



TOWNtalk

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL
VOLUME 18 ISSUE 1 • OCTOBER 2021

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On the Front Burner

Town Manager Maurice Jones

There is once again hope on the horizon as statewide COVID numbers appear to be trending down after a very difficult summer and early fall. I sincerely hope that trend continues and we get back on track with plans for returning more people to the office and reopening our facilities safely to the public. Our community and all of you have been patient through the altered services, and I'm sure everyone will be grateful when we can lift the remaining restrictions.

I want to thank everyone who has played a vital role in our efforts not to contribute to growing infections and to fight this virus. As TOWNtalk went to press 90% of our regular employees were fully vaccinated and those who aren't have been cooperating with our weekly testing protocols. I appreciate everyone's efforts to keep yourselves, your colleagues and the public as safe as possible during the latest surge in COVID cases.

Despite the positive news on infections, it has become apparent that the lingering effects of the coronavirus are taking not only a physical but emotional toll on people. I want you to know that none of us are immune to the stress the pandemic has added to our lives. The Town of Chapel Hill cares about your well-being. We have strived from the beginning

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Our newest Art Bus, *Rise Above Racial Injustices*, is a collaboration between community arts partners, Black artist/educator Debi Drew, and Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP Youth Council. Thanks to Susan Brown and her team at Community Arts & Culture for turning a basic idea into a fantastic collaboration and a wonderful exhibit—excellent work by Melissa Bartoletta and Steve Wright!

In the Spotlight



Sheleathea Wright-Quick's law enforcement career started nearly 30 years ago at a Dunkin' Donuts in Raleigh. Sheleathea, who – with a big, bright smile – will ask you to call her "She," was fresh out of college and working an overnight shift to save money and move out of her parents' house.

She was familiar with officers who would visit the donut shop and encourage her to use her degree in English and journalism at the Raleigh Police Department. The officers needed someone who could write and they recognized the need to diversify the perspectives within their department. But it wasn't until a 2 a.m. robbery at the shop, which brought out crime scene investigators, that She saw them in action and knew she had to join. She immediately put in her two-weeks' notice and applied to join the department.

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It's easy! Try a new form of alternative transportation this month!

Walktober

Get yourself ready, and walk yourself silly, for fun, healthier lifestyle and to earn points getting yourself to work!

Register at sharetheridenc.org (no carpool-matching necessary) to earn chances for great gift cards. The Town has many winners every month; at the same time, they are cleaning up the air and water!

Walk to School (and Work) Day

On Oct. 6, people all over the world walked to school and work! Ephesus Elementary had Go Chapel Hill and Chapel Hill Police (including **Charlie Pardo, Paul Bell, and Alex Carrasquillo**-pictured right) helping the whole community get to school! Get Your Walk On!!!



Stormwater 101

Annual stormwater awareness video training is required for all Town employees. Talk to your supervisor about the best time to do the training. The deadline to complete the training is by close of business Monday, Dec. 20, 2021.

If you have a Town email, you can access the 18-minute video through Cornerstone. The video is also available on [The Hive](https://youtu.be/AoFjtom5gs) and on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/AoFjtom5gs>). If you do not use Cornerstone, send to Tom Clark: employee name, department, date of training, and name of training ("Stormwater 101").

Log in to Cornerstone at <https://knowandgrow.csod.com>. Your username is your employee ID. The password for the initial login is P4ssw0rd. If you need to have your password reset, contact Tom Clark (HRD) at tclark2@townofchapelhill.org or 966-5031.

On the Front Burner

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of the pandemic to protect all of you from the virus and the challenges associated with its spread. And we will continue to do so. We are developing a strategy to provide additional support to our staff in order for all of us to be better prepared to address the strain on our lives. We'll have more information soon about ways we can lift each other up. And remember if you need to talk with someone about personal problem that may impact your health, mental and emotional well-being, please call 1-800-272-7255 or visit guidanceresources.com. We are still in this together.

