



TOWNtalk

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL
VOLUME 19 ISSUE 2 • DECEMBER 2022

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On the Front Burner

I am no good with goodbyes. Very specifically, I am terrible with saying the word "goodbye", especially to people I know and respect. A "goodbye" implies some level of finality I find hard to accept. It is much easier for me to launch a "See ya later", "Take it easy" or a simple "Be good" to my friends, family or colleagues, over a "goodbye". Those phrases represent the hope, actually the expectation, that you will see one another again, especially in regard to people you have affinity for. Knowing this will be my final TOWNtalk is making the task of bidding each of you a fond farewell exceptionally difficult.

It has been a privilege to serve as

the Chapel Hill Town Manager for the last four plus years, and to work with an incredibly committed team of people. I would match the accomplishments of our employees with anybody. Despite the many challenges we have faced, both professionally and personally (with the threat of COVID), each of us have banded together to meet those trials head on. Chapel Hill has been known for quite some time as an organization that "punches above its weight class", meaning that despite our smallish size, we strive to provide the highest quality service to our residents. We can and do compete with municipalities that are much larger than we are. You make that happen every day—with your dedication, compassion, innovation, and hard work.

I'm proud of the progress we have made in creating and preserving affordable housing; our efforts to re-invigorate our Downtown; and the critical investments the Town has made in all of you—the people

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With the help of the Optimist Club and CHCCS staff, the Guardians of the Hill brought some holiday cheer to Rashkis Elementary School students with a shopping spree at Walmart.



In the Spotlight: Elijah Lawrence

Raleigh native Elijah Lawrence works as a multi-trade inspector with Building & Development Services. When he's not performing inspections on building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical components in construction, he's educating builders and homeowners about the construction process. He wants to make sure that projects go as smoothly as possible.

"I am proud to be a member of [Building & Development Services] because of the level of support our members provide for each other and our shared commitment to performance and professionalism," he says.

Prior to working with the Town, Elijah held the same position for Orange County, having been involved in varying types of construction since high school.

Elijah says, "I am most inspired by the many small building companies in our area." He admires the passion that small-scale business owners have for their work, especially because they often lack benefits like tax breaks or healthcare. They "possess a great work ethic," he says.

When Elijah isn't on the job, he is spending time with his two young daughters, his milk cow, and his pigs! He says his family really enjoys their time outside and together, which small-scale agriculture provides.

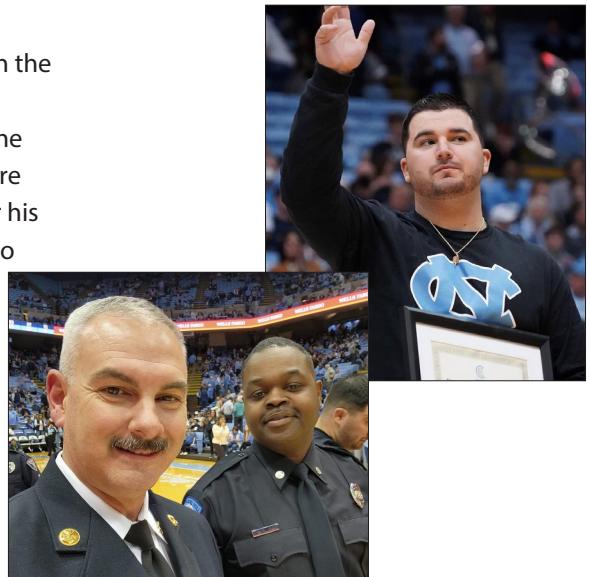
K9 Officer and Fire Inspector Honored

The Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro and UNC Basketball recognized the Police Officer and Firefighter of the Year during its 2022 Salute to Community Heroes at a home game on Dec. 13. Officer Jacob Clark and Inspector Roland Falana were honored as they stood with other Orange County First Responders while the crowd cheered them on!

