

Building Communities of Hope program is Thursday, May 10

May 9, 2012

A gathering scheduled for May 10 in Jackson will explore comprehensive approaches to improving the lives of children and families.

The Building Communities of Hope program is scheduled for 4:30 to 7 p.m. May 10 at the Mississippi Children's Museum at 2145 Highland Drive in Jackson.

Members of the media are invited to talk with program participants at 4:30 p.m. The program is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m.

Department of Human Services Executive Director Richard Berry, Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. and Jackson Mayor Harvey Johnson are among those who will open the program.

Discussion topics are expect to include:

- the role of the community in improving the lives of children and families;
- collaboration between the judiciary and child welfare agencies;
- successes of the Department of Human Services;
- perspectives of parents, youth, faith-based organizations, service providers and philanthropic communities.

Sharon McDaniel, Ph.D., a member of the Casey Family Programs Board of Trustees, will open the discussions. Casey Family Programs President and CEO William C. Bell Ph.D. will talk about the foundation's vision for Community of Hope.

Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Randy Pierce, co-chair of the Commission on Children's Justice, will serve as moderator for a panel discussion and will lead a question and answer session afterwards. Panelists are expected to include Foundation for the Mid South President Ivey Allen, Cade Chapel Missionary Baptist Church Executive Pastor Reginald M. Buckley, DHS Region V West Director Tonya Rogillio, and Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Chief Justice Hilda Faye Nickey. Also speaking on the panel will be a woman who grew up in foster care, and a parent.

DHS Division of Family and Children's Services Deputy Administrator Lori Woodruff will close the program.

Community of Hope seeks to create a shared vision to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families. The program is a cooperative effort of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Commission on Children's Justice, the Foundation for the Mid South and Casey Family Programs.

Casey Family Programs is the nation's largest private foundation focused entirely on foster care and improving the child welfare system.

The Foundation for the Mid South was established to bring together the public and private sectors and focus their resources on increasing social and economic opportunity in Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana.

The Mississippi Supreme Court created the Commission on Children's Justice to develop a statewide comprehensive approach to improving the administration of justice in Youth Courts in the area of child protection; coordinate the three branches of government in assessing the impact of government actions on children who are abused or neglected; and recommend changes to improve children's safety, strengthen and support families, and promote public trust and confidence.

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