Thanks for everything you do to make Chapel Hill a wonderful place. Enjoy the beautiful fall weather, and be well.

In the Spotlight

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Today, She is a Forensic Evidence Specialist at the Chapel Hill Police Department and co-chairs the Town's Wellness Committee.. And no, she doesn't drive a Hummer like the one on the show CSI: Miami. She says there are a lot of misconceptions about her job, but it just comes with the territory.

She loves the generosity and respect she feels in Chapel Hill – a combination she calls a good vibe. She is grateful the growing area still has a town feeling. When She isn't sorting through evidence and analyzing crime scenes, she teaches at a fitness center in Cary, takes Spanish classes, or travels. Aruba is her favorite destination. Next, she wants to make it to Greece and Turkey. She also enjoys sewing, knitting, and crocheting.

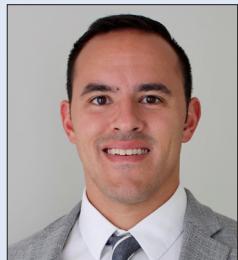
She says her faith in humanity inspires her – testimonies from people who have gone through life events and still get up every day and move forward with a kind word to someone who may be struggling. She calls it a good reminder that you never know what people are going through.



Briefs

Alex Carrasquillo

(CaPA) joined the Town in August as the Community Safety Public Information Officer. He was previously in the TV-news business for a decade. Alex grew up in Hillsborough and got his degree from NC State. In his first month, Alex got some real-world experience, being woken up at 5 a.m. to help with public information for an investigation and helping organize the press conference for a critical update to the nine-year Faith Hedgepeth investigation.



Doranda Cole

(Transit) has been promoted to Fixed Route Supervisor. She has been working with Chapel Hill Transit since 2013. She has been a Fill-In Supervisor since 2020, and has worked as a Dispatcher and performed on-street observations and video reviews.



Alisha Cordell

(Technology Solutions) has accepted the position of IT Business Analyst. Alisha has a B.S. in Business Administration and is completing a Masters in Applied Arts and Sciences and eLearning certification at UNC-Greensboro.



Mari Hall (Police) has been promoted to Lead Clinician of the Police Crisis Unit. Congratulations to Mari! She is a wonderful clinician, and our team is lucky to have her leadership!

A familiar face to Town Hall, **Brenton Hodge** (CaPA) has provided security for the building since 2015 with NightHawk Security and Consulting; he's been with the company since 2011. He is now serving as Assistant Town Clerk. Brenton has a degree in Political Science from NCCU.

Javius Newman

(Transit) has been promoted to Fixed Route/Demand Response Supervisor. Javius started as a Fixed Route Bus Operator in 2008.



He has worked many special events and competed in many bus skills Roadeos.

Jermaine Ray

(Transit) has been promoted to Demand Response Supervisor. He has worked with Chapel Hill Transit since 2019, and has served as Transit Ambassador and been chosen as Employee of the Year.



Star Reams has joined HRD to assist with benefits administration. Star has a Bachelor of Business Administration and M.S. in Human Resource Management from Strayer University. Star lives with her husband and daughter in Hurdle Mills. Her hobbies include baking, traveling, and genealogical research.

Christina Strauch

(CaPA) is taking on a new role: Public Information Officer. Her focus areas will be Planning, Economic Development, and construction. With more than 11 years of experience with the Town, she brings the institutional knowledge into this important role to allow her to hit the ground running and get our employees and community members the information they need to succeed.



National Awards for Town Communications

The Town of Chapel Hill won two awards at this year's SAVVY Awards from 3CMA (City-County Communications & Marketing Association). The Town won a Silver Circle Award in the COVID PR Campaign category for the Spread Kindness, Not Illness campaign; the Chapel Hill Fire, Now Hiring video won an Award of Excellence in the Video – Promo category.