K9 Officer Jacob Clark joined the Police Department five years ago. His colleagues praise him for his strong work ethic and willingness to help community members and the officers he serves

alongside. Jacob was selected to join the Police Department's Honor Guard.

Roland Falana, an inspector in the Fire and Life Safety Division of the Fire Department, is being recognized for his caring nature and his commitment to teamwork. Roland joined the Fire Department just more than one year ago. Each fire station feels his positive impact. Firefighters praise his attention to detail as he follows up on fires and asks about needs among the stations. Sometimes, he simply offers a helping hand.



On the Front Burner

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who provide the services our community has grown to expect. I'm especially grateful for the way the Town of Chapel Hill, our regional partners and the public came together and supported each other during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our amazing community served as a model for how to respond to this pandemic and without question saved lives during the last three years.

As I move on to my next journey in life, I simply want to say thank you. Thank you for the way you welcomed me to Chapel Hill; for the way you embraced ideas from the "new guy"; for the way you were patient with me as I got to know the organization and town; for the way you made me look good with your many accomplishments; and thank you for greeting me with a smile when we had the occasion to see each other during our daily work. You will never know how much I enjoyed those quick conversations in the hallways of our facilities and out in the community. I will miss that immensely.

I wish you nothing but the best with the Town of Chapel Hill. This community is in great hands and will continue to thrive because of your service.

As I finish my last TOWNTalk column I will not say "goodbye", because I sincerely hope our paths will cross again, down the road. Instead, I'll simply say, take care of yourself and be well!

2023 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Save the date for the 2023 Martin Luther King, Jr. Program on Friday, Jan. 13, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. After a few years of celebrating virtually, we are excited for the opportunity to physically fellowship and memorialize Dr. King together. As in past years, we will celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy in person at the Hargraves Community Center. Food will be provided following the program!

The program will be live-streamed for those unable to attend. Links to view the live stream will be provided in an upcoming email. Communications and Public Affairs is also preparing a special issue of TOWNTalk devoted to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

Shop with a Cop

The Police Department is celebrating another successful Shop with a Cop experience! With the help of the Optimist Club and CHCCS staff, the Guardians of the Hill brought some holiday cheer to Rashkis Elementary School students at the Walmart in Hillsborough. Members of law enforcement from every agency in Orange County were there, including the North Carolina State Highway Patrol. We are extremely grateful for the partnership!



Briefs



Todd Baron (Technology Solutions) is moving into the role of System Administrator. He will assist with server, security, and IT system projects. Todd is not originally from this area, but he couldn't imagine living anywhere but Chapel Hill. He can be spotted around town with his wife, Irene, enjoying some of their favorite things: Carolina basketball, Mediterranean Deli, or the trails in Chapel Hill.

Sayer Brosnahan (Building & Development Services) was promoted to Permit Center Coordinator.

Caroline Dwyer has joined Transit as Planning Manager. She has a Master's degree in City and Regional Planning from UNC-Chapel Hill and a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Design, Policy and Planning from SUNY-Stoney Brook.



Jessica Goodstein and Austin Keefer (both Building & Development Services) completed the Planning and Development Regulation course at UNC School of Government and passed their exams to become certified Zoning Officials in the State of North Carolina.

Wade Gulledge has accepted the position of Risk Manager. Wade brings 30 years of related experience to the position, including the past six years as the Town's Occupational Health and Safety Officer. While with the Town, Wade has helped facilitate the Town's Safety Committee and served on the Wellness Committee and Employee Forum. Wade has completed the Manager of Environmental Safety & Health certification program as well as the Advanced Safety Certificate program.

Katelyn Robalino (Affordable Housing and Community Connections) has been chosen as Community Connections Coordinator. Katelyn has a nonprofit background, and a passion for building resilient, inclusive, and empowered community. She is looking forward to using her fluency in Spanish to support the continued implementation of the Town's Building Integrated Communities Project and Language Access Plan.



