

NORTHSIDE NEWS

Connect to Yourself : Connect to your Community

2020 has been a combination of finding what is important to us and also setting boundaries. Recently, I heard Kim Kardashian say that this year was created so that we could all be grateful for the life that we have. When I first heard that, I was so upset because I felt that she was not feeling how much people have lost and how much anger has been felt. I have personally lost an auntie, and one of my favorite people, and since then things have not quite felt real. Upon further reflection, I realize that she was saying that this time has forced us to go beyond expecting our life to be the same and to appreciate it for all that it is. We have lost those we loved and been significantly challenged at the same time. It is important that we appreciate the things that come into our lives from the small to the beautiful, and all of the things in between. This year has been about appreciation, recharging, and growth. As people, we are responsible for doing what we can and giving to those around us. We are responsible for fostering connective relationships and for checking ourselves. Sometimes “getting the wind knocked out of you is the only way to remind your lungs how much they like the taste of air” (Sarah Kay). Goodness, gracious! This year has made me appreciate **BREATHING!**
- Aisha Booze-hall

Snapshots From 2020



Vimala's Thoughts on Thanksgiving

During the pandemic, Vimala's Curryblossom Cafe and the Jackson Center have joined forces to bring hot meals directly to neighbors' doorsteps. We are so proud that this creative and mutually-supportive partnership has resulted in 3,262 meals so far! As part of last week's meal delivery, Vimala shared the following letter with residents of Northside, Pine Knolls, and Tin Top:

“For me, the pandemic, despite its challenges, has opened a door that has taken me back to my beginnings as a new arrival from India. My first job in America was as a lead teacher in a predominantly black daycare on Caldwell Street in Chapel Hill's Northside. There I learned from co-workers, kids, and their parents about the history, culture, and cuisine of my new home. I was so fascinated by the food that came to us daily that I would stop in at church fish fry's and barbecue events to learn more about how to cook this delicious cuisine that was so new to me.

Fast forward to the years I spent as an undocumented single mother whose only means of earning a livelihood was cooking out of my home. I was frequently called on to cook for large groups of people who were not at all familiar with my native



Indian food. There I honed my skills cooking southern soul food until it became as familiar to me as my own. Then I knew I had come of age in the South.

Ten years ago, when Vimala's Curryblossom Cafe opened its doors in the building that years ago housed the first desegregated ice cream shop in town, I found myself at a historic crossroad. As an immigrant myself, I longed to make the growing refugee community feel welcome and at home the way I had been welcomed by my neighbors on the Northside. We began an annual tradition of inviting refugees from a dozen countries to a traditional Thanksgiving feast of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, and all the trimmings where the community also donated clothes and household goods for them to take home. At the same time, I felt a need to somehow connect these new neighbors with my old neighbors just across Rosemary Street. These two groups are vastly different, yet they share the experience of suffering prejudice and disenfranchisement. In the current political environment, both groups have experienced a resurgence of the dark side of this country's hateful past.

Enter the pandemic. Ever since the restaurant opened, we have enjoyed an ongoing relationship with the Jackson Center. Our southern food has always found a place at the table for their neighborhood events. But the pressure to stay home, particularly for the elderly, birthed a new and closer partnership with the Jackson Center. As funding has permitted, we have been preparing weekly or bi-weekly southern meals for Northside elders (*shut-in because of Covid-19*), delivered by their friends at the Center.

In this Thanksgiving 2020 season, we had hoped to bring both groups together in our spacious courtyard. But, of course, everything has to be distanced. The very same food, however, will be going out to all. Although at a distance, we will all be breaking bread together and giving thanks for every silver lining we can find in this storm. African Americans, Arabs, South Asians, Sub Saharan Africans, will all be partaking. Our prayer for all our neighbors from near and far (to borrow a phrase from our church, Love Chapel Hill) is that they will feel 'apart, but not alone.'”
By Vimala Rajendran

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE JACKSON CENTER HOLIDAY SHINE (DRIVE) BY

The Light in the Midst of Darkness

Light display, Music and Community

Drive by the Jackson Center via N. Roberson street to see the lights. and turn into our driveway for a holiday gift.
(Walking is also encouraged!! If walking park at Hargraves)

December 17th,
6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
512 West Rosemary St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

'Tis The Season of Giving

The Jackson Center invites you to give a gift this season! That gift can be a letter, a joyus call, even a nice pie to your neighbor or a friend. Work out a Covid-19 safe paln to exchange joy, hope, and love this holiday season. Help us make the season BRIGHT!!

