



See Town Manager's Message, p. 2

# CHAPEL HILL Towntalk

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017  
VOLUME 13 ISSUE 5

## HEATHER ROBINSON

"INDIVIDUALLY, WE CAN DO GOOD THINGS. TOGETHER, WE ACCOMPLISH SOME AMAZING THINGS."

Heather Robinson is constantly on the go, from being ready to answer an emergency call, to serving on the Wellness@Work committee, to public instruction and more. April will mark 11 years with the Town of Chapel Hill; she currently serves as a Master Firefighter.

On any given day she could serve on the front line of an emergency call, provide relief for a fire truck driver, or perform as the acting officer on-scene as staffing requires. Heather also performs as a fire safety puppeteer ("Johnnie Joins the Fire Department" <https://vimeo.com/76438231>), educates residents about child car seat

safety, helps develop community Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs, coordinates the annual retiree luncheon, and participates on a new peer support team.

"I wanted a challenging job in a helping profession that offered a lot of variety," Heather says. "Firefighting fit that perfectly. Once I started, I really came to love the camaraderie and non-traditional schedule—most of the time."

Heather says Teamwork is at the foundation of a fire department.

"We work out together, clean together, eat together, run calls together," Heather says. "Since we spend one-third of our lives together, we often become like family—laughing together, celebrating milestones and comforting each other during tough times."

Heather earned a Bachelor's in Psychology from the University of Maryland Baltimore County. She lives in Raleigh with her husband, Brad, who is also a firefighter. Before coming to Chapel Hill, she also served as a crisis counselor, emergency room technician and public health educator.

In her spare time, she enjoys being in nature; learning and being creative with a good book, word game or traveling; and cooking and baking at home. She serves as treasurer of the Chapel Hill Fire Fighters' Association. Heather also finds time to help charitable organizations such as the NC Jaycee Burn Center, Pink Heals supporting the UNC-Chapel Hill Lineberger Cancer Center, and visiting sick or injured firefighters and their families at UNC Hospitals.

—Ran Northam, CaPA

## Coming Up

### Monday, March 13

HRA Clinics begin (see p. 6)

### Sunday, March 19

Author Reading: Kwame Alexander, 3-4 p.m., Chapel Hill Public Library

### Wednesday, March 22

Lunch and Learn: Farm to Table  
Noon, Hargraves Center (see p. 6)

### Sunday, March 26

Food Truck Rodeo, Noon-5 p.m.,  
Rosemary Street

### Wednesday, March 29 and Friday, March 31

CPR/AED/First Aid Training  
Fire Department Classroom,  
103 Weaver Dairy Road Ext.  
(see p. 5)



Photo by Ran Northam

## Town Manager's Message

Town Manager  
Roger Stancil

I believe local government is the cornerstone of our country. We are closest to the people we serve and our services are determined by them. If somebody in our community did not want it and advocate for it, we would not be doing it.

The services we provide are core to basic needs and generally do not shift with the political winds. People thrive in a place where they feel safe and healthy and welcome, where they can get around easily in multiple ways and where they can connect with other people in cultural and recreational opportunities. They like to know they can influence the conditions in the place they live. We are all that.



And nobody does it better than the people who work for the Town of Chapel Hill. Thank you for your professional commitment to service to our community. Thank you for what you do every day. Whenever I talk with people who live here, they have the highest praise for you and how you do your job. Whenever I talk with you, I hear pride in working in this community. Treasure that. And continue to be good stewards of the public trust you have earned.



## LEARNING HISTORY ON THE BUS

Transit helped Carrboro students learn about black history. A Chapel Hill Transit bus was used as a classroom for two days as part of a civil rights curriculum at Carrboro Elementary School.

**Akelema Pherribo** (above) listens as a teacher reads to the class.

Special thanks to **Fixed Route Operations staff, Mila Vega and Anita Hackney** for making this happen.



## THE SLT CHALLENGE: A SMASHING SUCCESS

This past fall, the Town of Chapel Hill set an aggressive donation goal of \$23,000 for our partnership with the United Way's Combined Campaign. One of the incentive goals was that Senior Leadership Team members would participate in a "wacky task" if the Town surpassed \$23,000. Thanks to the generosity of Town employees, the Town ended up smashing past the goal and ended up with over \$27,000! The challenge was completed on Jan. 5 in the Library. From dressing up as movie characters to singing pop songs, we all had a lot of fun letting loose and being wacky for such a great cause!

Thank you to everyone who participated and donated to the Combined Campaign, and thank you to the SLT members who participated in the challenge! Look for information about the 2017 Combined Campaign later this fall!

