

New Year, New Pressures: New Diamonds In The Making

Is this Pandemic a prison or a prism? We had to bar direct contact, tele-interact, tell us to interact, safely and do so intentionally. Earth’s agenda, a harmonious moral Pangaea, against all the harm inflicted, riots incited, and we are called, today, to pay, attention to what is inside us, those around us, what values guide us, or defines us. Where do we see value? What value do we place, on that which is now scarce? This abundance of “me time,” or “public health timeout”, we are away from our comforting distractions, reflecting inward. This refractory, is showing us new life, new normals, in this new year. What can you See, or Be?
-B.L. Harrison

COVID-19 Q&A With Dr. Whitney Robinson

Dr. Whitney Robinson is a Northside resident and epidemiologist. She is currently on faculty at Duke School of Medicine.

What are the CDC guidelines for what I should do if I have COVID?

The CDC recently shortened the recommended timeline for people to isolate by themselves after COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test to 5 full days (~120 hours). For people who use the shorter isolation timeline, the CDC added another 5 full days (120 hours) of strict masking. I like this graphic from the website Dear Pandemic to explain the options.

Source: <https://dearpandemic.org/isolation-explainer/>

And here are the updated guidelines if you want to read them yourself: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

With the Omicron variant spreading, what is safe and not safe to do?

I recommend being more cautious than usual the rest of January and into early February. “More cautious” means different things depending on people’s work and personal circumstances. For me, that means:

- When I’m inside with people outside my household, I wear a tight-fitting, high-filtration mask (N95, KF94 – these can be re-used many times) or a surgical-mask-under-cloth-mask combo.
- I try to mostly socialize outdoors or open windows and turn on fans indoors, when it’s not too-too cold.
- My kids still go to school and daycare (7 yo is recently vaccinated; almost-3-yo doesn’t qualify). I appreciate their precautions like universal masking, lots of outdoor time, opt-in testing once a week at Northside Elementary, etc.
- We are being more cautious about seeing the grandparents, holding off if anyone in my family seems at all sick or had an exposure

I know that people’s personal circumstances vary: any extra caution over the next month or so reduces risk and helps our community.

Anti-viral pills to treat COVID? What has been approved?

Paxlovid is a newly approved anti-COVID pill treatment. It’s a 5-day course of 6 pills per day for people at higher risk of a bad COVID-19 outcome. Having an at-home treatment option is great news because other treatments are limited to people sick enough to be in the hospital (like remdesivir) or require an hours-long infusion at a special center (like monoclonal antibodies*).

But Paxlovid has a few catches:

- You need a MD prescription because it can interfere with some other medications or illnesses
- It’s in short supply and being reserved for highest risk patients
- You have to start taking it within a few days after symptoms start. So, if you’re older, high-risk, etc., see if you can get an MD referral as soon as you think you have COVID

Lots of additional info about Paxlovid: <https://dearpandemic.org/new-pill-to-treat-covid-19/>

* A note on monoclonal antibodies (artificial antibodies): Unfortunately, most monoclonal antibodies (like Regeneron) don’t work against omicron. The only one that does work against omicron is Sotrovimab. So this one is in high demand and short supply.

All households are now eligible to receive 4 free at-home COVID-19 tests. These are distributed by the U.S. Postal Service on behalf of the federal government, and will arrive in the mail. Apply at <https://www.covidtests.gov>

If you would like any assistance with getting COVID tests, vaccinations, or upgraded masks, leave the Jackson Center a message at 919-960-1670

Why is it important to get the booster shot?

This winter, a new variant of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus, is spreading quickly in the US: scientists named it “omicron.” The good news about omicron is that fully vaccinated people infected with omicron still have a lot of protection from very serious hospitalization or death.

The bad news is that omicron is very infectious, even if people are vaccinated. Omicron is more “immune evading,” more able to cause infections by “evading” people’s immune defense from “full” vaccination or previous infection.

Getting a vaccine dose gives a short-term (2-3 months) “boost” to your immune system that helps prevent infection from omicron and the risk that you’ll spread the virus to others. And it further reduces risk of serious illness. During this current surge, that extra layer of protection is really helpful.

Why did the CDC shorten the isolation period to 5 days?