ASK KEITH

Q: Ms. Keith Edwards and one other neighbor in the community were asked “what were some of the holiday traditions you remember having grown up in the neighborhood?”

A: The main focus for my family then and still is now is to remember Jesus because it’s his birthday! Because he came into this world to save us, we celebrate with that on our heart because that is how we were raised. In our day, Christmas was very, very special! It was all about Jesus and it just so happened that we would get a gift on that day. It was mandatory that you went to church and learned about all this.

On Christmas morning, we would get together for breakfast with all of the family and then have dinner with your immediate family. We used to go around to visit the neighbors because they always had gifts for everyone. Mrs. Agnes Rankin would make Christmas cookies for everyone. Mrs. Lucille Caldwell would crochet scarfs and hats and other things to give to everyone. Everyone had a gift, whether it was a scarf or a napkin. Kids got a lot of enjoyment after Christmas dinner to see what everyone got. Everyone would get to share in the riding of the new bikes. We shared our new skates! Even skating on one skate while holding on to the back of a bike; it was a lot of fun! It was a struggle though for our parents to give us gifts because they had to work extra to have the funds to buy the gifts for us. We were still taught to share.

There would be Christmas parties for the neighborhood at Hargraves Center and O’Bryant’s Chapel Church. Mr. Bynum Weaver or Mr. Doug Caldwell would play Santa Claus. Every church had Christmas programs and all the kids would participate. Afterward they would give out Christmas bags filled with fruit (oranges, apples, grapes, raisins), nuts (walnuts, pecans), and candy. You would expect this every Christmas. It was a big thing to do for everyone in the community. They made sure all the kids participated because it was a special time, honoring Jesus’ birth. All of it was for him. If you didn’t get something brand new, you got something.

Some of the fraternity and sorority houses would host Christmas gatherings for kids in the community before they went home for the Christmas Holidays. Chapel Hill’s Christmas Celebration included the Christmas parade which was always before Christmas day. It was a big treat back then because it was at night. Everyone looked for Lincoln High School Band in the parade. Santa Claus came at the end, throwing out candy. It was a special time, a loving time. Everybody loved everybody. The Spirit of Christmas went into the New Year. It was a festive time all over Chapel Hill. We had beautiful Christmas decorations because you knew you were getting ready for Christmas! At that time, all organizations, all churches, black and white, made sure kids would get gifts.

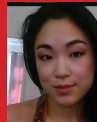
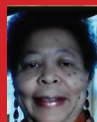
Northside Elementary arranged for the classes to go to the Planetarium to see the “Star of Bethlehem”. The Star was lit up on top of the dome and the program showed how far the 3 kings and the shepherds had to travel to get to the star and to the baby Jesus. It was an exciting time! The Star of Bethlehem is no longer shown at the Planetarium. Because someone complained about the star being on the Planetarium, they took it down. Now the celebration has been taken over by commercialism. Never would I have thought anything like that would happen. Regardless, I still celebrate Christmas, because it’s all about JESUS!

NEW YEAR’S TRADITIONS

- **Eating Black-Eyed Peas and Collards (greens) For Luck on New Year’s Day:** Black-eyed peas have roots in West Africa and traveled along with enslaved Africans in the Middle Passage. Because of their deep emerald color (think money), hearty greens like kale, spinach, and collards are believed to bring wealth (and of course health!). Other theories are that Jewish immigrants who migrated to the south, who include black-eyed peas in their Rosh Hashanah menu as a symbol of prosperity, also helped to form the annual tradition; “eat poor on New Year’s and eat fat the rest of the year.” Another explanation is that dried beans loosely resemble coins and greens are the greenback (money).
- **Eating pork on New Year’s Day:** Southerners celebrate New Year’s by eating ham and other pork products because the animal has long been considered lucky.
- **The First Visitor:** This tradition has its roots in Scotland and England, but many Southerners share the same sentiment. The story goes that the first person who enters your home after midnight on New Year’s Eve is a symbol of what is to come. African Americans added “it should be a male visitor”!
- **Not Cleaning on New Year’s Day:** It appears that not cleaning on New Year’s Day is an international tradition. From Japan and Poland to the Philippines and the United States, people believe that sweeping and cleaning will either whisk away your good luck or rid your house of gods and goddesses! A clean home represents a fresh start for the new year. But there is a catch: make sure you get everything clean before Jan. 1 or the day after.
- **Eating Grapes:** Some people of Spanish descent eat 12 grapes at the stroke of midnight. Vietnamese culture dictates that debts should be paid off before the Lunar New Year.