L-R: Chase Barnard, Angie Thompson, Maurice Jones, Charlie Pardo, Mike Wright. Not pictured: Carla Burnette

These employees are our 2022 Climate Action, Go Chapel Hill Award Winners! Congratulations and thank you to these Difference Makers for building a healthier community and world! This is a new annual award that Sustainability and Go Chapel Hill started to recognize employees who have taken action to save carbon emissions, keeping the community a cleaner and healthier place to live, work and play!

Town employees also won awards for levels of carbon saved.

- 15,000+ Miles Saved: Chase Barnard, Stephanie Smith, Lauren Ryan, and Tina Love.
- 5,000+ Miles Saved: Sally Warther, Ran Northam, Carla Burnette, Anya Grahn, and Lisa Baaske.

Find more information about alternative transportation at gochapelhill.org.

New Training Opportunities

We have a new training calendar for 2023! Check it out on the Hive.

If you're interested in signing up for courses, you can use Cornerstone or The Hive. Log in on Cornerstone at knowandgrow.csod.com to view courses and register, or use [The Hive](#).

If you need to use the Hive, visit [thehive-dev](#).

townofchapelhill.org/services/hrd/learning_and_development

If you use the Hive and need to sign up for a course, please email Learning and Development Manager Susann Harris (sharris@townofchapelhill.org) with your name, the name of the course, and the date of the training.

Personal Days Replace Funeral Leave

At the June 15 Council meeting, Town Council approved the Employee Forum's recommendation to convert the Funeral Leave bank (three average work days per calendar year) into Personal Leave (three average work days per fiscal year) that can be used for any reason during the year to provide employees with more work life flexibility.

Personal leave will not carry forward from year to year and does not have a payout value if you leave the organization. Personal Leave Days run from July 1 to June 30 on a Fiscal Year basis (not the calendar year).

Do You Want to Live Closer to Work?

As 2022 comes to an end, we know that many of you are looking toward the future and setting goals for the new year. If moving closer to Town, finding a new affordable rental, or becoming a homeowner is one of your goals, Affordable Housing and Community Connections wants to share some resources that may help!

Looking for an affordable rental? CASA is accepting applications for 48 brand new affordable rental units at Perry Place in Chapel Hill and Carrboro! You must meet eligibility criteria. Applications are first come, first served. Learn more at casanc.org/perry-place.

Ready to own your own home in Chapel Hill? Habitat for Humanity of Orange County will be accepting homeownership applications for **Weaver's Grove** here in Chapel Hill from Jan. 3–17,

2023! To learn more about the application process and eligibility guidelines visit orangehabitat.org/apply. Community Home Trust (communityhometrust.org) also accepts applications on a rolling basis for their homeownership program.

Need help preparing to buy a home? The Community Empowerment Fund will be offering first-time homebuyer programs in both Durham and Orange Counties starting in January 2023! The programs will include homebuyer education, financial coaching, and the opportunity for a down payment match. Learn more at communityempowermentfund.org.

These opportunities are available to any eligible household in the community, so please feel free to share with others.

And finally, don't forget about the Town's Employee Housing Program



to provide rental or homeownership assistance if you want to move in or close to Town! You may be eligible to receive one-time assistance to rent or purchase a new place within five miles of town limits. This assistance is available to permanent Town staff and it can be paired with other programs like those listed above to make it easier to get into your next home. Questions? Email Megan Culp at mculp@townofchapelhill.org.

Binge-able Books for Winter Break

If you love to spend the winter cozied up with a hot drink and a good book, try these recommendations from the LGBTQIA+ ERG. From lighthearted queer romance to hilarious essays to page-turning whodunnits, there's something for everyone. And each book is available at Chapel Hill Public Library!

- *Love & Other Disasters* by Anita Kelly
- *Red, White & Royal Blue* by Casey McQuiston
- *The Romantic Agenda* by Claire Kann
- *D'Vaughn and Kris Plan A Wedding* by Chencia C. Higgins
- *Here for It, Or, How to Save your Soul in America* by R. Eric Thomas

The LGBTQIA+ ERG

Learn more about the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and More Employee Resource Group!