Spread Kindness, Not Illness: At the start of the pandemic, a Councilmember shared her concern about a particular population in the community being blamed for the coronavirus. Chapel Hill's

culturally-diverse populations prompted the JIC (Joint Information Center) to create a simple, easily-translated message as part of a campaign: Spread Kindness, Not Illness. That campaign was translated into Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Burmese, and Karen, and has been featured on the Town website, social media, and Chapel Hill Transit buses.

Chapel Hill Fire, Now Hiring:

The Fire Department needed to fill multiple vacancies. Staff thought that the recruitment efforts were outdated and unlikely to catch the attention of the young recruits the department



needs. Younger firefighters asked senior administration if a video could be created and shared on social media. The department knew it had to get a strong pool of applicants to find the right fit who would remain on the job long term. The fire department received almost 350 applications for 8 vacancies.

What Does Queer Mean?

Many folks remember when queer was a word that demeaned and disempowered the LGBTQ+ community. Today, though, queer is a term we use to describe ourselves. It was reclaimed by activists during the AIDS crisis and now it's a word for our community that includes gender identities as well as sexual and romantic orientations. It's also a label we might use if there isn't a good word to describe our gender, sexual, and/or romantic identity.

So yes, it's okay to say queer when you use it like we do. It's not okay to say queer as an insult or a joke or if someone asks you not to. Some of us are still uncomfortable with the word, and you should always respect people's boundaries.

Want to learn more? The LGBTQ+ ERG (Employer-Recognized Group) is always open to new members, including allies. Email mdebillis@townofchapelhill.org to join.



Hispanic, Latina, and Latinx Affinity Group

If you identify as Hispanic, Latina, or Latinx, we have created an affinity space to deepen connections and build community. As a group, you have the autonomy to continue the dialogue formally or informally. In general, Affinity Groups or Employer-Recognized Groups consist of employees who share the concerns of a common race, gender, national origin, or sexual orientation--characteristics protected in some instances by law and in many organizations as a matter of company policy.

As the DEI Officer, Tom Clark (HRD) will provide support and guidance for any ongoing staff-led initiatives. If you missed the group meeting Oct. 13, there's still time to get involved.

Email Tom at tclark2@townofchapelhill.org.



Go Chapel Hill Annual Conference

On Thursday, Nov. 18, the Town will celebrate 30 years of Transportation Demand Management at the Virtual Go Chapel Hill 2021 Conference! The conference has representatives and speakers from all over the United States, with many from the Town of Chapel Hill and Triangle area.

There is no charge to attend the conference, which will begin at 9 a.m. The Mayor's Award Lunch will be held at 1 p.m. and the conference will end by 3 p.m.

Topics include:

- Cycling the Underground Railroad
- Veteran's Transportation Program
- Climate Action Plan
- Commute Incentive programs
- Town Streets
- Vision Zero program and more!

Please contact Len Cone (lcone@townofchapelhill.org) if you would like to attend.

PumpkinFest Is Coming!

Decorate your own ceramic pumpkin on Friday, Oct. 22. Clay Studio instructors will provide the pumpkins and fire them after they're decorated. This workshop is sponsored by Parks and Recreation and Wellness@Work. There is a limit of 10 participants per session to allow for social distancing.

The pumpkins will be ready for pickup on Friday, Oct. 30—just in time for Halloween!

RSVP by Oct. 15 to Liska Lackey at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796.

This workshop is free and available to all Town employees and pre-65 retirees.



Compliments

Mike Lee (Transit) was thanked by Erin Fraher for giving her extra space when she was biking on a busy street. "I know you're facing driver shortages and I hope your current driver(s) feel appreciated!"

Molly Drilling thanked Chapel Hill Transit for continuing to provide transportation during the pandemic: "I wanted to extend my gratitude towards all of you for working so hard the past few months under stressful conditions. I know I'm not alone in being so appreciative of you for keeping transit running and enabling everyone to get to where they need to go. I work on campus and it's not in the budget to pay for parking, so it really makes a big difference both in starting my day and getting back home - to have reliable transportation."

