological Seminary (MTS) is an ecumenical graduate school of theology that has been in existence as an institution of higher education for over 150 years. A strategic relocation to Memphis in 1964 was a defining move for the seminary, which has consistently sought to create a setting for higher theological education committed to scholarship, piety and justice, and to diversity and reconciliation.

The courage of a handful of pioneers set MTS on an intentional course to serve men and women of all races and denominations. Of the forty-nine students enrolled during the first semester in Memphis, six were African American, making MTS the first “white” educational institution in Memphis to voluntarily admit African American students. The openness of the seminary to welcome all people has distinguished MTS, not only in regard to its history, but also in terms of its commitment to prepare students for ministry in a global community. The lives of students at MTS become interwoven with their counterparts – black and white, young and old, male and female. Today, with enrollment over 300, in any given semester, close to 50% of students are African American, 40% female and over 25 different denominations are represented. The composition of the classes is as diverse as the students themselves.

Removing barriers to diversity to create an inclusive environment, starting new initiatives that involve community partners, intentionally sharing leadership, and expanding a curriculum to reflect a greater emphasis on different cultures and denominations have put MTS on a course to gradually live out the *beloved community*. The curriculum at MTS encompasses a cross-cultural experience that engages students and helps them reach beyond artificial boundaries of race, ethnicity, economics, and geography to understand others who are different from themselves. All students must meet the cross-cultural education requirement by taking courses which are outside of their cultural context. Students are leaving MTS transformed, prepared to do what God has called them to do, with an appreciation for diversity and commitment to justice.

Students, alumni, and faculty describe the impact of their MTS experience in these ways:

“It’s always helpful to have conversation and Memphis Theological Seminary’s position welcoming divergent viewpoints allows for a conversation that otherwise might not be taking place.” Dr. Bradley Gabriel, MTS Alumnus

“If you come from a minority perspective, sometimes you see only those who are in certain conditions and you tend to think that’s the way the world is shaped. At MTS, you get to hear and understand other people’s perspectives and while you might not agree with them all the time, you do understand why they think and do what they do.” David McCoy, MTS student

“The most unique and special thing about MTS is diversity – its ability to gently bring you into a new understanding.” Tonie Robinson, MTS student

“What’s really been amazing to me is that scholarship, piety and justice are not just words. We actually try and live that out. I see that in my conversations with other faculty members. I see it in the lives of our students. And I’ve seen it in the classroom and out in the community time and time again. Scholarship, piety, and justice are guides for the way in which we live together as a community here.” Dr. Pete Gathje, MTS faculty member

The mission of Memphis Theological Seminary to equip men and women from all backgrounds for ministry reflects its commitment to cultural and ecumenical reconciliation. Administrators, faculty and students have embarked together on the journey to *the beloved community*. And we are gradually living it in our daily lives.

## **Beloved webs of trust**

What could be more audacious and unlikely than coming in to Memphis from Atlanta in 1968 amid bitterly and violently divided times going and announcing to the politicians, businesses and churches that the city capable of –indeed surely moving toward—being part of God’s beloved community? Knowing how many generations separated Memphis’ reality from anything remotely close to shalom, they believed. At least they believed enough to move, if not into the beloved community, at least into the streets. They marched and they claimed, if not divinity, the most basic claim of all—we are human—I am a man. Forty years later has given both dreamers and cynics plenty of footnotes for their view of the world. The cynics have, as always, the easiest case given the multi-generational trajectory wicked stream of race, poverty, violence, denial, fear and education that continues to be separate, unequal, inadequate and thus failed. The failure is so radical that it can be measured in the gross arithmetic of babies that do not live a single year and mothers watching their sons die of diseases only the old should fear. The arc of history has obviously bent so little toward justice; it seems folly to even play those old tapes at all.

But we do play those old tapes. And just as the churches, mostly Black but a handful of white like salt giving flavor, still move and thrill to the call of the dream that hope is not dead. The arc moves toward justice, although not by magic and not just by hoping. Forty years later it may be even more audacious to speak of building a web of trust that might spread over the very same streets the cynics count for their evidence, but we do just that. Any move toward trust is a move of faith in the face of bitter evidence, but we move.

