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## Nashville's "Cayce United" joins NOAH

*By Matt Leber & Bobby Daniels*

Cayce United, with the support and solidarity for the North District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Middle Tennessee, joins NOAH – "Nashville Organized for Action and Hope!"



Eric & Wallace pause and pose. Photo: Matt Leber

Pictured at a Cayce United training "Listening Campaign" with, Eric, a Cayce Listening trainee, is Friendship Homes co-founder and Board Chairman, Wallace Cartwright. Wallace, also a trainee, has more than three decades of experience in the Nashville-area real estate market. Among other community-minded endeavors, he is a Board member of Big Brothers of Nashville, a long-standing member of the SERTOMA Club of Nashville Civic Club, and a life-long member of Belmont United Methodist Church, a partner and member of NOAH.

Cayce United is an organized group of residents of the Cayce Place Housing Authority development in Nashville, Tennessee. They work to protect and improve area homes, secure job training, employment opportunities, and access to needed services.



In early 2013, the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) launched "Envision Cayce," a year-long planning process to guide the transformation of James Cayce Homes, Nashville's largest remaining public housing project, into a mixed-income

neighborhood. This summer, a group of Cayce Place residents concerned about the future of their homes and community formed Cayce United.

*Cayce United wants all 716 units of Cayce Place to be rebuilt at the same rental price, with automatic entry for current residents, no changes to the lease criteria that might displace people, and to make the transition as smooth and undisruptive to people's lives as possible.*

Cayce United is working to ensure that resident voices are heard and incorporated throughout the Envision Cayce process. They are dedicated to secure and grow the low-income and affordable housing stock at Cayce Place and in Nashville, along with jobs and job training for Cayce residents and low-income workers of Nashville, and continued access to integrated services. [Read more...](#)

Cayce United believes that what matters includes children, livelihoods, and neighborhoods. Cayce United has embraced the position that they will not be “silent” about these issues.

According to the Metro Planning Organization, Middle Tennessee is slated to grow by an additional one million people over the next 20 years. Nashville’s downtown is growing outward with new development on several spokes of the city “wheel.” Shelby Avenue, East Nashville, is home to the largest remaining housing authority development, James Cayce Homes, housing over 2,000 people in 716 units. All 2,000 people living in Cayce Homes are in poverty: 87% are African American, 45% are people with disabilities, and over 60% are single parent households.

The exponential growth in Nashville has reorganized neighborhoods to accommodate the expanding workforce and relocating middle class. Those in poverty – and particularly those living in public housing – have been systematically displaced or relocated by this rapid development. The last three housing developments the MDHA rebuilt utilized the mixed-income HOPE VI model. These redevelopments displaced 80% of existing residents and did not track the housing outcomes of those residents who were displaced. The MDHA has pledged a different outcome in Cayce Homes.

In early 2013, the MDHA hired EJP Consulting to develop the plan and implementation of the Cayce Redevelopment, currently termed “Envision Cayce.” MDHA’s consulting firm has hosted three of four sets of meetings for residents and the broader community to learn about development plans and provide input.

Residents of Cayce became concerned about these development plans after the first public presentation in March 2013. They began to ask questions: “Where are they going to move us? Where will we go? When will this start?” In May 2013, several formal and informal leaders of the Cayce resident community came together and said: “Let’s get organized!” In June, a broad-based group of residents came together and formed Cayce United. They are committed to ensuring that resident voices are heard and incorporated throughout the Envision Cayce process.

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