

Memphis Child Advocacy Center Contact:
Beryl Wight, Communications and Grants Manager
Cell: 901-412-5385
Desk: 901-888-4369
bwight@MemphisCAC.org

**Memphis Child Advocacy Center named in top five prevention organizations worldwide
26,000 local adults equipped to protect children through Stewards of Children training**

(Memphis, TN) The newly released [Darkness to Light 2019 Impact Report](#) named the Memphis Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in the top five child sexual abuse prevention organizations worldwide. This is based on total numbers trained last year. Darkness to Light distributes the evidence-informed Stewards of Children sexual abuse prevention and response training in over 20 countries.

Stewards of Children trains parents, professionals, and volunteers to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Parents learn how to talk with their kids about sexual boundaries. Adults who work with kids learn to identify red flag behavior. Organizations learn how to deter predators from seeking access to children.

Over 26,000 Shelby County adults have taken Stewards of Children since the CAC began providing the training in 2011. The Memphis CAC's goal is to train 5% of Shelby County adults (roughly 35,000) in the next few years. This goal is based on the tipping point theory of Malcolm Gladwell. When they reach this goal, the CAC expects to see the beginning of significant changes in community norms around child protection. This includes more adults reporting reasonable suspicions of abuse.

The [Darkness to Light Impact Report](#) also spotlighted Memphis CAC prevention specialist Kieta Cooley. She was listed as one of the top training facilitators. All Stewards of Children trainers are trained and certified by Darkness to Light.

Virginia Stallworth, executive director of the Memphis Child Advocacy Center, stated, "Our community is facing a new challenge during the pandemic. Some children have been isolated at home with their abuser, without adults in the community watching out for them. Stewards of Children helps prepare adults to recognize and respond to suspected abuse as our community re-opens."

The Memphis CAC is pivoting to provide the training while maintaining social distance. They are participating in a pilot project for an interactive, virtual Stewards of Children training. They successfully provided two virtual training sessions so far this month. One of those was with Playhouse on the Square staff.

Kris Crim, prevention director, stated, "Our success thus far was made possible with the help of many participating community organizations, our prevention committee, our generous funders, and our board and staff. We are confident we will continue to prepare even more adults to protect kids, despite the pandemic."

Worldwide, 187,306 adults have gone through the Stewards of Children sexual abuse prevention training in fiscal year 2019. In fiscal year 2019, the Memphis CAC trained 4080 of those adults. This is especially important in Shelby County, where child sexual abuse rates are double the national average.

Tennessee is making child sexual abuse prevention a priority. The Tennessee Department of Children's Services was also recognized in the [Impact Report](#). They trained 2,860 adults statewide in fiscal year 2019, making them number ten worldwide for numbers trained.

The Memphis Child Advocacy Center supports safety for children through informed prevention, community collaboration, and a team approach to healing and justice for victims of child sexual and other severe abuse. Go to MemphisCAC.org to find out more.