—Alex Terry, BMD



# Briefs

Congratulations to **Henry DePietro** (Transit) for successfully completing the Transportation Leadership Development Program (TLDP), sponsored by the Institute for Transportation Research and Education at NC State University (ITRE) and the NC Department of Transportation Public Transportation Division. This intensive 12-week program provides executives and managers the opportunity to examine their leadership and communication style and connect with transportation professionals around North Carolina.

**Amanda Fletcher** (Parks and Recreation) attended the Event Management School at Oglebay produced by the IFEA and NRPA and received her CFEA (Certified Festival and Event Associate).

**Tammy Morales** (HRD) completed the IPMA-HR Course in Public Sector HR Essentials in January. Congratulations!



**Lauren Ryan** (Transit) and **Jef Ryan** (Fire) welcomed Bailey Rose on Jan. 29. She weighed 7 lbs.,

6 oz. and was 20.25 inches long. Congratulations!

**Laura Selmer** (Manager) has accepted a permanent position as the Program Coordinator in the Manager's Office. She will contribute to Manager's Office efforts related to economic development, organizational and strategic initiatives, administration, and communication.

**Chapel Hill Transit's** partnership with NextBus was featured in the October 2016 issue of the Collection Point public transit newsletter. Chapel Hill Transit was one of the first agencies in North Carolina to use NextBus services. NextBus shows when buses are scheduled to arrive at a stop.

Transit's **Demand Response Team** has achieved 201 (and counting!) accident-free days. Congratulations!

## SHINY NEW BUSES ARE COMING!

Two buses recently rolled off the production line and are now in Chapel Hill. Fourteen more will arrive in March and April. Transit plans to order an additional 12–15 buses before July 1, which will arrive within 12 to 18 months.

Transit is also working to get \$392,890.00 in funds to purchase up to six new Light Duty Transit Vehicles (LTVs) for Demand Response.

Need to take the bus? Check out routes and schedules at [chtransit.org](http://chtransit.org).



## CHRIS BLUE RECEIVES AWARD

Recognized for his public service and commitment to the people of Chapel Hill, Police Chief **Chris Blue** was presented the 2017 Duke Energy Citizenship & Service Award at the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting on Thursday, Feb. 2. This award is a tribute to individuals or groups who make a difference in their communities and organizations by using their time, talents and compassion to positively impact the lives of others. Recipients



of the award help foster a culture of citizenship and service that acts as a catalyst for others to become involved in their community.

## TRAINING CORNER

The Cornerstone Learning Management System is here to enhance our employee training experience. Cornerstone OnDemand uses a combination of online and instructor-led training to make training more engaging, collaborative and effective.

Sign in and try it out at [www.townofchapelhill.org/training](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/training).

Questions? contact **Tom Clark** (HRD) at [tclark2@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:tclark2@townofchapelhill.org) or 919-969-5031.



## RESOLVE TO READ (FOR YOUR HEALTH!)

Studies confirm reading benefits our health and well-being, which in turn can help us succeed and thrive at work. Here are some of the benefits of reading:

**Better Decision Making:** Regular reading can strengthen the cognitive function that goes into identifying, analyzing and translating situational needs into solutions. The ability to find solutions and make sound decisions can have an immensely positive impact in our work and personal lives.

**Memory Benefits:** People who engage in mentally stimulating activities such as reading have slower rates of memory decline. Reading exercises our memory, which helps boost our short-term recall. People with a good working memory are more likely to be optimistic and self-assured, and more likely to lead a happy and successful life.

**Improved sleep:** Sleep experts recommend reading a book before bed, as it signals the body that sleep is near.

In addition to better decision making abilities and improved memory,

improved sleep also helps spur creativity and gives us more stamina and sharper attention.

**Mental Health Benefits:** Reading activates the front lobes of the brain; activity that has been shown to reverse depressive symptoms. Reading also slows the pace of our hectic lives and makes room for us to put aside time to nurture ourselves. No matter how much stress we have at work or in our personal lives, it slips away when you lose yourself in a great story.

**Empathy:** In the workplace, empathy can show respect, promote teamwork, and increase productivity and morale. Recent studies show that reading fiction might improve empathy. Fiction can augment and help us understand our social experience and deepen our capacity for empathy.

We know reading is fun, but there is evidence that it may also help us live happier, healthier, and more successful lives. Resolve to read more in 2017!

— Shannon Bailey, Library

## OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION



### RECOGNIZING YOUR EXCELLENCE

Who will win our highest employee honor for 2017? Nominate your outstanding co-workers for the 2017 Cal Horton Service Award! Nominations are due by Friday, March 31. Pick up a nomination form at HRD or visit [www.townofchapelhill.org/calhortonaward](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/calhortonaward).

The award winner will be announced at noon at the Employee Appreciation Day Event on June 9 at the Friday Center.

