

Northside News

THE FUTURE IS YOUTH

Youth are the future. The future is young, and fecund. It is human nature that we sow seeds in the fertility of time. The young versatile sappling as the astute elders trees , there has always been much we can appreciate from the other. The question is will we? Or do we sentence ourselves to the treadmill of past transgressions from youthful perceptions. Will the wise be heard, the free unbound. In 10,000 years of human existence; original thoughts, opinions, theories, are hard to come by, but yet these evolving synaptic actions morph new vision of old spirits. Generations are at war, confrontation with no conversations keeps ignorant hatred the affordable compensation we have to give. I hope we can see boomers and millennials talking to heal, because we need each other to break the seal. Opus Invicem

Science to Service

Pristine is a rising senior at East Chapel Hill High School. She began serving with the Jackson Center last fall, when she helped with the Halloween Parade and Porch Party. Since then, she has volunteered at the Northside Music Day, the Keepin’ it 100 Party for Housing, and processed oral histories for From the Rock Wall. She is one of the finalists for Boeing’s ‘Genes in Space’ competition, where the winning experiment will be launched to NASA’s International Space Station in 2023.

What has been the most impactful experience for you from volunteering at the Jackson Center?

I was processing Edwin Caldwell Jr.’s interview, and it was nice to hear the story of someone who lived in Chapel Hill during a different time. He was a member of the school board during integration, and so I learned about that process of moving over from Lincoln High School to Chapel Hill High School. He faced a lot of resistance and people doubted his ability. There were teachers who didn’t want integration to happen. And all these different people had problems with him. But he still made sure it got done. It’s inspiring to see that you might face obstacles but as long as you know the goal is right, it’s worth it to fight to the end.

As a person of color, it’s important to know more histories of people of color, especially when they’re local. What you learn from the past can be used to fight inequity in the future and that’s something I really care about doing.

Can you tell us about your project for the ‘Genes in Space’ competition?

I was reading the NASA twins study with Scott and Mark Kelly, and I learned that while one twin was on the ground, they sent another to space, and in space that twin’s telomeres went under some changes. Telomeres are structures that cap the ends of your DNA. They are supposed to protect you from aging. Longer telomeres are correlated with better health, while shorter ones are correlated with aging. For the twin in space, his telomeres lengthened. That was crazy to me because it sparked the question: Do astronauts get younger when they go up to space? It seemed that there wasn’t conclusive research on this. I did more research and found that STEM cells might be altered in space, so I tried to see if there might be a link between STEM cells and telomeres and found a way to measure if those two are related.

What inspired you to do the project?

I’ve loved science forever. I really like health sciences, biomedical sciences. Science that relates to the human body. It’s intriguing to learn about processes happening inside your body. I want to be a physician scientist so I can apply what I learn to help people, treating people or as a medical researcher coming up with new therapies. I tie it into equity too. I want to focus on care in communities that haven’t gotten it as much. Especially in my [home] community in Nigeria, simple illnesses that would be easily treated here can kill people. It’s something I want to alleviate.

What do you hope to accomplish by participating in ‘Genes in Space’?

I think it would be really impactful to science. There are talks about Mars missions and commercial space flights. To make sure people are safe when they do that, we have to learn about all the ways that space affects the human body. My proposal teaches more about human adaptability. What are our limits? What can we withstand? [We can learn] about healing too. My reasoning is that astronauts would have more stem cells in response to all the stressors of being in space. I want to use whatever we learn from that and apply it to people on earth.

Listen to the entire interview on : fromtherockwall.org

Pristine Onuoha (Interviewed by Rachel Broun and Sophie Dubois)

Importance of Community Engagement for Young People

Caroline Chen is a graduating senior at East Chapel Hill High School. She began volunteering with the Jackson Center last summer and was part of the first Freedom School cohort. She has been very involved in the community, serving as the President of the Chapel Hill Youth Council, the News and Features editor for the East Chapel Hill ECHO, and volunteering with the Refugee Community Partnership.

What inspired you to start working with the Jackson Center?

I was researching Lincoln High School for a project, and my history teacher told me about the Jackson Center. I went through their [public history] archives, and saw that the organization is related to things I’m passionate about. And then I attended the Freedom School that they run for youth that dives deep into Chapel Hill history and the local Civil Rights movement. It was super interesting to see this organization working actively to preserve the history that isn’t [taught] in schools.

Can you describe your experience at the Freedom School?

The content was so powerful. Each day, a presenter would talk about an aspect of Chapel Hill history or Civil Rights activism in the South. I feel like in that week, I learned almost the same amount as I learned in the entire year of my Advanced Placement U.S. History class. I was taking notes the whole time. They mentioned places that I know around town as being important historic sites, and I was like ‘oh my God, I’ve never known that!’ ...I learned that Chapel Hill has come a long way through the work of many activists, but there’s so much more to do for the same problems. Issues where certain voices are not valued as much as other people’s voices in Town government.

