

HEALTH CARE

Hamilton shares grief and gratitude at Alliance's mental health breakfast

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Carmeon Hamilton, HGTV interior designer, speaks during Alliance Healthcare Services' Second Annual Mental Health Awareness Breakfast on Oct. 24 at Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church. Alliance Healthcare Services is the largest comprehensive behavioral health provider in Shelby County. (Brad Vest/Special to The Daily Memphian)

Memphian and HGTV star Carmeon Hamilton shared her experiences with grief and her openness about her own mental health struggles as the special guest at Alliance Healthcare Services' Mental Health Awareness Breakfast, on Tuesday, Oct. 24, at Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church.

An interior designer and popular content creator, Hamilton became nationally known after winning HGTV's "Design Star: Next Gen" and hosts renovation shows "[Reno: My Rental](#)" and "[Turn Your House Around](#)" for the network.

Memphis breaks ground on \$34 million mental health crisis center

However, three weeks before Design Star premiered, in August 2021, her husband, Marcus Hamilton, was killed in a motorcycle crash after he was struck by an intoxicated driver.

"In in that moment, at essentially the peak of my career — and also having a son that was going to middle school — I really had to find what centered me because if I didn't, there was so much around me that would have spiraled out of control," Hamilton said.

She said she was grateful for the time she and Marcus had together, but also wanted to show her son that she was "a whole human."

"I made sure he saw my grief process and also made sure we had professional grief counseling separately, because I knew that was important for him," Hamilton said of son Davin, who's now a freshman at Central High School.

Hamilton and her husband, who met at the University of Central Arkansas, had been together for 15 years at the time of his death.

Sanctuary for women who live on Memphis streets faces closure

Her mother had died from breast cancer two months before the couple's wedding. Hamilton returned to her hometown of West Memphis, Arkansas, to care for her mother during the final six months of her life.

Prior to her mother's death, Hamilton had also lost her grandmother, whom she described as her best friend, to breast cancer.

“My parents always instilled in me, no matter what is happening in your life, gratitude is the way to move,” Hamilton said. “And if you are always grateful for what you have, you’re never really thrown off by what you don’t. Losses aren’t really losses. They are lessons.”



Attendees lower their heads in prayer during Alliance Healthcare Services' Second Annual Mental Health Awareness Breakfast on Oct. 24 at Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church. (Brad Vest/Special to The Daily Memphian)

In addition to professional counseling and a focus on gratitude, Hamilton said the support she receives from the “village” of friends she began building when she moved to Memphis 13 years ago has been imperative to her mental wellness.

“That village is a group of friends, ultimately, that love life as much as I do and have the same values,” Hamilton said.

Carmeon Hamilton's latest HGTV show to focus on local homeowners

The Mental Health Awareness Breakfast is designed to reduce mental health stigma and promote wellness in the community. And Hamilton is known for her authenticity and penchant for sharing life’s challenges with her 185,000 Instagram followers.

“When hard times come, I share them just as loudly as the joyful ones,” she said.

During the breakfast, Hamilton spoke of her love for Memphis and the way the city has supported her success.

She owns Nubi Interiors, an interior design business in Cordova, and is a part-time owner of Inkwell, a craft cocktail bar in Memphis’ Edge District, and an investor in Cxffeeblack, whose storefront is the Anti Gentrification Cxffee Club.

“I love investing in this city,” Hamilton said.

Over-the-counter Narcan could save more lives in Tennessee's opioid crisis

Alliance Healthcare Services, which hosted the breakfast, is the largest comprehensive behavioral health provider in Shelby County, with nine local clinics, group and independent housing and a 24/7 Crisis Response Team.

It works to assess the patients for mental health and addiction and get them back into the community.

“It means that we will take care of you regardless of your ability to pay or where you're in life,” said Alliance CEO Laurie Powell. “That is our mission: to lift up and promote wellness.”

Last month, Alliance broke ground on a \$34 million, 55,000-square-foot behavioral crisis center in Binghampton, which was designed by Memphis-based brg3S architects and is being built by partner Turner Construction.

Mark Billingsley, executive director of the Alliance Healthcare Foundation, said the centrally located facility will provide a continuum of behavioral health care in a welcoming and therapeutic environment.



Laurie Powell, CEO of Alliance Healthcare Services, said the provider works to assess patients for mental health and addiction and get them back into the community. “That is our mission: to lift up and promote wellness,” she said. (Brad Vest/Special to The Daily Memphian)

Carmeon Hamilton helps local renters transform spaces in new TV show

“Patients will receive immediate care and will be able to access every aspect of mental health care that they need at one location, under one roof,” he said.

Alliance Healthcare Services has so far raised nearly \$25 million of the \$35 million needed, which includes funding from the state, foundations and private donors.

Alliance anticipates the crisis center could open in early 2025.

“Patients will have better care and better access to care, which we know can result in a higher quality of life,” Billingsley said.

TOPICS

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Aisling Mäki has spent the better part of two decades writing about Memphis. A former digital journalist for WMC Action News 5 and staff reporter for Memphis Daily News, her work has also appeared in The Commercial Appeal, High Ground News, I Love Memphis, Inside Memphis Business, The Memphis Flyer, Memphis Parent, Memphis Magazine and Tri-State Defender.