## Ask the Ombuds

### Not Yet ...

The employee sitting across from me was frustrated, confused, hurting, discouraged. He had been working for the Town for 18 years and really liked his job, the people he worked with, and those he served. BUT things had changed recently at work. He got a new manager from outside the Town and the two of them seemed to be on different pages, sometimes seemingly at odds. It felt like that person was micro-managing his every move and decision. It was really getting under his skin and was driving him crazy. It had gotten so stressful at work that it was negatively impacting his home life and even his health. He no longer enjoyed coming to work. First thing every morning he found himself getting anxious, dreading any interaction with this manager, even dreading coming to work. He could not get it out of his mind. Though he hated it, he had started looking for employment elsewhere. He was feeling frustrated, powerless to change and hopeless that things would change; desperation was setting in for him.

Beginning with the Town RESPECT Values as the

standard we focused in on the interaction between the employee and this manager's behavior, specifically in the area of Professionalism. He said that every time this manager questioned him it was as though he was viewed as a child, discrediting his experience and historical knowledge of the Town workplace. And in these repetitive uncomfortable interactions the employee was beginning to question his own job efficiency and effectiveness.

This helped us narrow in on what he wanted to communicate to and what he needed from this manager. Part of this involved identifying assumptions he was making about this manager and strategies to test these assumptions with him.

Together we explored his options: 1) he could do nothing and continue to be miserable both at work and at home; 2) he could find another job and leave Town employment; 3) he could complain to his co-workers, telling how unfair he felt this new manager was; 4) he could file a formal complaint with HRD against this manager alleging a hostile work environment; or 5) he could talk with this manager to let him know how he was feeling, to test assumptions



he had about this manager's behavior toward him, and to jointly design how to move forward.

Equipped with the RESPECT Values he felt he had common language with which to speak with this manager, tell his story, test assumptions, and jointly design next steps where there are no losers and everyone wins. He no longer felt powerless, helpless or hopeless about his situation.

Unfortunately, this employee represents a large number of employees experiencing the same disconnect between our Values and the way our interactions impact others. If you can identify with this employee, and you are feeling frustrated, confused, hurting, discouraged, powerless and want to look at ways to change this and renew the value and commitment you have for your job, let's talk and explore your options.

— Jim Huegerich, Ombuds

# Compliments



**Nate Chambers** (pictured above), **Andrew Smith** and **Aitor Canup** (all Police) were commended by **Michelle Guarino** (Police) for visiting children and teens in the hospital during the holidays.

**Deborah Davis** (Transit) was thanked by Pat Wolslagel for helping find a pair of driving gloves that were accidentally dropped on a Tar Heel Express shuttle.

**Chapel Hill Transit employees** were thanked by John and Gail Moriarty for providing safe Tar Heel Express service during winter weather. "You are all to be commended."

**Public Works employees** were thanked by Anna Wu for clearing snowy streets and sidewalks.

**Richard Terrell** (Public Works) and **Matt Sullivan** (Fire) were thanked by Housing and Community for going above and beyond on behalf of Public Housing tenants during the recent winter storm.

**Michael Chandler** (Transit) was complimented by James Joslin for being friendly and having a great attitude. "He obviously really cares about the riders and his ability to transport them safely and efficiently."

**Andre Jones** (Public Works) was commended by Dick Baddour for helping with yard waste disposal. "He takes pride in his work and is a tremendous representative of the Town staff and our community."

**Damon Jackson** (Transit) was thanked by Ellie Little for helping when she and a friend had difficulty getting into the RR lot.

**The Public Works Department** was thanked by Derek Flake for plowing streets quickly after a winter storm.

**Loryn Clark, Sarah Vinas and Renee Moye** (all Housing and Community) were thanked by Robert Dowling for simplifying the HOME/CDBG application process. "It's great to have such responsive partners in local government."

**Greg Ling** (Public Works) and **Ran Northam** (CaPA) were thanked by Carmelita Penaloza for helping resolve a problem with leaf collection.

**The Fire and Police Departments** were thanked by Housing and Community for assisting with orientation sessions for new public housing tenants every month.

**John McKerlie** (Police) was commended by Beth Gillon for his work at Phillips Middle School, including traffic management under difficult conditions.

**Housing and Community staff** were thanked by Susan Worley for making the application process for human services funding smoother and more intuitive.

**Bristol Jackson** and **Rashida Belk** (both Police) were commended by Hunter Pedersen for being respectful and calming after a traffic accident.

Anup Patel thanked **the Town** for installing a new left-turn traffic light at Raleigh and Franklin streets. "That was much needed."

Donald Cornish thanked **the Town** for keeping residents informed during the water crisis in February.