There’s a quote by Harold Foster that has stuck with me from the Freedom School: “Man, this town is hard to crack. It’s called a liberal place, but that’s a mirage, man. When you go to get water, all you get is a mouthful of sand.” That was in the 1960s, but when I was researching a local political group that is disrupting the development of affordable housing, I realized that it was connected.

In all of your different endeavors, what has made the biggest impact?

On a personal level, one of the most impactful things has been the grocery deliveries with the Jackson Center. Every week I have a list of 8 people I go to. There’s a woman on my route, Elaine Norwood, who has lived here her entire life, and she’s like 85 now. Every time I go, it’s never a 5 minute thing. It can be 30 minutes, it can be an hour. She always has to be at the end of my route, otherwise all the groceries will go bad in my car. We talk about her grandchildren, and growing up on that street. She’ll tell me about going to Northside Elementary School before it was integrated, and what Franklin St. used to be like. Developing this close friendship with someone who [I never would have met] without the Jackson Center connecting people.

How do you suggest other students participate in these opportunities?

I recommend anyone get involved with volunteering at these organizations. It’s just giving up a little bit of your free time to go out and meet people. At first, it might seem like it wouldn’t be that interesting and it would take too much time. But it’s really about talking to people in the community. It’s impactful to be present and it makes this period in our lives as young people more meaningful.

Listen to the entire interview on : fromtherockwall.org

Caroline Chen (Interviewed by Rachel Broun and Sophie Dubois)

History of Freedom Schools - What is a Freedom School?

Freedom Schools were created by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1964 in Mississippi. They were a response to the limited conventional education given to many poor folks and Black Americans. The first freedom schools were 6 week long progressive programs to help prepare students to become politically active. In the 1960s, there were nearly 40 Freedom Schools created and about 2,500 students in attendance. There was a large desire for the progressive education taught at the schools. About 60 years later, this education is still needed today. Two summers ago, with the passing of George Floyd, hundreds of thousands of people realized the importance of protecting Black lives and were activated all at once to support the movement. This work has been happening before the moment became mainstream and will continue even after it has stopped taking up headlines.

Through the use of the Freedom Schools, facilitators are able to activate small groups of students to immerse themselves in local history. We should continue doing this work of supporting individual students through the narratives of the local individuals. Many histories are often unbelievable at their core. The work of the Freedom School centers the efforts of the students present and their ancestors by telling the stories of local individuals. Once young people are aware of issues and given tools to make the change then they are able to actively and accurately participate in becoming changemakers in their communities.

The Jackson Center, Activate! IFC and the Southern Vision Alliance launched the Sankofa Freedom School in summer 2021 to mobilize the next generation of community leaders and activists in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. It will be returning this July where a new cohort of 15 high school students will participate in workshops on legislative theater, political education, eloquent rage, emergent strategy, and other organizing tactics.

- Aisha Booze-hall

Neighbor Editorial Feature: Coal Ash and Dignity

The following editorial is not a Jackson Center position. The Northside News is a vehicle of community journalism and, we hope, a container and catalyst for community dialogue.

(There is a legacy of environmental and class discrimination that has pushed lower-income and/or communities of color into areas where land is less than desirable. There is a history of hazardous waste in communities that lack the political power to combat their situations.)

Chapel Hill moves forward with affordable housing on a coal ash dump site! There is a coal ash dump on MLK Boulevard that was used by the University of North Carolina for many years. This area includes the Police Department complex, spans over 10 acres, and contains enough coal ash to fill as many as 18 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Coal ash is a harmful substance usually containing heavy metals. According to the EPA, if coal ash is ingested, these chemicals can cause many illnesses, including cancer, heart damage, skin lesions, kidney disease, birth defects and low birth weight, behavioral problems, and respiratory distress.

Following a study commissioned by the Chapel Hill Town Council on coal ash on the MLK property, plans have been enacted to place affordable housing on the property. State law prevents its use for single housing or condos; however, it can be used for apartments. According to the Town, removing the coal ash would cost more than \$16 million and release coal ash into the air.

But what will be the cost to human lives? New federally funded research indicates significant children's mental health problems from coal ash exposure even at low levels. This adds to research citing increased infant mortality and respiratory concerns from coal ash. As this issue progresses toward fruition, one Council member stands against this debacle, Adam Searing.