It’s hard to tell when somebody with COVID-19 stops being contagious. Because everyone’s time being contagious is a little different, isolation guidelines try to strike a Goldilocks balance:

- not too short (then lots of people are still spreading virus after they leave isolation) but...
- not too long (then lots of people are waiting around in isolation even though they are not infectious anymore)

The previous 10-day guidelines were probably a bit too long. But lots of scientists were surprised when the CDC went all the way down to 5 days. The CDC says that studies of virus contagiousness convinced them that most people (>80%) are no longer infectious 5 full days after symptoms begin. Because they know that some people (~15%) WILL still be infectious, they added on a masking requirement for another 5 full days or a negative result on a rapid antigen test (the kinds people can take at home), which are a good test of the end of the infectious period.

Some people think that timing and rationale is overly influenced by pressure from big businesses. Some scientists also worry about the people who may still be infectious after 5 days. Will they really mask diligently around everyone? And do those earlier studies that the CDC used apply the same to omicron?

If someone in my household tests positive but I test negative, am boosted, and have no symptoms, do I also need to isolate?

No. In fact, even if you haven’t been able to get tested, the official recommendation is that a person “up-to-date” on COVID-19 vaccines (boosted or recently vaccinated) does not have to isolate. But the CDC recommends that person take extra precautions during the time their household member is sick and for 10 days after the infected person is out of isolation. During that time period, these precautions include masking indoors when away from home, watching for symptoms and isolating if you notice any symptoms, avoiding people at high-risk of disease, like older people or those with suppressed immune systems.

FREE COVID TESTING

	ADDRESS	APPOINTMENT REQUIRED	TYPE OF TEST	HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT
ORANGE COUNTY / STAR MED	113 MAYO ST HILLSBOROUGH	YES	PCR & RAPID	REGISTER ONLINE OR CALL M-F 8:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m 919-913-8088
ORANGE COUNTY/ OPTUM	2501 HOMESTEAD RD CHAPEL HILL	YES	PCR & RAPID	REGISTER ONLINE OR CALL M-F 8:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m 919-913-8088
PEIDMONT HEALTH CARRBORO COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC	301 LLOYD ST CARRBORO	YES	PCR	DRIVE THROUGH TESTING APPOINTMENTS M-F 1 -3:40 P.M. CALL 919-942-8741

Longtime Homeowner Tax Assistance Program Update

After the tremendous increase in property valuations in the spring of 2021, the Jackson Center has advocated against the inequitable taxation of Northside, Pine Knolls, and Tin Top residents. This advocacy resulted in the Orange County Board of Commissioners allocating \$250,000 towards supporting long term residents in paying their property taxes. This program is called the Long Time Homeowner Assistance Program. In addition, the Jackson Center’s tax advocacy work has included filing appeals, awarding grants to help longtime residents cover taxes, supporting neighbors in applying to tax assistance programs such as the Homestead Exemption, and connecting people to the new Long Time Homeowner Assistance Program.

From October to December of 2021, Jackson Center staff and community volunteers reached out to over 60 residents to offer assistance in completing the Long Time Homeowner Assistance Program application. We are forever grateful to our community volunteers for their assistance and diligence in helping - again - in this effort! Some residents were able to receive a substantial amount toward their property taxes whereas others received only a minimal amount and still others did not qualify to receive assistance based on the County’s guidelines. Across the County, 91 households received assistance totaling \$16,000 from the program.

To hear that Orange County processed awards for only 91 households throughout the entire region is disheartening, but not surprising. Of the \$250,000 that was allocated for the program, only \$16,000 was awarded which shows that not everyone who would have been eligible, applied. Because this was a new tax assistance program and the ability to get this information out to all of Orange County residents in a short amount of time did not allow those who would really benefit from the assistance to know about it or get their application in before the deadline. According to them the Orange County Affordable Housing Advisory Board, they are recommending this program continue for next year. In the meantime, the Jackson Center will continue to stay in communication with Orange County to encourage them to work on making their valuation of property taxes throughout the County more equitable and fair for all Orange County residents.

-Christine Abernathy & Kathy Atwater

Are you concerned about affordable housing issues in Orange County?