There are many filaments to the web of trust, but one of the newest and largest is the Congregational Health Network (CHN) started by Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare in covenant with dozens of faith leaders from nearly every religious voice in Memphis. Like the beloved dream that captured the mind and heart of Dr. King, CHN springs from the streets of greatest need, which also—and not ironically—have the most resolute and stubborn capacity for life. CHN, led by Reverend Bobby Baker, who is an experienced chaplain and serving Baptist pastor, has a deep taproot that draws from the powerful strengths of Memphis’ congregations. Ninety-nine churches have entered into the agreement they dare to call a covenant, and we expect the web to include three times that number in a couple years. The intended fruit of the web is health in its most nitty gritty evidence: access to knowledge, services and care, paid and unpaid. CHN builds trust among the congregations and providers in a way that makes relationships possible that the cynics find impossible to even contemplate. As Dr. King wrapped a campaign around the daily traumas and lifetime hopes for dignity of the sanitation workers, the CHN dares to weave relationships around the traumas and dignity of the members and neighbors in Memphis. Only people of faith would find this reasonable, but forty years after Dr. King, there are perhaps more—not less—people of faith willing to extend themselves in trust to build a web of relationships for the infants, children, moms and elders who would otherwise bear the brunt of life’s cold wind alone. This web is woven from people with old and some with brand new jobs. Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare has created the novel job of “navigator” at each of its hospitals to develop the daily working relationships between congregation and facility. But, as in every great movement, the heavy lifting is done by those who themselves are moved beyond pay. Every congregation has appointed volunteer liaisons to build the network into the homes. And varieties of part time pay are emerging where scraps of funding are pulled into the web like birds’ nests are made of found ribbons and sticks in the Spring. It is hard not to love the process; and only a cynic could doubt its power to change the experience of those within range of its shared capacity to care.

The CHN is only months old, but already, the stories are emerging of journeys from congregation to hospital and back that is the early evidence of new story from this beloved community.



## **Love Economy Story....**

Blanch Thomas, CHN navigator at Methodist South, shares this story of how resources were leveraged and aligned with one of our CHN partnering churches, Testament of Hope Baptist, pastored by Rev. T. O'Neal Crivens and associate pastor, Rev. Lemuel Harris. In preparation for religious health assets mapping, MLH staff interviewed Rev. Harris to explore their health ministry in-depth. He generously shared the recently gathered results of a walk-around survey of vacant lots and areas within a 5 mile radius of their small to moderate size church of 100 members. He reported that their church conducted blood sugar and blood pressure screenings weekly after service and that they dedicated a Health Minute from the Pulpit weekly to some health issue, to educate parishioners and direct them to appropriate resources. Also, he reported that their church (in an area of South Memphis far away from most recreation or fitness centers) actually held a yoga class every Saturday for \$5 per class and were trying to recruit attendees. He also shared that he needed more glucometer strip supplies for the older machine they used for screenings. Blanch and MLH staff contacted a University of Tennessee pharmacist, who donated a new glucometer to Testament of Hope (saving the church 50% off strips, as the old machine used more expensive ones). This glucometer was supplied out of the pharmacist's outreach grant funds to help community members. MLH was able to give free PR to the church's yoga class and used the church's walk-around survey results to help with their religious health assets mapping efforts. Church members and neighbors benefited from improved quality and less expensive blood sugar screenings and the yoga class received help in recruitment. Rev. Harris reports that after service screenings have led many parishioners to appropriate medical treatment before crises occurred, that would have required emergency hospitalizations. Relationships of trust between clergy and hospital staff, under-girded by resource alignment and sharing, were solidified from this interview and "love economy" transactions. As the CHN care pathways and sharing of abundance are made manifest, Memphis may yet become the healthy, peaceful and loving community envisioned by Dr. King over forty years ago.....

## Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association (MIFA)



Forty years ago, Memphis was in great turmoil. With racial tensions running high at the peak of the Civil Rights Movement, the community was torn. In September, following the Sanitation Workers' Strike and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., clergy and lay leaders founded the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association (MIFA) as a means of bringing the community together. Forty years later, MIFA is still a healing force in the community.

MIFA now serves more than 60,000 families each year through nine powerful programs that sustain the independence of seniors, stabilize and transform families in crisis, and equip urban teens for success. In 2007 MIFA volunteers spent almost 140,000 hours making a difference in the lives of their neighbors. MIFA volunteers delivered 2,300 meals to the elderly every day and were available to advocate for more than 7,000 residents in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities. MIFA helped homeless families including almost 400 children by providing transitional housing and life skills education; provided jobs, mentoring, and/or college preparation to 71 urban teenagers; assisted more than 3,000 clients with utility assistance; and provided more than 70,000 trips for seniors to doctors' offices and other necessary destinations.

Although these examples represent only some of what MIFA does, these numbers each reflect one person's willingness to love another. Below is a story highlighting how MIFA stabilizes families in crisis through its Emergency Services Program.

