

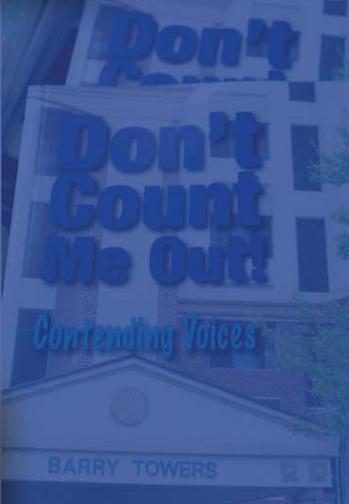
NEIGHBORHOOD

CONNECT

Seek to Serve Program's Authors Write About the Outcomes That Changed Their Lives



SUMMER 2015





Robert Lipscomb

Director of Housing & Community Development
Executive Director of Memphis Housing Authority



**We Got A Taste of Memphis!
in 2016**

Meet some new people and even people you haven't seen in awhile ... Learn something about each other's neighborhoods ... eat ... and we simply enjoy yourself at the 3rd annual "A Taste of Memphis at Tiger Lane".

COME AND CELEBRATE OUR GREATNESS and join us next April at "A Taste of Memphis at Tiger Lane."

CONTACT US:

Neighborhood CONNECT
City of Memphis
Neighborhood Redevelopment Department
314 A.W. Willis Avenue
Memphis, Tennessee 38105
Phone: (901) 576-6980

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECT

Welcome to another issue of the City of Memphis - Division of Housing and Community Development's E-Newsletter, Neighborhood CONNECT.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please visit us at www.cityofchoice.org/nrc/newsletter.html to upload your article and photos.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Neighborhoods USA Conference 2016
- Don't Count Me Out: Contending Voices
- It's All About the Mound
- Opening of Flexworx Rehab Facility in Frayser
- Raleigh Springs Mall Adaptive Re-Use Project
- Visioning Process for Memphis Mid-South Fairgrounds



COVER STORY

Excerpt from the Book, *Don't Count Me Out: Contending Voices*

Foreword From Robert Lipscomb

The title of the book "Don't Count Me Out", says it all for me. Residents of public housing beginning with the 1970's began to see themselves as being segregated from the large Memphis Community. Public Housing was perceived to be "the housing of last resort" and those living there as those people." The challenge that I was given as the executive Director of the Memphis Housing Authority was to change the "Face of Public Housing to Memphis." To change the culture, we had to change the way people see themselves. "Seek to Serve" was created to reinforce to residents that they are valued citizens of Memphis. They have positive gifts and talents that should be shared to make Memphis better, and are vital to its well-being. As pride and service to the community was re-instilled, it was made MHA's jobs easier to get rid of the poorly maintained and deteriorated housing projects. People felt good about themselves and pride of self was translated to pride of place. I am proud that the program has continued and that graduates are sharing their stories and experiences because they cannot "be counted out and deserve to be counted into" every segment of the City Of Memphis.

Thank you for asking me to be a part of your story.

Robert Lipscomb, *Executive Director*
Memphis Housing Authority

See more on Page 4



SAVE THE DATE

MAY 25-28, 2016

MEMPHIS IS THE PLACE TO BE IN 2016!



REGISTRATION INFORMATION AVAILABLE SOON

Would you like to present a workshop at NUSA 2016? If so, please visit us at:

www.cityofchoice.org

www.nusa.org



Don't Count Me Out!

Contending Voices

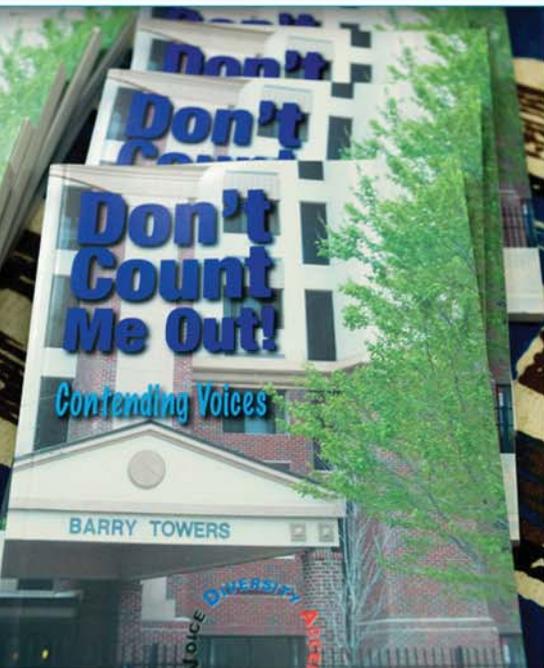
By Levi Frazier, Jr.

Years ago, playwright Lorraine Hansberry was asked if *A Raisin In The Sun* was realistic or naturalistic. Hansberry replied, "Realistic, of course!" The interviewer then asked why. The brilliant young writer stated, "Because naturalism is basically what you see is what you get. But with realism the author has the opportunity to change the outcome of the story."

