



In the Spotlight

Highlighting Exceptional Employees

John French Resident Services Coordinator

JOHN FRENCH WAS MOVED TO TEARS WHEN HE TOLD EVERYONE AT EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY WHAT RECEIVING THE W. CALVIN HORTON SERVICE AWARD MEANT TO HIM.

"I believe in what I do in order to make a better life for someone," John said. "That award showed me that fellow Town employees value my work and my work ethic."

The service award is one of the highest honors the Town of Chapel Hill bestows upon an employee. It is given to a Town employee who brings credit to the Town with exceptional contributions to the community.

When John started working for the Town of Chapel Hill 13 years ago, he mentored children at Smith Middle School. At that time, 99 percent of the students referred to the office for disciplinary reasons were African American. He says that number has since dropped to about five percent.

"This position doesn't always give me immediate results," John said. "But seeing the long-term benefits gives me the motivation to keep coming back every day."

John said 95 percent of the kids he worked with weren't on track to go to college, and that number is also dropping.

"Our program gave them the motivation to be successful,"

John said. "Now they mentor kids in the same situation they were once in. The best teachers are ones who went through similar situations."

John started as a part-time program coordinator at the Hargraves Community Center 15 years ago. Two years ago his full-time position as Resident Services Coordinator moved to the Housing and Community Department from the Police Department.

His time with his wife of eight years, Nicole, and daughter, Madison, 7, and son Caleb, 13, is sometimes limited due to his job.

"When I do have some spare time, I love fishing with my son and hanging with



Photo by Catherine Lazorko

my daughter," John said. "She gives me a different perspective on life."

John and his family live in the house his mother previously owned in Chapel Hill. He graduated from Chapel Hill High School and NC Central University with a degree in physical education and a minor in sociology.

—Story by Ran Northam (CaPA)

RESPECT Values

Responsibility

Equity

Safety

Professionalism

Ethics

Communication

Teamwork



Value in the Spotlight: **Equity**