

# MEMPHIS BAR FOUNDATION



*Leaving a Legacy of Hope & Justice*

## **SCDC Foundation Awarded With Grant For Vivitrol Treatment**

In September, Shelby County Drug Court Foundation was awarded a \$2,000 grant from the Memphis Bar Foundation (MBF). The grant will be used to assist in funding treatment for the Vivitrol Program, which helps clients suffering from opioid dependence.

While all drug court participants are in need of specialized care, opiate addicts face a unique set of challenges. Opioid dependence and abuse has been identified as a chronic disease of the brain, which affects reward, motivation, and memory related circuitry. Like other forms of substance abuse, chronic use of heroin or prescription opioids often leads to all manner of dysfunctional behaviors as individuals seek reward and relief through use. In addition to a unique stigma related to heroin addicts and intravenous drug use, injection methods greatly increase the risk of acquiring HIV, Hepatitis C, and other blood borne pathogens. Unlike other forms of substance abuse, opiate users are also likely to experience painful withdrawal episodes that require medical attention.

With the ongoing opioid crisis the nation is faced with, Shelby County Drug Court implemented the Vivitrol Program in October 2016 in order to address the severe cases of opioid dependence. To date, 27 participants have opted to receive Vivitrol. Currently, there are 22 participants in the program. Funds received from the MBF grant go directly toward paying for the cost of treatment for Vivitrol recipients.

MBF was established in 1981 and serves as a vehicle for attorneys and other in the legal profession to give back to the community through tax deductible contributions. The mission of the foundation is to advocate and support public awareness of the legal profession, promote social justice and legal education, and recognize professionalism among members of the Bar.

Shelby County Drug Court Foundation is honored to be awarded the grant in order to continue providing participants with access to Vivitrol treatment at no cost, supporting those who are underprivileged and would otherwise not be able to afford treatment.

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## **Believing in Judge Dwyer**

The local television show, *We Believe in Memphis*, featured Judge Dwyer and aired on May 27, 2017. The television show takes an honest look at ongoing and critical social issues in the city of Memphis, but also highlights and celebrates the goodness that is done throughout the town.

Senior Minister, Shane Stanford and Dr. Maxie Dunnam facilitated the interview as Judge Dwyer eloquently described the successes of Shelby County Drug Court and its impact on the community.

Visit [www.webelieveinmemphis.org](http://www.webelieveinmemphis.org) to view the interview with Judge Dwyer.

## **20 Years Later, 20 Years Strong**

2017 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary since the inception of Shelby County Drug Court. At a graduation earlier this year, former graduates stood up to introduce themselves and state the year they graduated. One man stood tall and proud, “Demetrick Hopson, 1998.” 20 years later, Demetrick still remembered that graduations were always the last Wednesday of each month. He knew it was time to pay a visit to Judge Dwyer, to thank him for giving him a second chance at life.

Demetrick entered Drug Court in 1997 after a theft charge landed him in jail. He had been using drugs for almost 12 years, the last 5 years were the worst, after losing everything – his children, house, cars. With the help of public defender, Debra Antoine, he was offered an opportunity to enter Drug Court, which he took without fully understanding what was expected.

Only one week later, Demetrick relapsed and was sanctioned with jail time. While in jail, he attended a church service and it was then that he realized he could not fight the program. The sermon resonated with him – parents should never have to bury their children. That night he called his mom who was already anticipating his call. From that point he made a commitment to begin his road to recovery. He begged to be admitted into residential treatment and was checked into a facility hours later.

Since graduating, Demetrick has maintained his recovery by doing everything right – working, taking care of his family and doing all the things that normal people do. “I grew up in a structured home and got off track. I just had to get back on track. I knew I couldn’t do drugs; I wasn’t successful at that. I changed my people, places and things.”

Relapse is no longer an option for Demetrick. While he still has vivid using dreams, he understands that the best thing is that he wakes up and is still sober. “In my mind, I believe that if I [relapse], I’ll die.”

## **Playback Memphis Gives Back to Drug Court**

Playback Theatre brings stories to life. Recent graduate, Elmore Smith, told the story of how his addiction spiraled into a self-defeating battle that eventually landed him in Drug Court. An audience sat quietly still as he took everyone on a journey of crack cocaine abuse, the destruction it caused to him and his family and the start of a new life in Drug Court. Then...his story was played back through impromptu acts. Several actors portrayed the anguish, emotion and experiences of Elmore’s story.

The act was all part of a program Playback Memphis offers to community partners known as Memphis Matters. Each year, Memphis Matters features several community organizations and invites them to tell their story and experiences with the audience. On August 26<sup>th</sup>, Shelby County Drug Court was featured as the program’s community partner.

Playback Memphis raised awareness about Shelby County Drug Court and allowed a participant to account, first hand, the life before, during and after being in the program. Shelby County Drug Court would like to give a special thanks to David Collins of Cocaine and Alcohol Awareness Program, Inc. for setting up the partnership.



Visit [www.playbackmemphis.org](http://www.playbackmemphis.org) for more information on the Memphis Matters program.

## **Drug Court’s Got Talent**

On August 26th, Narcotics Anonymous hosted a talent show fundraiser, which took place at the Trinity United Methodist Church on Galloway. The acts ranged from rappers, singers and bands showcasing their talent for a night of entertainment.

Three Drug Court clients showcased their artistic flair for the night. Corbett Buckingham took place in a lip sync to Aqua’s Barbie Girl with another female performer. Buckingham donned a blonde wig and danced around the stage.

Christopher Gallarno and Charles Finley formed the band, *Clique*, and played 2 sets of 3 songs with original lyrics written by both artists.

While the talent show took place, Narcotics Anonymous raised around \$2,000 via raffle and bake sales for the Volunteer Regional Convention (VCR), which is taking place November 22<sup>nd</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup> in Memphis.