### **MIFA Offers Relief to Families in Crisis**

*After working for the same employer for ten years, Kathryn lost her job in October of 2007.*

*"So many people have been dependent on me for so long, and when all of a sudden the resources weren't there, I felt like I was letting everyone down," she says. "You imagine what it will be like for your family to not have utilities, and you get down on your knees a lot and ask God to help you." Kathryn's time of need led her to the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association (MIFA), where she received assistance through the Plus-1 Program.*

*The Plus-1 Program is a partnership between MIFA's Emergency Services and Memphis Light Gas & Water (MLGW) that provides utilities assistance for families in financial crisis. MLGW customers are asked to add \$1 or more to the cost of their utilities each month as a donation to be reserved for eligible clients of Plus-1. When a client receives assistance through Plus-1, these funds are used to pay a portion of the client's MLGW bill, while a manageable payment plan is constructed for the remaining balance.*

*Kathryn adds that it takes a lot of humility to ask for help, but the folks at MIFA never judged her for it. She says, "I want to let people know that when you come to MIFA, the moment you walk in the door, the receptionist has a smile on her face, and you realize there is no judgment. Everyone just smiles at you and treats you with respect."*

*Kathryn says she plans to give to Plus-1 when she is financially stable again, and encourages others to give to this program. She says, "If we can't spare one, two, or five dollars, someday we'll get to a point where no one has any help at all. I will absolutely donate to Plus-1."*

*Another client named Kim offers the same encouragement. She came to Plus-1 for help years ago, then donated to Plus-1 when she got back on her feet.*

*Kim was recently laid off by an employer she had been with for nine years and she found herself in need of MIFA's assistance again. She has three teenage kids to take care of, so it was easy to fall behind on utilities. Her message to the community is similar to Kathryn's. She states, "I encourage everyone to give. That \$1 can be the difference between a family's having utilities or not. It's a blessing to receive help from Plus-1, but it's a better feeling to be able to give."*



## Mid-South Peace & Justice Center

The Mid-South Peace & Justice Center was formed on January 15, 1982, the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Center seeks to further the legacies of nonviolence left by past peacemakers such as Dr. King, Mahatma Gandhi and Dorothy Day. Our existence has been prompted by the chronic problems of social and economic injustice prevalent in the South, especially in Memphis. For the past twenty-five years, the Center has been committed to our mission of developing communities of peace, social justice and human rights through education and nonviolent action.

Since 2001 the GrowMemphis program has been working to build the Beloved Community across low income neighborhoods in Memphis. The first of its kind, GrowMemphis is a cooperative urban garden program that empowers youth and the development of low-income communities by turning vacant lots into thriving centers of education, community, action and change.

As vegetables grow in our gardens, so does the community. For an organization dedicated to ensuring the success of Dr. King's dream we feel that building community is a building block needed to start the construction that is needed to move towards another of Dr. King's visions -- the "World House."

GrowMemphis is a collaborative effort between the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center and five low-income communities in Memphis (Orange Mound, Midtown North, Beltline, Binhampton and St. Augustine Parkway Gardens). The mission of GrowMemphis is to create productive and educational urban community gardens that provide fresh healthy food for low-income areas, and empower people to develop and enhance their own communities. These gardens provide a local food source for those in need and empower a future generation with the important knowledge of sustainability and our connection with the Earth and with the community. Community gardening is the tool for communities to address local issues and create local opportunities.

More information is available at [www.midsouthpeace.org](http://www.midsouthpeace.org).

## The National Civil Rights Museum



In 1968, the attention of the nation was focused on the Lorraine Motel. It was this year, on April 4th, that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and acknowledged leader of the civil rights movement, was assassinated. The aftermath plunged the Lorraine Motel, a small minority-owned business in the south end of downtown Memphis, into a long and steep decline. By 1982, the Lorraine Motel was a foreclosed property.

With vision and faith, the motel owners, Mr. Walter Bailey and his wife Lorraine, sought support from local Memphis leaders in the African American community to raise enough funds to buy the property to create a shrine in honor of Dr. King. Founders of the museum organized initially as the Martin Luther King Memorial Foundation (now the Lorraine Civil Rights Museum Foundation) and raised money to buy the motel at auction and to generate additional support and interest that resulted in the \$10.2 million dollar project that became the National Civil Rights Museum. The museum opened on September 28, 1992.

Never straying from its original purpose birthed by Mr. Bailey, the museum is a site of commemoration in honor of Dr. King and the many other citizens of this country whose belief in the promise of equality and freedom provided the courage and commitment that became the civil rights movement in America. The mission of the museum is to chronicle key episodes of the American civil rights movement and the legacy of this movement to inspire participation in civil and human rights efforts globally. There is no better example of leadership, service, and personal commitment to creating a Beloved Community than in our volunteers at the National Civil Rights Museum. Two shining examples are Roy Logan and Carolyn Daugherty.

