



**NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office  
of Innovation & Performance Analysis**

***Lee Harris, Mayor***

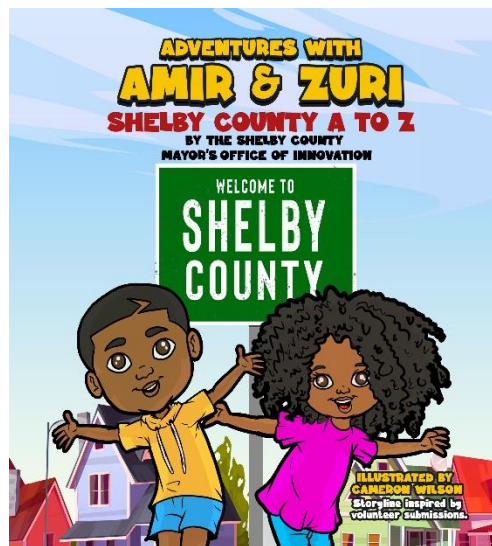
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SHELBY COUNTY MAYOR'S OFFICE OF INNOVATION PARTNERS WITH LOCAL VOLUNTEERS TO PUBLISH NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK ABOUT SHELBY COUNTY**  
*"Adventures with Amir and Zuri: Shelby County A to Z" features more than 55 local attractions and historical figures as a part of the County's push to improve student literacy.*



**Shelby County, Tennessee** – Local families can now learn about the unique sites, historical figures, and special experiences available when growing up in Shelby County, TN. The Mayor's Office of Innovation, in collaboration with the Shelby County Non-profit Committee, has published its first children's book, "Adventures with Amir and Zuri: Shelby County A to Z." The project began in 2021 with more than 300 submissions from community volunteers who selected local attractions and proposed alliterative sentences that would be relatable to 2nd-5th grade readers. The 46-page storybook begins with the letter A for Agricenter, ends with Z for Memphis Zoo, and features everything from Clayborn Temple to jookin' to Poplar Avenue in between.

The “Shelby County A to Z” book invites readers to join twin siblings Amir and Zuri on an all-day adventure around Shelby County. The literacy book includes a special message from Mayor Lee Harris, a reading guide to help families enjoy the book, and an address for all attractions so residents can embark on their own real-world adventure.

Recent state testing data suggests that as many as 75% of 3rd graders in some local school districts cannot read at grade-level, a problem that can cause anxiety, stress, and low confidence for young learners. “Adventures with Amir & Zuri: Shelby County A to Z” includes relatable, interesting, and encouraging language throughout - making it a fun gateway to reading for the entire family.

The Office of Innovation will collaborate with local school districts and community partners to distribute free copies to area 2<sup>nd</sup> graders through the end of the year. To learn more about “Adventures with Amir and Zuri: Shelby County A to Z” and find out the release date for your child’s school, visit [AmirAndZuri.com](http://AmirAndZuri.com).

**Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris:** “This creative storybook is what it’s all about. Local government, our schools, parents, and the community at-large can work together to accomplish seemingly impossible feats and create a Shelby County that will be strong for generations to come.”

**Toni Williams, MSCS Superintendent:** “We are a community working together to create a Shelby County where children receive the education they deserve. “Amir and Zuri: Shelby County A to Z” is a fun and educational book that will help our children learn about our rich county.”

**Danielle Inez, Shelby County Director of Innovation:** “Some of our community’s burdens can begin to feel heavy after a while – especially the challenge to improve student literacy. Writing a book that inspires, encourages, and teaches while bringing families closer together has been my favorite challenge to date. I look forward to seeing local families connect with Amir and Zuri’s adventure.”

**Janet Lo, Shelby County Government Manager of Community Partnerships:** “What began as a community project, has grown into the ultimate undertaking. More than 300 residents contributed to this project and they are just getting started. This project epitomizes the dedication of the County’s Non-profit Committee.”

**Sam O’Bryant, Literacy Mid-South CEO:** “Being a proficient reader is a quality of life issue. By promoting literacy in our youngest readers, we are promoting a better future. Community partnerships, like this one with the Shelby County Mayor’s Office of Innovation, allow us to reach more readers in new ways.”

**Cameron Wilson, Graphic Artist and Illustrator:** “Learning about Shelby County through the eyes of a child proved to be inspiring and sometimes challenging! I believe we all can learn something from how Amir and Zuri see their hometown. This project made me fall in love with Memphis.”

**Jennifer Sharp, Carter Malone Group Public Relations Manager:** “This project was dear to my heart because through it, we were able to create a little curly-haired cutie named Zuri. Representation matters and little boys and girls in Memphis and Shelby County should see their curiosity and imagination reflected in their books.”

(End of Release)

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