



TOWNtalk

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL
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Honoring Our Voices & Moving Forward Together

CELEBRATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Message from Town Manager Maurice Jones

Due to the nature of your work or your schedules, some of you may not be able to participate in our virtual Martin Luther King Jr. Employee Celebration on January 14th. During the event I will have the honor of delivering a message about Dr. King's legacy and the importance of our service to this community, especially during the last two years of COVID. So I have offered my remarks in this special edition of TOWNtalk just in case you do not have a chance to view the event. I hope everyone has a chance to reflect this weekend on where we are today because of the efforts and sacrifices of Dr. King and so many other courageous individuals.

One year ago, in response to COVID, we were forced to make this a virtual event with the hope of returning in person in 2022. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a similar situation this year as we continue to work diligently to protect ourselves, our families, our friends and our community. Let's hope that one year from now we will be able to gather - together again - to honor Dr. King and his lasting legacy.

I think of Dr. King often. Especially during these turbulent times we're living in. With COVID and the devastation it has brought on our world, with the deep political divisions of our time and with so much suffering in the world, I often wonder what Dr. King would say, if he



were alive today, to inspire us.

I do know that he would encourage us to continue to fight the good fight. That more work needs to be done to address poverty, and affordable housing and equal opportunity. I believe he would acknowledge the progress that has been made but he would point out, in a forceful but eloquent manner, that we cannot stop now. We cannot take our eyes off the prize of justice for all.

And we must, find a way to heal the divisions we have in our nation. We must help heal those wounds through understanding and forgiveness.

Dr. King once said, "We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies."

This coming from a man, who had been bombed, beaten, jailed, spied on by his government. He was called every name imaginable and his family was threatened time and again and he would ultimately be struck down by an assassin's bullet. Yet, he preached forgiveness. Not surrender. Not Acceptance of unjust laws but forgiveness

25th Annual Employee Celebration Program

Tune in to the 2022 Martin Luther King Jr. Employee Celebration on Zoom.

us02web.zoom.us/j/87695830454?pwd=R1VZd1dvZHM2ZIjkYnJLUG9QVkV3dz09

If you can't watch live, a link to a recording of the program will be shared next week via email.

- Welcome
- History of the MLK Holiday
- C.J. Suitt, Chapel Hill Poet Laureate – "Welcome to the Neighborhood"
- Celebrating Art in Chapel Hill
- Glory – from the 2018 Employee Celebration
- Discussion of Black History Lunch & Learns & Diversity Talks
- Shakera Vaughn, Joe McMiller, & Samantha Slayer
- Keynote Speaker - Shanekia Weeks, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
- Town Manager's remarks
- Northside Elementary School Choir: "Lift Every Voice and Sing" (2020)

Honoring the Life and Legacy

Principles of Dr. King

Brotherhood

Dr. King preached and practiced a philosophy of racial integration and would not give ground when faced with the call for separatism. He said: "When I speak of integration, I don't mean a romantic mixing of colors, I mean a real sharing of power and responsibility."

Action

Between 1955 and 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. helped change America. He brought to the world's attention how unfairly blacks were treated. He had the help of millions of Americans, but his strong leadership and unprecedented power of speech gave people the faith and courage to keep working peacefully even when others did not.

Justice

Martin Luther King Jr. made it clear that we all share a human and moral responsibility to join hands as brothers and sisters in the quest for social justice. What turned out to be his final protest march was a gathering of striking garbage workers in Memphis, Tenn.

Non Violence

In 1964, Dr. King became the youngest person ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. (He was 35.) King promptly announced that he would turn over all of the money he received along with the award (\$54,123) to help advance the civil rights movement.

Morality

"The time is always right to do what is right."

— Martin Luther King Jr.

Town Manager's Message

(continued from p 1)

in one's heart for another's injustices.

His lessons on forgiveness were not meant just for the evils of discrimination and segregation. Dr. King saw forgiveness as an everyday deed that could be applied throughout our lives.

In fact, he once said, "Forgiveness is not an occasional act. It is a permanent attitude."

And Dr. King also recognized how the inability to forgive leads to hatred which could lead to an internal turmoil that can tear away at our own humanity.

He said, "Hate is just as injurious to the hater as it is to the hated. Like an unchecked cancer, hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity. Many of our inner conflicts are rooted in hate. Hate is too great a burden to bear."

