

# THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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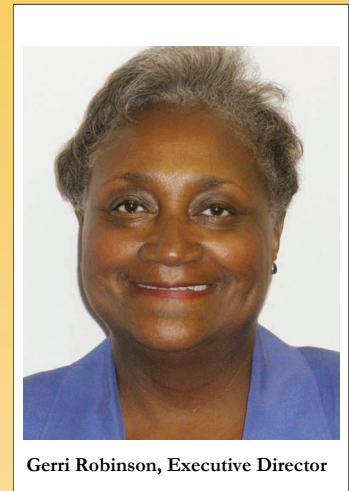
## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In some ways the time since the last issue of the *Connection* has been the best of times and the most challenging of times. The best of times came during the May 2008 meeting of the Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners (MSSBC) when board members voted unanimously for Metro Social Services (MSS) to continue providing nutrition and homemakers services under contract to the Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC) and the State Department of Human Services in addition to utilizing local dollars allocated by Metro Council to supplement and expand both services.

A performance audit of 2004 recommended that these and other services be contracted out to the private sector. However, the Board approved a pilot project to ascertain if any cost savings or improvement in the quality of services provided would be realized by contracting out the services. Toward that end, MSS contracted with Mid Cumberland Human Resources Agency (MCHRA) to provide

service to select customers. The University of Tennessee surveyed MSS customers and those of MCHRA and found that both providers garnered a satisfaction rating of 90% or more. MSS' Chief Finance Officer's fiscal analysis of the project found that contracting out the services would not generate significant cost savings. Based on this feedback, the Board voted to retain both services in house. The contract with MCHRA will continue.

This edition of the *Connection* highlights several partnerships initiated by the Department to fill resource gaps impacting the most vulnerable. Rooftop is a consortium of churches that provide financial assistance to individuals who do not qualify for homelessness prevention funds and services from Metro Action Commission (MAC). ASNIC is a partnership with private non for profits agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, United Way and other organization that resulted in a pilot project to provide training for unregulated child care providers. A



Gerri Robinson, Executive Director

partnership with Tennessee State University helped social services staff to acquire a Bachelor's degree in Social Work to meet the requirements of the Social Work Title Protection Legislation passed in 2005. **We are so proud on Sandra Bivens our first graduate.**

On a more challenging note, a very tight fiscal climate has been cause for the MSSBC, the Mayor and the Council to make very tough decisions regarding cost reductions. After eight

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*The best number to call to find out about services available through MSS and elsewhere in the Nashville community is (615) 862-6458. [www.nashville.gov/sservices](http://www.nashville.gov/sservices)*

### Contact Numbers of Metro Social Services

Administrative Offices (615) 862-6400	Brief Counseling (615) 862-6432	Relative Caregiver Assistance (615) 862-6432
Adult and Family Support Services (615) 862-6432	Adult Homemaker Services (615) 862-6480	Homeless Services (615) 880-2526
Information and Referral (615) 862-6458	Senior Nutrition Services (615) 880-2292	Planning and Coordination (615) 862-6419
	Burial Assistance (615) 862-6458	

# FUEL POVERTY SUMMIT

In order to bring attention to the needs of persons in poverty, Metropolitan Social Services held a Fuel Poverty Summit on March 28. The Summit brought together national and local experts to discuss the issues of fuel poverty.



MSS Board Chair Gwen Harris

Fuel poverty occurs when people cannot pay the costs of utilities

to keep their homes to the standard required for comfort and health.

Contributing factors to fuel poverty are the location and condition of a property, the type of heating/cooling system installed and the rising cost of fuel. Generally, a household should pay no more than 30% of its income on shelter, and utility costs should be no more than 20% of shelter costs. Therefore, utility costs should be less than 6% of the household income. When utility costs are higher than 6%, experts talk about home energy burden.

Attorney and economist Roger Colton, a national leader in fuel poverty issues, participated in the MSS Fuel Poverty Summit. He explained households who live at or below 50% of the federal poverty level carry the biggest energy burden. In Davidson County, these households were billed 53.2% of their incomes in 2007 for home energy. Colton said that the odds that these households were able to actually pay these bills were "remote at best."

According to Colton, 10% of energy burden is often the limit low-income households can han-

dle before they enter near-certain payment troubles. In 2007, Davidson County households with incomes of 100-125% of the federal poverty level were billed 11.8% of their incomes for home energy. (The federal poverty level for a family of four was a yearly income of \$20,650 in 2007).