Then consider joining the Orange County Affordable Housing Advisory Board (AHAB), which was established in 2001, as recommended by the Affordable Housing Task Force. The purpose of the AHAB is to advise the Orange County Board of Commissioners on:

- Prioritizing housing needs
 - Assessing project proposals
 - Publicizing the County’s housing objectives
 - Monitoring the progress of local housing programs
 - Exploring new funding opportunities, and
 - Increasing the community’s awareness, understanding, commitment and involvement in producing attractive affordable housing
- Look here: <https://orangecountync.gov/1043/Affordable-Housing-Advisory-Board>

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Feb 1	Barbara Wall
Feb 3	Pearl Cole
Feb 5	Lola Merritt
Feb 9	Carolyn Briggs
Feb 11	Janell Riggsbee
Feb 12	Marian Cheek Jackson*
Feb 14	Zach Kopkin
Feb 15	Sarita Nwachukwu
Feb 15	Rev. Troy Harrison*
Feb 15	Seneta King
Feb 16	Calvin Smith
Feb 24	Della Pollock*
Feb 25	Brentton Harrison
Feb 25	Barbara Smith

* Namesake and Founders

From the Rock Wall –
A Sneak Peek at a New Exhibit!

For generations, Black workers in southern Orange County have been part of a vast labor network that has supported and cared for community members near and far. Black workers are changemakers. Together, they have brought an enormous amount of creativity and care to their work. This work, both paid labor and informal work in the community, has helped neighbors fight against white supremacy, create an independent economy, and build a thriving and abundant Black community. The Jackson Center is celebrating the history of work in the community with a project called Teachers, Artisans, and Entrepreneurs: Black Work in a Southern Town. You can see a sneak peek of the exhibit – a portion focused on faith in the community – here:

<https://fromtherockwall.org/exhibits/show/TAE/faith>

In this section, step into the sanctuary of St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, and listen to stories from neighbors about the significance of the Black church in the local community. After you explore, **click on RESPOND** and tell us what you think!

-Kathryn Wall & Anna Spencer



Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

-Hebrews 11.1

"Let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good."

-Maya Angelou

In Memoriam



Mrs. Margaret Ingram Ballentine
Nov. 13, 1931 - Nov. 15, 2021



Mrs. Carrie Davis Bynum
Aug. 30, 1934 - Nov. 22, 2021



Mr. Christopher Johnson
Aug. 12, 1951 - Dec. 1, 2021



Mr. Josiah Maitreya Browning
Oct. 3, 1998 - Dec. 9, 2021



Ms. Sharon Lynne Bennett
Sept. 5, 1956 - Dec. 12, 2021



Mr. Robert Degraffenreid
June 30, 1954 - Dec. 13, 2021



Ms. Tiffany Riketa Merritt
Nov. 28, 1979 - Dec. 19, 2021



Mrs. Sabriner Ray Cotton
July 11, 1961 - Dec. 20, 2021



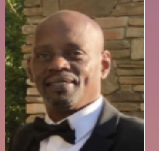
Mr. Norman "Skip" Burnette
Jan. 25, 1940 - Dec. 20, 2021



Ms. Flossie Alston
Feb. 29, 1944 - Dec. 27, 2021



Ms. Marcia Elizabeth Williams
June 16, 1939 - Jan. 4, 2022



Mr. Ervin Wayne Jones
Nov. 29 1967 - Jan. 14, 2022

The Marian Cheek Jackson Center is Hiring Y'all

Food Justice Fellowship

The Marian Cheek Jackson Center for Saving and Making History is seeking a BIPOC undergraduate student for our food justice fellowship. This position will support core Jackson Center community-building work with a focus on engaging with (and eventually leading) our food justice work and fostering relationships with diverse student groups. We are looking for a student who is interested in building roots in the Northside community and creating authentic connections with people of all ages and backgrounds. Compensation will be \$1,750 for the spring semester, 10 hours/week from early February to the first week of May. Potential for the position to be extended beyond this semester.

For the full position description, email Diana at diana@jacksoncenter.info. Interested applicants must submit a resume and cover letter to diana@jacksoncenter.info. Priority will be given to applications received by January 30 at 5 PM EST. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

Director of Development

The Marian Cheek Jackson Center for Saving and Making History is seeking a full-time Director of Development to champion our mission, strengthen relationships with supporters, and resource the organization’s growth and impact. This position will lead the Jackson Center’s fundraising and stewardship efforts and strategy, orchestrating and supporting staff, Board, and volunteers to participate in resource generation. As a member of the Leadership Team, this position will also work closely with the Director of Operations and Executive Director to support organizational operations and strategy.

For the full position description and more information, please visit <https://jacksoncenter.info/hiring>

Want to see your words or work in the Northside News? This is a call for community members who have something to say and want the community to know about it. Articles, Essay Excerpts, Poems, or just Opinions about things happening in the community, submit to contact@jacksoncenter.info.