J. Kirk (Police) thanked **Javious Newman** and **Thomas Dodson** (both Transit) for assisting a wheelchair user who was stranded on Merritt Mill Road. "I know it was late and they were probably getting ready to call it a day to go home. I want to share my gratitude and commend them for their dedication to service and to teamwork in assisting another department."

Greta Wayland thanked **Traffic Engineering staff** for quickly fixing a problem with flashing yellow lights in the Estes Hills school zone. Staff found a faulty clock with the flasher and it was fixed the same day. "Thank you so much for fixing it so quickly!"

Eric North (Transit) was commended by Joseph Schneider for being kind and helpful. "Today, when I was stuck out in the rain at a bus stop with a dead phone and a backpack full of very water sensitive electronics and books from my lab, I was helped by the kindest transit driver I have ever met."

Myra Jones thanked **Kim Badie, Jessica St. James** and **Tasha Harrington** (all Transit) for helping find and return a Fitbit smartwatch that she lost on the bus. "I want to give a big thank you to Kim for her honesty and integrity and again to the other two ladies for their help tracking it down."

Sheila Satterfield (Transit) was commended by a Transit rider for being friendly and courteous.

John Mueller (Transit) was thanked by Jasmine Kaur for going out of his way to help find an airpod that fell under the bus. "He's awesome!!"

Meagan Clawar thanked **Chapel Hill Transit staff** for helping the Refugee Community Partnership get three refugee families approved for EZ Rider. "These families have had extensive transportation needs with many doctors appointments and RCP has been filling the gap. We are so excited to be able to connect them to this town service and support them in having further transportation freedom for themselves."

The Mariakakis family thanked **Devorio Evans** (Public Works) for a quick response to their request to pick up three old sofas. The request was made online on Saturday and the pickup was completed on Monday morning. "We had expected those sofas to sit on our curb for 2-3 days and we would had to apologize to our neighbors for the unsightliness of this. Your quick response was greatly appreciated! Thank you for the speedy and efficient follow up."

Firefighters Rescue Runaway Puppy

David and Pamela Ransohoff thanked members of the Fire Department for rescuing their puppy Madeleine, who escaped from their house and ended up at a busy intersection. **Patrick Spencer, Bradley Hoover, and Luis Velazquez** (all Fire) found the puppy and brought her home.

Madeleine had bolted from their home near Meadowmont Village and ended up on the intersection of Raleigh Road and Barbee Chapel Road. "She didn't seem to understand the danger, so we stopped the truck and went over to her. She came right to us and we found her family's name and number on her collar," Spencer said.

"Luis sacrificed a newly-purchased bottle of water to give her a drink and Bradley held onto her while I called her folks."

The firefighters said they were in the right place at the right time. They put Madeleine in Engine 32 and drove a short distance back to her home, where her family was grateful to see her again.

"Madeleine is such an important part of our family, that our family would have been totally devastated if she had been hit by a car," the Ransohoffs said in an email to the Town Manager. "I asked if I could thank and 'commend' them to someone. They said 'this is just part of our job!'"



Clinic Staff Changes

The Wellness Clinic's new dietitian, Natalia Adamson, is available to support Town employees, dependents, and pre-65 retirees in a more nourished and healthier lifestyle by creating custom nutrition plans and providing support and guidance. Contact her at Natalia.Adamson@unchealth.unc.edu.



Barbara Silver, who provided Tobacco Cessation Services for the past 10 years, has retired. UNC Family Medicine's Tobacco Treatment Program Staff will continue to provide services for Town employees. Celestine Valcourt-Hall is currently providing that care. Contact her at tochtp@unc.edu or 984-974-4971.

Transition to UNC MyChart

Your connection with the Wellness Clinic has transitioned from the W@W portal to My UNC Chart. This change makes your healthcare records even more secure.

While you will be able to connect with Wellness Clinic Staff through My UNC Chart, feel free to contact Clinic Staff directly by calling 919-968-2796.