Even Davidson County households between 150% and 185% of the federal poverty level spent 7.9% of their incomes in 2007 on home energy. While in 2004, these households still met the 6% threshold, three years later, they were well above the 6% affordability line, Colton said.

The Fuel Poverty Summit examined such issues and offered a venue for nonprofit organization, churches, utility companies and government agencies to look at available programs that support families on the brink of losing their homes because they cannot afford heating and cooling bills.

Among the presenters was Debbie Houser, weatherization director for the Mid-Cumberland Community Action Agency, which works in seven counties surrounding Davidson County and offers weatherization for low-income homes. The goal of the program is to reduce the energy cost of a home.

Houser explained that the amount of work her organization provides ranges from \$3,000-\$10,000 per home. The \$10,000 projects are usually financed in partnership programs with an electric or gas company paying a portion of the bill.

Weatherization generally helps reduce a home's energy bills by one quarter to one half. Customers usually are elderly and disabled persons with an income of 125% of the federal poverty guidelines or less.

In Davidson County the weatherization program is handled by the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA).

*Fuel Poverty occurs when people cannot pay the costs of utilities to keep their homes to the standard required for comfort and health.*

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years during which the MSS budget was reduced by 75%, the MSSBC grappled hard and long to meet the requested 5% reduction in the 08/09 budget. In the end, the Board decided to eliminate the summer camp voucher program. The impact of the decision will not be felt

until next summer. Approximately 1,000 children will receive camp vouchers this summer. During the interim, staff from the Department's Planning and Coordination Unit will be soliciting partners from private non-for-profit and for-profit social service providers, the business community, communities of faith as well as

foundations and other philanthropic organizations to pool funds to replace the 1,100 vouchers.

Please take time to peruse this issue of the *Connection* and partner with us to meet the growing needs of the most vulnerable persons in Metro Nashville/Davidson County.

## FEDERAL LIHEAP DOES NOT COVER ENERGY NEED

**L**IHEAP stands for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and is the biggest source of energy assistance to the poor. The funds for LIHEAP come from the federal government and are distributed to local agencies by the states. The Metropolitan Action Commission administers the LIHEAP funds in Davidson County.

The LIHEAP allocation for Davidson County was \$2.41 million in 2005, attorney and economist Roger Colton said at the Fuel Poverty Summit in March.

However, in the same year the Home Energy Affordability Gap for Nashville was more than \$39.4 million.

The Home Energy Affordability Gap is the shortfall between what people can afford to pay and what their actual energy bill is, Colton explained.

Therefore, the LIHEAP allocations for Davidson County in 2005 (\$2.41 million) did not even come close the \$39.4 million needed to close the Home Energy Affordability Gap in Nashville.

"If we increased LIHEAP tenfold, it would still fall short," Colton said, adding that LIHEAP was not the answer.

Unaffordable energy has a variety of interdependent consequences and as such impacts housing, public health, public safety, hunger and nutrition, education, business competitiveness, and utilities, Colton said.

Higher energy costs caused the Fair Market Rent's proportion for shelter in Davidson County to decrease between 2003 and 2007 by \$23 per month (before adjusting for inflation).

This is how:

- Davidson County's Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom home in 2003 was \$676 per month - \$589 for the shelter cost, \$87 for utility cost. (The Fair Market Rent includes utility costs, except for telephone expenses).
- While the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom home was increased to \$693 in 2007, the energy cost portion increased by \$40 to \$127, causing the shelter portion to actually decrease by \$23.



Roger Colton

Unaffordable energy costs also affect education because poor families are often forced to move. Children who frequently move tend to fall behind in school.

When homes are too cold, people become sick and miss work and/or school. If energy costs are too high, medicines become unaffordable and sometimes people even go hungry to pay the bills. Consequently, people fall ill and are fired because of tardiness, absenteeism, distraction on the job and a number of other factors that reduce productivity.

Looking at these aspects, Mr. Colton concluded that unafford-

able home energy is a community problem, not simply a household problem.

However, he said the problem cannot be addressed without spending money. While such an investment could save money long-term by reducing emergency room visits, improving public education, strengthening the local workforce, etc., communities still need to spend money upfront to help low-income households with their energy bills.

The energy industry can help low-income customers with (among other things) additional financial assistance, with creative solutions for their problems, and with expertise on public policy issues.

