

Shelby County is taking initiative and making National Foster Care month a blast with several events to raise awareness.

Itinerary:

1. **May 1st**

- Balloon Launch Kick off on the front Plaza of the Donnelly J. Hill State office building.
- Permanency Specialist, Constance Brown, announced the occasion with a brief inspirational speech highlighting awareness of the thousands of children in Foster Care in Tennessee and in the Nation. She raised awareness of the need to rededicate ourselves as child welfare workers, community partners, and resource parents to meet the needs of children, families, and the community.
- Deandra Long, FSW, intrigued the crowd with an inspirational song, “Hero” by Mariah Carey; followed by an occasional poem by Cheryl Townsend.
- Community Partners’ Jocelyn King (Wendy’s Wonderful Kids) and Charles Williams (Buckman Labs) were amidst to show their support. Forty- eight colorful balloons with interest cards were launch in allegiance to our children in foster care.

The Kick-off Event certainly was a breath of fresh air to everyone that attended. Shelby County has several events outlined for the month of May.

2. **May 4th**-

- Recruitment booth at Fullview Baptist Church sponsored by Toni Davis

3. **May 6th**

- On Cable Tonight, Mary Harris will appear on the local Memphis station to highlight National Foster Care Month

4. **May 9th** – Recruitment Fair at Southland Mall.

5. **May 15th** – Recruitment Event with Collaborative Agencies & Community Partners

6. **May 23rd** – Foster Care Awareness Finale

Poem recited by Cheryl Townsend at Balloon Launch

Strangers

**Hello, I'm a stranger, so are you.
You don't know me and I don't know you.
We see each other passing in the night.
Unknown from each other, we walk out of sight
Don't be surprised that we may have the same thoughts, same values, and cares.
You know I have been through some traumas, abuses and shed some tears
Lifetimes are passed unaware of who really cares.
Hello, I'm a stranger whom you've met before
Your personal trials and tribulations only know the score.**

**Do you as strangers' understand my pain?
Do you as strangers really want to care for those displaced children in Foster care?
So see, I am a person that also can care
Just love is all I ask, and patience I shall again.**

- Unknown