Many say that silence is golden and Mr. Roy Logan is a testament to that fact. He is quietly effective and often heavily relied upon. Mr. Logan began volunteering at the museum more than 12 years ago. He is now a retired principal who, even before retirement, gave generously of his time and resources to the museum. Without fail, Mr. Logan can be found greeting visitors and leading tours on most Saturdays and some Sundays at the Museum. No matter the visitor's station in life, age or language, Mr. Logan makes eye contact and manages to share the spirit of brotherhood and importance of this history and its meaning for all with everyone he meets.

Another volunteer that serves as an example of this type of commitment is Carolyn Daugherty. Ms. Daugherty brings many years of professional and community service experience to our organization. She is also known for her no nonsense approach to getting the job done. At Museum events, she is a go-to person. She can be counted on not only to volunteer herself, but as a volunteer recruiter, who can be called on at a moment's notice to fulfill both missions. Dr. Martin Luther King's belief that each person has value and that in every job there is dignity is deeply rooted in Carolyn's soul and in all of her pursuits.

In keeping with Dr. King's teachings, our volunteers embrace the conviction that the Beloved Community can be achieved through an unshakable commitment and love for service to others.

## **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**



The Southern Christian Leadership Conference is a civil rights organization co-founded in 1957 by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Montgomery bus boycott.

The Memphis Chapter of SCLC pursues the goal of "bringing peace, security and hope to the afflicted people" of Memphis and surrounding communities. To realize the goal, the local action agenda focuses on seven areas: education, economic development & empowerment, poverty, political action, public safety, public health, and promoting the National Civil Rights Museum.

Reverend Dwight R. Montgomery, president of the Memphis chapter of SCLC, inspires others to join in the creation of the Beloved Community through word and deed. Whether standing against oppression or promoting unity among the races, Reverend Montgomery stands squarely in the spirit and tradition of Dr. King.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (Memphis Chapter) has hosted numerous "community unity" events and programs. The chapter has partnered with churches to hold community-wide prayer summits on behalf of our city. In addition to Community Unity Celebrations, Operation Take Back has encouraged citizens to reclaim neighborhoods from gang activity. Diverse groups of Memphians also come together to remove gang graffiti throughout the city. To help gang members, Gang Peace Summits have sought to encourage gang members to leave the streets and find viable employment alternatives.

Additionally, SCLC has worked to support public education by calling on the faith community to volunteer at the most distressed schools. With the blessing of the Memphis City Schools administration, SCLC has petitioned ministers to involve their members in tutoring, mentoring, and patrolling. To further support school communities, the after-school program and Jobs, Enrichment and Recreation (JER) program provide summer and after school activities for students. SCLC is dedicated to helping all of God's children.



## **Lady Lynx Team Up with Lady Lions For King Day of Service**

**Volunteer Memphis/Hands On Memphis** is a recently merged organization that serves as one of the lead volunteer resources in Memphis, TN. Every year, Volunteer Memphis/Hands On Memphis mobilizes thousands of volunteers to contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of their time, energy, and talents to a wide variety of volunteer projects and special events. One remarkable event that has grown exponentially in the past few years is the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. This year, in celebration of Dr. King’s life and legacy, Volunteer Memphis/Hands On Memphis played a pivotal role in uniting people of different religious and cultural backgrounds to participate in a range of service projects throughout the city. The following is one example of the incredible work that was accomplished on that day.

The Lausanne Lady Lynx, the top ranked varsity girls’ basketball team in Memphis, spent the Martin Luther King holiday running drills and shooting baskets—but this was no ordinary practice. In commemoration of Dr. King’s commitment to community service, twelve Lausanne high school players paired up with the middle school girls’ basketball team at Memphis Academy of Health Sciences (MAHS), to provide a three-hour clinic for the younger athletes. The varsity girls demonstrated their warm-up routine, taught the middle school girls some practice drills, and worked individually with the MAHS girls to help them improve footwork, passing, and shooting. More than 40 FedEx employees, who volunteered to install lockers and upgrade athletic facilities that day, watched the girls on the court while taking their lunch break.

Lausanne Coach Wayne Kelley, who brought the team to MAHS on King Day last year to help paint the school gym, was delighted to bring the varsity team back for a second year. Kelly said, “It was great for the girls to give back to the community. It was a terrific three hours of basketball for our team and theirs.”

“We hope that the Lausanne team will make this an annual event,” said MAHS Coach Regi Hall. The middle school team hopes to attend a play off game and cheer the Lausanne Lynx to victory in the state finals. Curtis Weathers, MAHS Director, points out that the event “afforded everyone an opportunity to exercise the spirit of volunteerism, which was a critical element in the success of the civil rights movement.”

## **Memphis Partners and Planning Committee**

*(in alphabetical order)*

*as of March 5, 2008*

**Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc.**

**American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees**

**April 4th Foundation**

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**Commission on Religion and Racism**

**The Healing Center**

**Memphis Public Library and Information Center**

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**Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare**

**Mid-South Peace and Justice Center**

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