Potential solutions to the home energy burden include:

- Promotion of available public assistance such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and Summer Food Service programs;
- Enforcement of existing laws regarding assistance such as an annual update to Food Stamp Standard Utility Allowance (SUA), which could result in higher Food Stamp allocations;
- Elimination of wasteful energy usage, for example, by requiring energy efficient construction in publicly-funded housing;
- Ending of the regulatory "war on the poor" by eliminating late fees on low-income customers; and
- Enforcement of regulatory consumer protection requirements such as consideration of a customer's ability to pay by structuring deferred payment plans for arrears.

*The Home Energy Affordability Gap is the shortfall between what people can afford to pay and what their actual energy bill is.*

*In 2005, the Home Energy Affordability Gap for Davidson County was \$39.4 million.*

## Q&A WITH COUNCILMAN JERRY MAYNARD II

**C**ouncilman-at-large Jerry Maynard II sat down with the editor of *The Community Connection* to discuss his ideas to address social issues in the Nashville Community more effectively. Maynard, who is also pastor of the Southside Community Church on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, chairs the Council's Health, Hospitals and Social Services Committee.



Jerry Maynard II

*Transportation, quality health care and affordable housing are the three things that will directly improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable in Nashville.*

**CC:** *How does Nashville compare to other cities when looking at the social climate?*

**JM:** Nashville is a great city.

Nashville has its challenges. Some of the challenges that I see in Nashville are dealing with our senior citizens who live on a fixed income, the working poor and our poor people in general.

To be more specific, Nashville is years behind in transportation. We need a public transportation system that will allow those with economic challenges to have access to the entire county.

Transportation is also critical to ensure everybody has access to high quality health care. And talking about health care, we've got to do a better job of promoting and supporting General Hospital. We need to be better in linking the services of General Hospital, the Department of Health, Metro Social Services and the Metro Action Commission to deal with prevention of diseases that disproportionately impact the poor, low-income working families and the elderly.

Thirdly, we need to address affordable housing. We don't have an affordable housing policy – other than the private sector doing what it can in the charitable field. From a government and business perspective, we simply say that a home in Nashville costs less than one in New York, and therefore, Nashville is more affordable than New York. That's not affordable housing!

So we've got to look at affordable housing for low-income working families and people with a fixed-income. I'm talking about a single

mother making \$17,000 a year trying to provide for her family.

All of it is connected – transportation, quality health care and affordable housing. Those are the three things that we as a city need to work on. That will directly improve the quality of life of those persons who are most vulnerable.

**CC:** *What in your view needs to be done to improve local partnerships to better the outcomes of the poorest?*

**JM:** There are so many private organizations that have limited resources, but have limitless love and commitment. Nonetheless, there is a disconnect between all of these private organizations who have the heart, but don't have the money. They are doing the best they can to help the vulnerable.

However, if there was any way that we could come up with a Consortium where all of these organizations belong to one group and/or Metro Social Services be that agent to bring all of them together, then we could see where services are overlapping and identify possibilities for partnerships and/or mergers. This would also allow us to discover areas where the need is not being supplied.

I believe a Consortium of all these social service organizations throughout the county is the best solution for us to pool and stretch available resources. And I guarantee you, if we had a Consortium that existed of a whole bunch of organizations, it would be easier for us to go out to private corporations and organizations and have

them write one check to the Consortium. Then the Consortium could distribute those resources as needed. Instead, right now, we have all those organizations doing their own thing. All of them are begging for money and struggling to make it. A Consortium, I think, is the best way to help with partnerships throughout the county.

**CC:** *So you feel that the Consortium is a next step for Metro Social Services?*

**JM:** Metro Social Services is already doing it to some level. They already have many organizations that they know about. So if I come to Metro Social Services and ask for help, they direct me to a public or private organization who has the ability to address my issues.

And what I'm saying is, let's expand it. Let's create a Consortium. And then we can provide training, we can expand our capacity and help all organizations stretch their resources. A Consortium also helps provide synergy.

Here is a great example: If I am providing job training and another organization is providing GED preparation. Why not bring us together and eliminate duplication while expanding our services. That's what I'm talking about.

Metro Social Services could provide that function of bringing all those independent small organizations that don't receive a lot of money together and say, "This is the way we can help you provide the services you are doing without taking over what you are doing."