In Don't Count Me Out: Contending Voices, the writers – who are members of Seek-to-Serve sponsored by Blues City Cultural Center—exercised their right to change the outcomes of their stories. Unlike Hansberry's fictional drama of a struggling yet triumphant African American family, these authentic stories speak honestly of shattered lives that could have ended in drug addiction, depression, prostitution and even murder. However, their lives were resuscitated, given a second and in some cases a third and fourth chance to "get it right." For them, "don't count me out" is more than the lyrics of a popular song, it is a living testament of their determination to be "counted in." Anna Jean Evans wrote about being in a coma for three months and bouts with depression. Robert Washington credits his leadership role in Seek-to-Serve to his years of military training. Another writer relayed her story of long-term physical abuse from her husband which eventually ended in his death at her hands.

In writing this book, they discovered and used their voices to articulate often hidden narratives that added significance to their lives while validating their importance within the greater Memphis community. As Memphis Housing Authority director Robert Lipscomb stated in the introduction, public housing residents are generally referred to as "those people." Yet, "they have positive gifts and talents that should be shared to make Memphis better and are vital to its well-being."

In 1879 Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen wrote *A Doll's House*. The drama not only centered on women's rights and independence but the need for every individual to discover who they truly are and to strive to become that person. *Don't Count Me Out: Contending Voices* is a giant step toward self-discovery and determination against all odds. More importantly, it is a celebration of the victory in the actual overcoming. The book is dedicated to Lily Jones, a stellar graduate of the Seek-to-Serve and faithful member of the Nspirers. Jones, affectionately known as Ms. Lily, died more than a year ago. Yet, her work and enduring spirit live within the pages encouraging others to change the outcome of their present predicament and not be "counted out" under any circumstances.





IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MOUND...



**It's all about the Mound,
'bout the Mound,
'bout the Mound.**

**It's all about the Mound,
'bout the Mound,
'bout the Mound...**

These lyrical words resonated throughout the audience of over 500 Orange Mound residents and friends who attended the morning and evening performances of “Orange Mound: Past, Present and Future” produced by Blues City Cultural Center in partnership with the Orange Mound Service Center Drama Ensemble. Written by Dr. Cynthia Sadler and directed by Orange Mound resident Joyce Dukes Shaw, the production was staged at the Orange Mound Senior Services Center to commemorate the community’s 125th Anniversary as one of the oldest subdivisions in the United States, specifically developed for African Americans. The cast, comprised of residents and others who have a relationship with Orange Mound, recounted the rich cultural heritage of the community through the eyes of lead characters Alice Speggins and George. Alice, who purchased a lot in the community in 1890, embodied the Spirit of Orange while George represented a contemporary resident. Audiences could relate to the familiar stories of Park Avenue when it was known as “The Drag,” live entertainment at the Handy Theater, and the Golden Wildcats of Melrose High School. Like an unfolding lesson, “Orange Mound: Past, Present and Future” led audiences on a reminiscent journey of the triumphs, challenges and possibilities for a vibrant caring community. By the end of the performances, the enthusiastic audiences were on their feet cheering, not only for the performers but also signifying that many, particularly the elders, were still “standing” in Orange Mound. Following the performances, a reception by AARP and a spirited talkback with the audience took place. It was obvious from the comments that the audiences thoroughly enjoyed the performance and wanted to see more theatrical productions about their community. When asked “what types of activities would you like to see in Orange Mound,” a youngster responded with “more events for families.”

This production was staged as part of the 125 anniversary of the historic community bounded by Airways on the West, Lamar on the South, Southern on the North and Simms on the East. With funding from ArtsMemphis and the Tennessee Arts Commission, “Orange Mound: Past, Present and Future” represented a collaboration between BCCC and Theatre Memphis, two of five organizations that are using the performing and visual arts to stimulate social change and community engagement. While BCCC focused on the elders in Orange Mound, Theatre Memphis worked with teens at Red Zone, a community-based youth development organization. The resulting production included the intergenerational voices of youth and elders, each group possessing stories to share about the old and the new.

Linda Steele, community outreach coordinator for Arts Memphis, In assessing the community center production and Blues City’s extensive creative work in the community said simply, “Don’t stop!”

FLEXWORX

Frayser Celebrates the Opening of the Rehabilitation Clinic

The City of Memphis and the Division of Housing and Community Development in partnership with Frayser Community Developments host a grand opening and ribbon cutting for FlexWorx, a medical clinic funded by the Community Economic Development (CED) program and located in a building donated by the Shelby County Land Bank and redeveloped by the Frayser CDC and City of Memphis.

“This neighborhood wants and deserves the same thing that every other neighborhood wants. They want beautiful buildings. They want good businesses. It’s not just Germantown, Central Gardens that wants that,” said Frayser Community Development Corporation Executive Director Steve Lockwood.

This is community development at its best,” said Director Robert Lipscomb, Housing and Community Development. Together, FlexWorx opened its third location on Watkins in Frayser.

It is a clinic for personal injury patients. “I came looking for Frayser, because this community was not served,” said FlexWorx owner Lea Ann Kelley. “This is a beehive of civic activity,” Lockwood said. There are many activities currently working in Frayser, like “success zones” around schools, packed community meetings, and the Frayser Exchange Club.

