



# TOWNtalk

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL  
VOLUME 19 ISSUE 4 • FEBRUARY 2023

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## The Enduring Legacy of Ella Baker

It is February, so the world stops to acknowledge the contributions of Black folks past and present to bring about awareness. Black History is American History. If we are not careful, the work and accolades of extraordinary people will leave most of us thinking that we don't have the capacity or fortitude to make a difference. I beg to differ, and this article highlights a leader whose name is often left out because she was an organizer who put her trust in everyday people to lead the way.

Ella Josephine Baker was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1903. She spent most of her childhood in rural North Carolina, listening to her grandparents tell stories about being enslaved. Ella attended high school in Littleton and then college at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. In 1927, she graduated as the class valedictorian.

Ella Baker was in New York when the Great Depression began; she found ways to be a difference-maker by organizing. She worked on issues of economic

independence and unfair labor practices. She spent considerable time on civil rights issues helping the NAACP raise awareness and funds while recruiting new members. Starting as a Field Secretary, she rose to the National Director of Branches. Despite her success she believed there was more work to be done by everyday people.

She would go on to co-found In Friendship, an organization that would support Southern civil rights activism. Supporting the creation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference would be another space where she excelled and recognized everyday people can do more. During the bus boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama, she empowered students to use their voices, and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was formed; she was their advisor. There were many other



organizations that Ella Baker would go on to support.

What I like most about Ella Baker's contribution and legacy, was her desire to give power to people most impacted. The notion that people don't need a spokesperson. Her quote summarizes this thinking: "Oppressed people, whatever their level of formal education, have the ability to understand and interpret the world around them, to see the world for what it is, and move to transform it."

These ideas are connected to how we approach equity in the Town of Chapel Hill. Community Engagement is a pillar of OneOrange Racial Equity Framework that seeks to shift power dynamics to people who have suffered marginalization. We use community engagement from inception to evaluation. If you want to learn more about ways you can incorporate meaningful community engagement in your work, please reach out or look for DEI training in Cornerstone.

Ella teaches us all that everyone is capable of making change. Let's do it together.

—Shenekia Weeks, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer



Town employees join in on "Lift Every Voice and Sing" at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration at Hargraves Center. Read more on page 2.

## Martin Luther King Jr. Employee Event



Thanks to everyone who came to Hargraves Center on Jan. 13 to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with the theme of "Reframing the Narrative." Thanks also to those who could not attend because they were keeping Town services running. The program included a video on the history of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in Chapel Hill featuring Town employees and uplifting songs by the Chapel Hill Mass Choir, led by Michelle Sykes-Parker (Transit).



View a video of the event at [youtu.be/kbFf0D8i0s8](https://youtu.be/kbFf0D8i0s8)

View more photos at [chapelhill.photoshelter.com/galleries/C00005Ux0smWxkNo/G0000Nv\\_LQ\\_EIEow/2023-Martin-Luther-King-Jr-Employee-Celebration](https://chapelhill.photoshelter.com/galleries/C00005Ux0smWxkNo/G0000Nv_LQ_EIEow/2023-Martin-Luther-King-Jr-Employee-Celebration)

## TOWNtalk the Podcast

Our new podcast is now available. We want to help you get to know the people behind the services of the Town of Chapel Hill. Whether you want to learn more about your colleagues or are curious about who is picking up trash, driving a bus, or watching over the community, you've come to the right place. Available wherever you get your podcasts.

<https://anchor.fm/chapelhillgov>

Do you know someone who has a great story? Email [info@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:info@townofchapelhill.org). We would love to speak with them in a future episode.



## History of Hargraves Center

Originally known as Negro Community Center and later Roberson Street Center, Hargraves Community Center at 216 N. Roberson St. was conceived by the Negro Civic Club to provide socializing and recreation space for African-Americans. The B-1 Navy Band—seen here on the steps of the Negro Community Center—played a major part in the completion of the center during World War II. In exchange for housing, the band agreed to complete construction of the building and provide for upkeep until it was no longer needed by the band.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is seen here (bottom right) in the Center on May 9, 1960, giving a speech while visiting Chapel Hill.

Each year on the Friday before Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a Town holiday since 1984, Town staff gather in the Northside Gym at the Hargraves center to celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy.