This approach also includes assessment. You actually assess what

each organization is doing and you see what their strength and weaknesses are. And then you partner organizations together where there is the possibility of synergy or where they're overlapping and have them work together.

**CC: Does MSS currently have the ability to take on the task to form such a Consortium?**

JM: I do believe that Social Services would need some additional resources from Metro Government to do that.

I would strongly support giving additional resources to Social Services if as part of their mission they had a department within their department whose sole function was to do this

Consortium to bring social service organizations together.

**CC: Are there already discussion on that issue in the Council?**

JM: I don't know about the Council, but you would need to ask Social Services – Gerri Robinson, whether that's already something in development.

## RESPONSE FROM THE MSS DIRECTOR

The Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners accepted the task to become a planning and coordination entity for Metro Nashville/ Davidson County in 2004. To fulfill this role, MSS has taken the lead in multiple endeavors and provided support for others.

However, a major challenge to collaborating with the private sector has been a lack of funds. MSS' budget has been reduced by 75% over the last eight years. Federal safety net funding has been cut, the Mayor's budget to fund nonprofits has decreased as well, and Council-allocated funding for nonprofits has been

eliminated. These reductions make expansion of partnerships and collaborations a necessity.

MSS is in the process of developing a comprehensive social services plan for the county (see *Community Connection*, fall 2007, page 6) and has devoted a staff person to ferreting out grants to support the plan's implementation.

In addition to the social services plan, MSS will provide support for the Poverty Reduction Summit to be held this fall. This is a great opportunity for all public and private social services providers to better use our limited resources.

The United Way recently commissioned a study that was con-

ducted by the Center for Non-profit Management. The study, which has not been released to the MSS Board yet, also calls for the need to coordinate community services. The study even suggests the merger of United Way with the Community Foundation.

The study in combination with the Poverty Reduction Summit present opportunities to bring all stakeholders to the table for leveraging respective resources.

MSS is involved in both the United Way and the Poverty Summit, hence we are positioned to tackle our role as a planning and coordinating entity in a more holistic way.

*A new study by the Center for Nonprofit Management together with this fall's Poverty Reduction Summit hosted by the Chamber of Commerce's Benefit Board, the Metro Action Commission and the Mayor's Office, will present opportunities to bring all stakeholders to the table to leverage available resources.*

*MSS is prepared to take on a central coordination role.*

*- Gerri Robinson*

## STAFF PROFILE: SANDRA BIVENS

Sandra Bivens, a 27-year veteran at Metro Social Services, graduated from Tennessee State University with a Bachelors of Science degree in Social Work (BSW) this May. She is the first MSS worker to complete the new state requirement that people employed as social workers need to be certified.

Bivens completed her program in under two years. She already held a bachelor's degree in psychology.

"I'm so grateful for the challenge and the opportunity," an emotional Bivens said. At first, she recalled being surprised and frustrated about the new requirement. Now, she feels the challenges to manage a full-time job, a household and family, and a full-load of classes were worth it.

Bivens joined Metro Social Services in 1976 and

said she has seen a lot of change over the years.

"Change isn't always bad," she added, pointing to the requirement to add a BSW degree to her many accomplishments. "I feel better for having this degree when I am talking to a client."

Plus her vast experience has helped her manage her classes even better.

Classes were held on weekends and sometimes on weekday evenings.

"I didn't miss a day of class. I got hungry for information and wanted to know more and more," Bivens said, adding that without the help of her understanding family and especially the support from her husband, it wouldn't have been possible.



Sandra Bivens

## COMMUNITY PARTNER: ROOFTOP

Rooftop is a faith-based partnership of 28 Nashville congregations that was formed two years ago.

Metro Social Services has partnered with Rooftop to provide emergency financial assistance to Nashvillians who are on the brink of losing their homes.

Bill Coke, a founding member of Rooftop, said the partnership with Metro Social Services was key to the organization's success.

"When a client calls to a church, the information is taken and then faxed to Metro Social Services," Coke explained. "They then contact the person and set up an appointment."

MSS screens the clients and examines all options to help that person or family.

"MSS acts as the central clearing house in making the initial interviews and keeps a record of clients making requests," Coke said. "The value for the congregations is the knowledge that professional social workers are seeing the clients. It is like every congregation having a social worker on staff."

If MSS social workers find that Rooftop can help, they refer them to Cathy Bryan Link who works for Rooftop. Link sends housing payments directly to the property owner. Generally, the family in need will have to come up with a portion of the outstanding payment while Rooftop donates the remaining amount, no more than \$300.