My UNC Chart is a safe, secure and convenient portal that allows you to:

- Schedule appointments and communicate with a provider
- Take the annual Health Risk Assessment
- View your recent lab results, weights, and blood pressures

Already have My UNC Chart? [Log in](#).

New to My UNC Chart?

[Find out more](#), including how to sign up.

Spreading Kindness

The Spread Kindness, Not Illness campaign has highlighted the importance of addressing our physical and mental well-being. The pandemic has impacted everyone differently; we recognize that and want to make sure everyone can connect with the resources they need.

Protecting those we care about can be difficult especially when we believe someone may be considering harming themselves. But we can make a difference by recognizing their struggles and asking difficult questions. For more information, visit orangeprevention.org/362/Suicide-Prevention.

The Police Department's Crisis Unit has certified human services professionals available 7 a.m.–12:30 a.m. Monday–Friday at 919-968-2806 and on-call 24/7.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free, confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-8255 any time.

Wellness@Work Is Ten!

Ten years ago the Town of Chapel Hill and UNC Family Medicine partnered to establish a comprehensive wellness program called Wellness@Work. The program has grown and is a strong component of the Town's mission to create a place where people thrive.

Clinic staff has grown to include Family Nurse Practitioners, a Physician,

a Tobacco Treatment Specialist and a Dietitian.

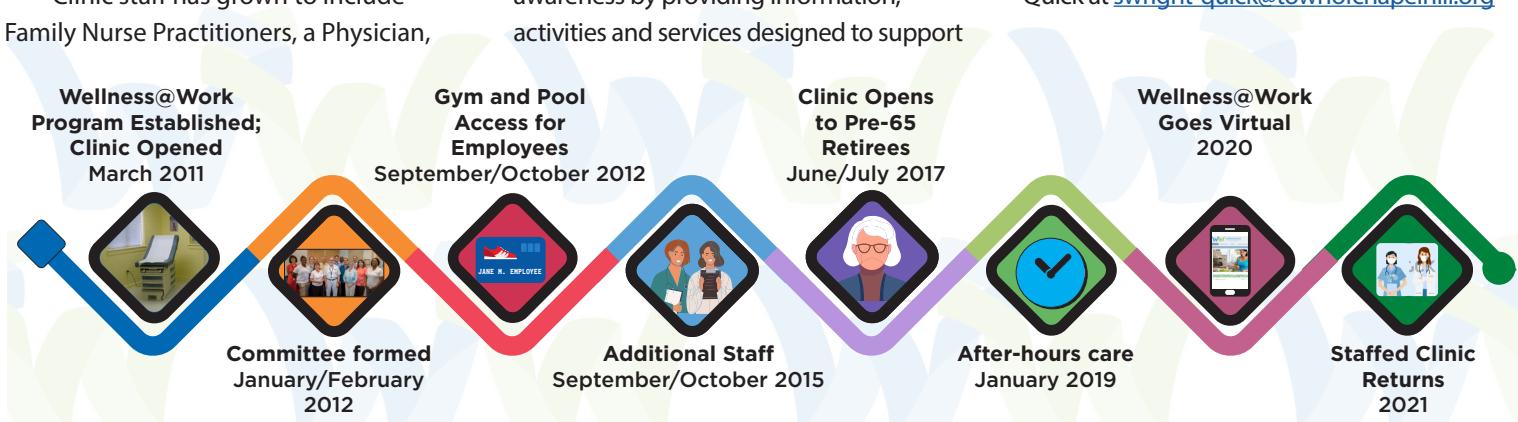
With employee representatives from every Town Department, the Wellness Committee meets monthly to provide program development. The Committee's mission is to promote greater health awareness by providing information, activities and services designed to support

healthy lifestyle choices for employees.

Visit the Wellness@Work website for more information, including how to connect with clinic staff:

<https://chapelhillwellnessatwork.org/>

Interested in being involved in the Wellness Committee? Contact She Wright-Quick at swright-quick@townofchapelhill.org



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publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org or (919) 968-2743

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