



Shelby County Sheriff's Office

Floyd Bonner, Jr., Sheriff

April 2, 2024

Ms. Shirley Bondon, Executive Director
Black Clergy Collaborative

via e-mail

Dear Ms. Bondon:

Thank you for your recent e-mail correspondence regarding the youth in the Youth Justice and Educational Center. It appears we have many of the same goals for our youth.

The Shelby County Sheriff's Office voluntarily undertook operation of the facility at the Memphis and Shelby County Juvenile Court Judge's request in 2015. At that time, the facility was being overseen by the Department of Justice, pursuant to a 2012 Agreement with the Court. The Sheriff's Office collaborated with the DOJ team, their primary consultant (who later served as our consultant), as well as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

Together, we charted a course that has been extremely beneficial. We have eliminated isolation, we utilize Cognitive Behavioral Therapy 2.0, Positive Behavior Management, and trauma informed approaches to the youth. We championed the cause of a facility with natural light, sufficient classrooms for teachers and volunteers, a gym/auditorium for sports, plays, musical and other events, greenspace and more. We realized that goal in July 2023 with the renovated facility. We followed the Court's lead when it brought Hope Academy to its youth via the public school system and brought Hope Academy East to the transferred youth in the custody of the Sheriff's Office.

I hope that you will take the opportunity learn about the many programs in place to help our youth heal, be inspired, to learn, and to find new paths that we hope will keep them out of the criminal justice system. If you would like, we will share that information with you and then you should be in a better position to offer assistance. Likewise, you should learn about Hope Academy, which is inspiring so many youth to achieve and excel as they never have before.

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris brought free telephone calls to the youth. That turned out to be an important life-line for them as Covid soon eliminated our daily in-person family visitation. We planned for that in the renovations to the Center and there are video visitation stations ready to be utilized, at no cost to the families. We are still waiting for the Court to activate that service through the vendor.



201 POPLAR AVENUE, 9TH FLOOR, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38103



Ms. Shirley Bondon, Executive Director BCCM

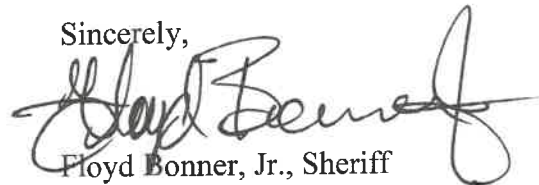
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Likewise, we are preparing to begin in-person visitation, indoors and outdoors, as soon as we receive the necessary information from the Court to enable us to do so. Unfortunately, the current population is such that we cannot have daily visitation. On Monday, there were 110 boys and girls in the Center, far more than we had ever expected or planned for. We anticipated 40 to 60 youth and we seldom have fewer than 100 in the Center. The youth will be utilizing the outdoor space, weather permitting very soon, although not as we had envisioned due to their large numbers.

Please let us know if you wish to receive information about our programming as we would love to share it with you and, hopefully, explore ways in which we can collaborate for the benefit of the youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Floyd Bonner, Jr.", with a stylized, cursive script.

Floyd Bonner, Jr., Sheriff

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