"We only help with utilities if someone is in Section 8 Housing," Coke said. "Otherwise, we stick strictly with rental or mortgage problems."

"We're finding so many people in so much need in this community, and it's gratifying that congregations are coming together and are able to work together on this common problem," Coke said. "On the other

hand, we only have 28 congregations at this point, and we have over 600 congregations in Nashville."

Cathy Link said most people she sees live with enormous fear. People making \$7-\$12 an hour do not have any job protection such as sick leave. If their child is sick, they may be sacked if they cannot find someone to take care of the child.

"They get fired all the time," she said, adding that oftentimes 40-50% of their incomes goes towards housing.

Link said that she frequently hears that the solution lies in budgeting because people need to budget better. She pointed out that while she agrees that good budgeting skills and financial literacy may help, it would be difficult for anyone to budget an income of \$630 a month when 45-50% of it goes to housing and utilities.

*Rooftop is actively recruiting congregations and encourages them to get involved. Contact Metro Social Services at 880-2526 for more information.*

## CAMILLA CALDWELL FUND

Metro Social Services renewed its efforts to raise private donations to supplement the existing budget and serve the most vulnerable populations in Davidson County.

Private donations are added to the Camilla Caldwell Fund, which is named after the first MSS executive director and currently holds close to \$19,000.

The money will assist Davidson County residents who are not eligible for assistance from other Metro agencies and community organizations.

"Our budget has been shrinking each year while more and more people are coming to us to ask for assistance with food, utility bills, transportation, and rent – to name but a few of the needs," MSS Executive Director Gerri Robinson said. "The Camilla Caldwell Fund will serve as a means of last resort."

Robinson said she wants to reach out to faith-based organizations and the community at large to let them know that Metro Social Services has

the ability to accept financial donations.

While MSS carefully screens customers and refers them to existing resources within Davidson County, some people do not meet requirements of other organizations. The Camilla Caldwell Fund is designed to fill that gap in need and assist those individuals and families who do not meet the criteria for any other program, but clearly have a need.

"The fund so far has not received regular contributions because the general public does not know of its existence," Robinson said. "We want to change that and reach out to our generous community in Davidson County."

Fund contributions can be designated for specific help such as housing support (rent/mortgages), utility bills or transportation.

People can contribute to the Camilla Caldwell Fund by writing checks to this fund and forwarding them to Pam McEwen, Chief Finance Officer at Metro Social Services.

***To contribute to the Camilla Caldwell Fund, send checks to: Chief Finance Officer Metro Social Services 523 Mainstream Drive Suite A Nashville, TN 37228***

## MSS CONTINUES SENIOR PROGRAMS

The Board of Commissioners voted at their May meeting to continue the Nutrition and the Homemaker programs offered by Metro Social Services to eligible seniors and individuals with disabilities.

The Maximus Audit of 2004 recommended that Metro Social Services privatize all direct services.



However, the Board at the time was reluctant to contract out the Homemaker and Nutrition programs

and instead created pilot programs to study potential cost savings.

That study revealed that privatization of the two senior services would not result in significant cost savings. In addition, the high quality of the two programs and customer satisfaction were the main reasons why the current Board decided to keep the two services in-house.

Following the decision, Board Chair Gwen Harris said the disruption of the programs would be

a disservice to the elderly in Nashville.

“Many of our customers have built their social networks around these two programs,” Harris said. “We realized that continuing the services as they are is in the best interest of our seniors.”

The Homemaker Program serves 450 elderly and disabled people. It’s 2008 budget shows expenditures of \$1.83 million with close to \$400,000 in revenues. The Nutrition Program’s 2008 budget lists expenditures of \$1.77 million with revenues of \$967,700.

MSS Executive Director Gerri Robinson said she is thankful to her staff for being patient with the Department. The staff was in a state of limbo for the past years because they did not know whether their positions within the two programs would continue.

“I’m very grateful to the staff and proud of their commitment to our customers,” Robinson said. “We have a high-quality staff that care for the seniors they serve and form personal relationships with them. Our customers are very attached to our Homemaker and Nutrition services providers and were concerned about any changes.”

The programs will be continued indefinitely or until the Board has a reason to review them again.

*The MSS Board voted in May to keep the Senior Nutrition and Homemaker programs in-house.*

## NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Nutrition Program provides meals to approximately 1,400 seniors every day. The meals are distributed at 15 congregate sites throughout the city.