That's a powerful message.

I also believe Dr. King would be proud of the service that has been provided during the last two years by millions of people across this country, including the employees of the Town of Chapel Hill. You all have risen to the occasion time after time to keep people safe and keep the business of our government running during the pandemic. You have come to work, in difficult circumstances to ensure the wonderful services we offer continue.

Dr. King recognized that trials and tribulations will test us and show our true stripes.

He said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

All of you have measured up during the last two years. And we are grateful for you, especially our employees who have been on the front lines since the beginning of the pandemic. You have once again demonstrated great skill and courage in order to keep us going. And I have no doubt you will continue to do those in the days and months ahead.

I wish you peace and protection for you and your families. Thank you.

Did You Know?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday has been observed as a U.S. federal holiday since 1986. Chapel Hill has observed the day as a town holiday since 1984. Chapel Hill was one of the first communities in North Carolina to declare Martin Luther King Jr. Day a municipal holiday.



Day of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I Have a Dream” Video:

The Chapel Hill Public Library produced a video of Town employees reciting the words from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech. The video is posted on the Town’s YouTube and Facebook accounts.

Communications and Public Affairs has provided a documentary about the dedication celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Chapel Hill on May 8, 2005. Available for online viewing at vimeo.com/chapelhillgov/mlkblvd. For more information, visit townofchapelhill.org/history. Video from Martin Luther King Jr. Employee Celebrations is on our YouTube channel (youtube.com/c/chapelhillgov).



Learn More

The Chapel Hill Public Library has a wide variety of publications about the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.

Find out more about his life and the Civil Rights Movement through movies, books, eBooks, and audiobooks. You can check things out to take home using the Library’s lockers at University Place or download them to your personal device. Visit the library’s website at chapelhillpubliclibrary.org, or ask a librarian for a recommendation. And remember, all Town employees can get a free library card, no matter where they live.

Documenting Local Stories

In the spring of 2016, the Orange County Training School/Lincoln Alumni Association began a partnership with Chapel Hill Public Library to collect, record, and document stories of the local Black community that had previously been untold.

The methodology is based upon the critical oral histories technique that was developed at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. The goal is to amplify history that is accessible, equitable, and relevant to today’s world, that centers on the people who lived it.

To hear more from the amazing women of the civil rights movement and to learn about Chapel Hill history, listen to Re/Collecting Chapel Hill, a community history podcast by the Chapel Hill Public Library at ChapelHillHistory.org.



Community Honors Dr. King

Community events celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP Virtual MLK Day (YouTube)

11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 17

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgElw-wiU4VdpKdCz3ESYjA> Monday, Jan. 17 at 11 a.m., for this year's virtual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (If you don't see the video, hit refresh, as it will premiere at 11.)



37th Annual MLK Banquet

6 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 16

In 1993, the MLK University/Community Planning Corporation embarked upon a fundraising campaign to endow the MLK Scholarship Fund at \$250,000. To date, we have raised approximately \$150,000 toward our goal.

Register: <https://mlkpc-ch.org>



Letters of Hope

12–2 p.m., Tuesday, January 18

The Pit

Write letters to incarcerated individuals during this community service event. Snacks, warm cider and music will be provided as students write encouraging messages to inmates on blank letter cards.

Movie Screening: "Just Mercy"

6-9:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 18

The Great Hall

Join us for a screening of the multiple award-winning Just Mercy, the true story of Bryan Stevenson, a young lawyer who makes history in his battle for justice in defending wrongly condemned individuals. In his most incendiary case, that of Walter McMillian, who was sentenced to death for the murder of an 18-year-old girl in spite of overwhelming evidence proving his innocence he makes his rattles others with his legal maneuvering. In spite of overt systemic racism, he fights for Walter's freedom – and that of others like him. Starring Michael P. Jordan and Jamie Foxx.

The event will be catered by the Vegan Ice Cream Man, who will provide ice cream after the movie.

DID YOU KNOW: Dr. King visited Chapel Hill in May 1960. He is pictured here speaking in the Hargraves Community Center, which stands today and provides recreation facilities to our community.

(Lots more events at

<https://diversity.unc.edu/programs/mlk/>)

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