The Negro Community Center was renamed in 1973 for William M. Hargraves, Jr., a former Parks and Recreation Commission member who died in an automobile crash.

Historical information was provided by [openorangenc.org](http://openorangenc.org)



# Briefs

The Crisis Unit is pleased to announce that they have a full team!!

Two new Crisis Counselors started in January: **Karina Santibanez** (top right) and **Anna Hart** (bottom right).



The Crisis Unit provides emergency response with police officers in crisis situations.

The Crisis Unit was established in 1973 as one of the earliest examples of law enforcement and human services professionals working together.

Public Housing staff recently participated in the department's planning retreat. Staff wanted to share their takeaways and their positive outlook on the future of the department. Learn more at [www.leadergov.com/chdphretreat](http://www.leadergov.com/chdphretreat)

**Britany Waddell** is our new Planning Director. She has almost 20 years of planning experience and an extensive background in community engagement and participatory planning, with a focus on town/gown relationships.



Britany is a proud Carolina alumna, and said she is thrilled to be coming back to "Blue Heaven" with her miniature schnauzer, Luca.



Town Council recognized ret. Town Council Liaison & Chapel Hill Police Officer **Rick Fahrer** who served council faithfully from 2008-21. Rick provided safety and security to all attendees at 417 Town Council and another 51 advisory and committee meetings.

- 200+ mile range
- Equal to ~93 mpg
- Zero tailpipe emissions

The Guardians of the Hill have a new ride! Officers in the Police Department's Community Services Unit are driving this new Ford Mach-E. It's not just super sharp looking, it's also part of the Town's Climate Action and Response Plan. Electrifying the Town's fleet is one of the most effective ways to reduce municipal emissions.

## In-Person Group Trainings Return

Fire employees participated in Sustainable Leadership Training, led by Susann Harris (HRD). Group trainings were paused during the pandemic, so this was the first since 2018. Participants learned about topics including understanding your role as a supervisor, creating a positive work environment, diversity, conflict management, communicating effectively, and giving effective feedback.

This two-day class is designed to establish a shared understanding of what the Town of Chapel Hill expects from all supervisors. In addition, on the second day of class the participants learned about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator from Tom Clark (HRD) and discovered their personality and leadership preferences.

Participants: Eleni Terzis, Susann Harris, Carmen Cain, Aris Dixon, Chris Wells, Ryan Warner, Heather Robinson, Michael Crabtree, Noah Reagan, Ryan Campbell, and Justin Lawson. Also pictured: Interim Town Manager Chris Blue, and HRD Director Cliff Turner.



## Ask the Ombuds

### A Book Review: *Atomic Habits* by James Clear

My pastor recently recommended this book, and I was intrigued enough to put it on my reading list. I also found a great website—the modern-day version of Cliff Notes—written by Samuel Thomas Davies at [samuelthomasdavies.com](http://samuelthomasdavies.com). I love how he's summarized this book and share these with due credit to him. \*\*

#### The Book in Three Sentences\*\*

1. An atomic habit is a regular practice or routine that is not only small and easy to do but is also the source of incredible power; a component of the system of compound growth.
2. Bad habits repeat themselves again and again not because you don't want to change, but because you have the wrong system for change.
3. Changes that seem small and unimportant at first will compound into remarkable results if you're willing to stick with them for years.

#### The Five Big Ideas\*\*

1. Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement.
2. If you want better results, then forget about setting goals. Focus on your system instead.

3. The most effective way to change your habits is to focus not on what you want to achieve, but on who you wish to become. (emphasis mine)
4. The Four Laws of Behavior Change are a simple set of rules we can use to build better habits. They are (1) make it obvious, (2) make it attractive, (3) make it easy, and (4) make it satisfying.
5. Environment is the invisible hand that shapes human behavior.

It was the third idea that really spoke to me. When you think about your goals, ask yourself, "What kind of person would be likely to get that outcome, and what are the specific habits I need to develop to become that person?" We are far more likely to be successful in achieving our long term goals when we build systems that support these types of identity-shaping habits.

The book provides detailed instructions for identifying habits that are holding you back, how to deal with procrastination, understanding how your environment has shaped the habits you have, and how to develop new habits that help you become the person you want to be.