The customer base has tripled since the program contracted with the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s (MTA’s) AccessRide program.

The Nutrition Program also serves meals to elderly who are confined to their homes through illness or disability. Referrals to the program must be made by a health care provider such as a physician, a home health care agency or a hospital.

The typical client is a 77-year-old female, according to Julius Witherspoon who oversees the Senior Nutrition Program.



Seniors at the East Park Community Center

However, characteristics of the population have been changing slightly. Clients are getting older and more immigrants are being served.

Steve Lavigne, who manages the 15 congregate meal sites, said the Senior Nutrition Program

helps activate the social life of many participants.

“It’s not just a meal, it’s not just transportation,” Lavigne said addressing Board members at their February retreat. “Without us, these people would be home, without a life.”

MSS partners with Metro Parks and MTA to provide activities and transportation besides meals. While the meals last about two hours, the sites are open for four to five hours every day and offer diverse activities for fun, fitness and fellowship.

“This [service] is a reason for people to get out every day,” Lavigne said.

**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

**MSS Board Meeting  
Every 4th Wednesday of the  
Month 3:00 p.m.  
METRO SOUTHEAST  
1417 Murfreesboro Pike  
Nashville, TN 37217**

**READ ABOUT US  
ON THE WEB!!**

*http://  
www.nashville.gov/  
sservices/index.htm*

**Metro Social Services  
532 Mainstream Drive  
Suite A  
Nashville, TN 37228  
(615) 862-6400**

## INFORMAL CHILD CARE

The Ad Hoc Support Network for Informal Child Care (ASNIC), which was formed in 2006 following an Informal Child Care Summit, has completed a pilot program providing four training sessions for unregulated child care providers.

Through phone contacts in the Hispanic community, informal child care providers were located and informed of training for them in their community. The training was held at Woodbine Community Center. A provider who cares for four or less children in her home is not required to register with the State Department of Human Services (DHS). However, regulated providers benefit from access to training.

Brenda Venson, who coordinates ASNIC, said MSS had planned on training between six and nine providers, but the demand was so high that the group was expanded to 20 caregivers.

“Our trainer is bilingual and well known in the Hispanic community,” Venson said.

The first training, which was held March 1, included a general discussion on stress and how it affects caregivers as they relate to the children in their care, their own children and with adults in their lives. Participants were asked to suggest future topics and said they would like to see training on child development, safety, nutrition, First Aid, and discipline.

MSS also gave each participant a folder fill with relevant information about children and a pre-school book written in English and Spanish. Those were provided by Book'em.

A second session was offered for more Hispanic providers in April. English speaking informal

child care providers participated in two separate trainings in April and June. Each session lasted 2.5

to 3 hours. These sessions were held at Hartman Community Center on Tucker Road.

The success of the pilot projects resulted in a new contract with Our Children Our Future (OCOF) of Madison, a small business agency that provides services to children, adolescents and families.

This project came to fruition because informal child care was identified as a gap in outreach services. Metro Social Services serves the most vulnerable persons in Nashville and Davidson County and acts as a safety net for the poorest.



## LONG-TERM CARE CHOICE

Gov. Phil Bredesen travelled across the state in June to sign the “Long-Term Care Community Choices Act of 2008.” The bill will expand access to home and community-based services for Tennessee’s elderly and disabled. It fundamentally restructures the way long-term care services are delivered in Tennessee by using existing state dollars to create new options that will allow more people to stay at home for their long-term care needs.

Until now, Tennessee ranked last among the 50 states in the percentage of citizens who receive home-based services

throughout the federal Medicaid program (TennCare). The fed-



Sammie Boyd & Mable Bassham live at home and volunteer at East Park Community Center.

eral Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services reported that Tennessee spent \$149 for nursing home care in 2003 for every dollar spent on home-based

care. That compared to \$34.6 for nursing homes per dollar spent on home-based care in North Dakota, which ranked second to last in home-based care funding among the states.

AARP Tennessee has fought for years to create alternatives to nursing home care. The new law, which will go into effect July 1, will also increase funding for community living programs by nearly \$4 million. To view the law changes go to

For more information see [www.aarp.org/community/AARPTN/journals](http://www.aarp.org/community/AARPTN/journals) or [www.legislature.state.tn.us](http://www.legislature.state.tn.us) and search for SB3150/HB3332.