



# CHAPEL HILL Towntalk

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## TS TEAM MAKES REMOTE WORK EASIER

Before the arrival of COVID-19, **Tim Czupka** (Technology Solutions), the Town's Technical Services and Support Manager, was helping to prepare for the Town-wide release of Microsoft Office 365 and the associated training. He says it's a blessing that Technology Solutions staff had migrated all the Town's mailboxes to the cloud prior to the stay-at-home order, which allowed the move to Teams and 365 much smoother and faster. Since mid-March, the amount of Teams created in MS365 went from around five to 70!

A lot of projects that required hands-on work to be done were put on hold, as Technology Solutions moved to make sure the Town had enough

laptops, webcams, and anything else that was needed to work remotely. They've opened a depot at Public Works that's open four hours each day, where employees who have trouble with their equipment can drop it off to be fixed. TS staff then goes through the rigorous process of wiping down all the equipment prior to fixing and returning it.

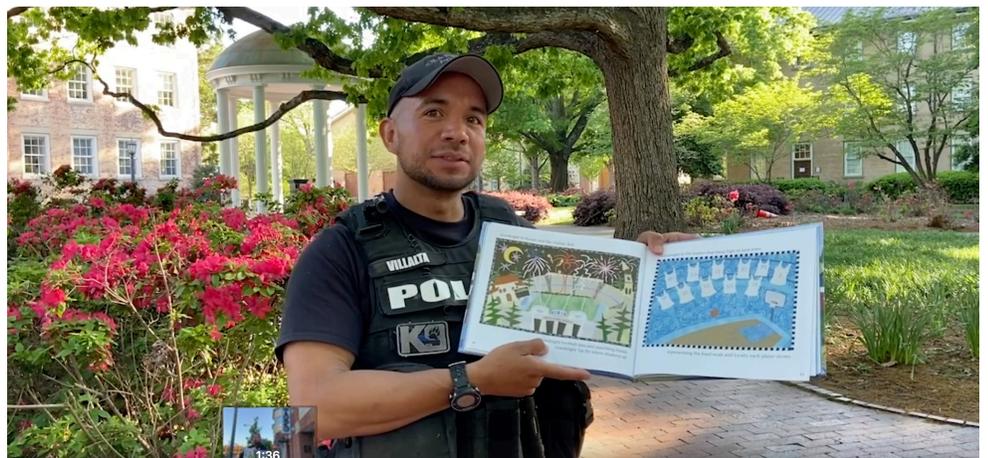
The rush to help assist folks in working from home also gave TS an opportunity to try out new remote options that had been on the back-burner: they've been able to install Cisco IP softphones on some laptops and for the call center, which allows work phones to be transferred directly to your laptop.



"There's been a lot of positivity as to how this was all rolled out" Tim says. Since this has happened, the amount of positive feedback Technology Solutions has received has been overwhelming. Town staff are thankful to Tim and TS for making the somewhat overwhelming move to working from home relatively painless!

"Catherine Lazorko has been the leader and champion for TOWNtalk and our communications efforts for many years. As Catherine prepares to begin a new chapter in her career with our friends in Carrboro, please join me in thanking her for her many contributions to our organization and our community!"

–Town Manager Maurice Jones



There is a Stay at Home challenge currently going around the virtual world where uniformed police officers record themselves reading a children's book aloud and posting on their department's website and social media channels. Our police officers so enjoy going into our schools on a regular basis to read to children that they were really excited to do this. **Nicole Kay** and **Johnnie Britt** created a video of police officers reading the children's book *Goodnight Carolina*. As the book takes readers to much-loved local places like the Old Well, Kenan Stadium, and Franklin Street, the video features 16 officers reading at each of the sites in the book and passing it off to the next person all under Carolina blue skies. There is both an English and Spanish version of the video. This is a creative and fun way for families to feel connected to the community as they safely stay at home!

## WHO KEEPS CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT RUNNING?

Transit buses are still running. Many health care workers rely on Chapel Hill Transit to get to their jobs. Transit operators, administrative staff, and operations and maintenance staff are essential to providing service to the communities we serve.



## NEW PARKS AND REC IDEAS

With the arrival of COVID-19, residents have increasingly been turning to the beautiful parks and trails of Chapel Hill to exercise, take their minds off current events, or just be outdoors. Even though parks and recreation facilities have been closed, staff have continued their work both out in the community and virtually. This includes continued care and maintenance of our right-of-way, parks, and trails, providing guidance to the public on how to stay safe in the current environment, and supporting food distribution efforts as well as the farmer's market.

Staff from within the Recreation Division are also developing virtual programs for youth and families to participate in online. Some examples of upcoming programs include:

- Adventure hunts and adventure challenges with **Keith Dodson** and team
- Virtual Escape Room by **Sam Slayer**
- Beat making with **Brentton Harrison**
- Bolin Creek discussion by **Sammy Bauer**

In addition, a series of make-your-own arts and craft projects (make your own sock bunnies, sensory bottles, etc.) with **Robin Pipkins** and **Marian Kaslovsky** in conjunction with the Town's Emergency Operations Center will be coming soon. The public truly appreciates the essential role that Parks & Recreation staff are being called upon to do, and it has not gone unnoticed by the community.

## IMPROVING FOOD DISTRIBUTION

With local school districts temporarily closed, School Resource Officers (SROs) **Stan Newsome** and **Kurt Gurley** (both Police) are assisting at the food distribution events at the Chapel Hill Public Library. More than 350 households are showing up to each event to get much needed food during these difficult times. At the second event the line of vehicles extended out Library Drive and far up both sides of Estes Drive, prompting organizers to plan for alternative sites that could handle the tremendous turnout.

Before the third distribution event Newsome and Gurley came up with a creative solution to reduce the traffic backup by using the existing parking lots at the Library and centralizing how volunteers put the food into vehicles. Their leadership made the distribution much more efficient and safer, while still maintaining physical distancing for everyone. Organizers no longer need to scramble to find alternative sites. Thank you to Newsome and Gurley for taking on this challenge!

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