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NEWS RELEASE

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Crime Free Multi-Housing communities celebrate one year of commitment to safety program; other communities encouraged to become certified

College Point, College Center and University Center certified in safety partnership

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. — Three Murfreesboro apartment communities have been credentialed under the Murfreesboro Police Department Crime Free Multi-Housing safety program, but the City strongly encourages other communities to become certified and join the partnership to build a safer community.

“Maintaining a safe, family-friendly community is one of the trademarks of our growing community and we want to keep it that way,” said Mayor Shane McFarland. “I want our residents, parents and college students to know that we initiated this effective program in 2017 to address the problem so citizens and visitors feel safe and the community’s positive image is protected.”

“We have been pleased with the initial level of cooperation and support from the apartment community managers and owners,” said Murfreesboro Police Chief Michael Bowen. “However, commitment to the security upgrades in Phase 2 for certification involves a substantial investment to ensure the safety of residents and students who live in off-campus housing.”

College Point, College Center and University Center Apartments are locally owned and the first to become certified through the Murfreesboro Police Department program. Krista Davis manages the three rental properties that were first, and so far, the only communities to become certified:

“I am excited and very proud that we were the first,” said Davis. “Since becoming CFMH certified, the occupancy rates at our three communities have risen from 53 to 97 percent. I do wish more properties would get involved in the program to help make our community a better place.”

Watch a video by MPD PIO Larry Flowers featuring the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program on YouTube <https://youtu.be/3WR79Wve3z0>.

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The City of Murfreesboro Police Department, in partnership with Middle Tennessee State University, announced the first training for a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in February 2018. Since then, more than 30 rental communities have participated in the free education and certification training, but completing the three-phase process requires more commitment.

Rental facilities that meet the criteria and implement the city's recommended best practices for safety to become certified receive a special emblem displayed to prospective residents.

"We need to come together, whether individually or for the good of the city. Everyone on board would make a huge difference," added Davis. "I think parents are very particular about where their child is going to live when they enroll them in college, especially if they are going to live off-campus. This program is a prime example of what we do for their safety of their children."

MTSU Police Chief Buddy Peaster said he's pleased that the University and the City are continuing its partnership to help improve safety at the apartment complexes around the University.

"MTSU and the City of Murfreesboro have partnered together to try to make off campus housing opportunities for MTSU students (and really everyone) even safer," Peaster said. "While both things are important, everyone knows that preventing serious crime is much better than responding to it after the fact. Our Department is honored to work with the Murfreesboro Police Department and to play a part in this committed partnership."

The City of Murfreesboro and MTSU officials met in summer 2017 to initiate the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program with owners and managers of privately owned apartment communities. Participating Murfreesboro rental communities that complete the three-phase credentialing process become fully certified members.

Certification training (Phase 1) is required for rental property participation in MTSU CUSTOMS orientation for students and parents. CUSTOMS helps new freshmen and transfer students transition into the university.

- Phase 1, an eight-hour meeting, introduces property managers to effective property management, including rental agreements, ongoing property management, crime prevention, warning signs of gang and drug activity, the role of police, crisis resolution, and housing assistance programs.
- Phase 2 involves an on-site property review through environmental design to improve security and lighting. Phase 2 puts everything learned in the program into effect, replacing door jams and deadbolts in doors and secondary window locks on windows, as well as landscaping and exterior lighting enhancements. While Phase 2 is time-consuming and requires a financial investment, it is very effective in reducing crime.
- Phase 3 incorporates tenant involvement.

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“Murfreeboro Police Department officers have expressed support for the lighting upgrades in these certified communities,” said Sgt. Harry Haigh, who coordinates the Crime Free Multi-Housing program in Murfreeboro. “Participating members of the program work directly with the police department to improve safety and reduce potential crime.”

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, first introduced in Mesa, Arizona in 1992, is a special initiative geared specifically to rental housing and is essentially a crime prevention program.

Adoption of an apartment credentialing or certification program informs the public about apartment communities that utilize “best practices” such as third-party security, gated access, monitored parking and visitor registration.

To participate or for more information on the program, visit <http://www.murfreesborotn.gov/1475/Crime-Free-Multi-Housing-Program>. For further information on how to become a participant, contact Sgt. Haigh at 0367@murfreesborotn.gov or call 615-895-3874.

For City News online, visit www.Murfreesborotn.gov.

Photos and Logos attached:

1. *L/R MPD Sgt. Harry Haigh, coordinator of the Murfreeboro Crime Free Multi-Housing program, and MPD Chief Michael Bowen, staff event to celebrate one-year anniversary of College Center Apartments certification in program.*
2. *MPD Sgt. Harry Haigh addresses rental property community managers, Feb. 16, 2018.*
3. *Krista Davis, second from left, with CFMH symbol and apartment community team, 2018.*
4. *Crime Free Multi-Housing symbol logo.jpg*
5. *MPD Patch.jpeg.*

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