Submitted by Mae McLendon

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
MCJC WILL BE CLOSED DEC. 21ST - JAN. 3RD
We will resume operations on Jan 4th



UNC’s Reopening

As a member of the Campus and Community Advisory Committee, we met to determine the best and safest way to reopen the campus for when the students are scheduled to return after the holiday break. January 19th is when students will return and there will be mandatory testing of all students for COVID 19 and mandatory enforcement of CDC guidelines. This will be done on a weekly basis. Testing sites will be set up on campus as well as off campus (off campus sites TBD). At the writing of this article, the committee presented its recommendations to the Chancellor and are awaiting his final decision. We will keep the community updated to ensure that our neighbors remain safe when and if students return to on campus learning as this will affect not only the students who live in our neighborhoods but also the faculty, staff, and residents of our beloved community.

-Kathy Atwater, MCJC Community Advocacy Specialist

COVID-19

Health and Safety Tips



Wear a Mask

- Wear a **cloth face covering** such as a mask, scarf or bandana in **public spaces**

If you are in need of a mask, please contact The Jackson Center

Maintain Physical Distance

- **Avoid** large group gatherings
- Stay **6 feet apart** in public spaces
- Avoid close contact with people you do not live with



Frequently Wash Hands

- **Wash hands** for 20 seconds with soap and warm water
- Use **hand sanitizer**

Don't Delay Medical Care

- If you are faced with a medical emergency, **call 911** or go to the emergency room
- Many clinics are offering **video or phone visits**- check with your doctor!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

December Birthdays

12/03 Virginia Carson

12/04 Priya Sreenivasan

Corey Edwards

12/18 Addie Jones

12/27 Paris Miller

12/30 Thomas Merritt

January Birthday

01/06 Vimala Rajendran

01/07 Hudson Vaughan

01/14 Lillian Alston

01/21 Clarence Farrar

Dennis Farrington

01/23 George Barrett

01/25 Lula Bell Norwood

01/30 Willis Farrington

In Memoriam Remembering Two Centenarians

Mrs. Jessica Euzelle Patterson Smith

July 3, 1919 - September 19, 2020

Mrs. Smith was born in Newport News, VA and after paying her way through college, received her BS degree in Elementary Education from Hampton Institute in 1941. Mrs. Smith received her Masters of Art in Education in 1970 and State Certification in Guidance and Counseling from NCCU. She met her husband, Mr. Reginald Smith while at Hampton and after marrying in 1943 moved to Chapel Hill to start their teaching careers with Orange County Training School and Lincoln High School. Because of their commitment to the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School System, R. D. and Euzelle P. Smith Middle School was named in their honor in 2000. In honor of Mr. & Mrs. Smith, the family is asking that you consider future donations of grocery gift cards to Smith Middle School to support them in these unprecedented times. Please contact Smith Middle School Social Worker, Tina Moore at tmoore@chccs.k12.nc.us.



Mrs. Clara Mae Hill Matthews

May 23, 1919 - September 25, 2020

Mrs. Matthews was born in Alamance County, NC and was married to Mr. Roy Matthews who passed in 1981. To continue her legacy are her special caregivers who were diligent in assisting her in her time of need: Mrs. Veora Atwater, Ms. Francesca Alston, Ms. Helen Galbreath, and great-niece Judge Doretta Walker. Ms. Clara loved the WORD of GOD and gospel music. She was also a member of First Baptist Church under the leadership of the late Rev. Dr. J. R. Manley and current Pastor Dr. Rodney L. Coleman. Ms. Clara was a former member of the Mothers Mission Club of Chapel Hill, which consisted of a group of Christian women who provided support to those in need in our community in the early to mid 1960’s. As one neighbor and church member has said, “Even at 101, Ms. Clara was very keen and had sharp wit!”

Both Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Matthews were part of an amazing group of neighbors who passed the age of 100 years, strong in spirit and in faith! May we continue to celebrate and be thankful for the rich heritage of this community and the centenarians who grace us with their wisdom and presence. “With long life shall I satisfy ‘them’ and show ‘them’ MY salvation” - Psalm 91:16

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

-MATTHEW 25:40