

CITY OF MEMPHIS

Memphis Lift honors 'Cake Lady' with Brenda Rogers Resource Center

By Alicia Davidson, Daily Memphian

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Sarah Carpenter, executive director of Memphis Lift, speaks at a groundbreaking for the Brenda Rogers Resource Center June 1, 2023. (Patrick Lantrip/The Daily Memphis)

Nonprofit organization Memphis Lift broke ground on a planned 3,200-square-foot expansion honoring North Memphis resident Brenda Rogers at the organization's 1637 Britton St. headquarters Thursday, June 1.

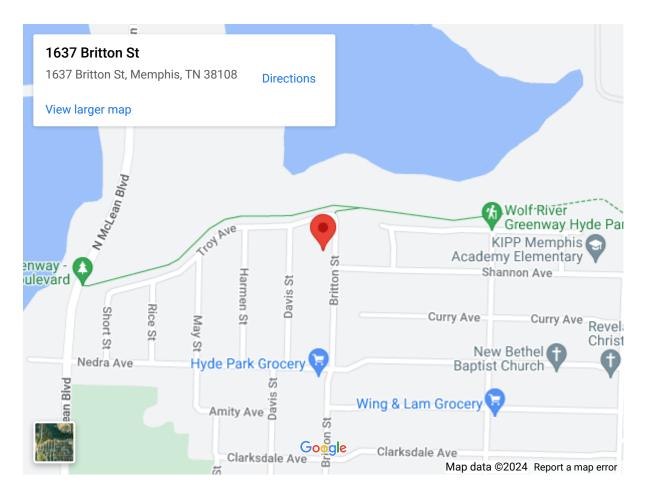
The addition will be called The Brenda Rogers Resource Center. Also referred to as "Cake Lady," Rogers was affectionately known in the North Memphis area for baking homemade cakes for her friends and family.

Rogers was killed in 2004 by gun violence while living in North Memphis.

Seed funding: Nonprofits give free garden beds to about 100 homeowners

Sarah Carpenter is the executive director of Memphis Lift. Carpenter received an unexpected phone call while recovering from her second brain surgery in March 2022 informing her of a \$1.5 million grant from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott.

Carpenter said the donation will make an exceptional impact on not only North Memphis and Memphis Lift but the entire city.



"It has long been a dream of mine to see beautiful things in this community, because we deserve beauty, too," Carpenter said. "Every day it's a fight to get our politicians to see us and to get city services to respect us, so this is us taking care of our own with the support of private donors who believe in us and our people."

Memphis Lift partner Emma Bloomberg is the founder and CEO of Murmuration, an organization dedicated to transforming the politics and mission of education.



A photo of Brenda Rogers stands next to the Brenda Rogers Resource Center, which was named by Memphis Lift in honor of the late North Memphis advocate June 1, 2023. (Patrick Lantrip/The Daily Memphian)

Bloomberg expressed her support for the nonprofit noting Carpenter's strength, determination and love for her community.

"Sarah is tireless in her pursuit for equitable opportunity for all kids, not just here in our community, but now across the country," Bloomberg said. "She is really a beacon of hope and inspiration to organizers everywhere."

Bloomberg noted while there is more work to be done to transform education and availability of resources for Memphis children and parents, Memphis Lift is an organization that keeps the hope and dream alive.

'Grounded' program inspires teen mindfulness, peace work

"I'm inspired by the work that Memphis Lift does, and I'm inspired by you," Bloomberg said. "We are thrilled to be your partner and still want to give you whatever it is you need to continue to drive that workforce.

"If anyone can do it, you all can, and I'm just honored to be a small part of this story."

More than 25 family members of Brenda Rogers were in attendance for the groundbreaking, including Reginald Rogers, Brenda's son.

"I was raised in this community, and to see something like that happen in honor of my mother just makes me feel proud," Rogers said. "It makes me want to continue to give back and support the community."



Memphis Lift breaks ground on a planned 3,200-square-foot expansion honoring north Memphis resident Brenda Rogers June 1, 2023. (Patrick Lantrip/The Daily Memphis)

Rogers noted the significance of Memphis Lift's mission to "make the powerless parent powerful," and said the new Brenda Rogers Resource Center will be the place of resource and refuge for local children and families.

"A lot of times people just need support, an upper hand," Rogers said. "I think this facility will provide that service, to not just the children but to the parents as well so they can be able to assist with the growth of this community."

Numerous city leaders joined more than 100 community members for the groundbreaking, including Memphis-Shelby County Schools board member Sheleah Harris, MSCS board chair Althea Greene, Shelby County Sheriff Floyd Bonner Jr., president of the Memphis NAACP branch Van Turner and Shelby County Commissioner Michael Whaley.

Uptown greenline an 'ending and beginning' for county trail system

Memphis Lift is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building awareness for underserved Memphis students and widespread demand for high-quality schools. The organization has more than 1,000 volunteers.

The Brenda Rogers Resource Center opening date is to be determined. According to Memphis Lift parent coach Marcus Randolph, the organization has a goal to open the new center by Summer 2025. To learn more about Memphis Lift, <u>click here</u>.

TOPICS

MEMPHIS LIFT BRENDA ROGERS RESOURCE CENTER



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Alicia Davidson is a lifelong Memphis resident and graduate of The University of Memphis College of Journalism and Strategic Media. When not scribbling about the latest Memphis news, you will find her reading historical biographies, cooking Italian cuisine and practicing vinyasa yoga.