This quote pretty much sums it up: "You do not rise to the level of your goals; you fall to the level of your systems."

Happy reading! I have a couple of copies of this book if you want to borrow it. [abadrock@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:abadrock@townofchapelhill.org) or 919-260-3153.

## #DidYouKnow: Emergency Management has moved to the Manager's Office

Emergency Management Coordinator

**Kelly Drayton** and Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator **Michelle Daschner** now have offices in the old PNC

Bank building (101 E. Rosemary St.). You can still find Capt. **Josh Mecimore** at the Police Department. For years, the plan has been to shift the focus of EM from public safety—housed in the Fire Department—to a more Town-wide approach. That move has happened.

Emergency Management has been a vital resource in leading emergency response and numerous public safety related projects. However, this function has also been extremely helpful in non-emergency projects. This move to the Manager's Office will allow EM staff to focus on an even more comprehensive approach to community preparedness and positions them to assist with various high consequence projects. To that end, you may see EM staff in meetings or leading initiatives that extend beyond the traditional public safety scope.



## VIDEO: Our BIPOC Elected Officials Read Poetry

For Black History Month 2023, BIPOC elected officials of Orange County have released a video of two poetry readings: "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou and "Making the Struggle Every Day" by Ella Baker. WATCH THE VIDEO on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/rvtyw2zameg>

The elected officials representing the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) coalition who are featured in the video include Chapel Hill Town Council Members Tai Huynh and Paris Miller-Foushee.

Since its beginnings as a weeklong recognition by historian Carter G. Woodson in 1926, Black History Month has grown to include opportunities for education, reflection, and celebration. Let's honor Black history-makers in Chapel Hill, celebrate the work of Black authors and artists, and explore Chapel Hill's civil rights history. Learn more: [www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/Components/News/News/18455/4048](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/Components/News/News/18455/4048)



# Compliments

**Any Grahn-Federmack and Charnika Harrell** (both Planning) were thanked by Amy Ryan for helping to make the historic district application and review process smoother over the past few years. "Kudos to them for making the work of this board so much better -- we appreciate all of the effort you've put in to get us here, and people are seeing the results in a much, much more effective HDC process. Victory lap!"

Solid Waste collectors **Timothy McKinnon, Jonathon Hawkins, and Andrew Summers** (all Public Works) displayed initiative, dependability, and integrity one recent morning. They discovered some pieces of lost jewelry and quickly alerted the resident to return them. The resident called Public Works to express their gratitude and give praise for their actions. This display of character sets a great example for all to follow. Thank you!

Paul Keyes thanked **Town inspections staff** for making a renovation project easier. "They have always been helpful, patient and willing to explain things so well that the inspection process was smooth and without issues."

**Amy Harvey** (CaPA) was thanked by Katherine Leith for providing a DVD of a council meeting where Sally Binkowski spoke in favor of Legion Park for her widower, Frank. "It was so good to see and hear Sally. Amy has provided a wonderful gift to this family, and the town is lucky to have her."



A visitor to the town, Scott, wrote with thanks for the thoughtful actions of several firefighters. The battery in Scott's truck died on a cold December night. He tried to fix it, without success. As he looked around for someone who might be able to help, he saw our team! Without hesitation, **Jeff Stevens, Michael Crabtree, Macy Gunter, and David Sasser** (all Fire; below, l-r) helped out and sent Scott on his way within minutes.

"All in a day's work for our public servants," Scott said. The actions of these firefighters easily represent the CHFD value of Dedication—a devotion to serving others.



## Chapel Hill Recognized for Climate Leadership

Thanks to our Sustainability Team (**John Richardson, Elizabeth Houghton, and Brennan Bouma**) for helping to make Chapel Hill one of 122 cities and towns worldwide to earn the 2022 CDP A-List ranking for bold climate action and transparency.

Chapel Hill is recognized among other global sustainability leaders like San Francisco, California, and Kyoto, Japan. Cities on the A List have demonstrated climate leadership through concerted and effective action. Learn more about the Town of Chapel Hill's [Climate Action and Response Plan](#).

## Traffic Garden Grand Opening

The Traffic Garden at Homestead Aquatic Center is officially open! A ribbon cutting with Mayor Pam Hemminger was held on Feb. 7, and a grand opening event was held on Feb. 11.

