

## A New CEO and Legacy of Leadership!



We are excited to announce that Nora Buckley has stepped into the role of Chief Executive Officer at MHDS, Inc. Nora has been an integral part of our organization for the past 10 years, serving as Chief Operations Officer and driving innovation and growth throughout her tenure.

Nora's career in this field began after graduating from Arkansas State University with a degree in Social Work. Her first role was at Arlington Developmental Center, and she later became one of the first Support Coordinators in the state of Tennessee - a milestone that reflects her commitment to advancing services for individuals with developmental and mental health needs. During her time at MHDS, Inc., Nora has led transformative initiatives, including the creation of our Mental Health program, the launch of our Enabling Technology Company, and the development of the MAPs program. Her vision and leadership have been instrumental in diversifying the services we provide and expanding our impact.

Nora enjoys spending time with her family. She has been married to Randall Buckley for 37 years and is the proud mother of two sons and grandmother to two wonderful grandchildren. Please join us in supporting Nora as she leads MHDS into an exciting future!

## Our Chief Operations Officer

Deana Shephard has more than 10 years of experience with MHDS. She has served the agency in several capacities including Day Services (Employment & Community), Mental Health Programs and Agency Operations. Throughout her tenure, she has developed a deep understanding of the organization's mission, people and systems. She is excited to step into her new role.



A graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin, Deana began her career as a social worker in child abuse prevention. It was during this time that she gained early experience working with individuals with varied disabilities and discovered a passion that would shape her career. She later spent 17 years as a Support Coordinator in West Tennessee, further strengthening her commitment to advocacy, inclusion, and person-centered supports.

Deana is married to Michael Shephard and has two adult daughters. Through her blended family, she has five adult children and six grandchildren.

## Jackson Area Chamber Nonprofit of the Year



We were honored to be selected as the 2025 Nonprofit among a distinguished host of agencies serving our regional area.

"As we go about our daily fulfillment of supporting those in our care, we are always mindful that we are successful because of the unwavering dedication of our Board and the pursuit of excellence by our skilled staff," stated CEO, Nora Buckley. "We know that without the efforts of our entire team, we could not provide the quality programs that garnered our nomination."

For more information and to see a video of our acceptance of this award, please click [here](#).



## Need To Know

- 4/3 Good Friday (new Holiday)
  - 4/24 Spring Banquet
  - 5/6-12 Nurse's Week
  - 5/25 Memorial Day
- Full Calendar on [website](#).

## CEO Focus



Nora Buckley  
Chief Executive Officer

Stepping into the role of CEO for an agency with 54 years of history is both an honor and a responsibility. Being only the third person to hold this position underscores the strength of the foundation built by those before me - one rooted in commitment, resilience, and service.

Yet even the strongest foundations are meant to support growth. Our industry, our communities, and the needs of those we serve continue to evolve, and so must we. This is a moment to honor what has worked while embracing the opportunities that come with thoughtful, intentional change.

As Peter Drucker once said, “The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence - it is to act with yesterday’s logic.” Together, we will build on our legacy while shaping a future that reflects who we are and who we aspire to become.

*Nora*

## The Path Forward! Operating Standards as We Look Ahead!

### **1. Expand Affordable, Quality Housing and Supportive Living Options**

Provide safe, affordable, and high-quality homes while incorporating supplemental supports - such as technology, mental health services, and nursing - to help people live more independently and successfully in their communities.

### **2. Strengthen Employment Supports and Opportunities**

Ensure that every person who wants to work has access to meaningful employment opportunities, skills development, and the supports needed to explore, obtain, and maintain successful jobs.

### **3. Enhance and Grow Enabling Technology & Innovation**

Expand Enabling Technology services and integrate new tools - including AI and other innovative supports - to improve independence, communication, safety, and overall quality of life for the people we support.

### **4. Advance Agency Accreditation and Service Excellence**

Strengthen accreditation across the organization and expand accreditation into additional departments to ensure high-quality, accountable, and person-centered services.

### **5. Foster Community Partnerships and Connectedness**

Build stronger relationships with community programs, businesses, and stakeholders to create new opportunities and reduce loneliness, isolation, and barriers for the people we support.

### **6. Promote Purpose, Engagement, and Meaningful Lives**

Create pathways for individuals to connect, build relationships, discover purpose, and engage in fulfilling activities that enrich their daily lives and support overall well-being.

### **7. Invest in Employees and Strengthen Workforce Support**

Empower staff by enhancing benefits, growth opportunities, training, and ongoing support - ensuring employees feel valued, equipped, and motivated to deliver exceptional services.

## Director of Nursing, Kim Parham, Earns RN Degree



As she worked a 40+ hour week, Kim was also taking classes and completing coursework toward achieving her Registered Nursing degree. It took her several years and long hours but she never wavered from her goal. We are so proud of her commitment to her profession and desire to further her education to strengthen her role within our agency.

### **Social Security Disability Benefits: How Does Employment Affect Them?**

**Find Out: Tuesday - 3/3 - 4 pm  
At: MHDS, 27 Conrad, Jackson  
Free & Open to the Public**

**Reservation to: [ksorrell@mhds.org](mailto:ksorrell@mhds.org)**

## *Save the Date*

**Spring Banquet**

**Friday, April 24**

**5-8 pm**

**Jackson Fairgrounds**

**Friends - Dinner - DJ - Fun**

## Winter Storm Fern: Lessons in Determination



Beverly caught a ride on the MHDS Polar Express to be sure she got to work! Everyday, designated drivers picked up essential staff who were unable to drive themselves.

(MRS) Manager of Residential Services, Tonica, was one of our drivers. She delivered Ruby to help LaToya keep a home covered.



HR Director, Chad, and Selmer Residential Trainer, Randy, freed vehicles from the ice to be put back in service when roads cleared.

In Bolivar, MRS, Kebrina took meds to Christina.



# Fern Displaced Selmer from Homes for 9 Days

Persons Supported & Staff kept can do attitudes!



United Way of West Tennessee

## Valentines Dance!



Mail:  
P O Box 11205  
Jackson TN 38308  
www.mhds.org

Admin/Program Centers:  
27 Conrad Drive  
Jackson TN 38305  
731.664.0855

Program Center:  
615 Moss Lane  
Bolivar TN 38008  
731.658.4404

Program Center:  
1431 Peach Street  
Selmer TN 38375  
731.645.7730

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