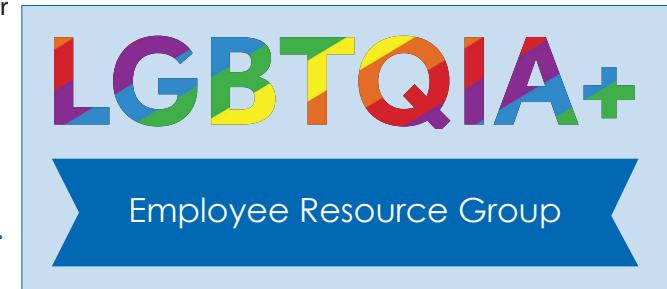
Who are we? We're an employee-led group of queer staff and allies from across all Town departments. The LGBTQ+ Liaison to the Town Manager organizes and advocates for us.

What do we do? We meet monthly to share our wins and our challenges, seek advice and support, share resources, and learn about events, trainings, and other programs that support the queer

community. We also work together on projects, especially education, to help the Town reach its goal of being a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and community.

Want our help? If you want to build a more inclusive culture in your team/department, or better support your queer staff, we can help! You can always send questions or meeting requests to our inbox at lgbtqerg@townofchapelhill.org.

Want to join? All staff are welcome, including allies. We keep our meetings confidential so everyone can feel safe being their authentic selves. Email us at lgbtqerg@townofchapelhill.org and we'll add you to our group.



Compliments

Triangle BlogBlog named **Jeanette Coffin** as a Town hero.

"We want to throw a little love towards Jeanette Coffin today. Coffin reads every single email sent to the town of Chapel Hill mailbox, and then figures out where to send them. She listens to the collective grievances, wishes, hopes, and (occasional) praise of an entire town, and then helpfully redirects those emails to where they should go.

Coffin is always kind and cheerful, never judge-y, and probably reads more email than any other person on the planet. Thank you Jeanette. We hope you are able to get offline this weekend." [Read More](#)

Jeffery Owensby (Transit) was thanked by a customer for making his ride from home to downtown "especially pleasant."

Elijah Lawrence (Building & Development Services) was complimented by a Dominion Energy Director who said, "Elijah is always professional and goes out of his way to help our team. He always takes time to explain situations on site and returns calls, even on his days off. He is a great addition to Chapel Hill."

Mike McGowan and **Scott Saterlund** (both Building & Development Services) were complimented on their customer service: "I have multiple projects going on and Mike and Scott have always made themselves available for questions".

Leighia Alston thanked **Chapel Hill Transit** for helping her find keys and a wallet that she lost on a bus. "I just wanted to send my gratitude for everyone's help that made a stressful morning, turn around almost instantly. I want to send a special thank you to the phone operators, the bus driver, and especially the supervisor that brought my keys back uptown."



A community member's out-of-state sister, Hope, wrote the Police Department to commend Officer **Brad Kramer's** "responsible, caring, compassionate, and helpful" response to a call. Hope notified the Police Department when she could not reach her sister, who has medical challenges. Brad checked on Hope's sister and confirmed that she was well. Brad helped with the phone and shared updates with Hope. She called the Police Department remarkable and said she is grateful the Guardians of the Hill are so responsive.

Ask the Ombuds: The Magic Conflict Resolution Tip that We Should Have Learned in Kindergarten

When I came to this organization, I heard a lot about 'positions' and 'interests.' It took me a while to admit that I actually had no idea what they meant. Fortunately, somebody was kind enough to explain it.