## THANKS TO TRANSIT EMPLOYEES

for coordinating the "Fill the Bus" program, which collects a bus load of toys for Orange County Toys for Tots. Special thanks to **Joe McMiller** (Transit) for helping coordinate the effort for Chapel Hill Transit and to **Sonja Robinson** (Transit) for driving the bus (for the third year in a row) filled with toys to the Toys for Tots distribution center in Hillsborough.



## ARE YOU READY TO BE A HOME TOWN HERO?

The Town Workplace Safety Committee will hold CPR/AED/First Aid classes from 9–10 a.m. or 2–3 p.m. Wednesday, March 29 and Friday, March 31 at the Fire Department Training Center, 103 Weaver Dairy Road Ext. Participants will have the opportunity to learn and perform CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) and learn to use an AED (automated external defibrillator) on a victim of cardiac arrest. Basic first aid will also be included in the class.

To sign up, contact Tom Clark (HRD) at [tclark2@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:tclark2@townofchapelhill.org).



**wellness@work**  
 UNC HEALTH CARE | FAMILY MEDICINE  
 TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL



Join us for a **Wellness@Work Lunch and Learn** at noon Wednesday, March 22, at Hargraves Center. In "Farm to Table," Clinical Dietician Avril Rowerdink will talk about how to prep, use, store and benefit from seasonal produce. We'll have a cooking demo and taste test of garlic mashed cauliflower and raw cauliflower with homemade hummus.

Lunch will be provided! Sign up by 5 p.m. Monday, March 20 – contact Liska Lackey at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796.

**The 2017 Health Risk Assessment (HRA)**

will begin March 13 and continue through May. HRA Clinics are planned for Transit, Public Works, the Library and the Wellness Clinic. Make an appointment at [www.chapelhillwellnessatwork.org](http://www.chapelhillwellnessatwork.org) or walk in any time during scheduled HRA Clinics.

Clinics will be held from 8 a.m. to noon on the following dates:  
 Monday, March 13, at the Wellness Clinic  
 Tuesday, March 14, at Transit  
 Thursday, March 16, at Public Works  
 Monday, March 20, at the Wellness Clinic  
 Thursday, March 23, at Transit  
 Tuesday, March 28, at the Wellness Clinic  
 Thursday, March 30, at the Library

**Get your fresh veggies the easy way!**

The 16-week summer Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) session begins April 11. You can join at any time—the fee will be pro-rated for any weeks you miss. To sign up, contact Liska at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796.

**Get ready for the Tar Heel 10 Miler!**

Join other Town employees on April 22 for the Tar Heel 10 Miler/ Fleet Feet 4 Miler. The route through downtown Chapel Hill, the UNC campus and historic neighborhoods is a great way to celebrate spring in Chapel Hill! Register online at [www.TarHeel10miler.com](http://www.TarHeel10miler.com) (select "Town of Chapel Hill" as your group). Save \$5 off the registration fee with promo code TownCH5.

Would you like to lead the effort for the Town team to win the Fittest Company Award? Contact Liska Lackey at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796.

Fleet Feet Sports offers a 12-week training program to get you ready to run! Get more information at <http://www.fleetfeetcarrboro.com/training/4-and-10-mile>

The **Wellness website** is up and running. Thanks for your patience while it was down for maintenance. If you see any problems, contact Liska Lackey at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796. Visit the website at [chapelhillwellnessatwork.org](http://chapelhillwellnessatwork.org) for the latest on Wellness@Work programs and resources.

Check out our **monthly wellness email newsletter!** It comes out the first Thursday of every month, and focuses on a different health topic. The March wellness newsletter is all about cholesterol.

**WORKING TOGETHER DURING A WATER CRISIS**

A technical issue and subsequent water shortage for Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) customers prompted a Do Not Use and Do Not Drink order to be issued by OWASA and the Orange County Health Department on Friday, Feb. 3. That order remained in place until the afternoon of Saturday, Feb. 4. You can read more on the water shortage and how OWASA responded at [owasa.org/2017-water-emergency](http://owasa.org/2017-water-emergency).

While non-essential Town of Chapel Hill employees were sent home, many Town employees assisted the community during the water shortage. The photo above was taken at a Harris Teeter water distribution site (others were Southern Community Park and Hargraves Community Center). Police officers, firefighters and other Town employees helped distribute water to residents.

**Cybersecurity Tip**

**✓ CHOOSE LENGTH OVER COMPLEXITY**

When it comes to passwords, length trumps complexity. Try making a passphrase for a long password that's easy to remember.

Published by:  
 Town of Chapel Hill  
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TOWNtalk is produced by the Communications and Public Affairs Department  
 Editor: Catherine Lazorko  
 Graphic Designer: Melanie Miller  
 Staff Writer: Ran Northam

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.