The majority of Town Council see the solution to this toxic problem is to cap the area with clean soil and build a retaining wall. And then allow poor people to live on this site! But what if these efforts fail and human life is affected in the future by this decision? Who will bear the brunt of this decision then? Will the Town of Chapel Hill be willing to pay for the pain and suffering? In the coming decades, if this planned affordable housing is placed in this area, and there is erosion or flooding, causing the coal ash to leech to the surface, how will the Town respond? Suppose people become sick from coal ash-related illness or children suffer for a lifetime, will the Town take responsibility? Would the council members consider living on this site themselves with THEIR future generations of children? Are the council members willing to assume personal and financial responsibility for the outcome of their choice on human life? Of course, the answer to all these questions is a resounding NO!

When we look back, there are many examples of toxic sites used for housing that have gone badly awry; let's not allow Chapel Hill to become a future site of a toxic dump gone wrong!

Examples of building on toxic sites where low-income and/or communities of color ended up living by them include: Love Canal in Niagara Falls; the Rogers Road community in Chapel Hill; New Orleans; Mooresville, NC; Holly Springs, NC; and Wilmington, NC.

There has been no environmental justice for these communities; should we willingly add a housing development in Chapel Hill to this list? Indeed, everyone deserves the dignity and respect of living in a safe environment regardless of their race, income, or sexual orientation!

Please contact your local council members with your objections to building affordable housing on a toxic site! Special thanks to Council Member Adam Searing for standing up for the rights of people who often lack the political backing to stand on these matters. Environmental and class discrimination has no place in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Write to:

mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org

Mr. Nicholson, Program Manager, Brownfields Program, NC Division of Environmental Quality: bruce.nicholson@ncdenr.gov

Ms. Eckard, Project Manager, Brownfields Program, NC Division of Environmental Quality: sharon.eckard@ncdenr.gov

- Christie "Jakini" Adisa

IN MEMORIAM



Mr. Kenneth Harris
Sept. 27, 1961 - May 6, 2022



Ms. Lisa Diane Hopson
June 24, 1968 - May 6, 2022



Mr. Paul Riggsbee, Jr.
Jan. 16, 1932 - May 13, 2022



Mr. Darry Andrew Allen
Dec. 27, 1952 - May 16, 2022



Ms. Polly Anna Purefoy
Aug. 20, 1932 - May 16, 2022



Mr. Curtis Farrar
Sept. 30, 1936 - May 25, 2022



Mr. Allister Horton
March 28, 1956 - May 31, 2022



Mr. Samori Self
Nov. 10, 1972 - May 31, 2022

Summer Porch Parties

Jackson Center service partner and student neighbor Nicole Osborne hosted a porch party in Tin Top earlier this month. She was joined by over 40 students, families, and long-term residents for a fun evening of grilling and tie-dye. If you'd like to host an intergenerational event on your block, reach out to sophie@jacksoncenter.info!



Call for Graduation Announcements!



Do you have someone in your family who is graduating from high school, college, or trade school this year? Send a graduation announcement to rachel@jacksoncenter.info so we can include it in the next issue of the Northside News! Please include the special person's name, photo, graduating institution, and their future plans.

July Birthdays

July 1 - Janie Johnson
July 1 - Susan Headen
July 14 - Dan Levine
July 17 - Donna Bell
July 17 - James Degraffenreid
July 17 - Yvonne Cleveland
July 18 - Fred Weaver
July 23 - Ruby Locklear
July 26 - Chaitra Powell

Need help paying your water bill?

DON'T WAIT!

You do NOT need to wait for a disconnection notice to apply for water bill assistance.

The temporary moratorium on late payment penalties and water shut-offs will end June 1, 2022. Overdue balances cannot be forgiven.

The following organizations may be able to help NOW:

Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program

(919) 245-2800

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/energy-assistance/low-income-household-water-assistance-program-lihwap>

Orange County Emergency Housing Assistance

(919) 245-2655

www.orangecountync.gov/2359/Emergency-Housing-Assistance

Central Piedmont Community Action, Inc.

(919) 391-4005

www.cpcanc.org/caresnc

Inter-Faith Council for Social Service

(919) 929-6380 x2024

www.ifcweb.org/services/crisis-intervention-emergency-services

For OWASA customers who receive a water bill from a third-party, such as a landlord.

Care to Share Water Bill Assistance

(919) 537-4343

OWASA customers who receive a water bill directly from OWASA can receive up to \$200 of bill assistance, while funds last.

OWASA Extended Payment Plans

(919) 537-4343

Online form: <https://bit.ly/3TldZ6>

Contact OWASA to set up a 6-, 12- or 18- month extended payment plan. There will be no late fees, interest, or penalties.

ကရင်ဒိုဘာသာစုံလိုလုပ် မကုမ္ပဏီ 919-951-0889 ကို ဆက်သ်

မုလိကဘုံတပ်မတော်ကတိုက်ရိုက် ဝန်ဆောင်မှု 915-951-4089