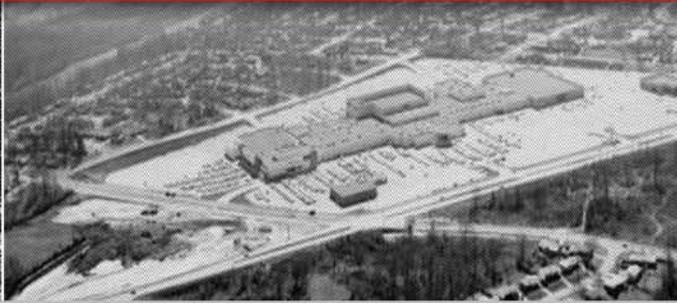
Lockwood said there is more work to do.



For more information, contact Lea Ann Kelley, *owner of the FlexWorx and Progressive Rehab clinic*
3699 Watkins Street Memphis, Tennessee 38127

RALEIGH SPRINGS MALL

Adaptive Re-use Project



Situated along a high bluff on the Wolf River, Raleigh is one of the highest points in the Memphis area. The old town's center, which was located around the intersection of today's James Road/Stage Road and Old Austin Peay Highway, had a commanding view of the river. Mary Winslow Chapman, in her 1977 memoir *I Remember Raleigh*, provided these vivid descriptions of the Wolf River in its natural state.

Formerly an incorporated city, Raleigh was the county seat of Shelby County from 1824 to 1866, when the county courts were moved to Memphis, which had outstripped Raleigh in growth. In 1912, the town surrendered its charter and returned to unincorporated status. The town was named by Joseph Graham, the first circuit clerk of the county, who was from the Raleigh, North Carolina area.

The stone courthouse was situated between James and Fayette roads; a warehouse was later built on the site at 4216 Fayette Road. After the town lost its status as county seat in 1866, the courthouse was dismantled and the stone was used to construct the courthouse in nearby Bartlett, Tennessee, which had incorporated that same year.

Raleigh Cemetery, on Old Raleigh-Lagrange Road, is the final resting place of many of the area's early settlers, such as Coleman, Burrow, Isaac Rawlings, the second mayor of Memphis; relatives of Isaac Shelby, the county's namesake; and Wilson Sanderlin. This cemetery was founded in the 1840s.

In the 1800s, The Raleigh springs were known as waters that would cure ailments of those who came into contact with it. Later in 1892, the Raleigh Inn was built as a pristine destination for Memphians to lodge while visiting the springs. Later, the water table dropped, and this area became much less of a destination. Raleigh served as the Shelby County Seat from 1827 to 1867.

100 years later, the Raleigh Springs name continued on with the development of a closed-air shopping mall (1971). Popular in its time in the North because of weather concerns, this trend caught on across the country. In today's setting, an open-air concept, or lifestyle center, is more appropriate due to accessibility, branding strategies, and creating a sense of place.

Looking forward, this area has the potential to become the active node that it once was.



REPORT ON COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS FOR THE MEMPHIS MID-SOUTH FAIRGROUNDS TO THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL

by National Charrette Institute

The National Charrette Institute, a non-profit organization from Portland, Oregon was engaged by the City of Memphis to convene, listen and report on the community's ideas and vision for the future of the Fairgrounds. The city requested a comprehensive community involvement process that is coordinated with, and presented to, the Urban Land Institute Panel related to the study of the Fairground property. A primary city goal is to provide multiple and diverse involvement opportunities that will make it easy for a wide range of community members to participate in the visioning for the Fairgrounds.

NCI contracted with PlaceMatters, a Denver based non-profit to develop and maintain an interactive project website (MemphisFairgrounds.org) and to conduct keypad polling at the public meetings. The City contracted separately with Carter Malone Group in Memphis to conduct on-the-ground community outreach, communications and meeting logistics, venues and staffing. (See Summary of Fairgrounds Community Engagement and Media Outreach in the appendix for details). Leadership Memphis donated facilitators for the public meetings.

This document provides a summary of the outreach conducted and the complete results of the public meetings, website input and survey responses collected from 5/1/15 to 6/5/15. All comments made via the website and in public meetings can be found in the appendix of this report.

The full report can be found on the City of Memphis website....as well as the full presentation at [www. memphistn.gov/FairgroundsRedevelopment.aspx](http://www.memphistn.gov/FairgroundsRedevelopment.aspx)

**Visioning Process for the Memphis Mid-South Fairgrounds to the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel
Development Strategies & Program**

Add small scale retail, residential and hospitality uses to complement the development



Add program elements designed to meet the needs of these adjacent communities



Include multi-use public open space in the center of the development



Repurpose the Coliseum structure to provide a smaller events venue and regional attraction



Add small scale retail, residential and hospitality uses to complement the development





conference info
available soon!

**MEMPHIS
IS THE PLACE
TO BE IN
2016!**

SAVE THE DATE
MAY 25-28TH
www.cityofchoice.org



City of Memphis
Neighborhood Redevelopment Center
314 A. W. Willis Avenue
Memphis, Tennessee 38105