

NORTHSIDE NEWS

This Newsletter will contain reflections from the year as the holidays come up and the new year starts. A lot of people like to think about what all has transpired in the last calendar year and we as humans like to put things into perspective. Some questions that we all could consider for our yearly reflections and planning are: *How did I grow in this last year? What changes would I like to keep going from the past year? What does community mean to me? Where in my faith/spirituality/mental health do I want to be? How can I serve my community in ways that are not toxic to me or the community and people around me?* Reflections allow us to notice and consider all the pieces of our identity in which we like, love, and wish to show growth in. Reflecting helps us know who we are and who we want to be, and that helps us all continually reach our goals towards building the lives we want.

- B.L.Harrison

Mirror Mirror On The Wall, 2021 Reflect it All

Program Reflections From Jackson Center Staff

Learning Across Generations

This year the Jackson Center’s **Learning Across Generations** (LAG) program focused on centering Black lives, diving into what it means to be Black, Indigenous or a Person Of Color in Chapel Hill-Carrboro today, building upon the precedent of organizing that neighbors have led for 60+ years. We revitalized the Chapel Hill Freedom School, created flash cards on “the ABCs of the Movement for Black Lives,” and presented local history workshops to nearly 1,300 K-12 students. Our student volunteers completed nearly 1,000 service hours in collaboration with the local Boys and Girls Club and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools. We expanded our network of partners to include Southern Vision Alliance, Legends in the Making a partnership with Inter-Faith Council and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP’s Education Committee. Our namesake Mrs. Marian Cheek Jackson stated that, “Without the past, you have no future”—through this work, we believe the past will illuminate pathways for the future of local education.

-Aisha Booze-hall and Brentton Harrison

From the Rock Wall : Oral History Archive

We started 2021 by launching **From the Rock Wall** (www.fromtherockwall.org), a new website highlighting oral histories from Orange County’s historically Black communities. While we couldn’t conduct in-person interviews during the height of the pandemic, we were able to add many existing interviews from other archives to the site during that time, and we have resumed Covid-safe interviewing this fall. From the Rock Wall now features 339 interviews witnessing the history of Black Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County! This summer, we celebrated that history at three Community Cinema events at the Chelsea Theater, viewing silent films from the 1930s and sharing memories with neighbors. Recently, we’ve conducted several “potluck” interviews (combining oral history with scanning photos and documents) with local history-keepers. Interviewers (including our staff and Community Review Board) are currently planning and recording new oral histories about work in the community as part of our Teachers, Artisans, and Entrepreneurs project. Over 25 student service partners and community volunteers have been processing all of these new interviews to add them to From the Rock Wall. The Jackson Center also hired two public history Co-Directors, Anna Spencer and Kathryn Wall this year. We were pleased to receive a \$19,990 American Rescue Plan Humanities Project Support Grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council and are applying for funding from other sources to support our work in 2022 and beyond.

-Anna Spencer and Kathryn Wall PhD Public History Co-Directors

From the Rock Wall

Living Histories of Black Chapel Hill/Carrboro

Reflections From Leadership

The following is an excerpt from the annual letter that our Executive Director, George Barrett, wrote to over 500 Jackson Center supporters and friends this November. Inspired by the 2009 MLK Address given by the late Reverend Troy F. Harrison, George reflects on how the Jackson Center and the community have risen above the struggle to transform dreams into reality!

This year, we have faced struggle. We have battled large institutions that weaponized their apathy and cruelty in our direction. We’ve persisted through a global pandemic that has ravished Black and Brown communities across this nation. Throughout, I have witnessed what Pastor Harrison shares in his MLK Day address: “It is in the midst of struggle that dreams become a reality.”

In February, we launched From the Rock Wall, turning the dream of a community-held history commons into a reality. In April, we challenged Orange County’s inequitable tax assessments of Northside properties, winning \$1,355 average annual savings for long-term residents. In October, Orange County’s approval of an unprecedented property tax assistance fund turned the dream of county wide tax assistance for long-term low- and moderate-income residents into a reality. Throughout the year, the Northside Neighborhood Initiative made seven families’ and two elders’ dreams of owning or renting safe and affordable housing a reality. Dreams never die.

