

🎉 Shelby County YPAR Newsletter 2 (9/18/2023) 🎉

8 messages

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To: [Email List]

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This edition of the Shelby County YPAR Project Newsletter focuses on our researcher recruitment efforts. We also have updates on our Researcher Training Schedule and another profile of someone involved in the project.

🎉 Over 50 People Applied to Be Community Researchers!! 🎉

By the time we closed the application this past Sunday, September 17, 55 people applied to be community researchers. Of those applicants, 46 fit our age criteria of being between the ages of 18 and 27. 38 of the applicants self-identified as women, 15 as men. That ratio is typical for this type of community research project. 17 zip codes are represented among the applicants, with the highest concentrations in the South Memphis, Frayser, and White Haven neighborhoods.

All of the perspective researchers were excited about the opportunity to help improve things in their communities and for Memphis and Shelby County as a whole. Here are a few comments that stood out to us:

"What excites me about this project is the fact that I will be contributing to someone's education who has a similar background as me. It makes me happy to know that I can be a part of that effort."

"I find it very interesting that people are trying to help and are concerned about others future. This project in particular can be a game changer and open doors for so many people and things."

"[I want] to make a difference in the city of Memphis and gain different perspectives from many backgrounds in order to come together for solutions to improve our city."

For a more in-depth analysis of the applications, [download this PDF](#).

Now that all applications are in, our local research coordinators are working to vet and interview the candidates to get to our core team of 12 youth researchers. We will also be selecting two alternate researchers, in case people have to drop out for any reason. And we are investigating ways to include everyone who applied in the research process.

👏 Meet Local Research Coordinator Jason Sharif of RESPECT the Haven 👏

A native of the Whitehaven community and proud graduate of Whitehaven High School. Jason Sharif has over 20 years of public and private sector experience, including 10 ½ years for the Tennessee Department of Children's Services in Memphis and Nashville as a Child Protective Services Investigator, Juvenile Justice Probation Officer, and Juvenile Justice Regional Coordinator. In 2019, Jason returned to Memphis where he resumed his community and youth advocacy work. He taught 6th grade social studies at Craigmont Middle School and was the assistant baseball coach. Jason was a Youth Behavioral Counselor at Youth Villages, started the Boys & Girls Club at Westwood High School, and was a Neighborhood Organizer in Klondike-Smokey City for Whole Child Strategies. As the Founder and Executive Director of RESPECT the Haven, Jason works to support, assist, and coordinate with community stakeholders in the revitalization of Whitehaven and to empower residents to achieve sustainable outcomes.

To learn more about Jason and RESPECT the Haven, visit the [RESPECT the Haven website](#).

Next Steps

As we mentioned, the next step for the project is to review all of our amazing applicants and get things down to the 12 core researchers and alternates. Then, everyone will meet in person on October 4th for the project kick-off. Remote training starts the week after with our partners from the [Network for the Development of Children of African Descent \(NdCAD\)](#). After that our researchers will begin to plan and conduct research!

Important Upcoming Dates

- **September 19th @ 10:30am CT: Youth and Education: YPAR Advisory Committee Meeting** – The advisory committee will be discussing how to support the Shelby County YPAR project.
- **October 4th @ 5:30om CT: The Project Kickoff!** - More details on this next week
- **October 10th: Virtual Training Starts**

Comments or Questions?

We want to hear from you! If you have any questions or comments about how the project is going, please reach out to Matt Bernius, mbernius@codeforamerica.org. We'd also LOVE feedback on how to improve future newsletters!

👁️ Be on the lookout for the next update a week from now! 👁️

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Matt Bernius

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