



**News from the Shelby County Mayor's Office**  
**Mark H. Luttrell, Jr., Mayor**  
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**August 10, 2012**

### **Mayor Luttrell Urges Community's Help to Reduce Infant Deaths**

Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell Jr., is calling on faith-based organizations and community groups to help highlight the alarming number of infant deaths in Shelby County. A kick-off event will be held tomorrow at the Church Health Wellness Center, 1115 Union Avenue, at 10 a.m.

**"It's vital that we help save the lives of babies, especially those less than a year old. Shelby County has one of the highest infant death rates in the country,"** said Mayor Luttrell.

Throughout September, Mayor Luttrell, the Shelby County Office of Early Childhood & Youth's infant mortality reduction initiative, "All Babies Count," along with the faith-based community will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Celebrate Life Purple Sunday initiative." Churches participating will use purple banners and other decorations to signify their fight against infant mortality.

In 2010, 142 babies less than a year old died in Shelby County. This translates into a rate of 10.3 deaths per 1,000 births, which is higher than the national average.

However, Shelby County has made significant improvements to reduce infant mortality. Since 2006, the county has had a 25 % reduction. **"This is a positive trend and with sustained, community-wide efforts and support we can hopefully reduce the number of deaths. Mothers now have more knowledge about health services designed to help them and their babies,"** added Mayor Luttrell.

Participating churches in the "Celebrate Life Purple Sunday" events will feature presentations about preconception care, prenatal care, nutrition, breastfeeding, prematurity, stress and infant safety.

For more information, contact Nicole Gates at the Shelby County Early Childhood and Youth Office at (901) 222-3990 or (901) 229-4190.

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