We rose above the odds and ensured that hundreds of our elders received the COVID-19 vaccine, many of them doing so in their own neighborhood. We educated over 1,000 students on local civil rights and Black History. We invited three hundred UNC students into the practice of caring for their neighbors as they became the boots-on-the-ground force that drove our grocery box and community newsletter distributions. Partners from the Inter-Faith Council and Southern Vision Alliance worked with us to revive the Chapel Hill Freedom School, where 25 high school youth learned local Black history and trained in how to liberate their communities from the oppressive systems of today. Dreams never die.

...
Trouble doesn’t last always, and joy comes in the morning. And as we’ve seen over and over again this year, the morning is here!

-George Barrett, Executive Director, Marian Cheek Jackson Center.



Linking the Generations

The Northside Residential Fellowship (NRF) and LINKing Generations in the Northside (LINK) are the Jackson Center’s two programs that support aging in community and intergenerational mentorship. Both programs foster and deepen conversations across generations around aging, housing, and anti-racism; this year’s themed topics explore and celebrate conversations across lines of difference. The year-long Northside Residential Fellowship invites three students to live in the Northside community to learn from Northside neighbors about aging, housing, and anti-racism. Fellows attend bi-weekly workshops, and also support the work and mission of the Jackson Center, collectively completing 200+ hours of community engagement. Through LINK, a relationship-based program, 16 long-term residents pair with students to connect regularly. In 2021, LINK elders and students have spent 300 hours checking-in with each other through phone calls! Mary Beth, a student participating in LINK, shares, “I reflect on how grateful I am to have met my community partner and for the relationship we have. Every time we speak, she brings insight of hope and wisdom into conversation.”

-Aisha Booze-hall

Northside Neighborhood Initiative

The Northside Neighborhood Initiative preserves the history and future of the community through creative housing justice work. This year, residents, the Jackson Center, and partner organizations (Self Help, EmPOWERment, NAACP, and volunteers from Chapel of the Cross and Greenbridge) made history with our strong advocacy for equitable property valuations. Over 150 appeals were filed on behalf of long term residents which resulted in unfair valuations being lowered by more than \$9 million. This translates to an estimated \$150,000 in collective tax savings for long term residents per year. This advocacy effort also spurred Orange County to set aside \$250,000 in assistance funds. In addition, in our Keeping Your House A Home and Do It Yourself (DIY) workshops, 20 of our neighbors learned about preventative home maintenance. Over 48 neighbors were retained through ensuring their homes were repaired and property taxes were paid so they can continue to live close, connected, and proud. We also acquired our 40th property through community-first landbanking efforts and created 7 affordable homes in the neighborhood through local partnerships.

- Christine Abernathy



Girl Scouts Tours and Workshops

On the morning of Saturday, November 13th our Education team hosted Girl Scout troops from across Orange County on the Jackson Center's front lawn. Each troop received a walking tour and a workshop about this Northside History. The older troops also learned about the importance of Oral History and active listening. This day was the rebirth of a deeply rooted tradition of Scouts being closely connected in the neighborhood. This was a call into the Northside, Pine Knolls and Tin Top community for troops of all ages. By coming together and teaching the incredible history of our beloved community the Girl Scouts were able to learn about the local history that was untold to them! Through this work the Orange County Girl Scouts will have the opportunity to continue engaging with the power of the past and their personal legacy.



Halloween Parade

On October 31st you may have witnessed our community in joy. We held a Halloween Day parade that included trick or treating, a group of dancing community members, their kids and some extended families. This parade was an absolute joy! We engaged with over 20 community families. As we marched through the Pottersfield and Sunset our crowd grew in size picking up fellow trick or treaters and neighbors joined in the celebrations from their porch being DJ from the 1980's and sharing tunes and candies. The parade ended in a haunted backyard party with food and music. Shout out to our Staff Members and Coordinators, Northside Residential Fellows, Volunteers and Community for making this event marvelous!