This simple approach to communicating and solving problems is practical, useful, and effective. It has proven invaluable in my work as an Ombuds. Have you wondered about what these terms mean and how to use this approach in situations where you find yourself in a rapidly escalating disagreement? 'Positions' refer to what you say you want. 'Interests' are the reasons—the WHY—behind the positions.*

Here's an example of the effectiveness of this technique from my recent experience putting up the Christmas tree with my husband. Me: "I want to put the tree in a different place this year. I want it next to the entryway." Husband: "I want it in the living room. It's always been in the living room. I like it in the living room." Me: "Well I want it in the entryway and blah blah blah...."

Repeat three times more loudly and you get the idea of how this conversation was going south fast. FINALLY, my husband asked a simple question. "I don't understand. WHY do you want the tree in the entry way? Me: "Because it will give us more seating in the living room for when the kids come. That tree takes up a lot of room. We were so crowded last year in there and we have even more people this year." Husband: "Well that makes sense, but I want to have some nice decorations in the living room. I want it to look

like Christmas and the tree is such a nice focal point." Me: "Well, what if we did XYZ for the living room? Would that work?" Husband: "Yes, I think that could work."

When my husband asked that that simple question, it flipped the conversation from talking about our positions, and moved to discussing our interests. We were able to accommodate both of our interests by moving the tree and doing some extra decorating in the living room.

Positions are often incompatible. When you shift to talking about your interests, you usually have more options to choose from to resolve the issue.

Here are some questions to help you move from talking about positions to discussing your interests next time you find yourself dealing with a difference of opinion. *

Uncovering my interests

Why do I want that?

Why is this important to me?

What is the problem I am trying to solve?

What are some other options that might solve this problem?

Uncovering the other person's interests

Why do you want that?

Why is this important to you?

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

What are some other options that might solve this problem?



*Credit to University of Colorado Ombuds Office



Wellness@Work Offers Fall Programs!

We have lots going on for the winter! Check it out, grab a co-worker and get started!



Gratitude Campaign

Visit chapelhillwellnessatwork.org for more info.



Jan. 18 & Feb. 1 noon Lunch & Learns

Let's Talk About Money: Compass Center's series on how to accomplish financial goals



January Challenge:

Thriving in 2023. Explore how we can flourish even with life's setbacks.



Jan. 24 at noon Book Club:

Rising Strong, by Brene Brown
How to accept failure and come back stronger than before.

Look for more details by email or at chapelhillwellnessatwork.org. To sign up, email llackey@townofchapelhill.org



Visiting the clinic? What to do if you have symptoms.

Visiting the clinic? Call before coming if you have symptoms of a respiratory infection like cough, congestion, and fever. Because of the continuing rise in the number of people with flu, COVID and RSV, the Wellness Clinic asks that you call before coming to the clinic. Staff will provide telephone screening before you arrive. Please call 919-968-2796 and leave a message if you get the machine.

2022 Wellness Champions Announced!

Every December, the Wellness Committee looks forward to recognizing employees who help to create a workplace where people thrive. Going above and beyond, they are our Wellness Champions!

This year's Wellness Champions are:

Maurice Jones, Town Manager, has been a strong advocate for the well-being of all Town employees since he began his tenure here in 2018. Under his leadership, the Town's Wellness Program has been able to expand its impact on all facets of employee wellness. Especially during the COVID 19 pandemic, Maurice has made a strong commitment to employee safety and health, while continuing to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to the residents of Chapel Hill. His ability to address the interests of employees, while balancing these interests with those of the community and Town Council, is to be commended.

Sheryl Sherman, pre-65 Retiree Wellness Committee Representative, has served on the Wellness Committee for over 10 years. Originally serving as the Transit Department Representative, Sheryl transitioned to the newly created pre-65 Representative when she retired. We are thankful for her dedication to the well-being of Town employees and pre-65 retirees. As a fellow Wellness Committee member shared: "Sheryl is someone who not only has wonderful ideas, she is ready to do the work to get it done".

Would you like to be involved in the work of the Wellness Committee? Reach out to your Departments' Wellness Representative or Liska Lackey at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796.



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Please recycle.

