

Letter: Fighting DV from every angle

Staff Reports

Saturday, April 30, 2011

As coordinator of Shelby County's Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence, we were interested to learn about efforts to assist domestic violence victims by the grass-roots Living Legacy Inc. (April 23 Viewpoint guest column by Selena Smith).

Without doubt, there is plenty of work to be done by any and all who will take time to provide competent, appropriate, victim-centered services.

The Memphis Area Women's Council has worked since its founding in 2003 with partners from law enforcement, courts, social service providers, Memphis Area Legal Services, University of Memphis, University of Tennessee, Shelby County agencies, Memphis/Shelby Domestic Violence Council, Operation: Safe Community and others to unify efforts and focus strategic action on gaps in our local system of response.

That unified work, since 2008 under the umbrella of the Erase Domestic Crime Collaborative, is coordinating awareness outreach, increasing emergency shelter capacity and quality, improving orders of protection process, assuring training and evaluation of judicial commissioners, and developing housing options for domestic violence survivors.

Earlier this month, Shelby County's CCRDV effort was selected to receive specialized technical assistance through the Blueprint Project from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women and Praxis International, a nonprofit training and research organization that works toward the elimination of violence in the lives of women and children.

Shelby County was one of three communities nationwide selected for the Blueprint Project, which speaks to both our epidemic of domestic violence cases and our partners' proven willingness to work together to make the community's response the strongest it can be to make all our families safe and strong.

The Memphis Area Women's Council remains committed to a truly and fully coordinated community response that connects law enforcement and government agencies with victim service and advocacy groups from across all neighborhoods, faiths and sectors. There is work and room for all.

Sonja B. White

President, Memphis Area Women's Council Memphis



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