Longtime Homeowner Assistance

Orange County approves new

Longtime Homeowner Assistance Program

In response to a summer of advocacy, the Orange County Board of Commissioners initiated the Longtime Homeowner Assistance Program to provide property tax bill assistance to help people stay in their homes. They allocated \$250,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds to assist households affected by the 2021 countywide property revaluation. The final program design was approved at the Oct. 5, 2021, business meeting. Orange County has started accepting applications. Applications must be received by 5 p.m. on Dec. 15, 2021, to allow time for processing.

To qualify, homeowners must:

Live in Orange County;

Have lived in their home for at least 10 years;

Have experienced an increase in property taxes due to the 2021 tax revaluation; and

Earn no more than 80% of the area median income

There are three ways to apply:

1) Online Application Portal:

<https://orangecountynhousing.submittable.com/submit>

2) Paper Applications: Pick up a paper application at the Orange County Housing and Community Development Department offices:

Hillsborough Office: 300 West Tryon Street, 3rd Floor, Hillsborough, NC 27278

Chapel Hill Office: 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Completed paper applications can be dropped in the drop boxes outside of the Housing and Community Development offices or mailed to:

Orange County Housing and Community Development

P.O. Box 8181

Hillsborough, NC 27278

3) Phone/Email: Housing Helpline staff can help people complete and submit applications and to give information on the supporting documentation needed.

Call 919-245-2655 or email HousingHelp@orangecountync.gov.

Marian Cheek Jackson Center 2021 Photo Review



Upper-left: Envisioning the next three years at the Jackson Center in our October strategic planning workshop. Top-right: Ms. Odessa brings lunch for Jackson Center staff. Middle-left: George stars in "The Price Is Right" parody video, advocating for property tax justice. Middle: Durham Academy oral history students learn about local civil rights history. Bottom-left: APPLS service partners start the fall semester. Bottom-middle: snapshot from a LINK event, kick starting conversations across generations. Bottom Right: The Jackson Center 4 Singing Telegrams for Valentines Day

COMMUNITY BOARD

Freedom is being handed out to us in installments!

-Bishop Thomas L Hoyt

December & January Birthdays

December 3 - Virginia Carson
December 4 - Priya Sreenivasan
December 18 - Addie Jones Wilson
December 25 - Christine Abernathy
December 27 - Paris Miller-Foushee
December 30 - Thomas Merritt
January 2 - Terrence Foushee
January 6 - Vimala Rajendran
January 7 - Hudson Vaughan
January 14 - Lillian Alston
January 21 - Clarence Farrar
January 23 - George Barrett
January 25 - Lula Bell Norwood
January 30 - Rev. Willis Farrington

Scholarship Opportunities for Chapel Hill - Carrboro City Schools Students

Felicia Brewer Opportunity Scholarship:

The purpose of the Felicia Brewer Opportunity Scholarship is to create a life-transforming opportunity for immigrant or first generation students who have overcome significant adversity, giving them the opportunity to pursue their dreams and improve their lives through education or training. The Scholarship will be awarded to students who have attended a Chapel Hill -Carrboro City Schools district high school. The Fund has been created in memory of Felice (Felicia) Berkman Brewer by her father-in-law, Donald Brewer.

Richard E. Whitted Scholarship:

Once in a great while someone moves through our lives, awakening our better instincts, stirring us to finer goals and higher productivity, reshaping our understanding of citizenship, and leaving behind a legacy of good deeds and the joy of a life well lived. Richard Whitted, former Orange County Commissioner and Board of Commissioners chair, was such a person. To honor Richard's memory and to keep alive his splendid example of service, the Richard E. Whitted scholarship was created to award a college-bound member of the senior class of each of the Orange County and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools who has shown outstanding academic achievement and public service.

More information on scholarships can be found at: <https://trianglecf.org/students/scholarships-awards/>