Thank you to all of the Town employees who worked so hard on the project, including staff from Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Planning, Communications and Public Affairs, Police, Transit, Fire, Community Arts & Culture, and Chapel Hill Town Council. And a special salute to Homestead Aquatic Center for sharing space for the traffic garden and to Go Chapel Hill for leading and coordinating the project.

The Traffic Garden is designed to allow beginning cyclists to learn how to navigate miniature streets in a safe environment without vehicle traffic. The project encourages young people to use bicycles as an alternative way to get out and about as part of the large carbon savings goal of the Town. The Traffic Garden is open to the public year-round during park hours, from dawn until dusk.

Learn more at [gochapelhill.org/bicycle-traffic-garden](http://gochapelhill.org/bicycle-traffic-garden).





## wellness @ work

UNC HEALTH | FAMILY MEDICINE

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

### Wellness Video Library

View past Lunch & Learns, wherever you are! We are so happy that we are building up a library of Lunch & Learn videos that you can watch anytime and anywhere! Here are just a few of the videos in our library:

**Let's Talk Taxes!** Timely information that just might save you some money.

#### Intuitive Eating & Freedom From

**Dieting:** Support your health without worrying about your weight and break free from the diet yo-yo.

#### Finding Good Health Information

**Online and at the Library:** How do we know what is good quality information online and what resources are available to us through the library?

**Taming the Worry Monster:** Learn practical strategies for managing unhelpful worry.

Find them all – and more – at [chapelhillwellnessatwork.org/health-education/lunch-and-learn](http://chapelhillwellnessatwork.org/health-education/lunch-and-learn)

### Lunch & Learn: Knee Osteoarthritis

Join us for a Lunch & Learn on Knee Osteoarthritis from noon to 12:45 p.m. Wednesday, March 15. The session will be on Zoom and is open to all Town employees, dependents and pre-65 retirees.

RSVP by Monday, March 13, to Liska Lackey at [llackey@email.unc.edu](mailto:llackey@email.unc.edu) or 919-968-2796

Topics include exercises you can do at home, OTC medication, supplements, and more.

The presenter is Justin Lee from the UNC Department of Family Medicine.



### Town Staff Help Open Perry Place

Affordable Housing & Community Connections staff members and members of the Town Council attended the ribbon cutting of Perry Place Feb. 3 on the Chapel Hill-Carrboro border. The property will provide 24 affordable housing rental units in Chapel Hill, 24 in Carrboro, to individuals and families. The Town provided funding to support this project.



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405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
[info@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:info@townofchapelhill.org) or (919) 968-2743

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Graphic Designer: Melanie Miller  
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### At-Home COVID Tests

The Town of Chapel Hill's Health Plan provides the following COVID-19 benefits: At-Home Rapid COVID-19 tests continue to be covered 100%. There is a limit of eight At-Home Rapid tests per 30 days.

Plan members will have two options for coverage of At-Home Rapid COVID-19 tests:

- Purchase your At-Home Rapid COVID-19 test at a local pharmacy using your Blue Cross NC ID card. When purchased at the pharmacy with your ID card, there should be no cost to the member, or
- Purchase an At-Home Rapid COVID-19 test online or in a store and submit a receipt and claims form for reimbursement.

Blue Cross NC members are encouraged to utilize the free COVID-19 test kits available through federal and state programs:

NC DHHS and LabCorp are teaming up to make at-home kits for COVID-19 testing available to North Carolina residents. For more information and to place an order visit [ondemand.labcorp.com/nc](http://ondemand.labcorp.com/nc) .

Several retail pharmacy chains are now offering more convenient ways to order COVID-19 tests, including the ability to order them online. Check with your pharmacy for more information.

Members electing to purchase the test and submit a claim should use the Reimbursement Claim Form ([bluecrossnc.com/covid-19/covid-19-testing](http://bluecrossnc.com/covid-19/covid-19-testing)).

## Got News?

Achievements • Weddings • Babies



Send your news to [info@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:info@townofchapelhill.org). Got photos? Send them too!

TOWNtalk, a publication for and about Town of Chapel Hill employees, is issued monthly September through June. It is printed on recycled paper. Please recycle.

