

# NORTHSIDE NEWS

## Celebrating Love and Care Within Our Community

Over these past nine months, our team had the opportunity to work with the Jackson Center to cultivate a deeper understanding of the history of healthcare and caregiving in Black Chapel Hill. As we dug through the archives and conducted oral history interviews, we were struck by the countless ways that Northside residents have and continue to look out for one another. Whether it was creating an ambulatory service when there was none, or driving neighbors to a doctor’s appointment, or hosting online Bingo sessions during the pandemic, community members found ways, big and small, to care for one another. This left us with the lasting impression that Northside is so much more than meets the eye and an example of community care. In this newsletter we have attempted to present



you with a small slice of all that we’ve learned. However, there was so much that we could not fit. If you would like to learn more, we hope that you check out <https://fromtherockwall.org/>, where you can listen to oral history interviews and walk through digital exhibits.

Thank you for inviting us into your homes, welcoming us with open arms, and taking your time to share your stories, experiences, and wisdom with us. We hope with this project, we can continue to celebrate the community of care, compassion and resiliency that is the embodiment of Northside.

Jasmine, Kate, Melissa, Taylor, and Jackson



## Healthcare isn’t Just Going to the Doctor...It’s also Online Bingo

“Well, first, you gotta find out whether they want you to care for them, you know. And if they say “yes,” you do whatever you can do to help that person. If it’s nothing but, you need something from the store, you need a ride, you need to go to the doctor, whatever. Little things that people really can’t do.”

- Carolyn Evans, 2023

It’s the little things, as Ms. Carolyn Evans would say. It’s the countless little things that bind communities together in networks of care. And Northside is no exception. Whether it’s picking up neighbors’ groceries or looking out for each others’ kids when they walk to school, Northside residents provide care to one another in a variety of ways.

While these small acts of community care may seem distinct from healthcare and caregiving, in reality, they are integral to improving well-being and quality of life in Northside and other historically Black neighborhoods. There is ample evidence that indicates that structural racism has excluded historically Black neighborhoods from formal healthcare systems. In the face of this exclusion, communities, like Northside, have created their own networks of care to provide support to one another.

In Northside, these kinds of care networks became even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a period that was marked by intense loss and social isolation, Northside residents found ways to connect with and support one another. Dr. Whitney Robinson, a reproductive health epidemiologist who lives in Northside, remembers, “[During the pandemic,] the way I saw people trying to be so careful to take care of elders was very powerful to me. So much thought, so much care, without even needing to be explicit because of course we’re going to be thinking about others and how we can take care of them, and not just ourselves... there was a lot of trying to make fun online things, like online bingo and stuff. And serenading people from a distance. There were a lot of activities that were thoughtful to let people know that ‘We’re here and we’re connected, but we’re going to be cautious too.’”

There is often an impulse to shrug aside activities like the ones Dr. Robinson described. People might say, “Online bingo...that isn’t healthcare!” But in a way, it is. The various acts of care, big or small, that community members provide for one another increase community connectedness and reduce social isolation - both of which can improve physical and mental well-being. We must be sure to remind ourselves that the small bits of care we provide to our families, friends, and neighbors are not nothing. Rather, they serve a vital purpose in improving health and well-being in our communities.

“I think there’s a lot of talk now about structural racism and how it impacts health. And I think something that’s missing is the way that communities really do a lot of self-help...I’m like structural racism [would be] even worse if people weren’t resisting it...I think there is a failure to think about how communities don’t just sit and suffer, but really get together and try to do things.” - Whitney Robinson Rivers

## Celebrating Our Community Caregivers

Most of us can remember being taken care of by a family member when we were sick. It is a special type of comfort when a loved one prepares a hot meal or checks our temperature. For some, however, this act of care is a long-term role. Informal caregiving occurs when medical care and assistance is provided by family or friends outside of traditional medical spaces, like the hospital or doctor’s office. Caregiving relationships might occur for many reasons: the desire to support a loved one in the comfort of their own home, family duty, or lack of access to medical care. The Black community in Chapel Hill has evolved to support one another in the face of exclusion from medical care and spaces. Caregiving is yet another example of community resiliency.

Throughout the school year, our Capstone team has learned about informal caregiving by engaging with the *From The Rock Wall* site and interviewing past and current caregivers, like Ms. Kay Gattis. For as long as she can remember, Kay has acted as a caregiver to her siblings, nieces, nephews, and children. Like many caregivers, helping others has been an intergenerational duty - she remembers her mother doing the same.

“When my momma died, she said, ‘you got to take care of your family.’ [...] And I said, ‘that’s going to be a hard job, that is a hard job,’ but you know, I’ve been doing it ever since, over twenty-something years I’ve been doing it.” - Kay Gattis, 2022

As Ms. Kay discusses in a recent interview, informal caregiving can look like a wide array of things - helping a family member with healthcare needs, transportation, bringing food to someone, or providing emotional support. Caregiving can also extend beyond helping family; informal caregivers can also be friends or neighbors.

“I love my family, and I take care of my family right now. If they need anything...I give it to them; because I am blessed. I really am.” - Kay Gattis



Ms. Kay Gattis

## Healthcare Pioneer Spotlight

As we reflect on the greatness within the Northside community, let’s take a moment to look back at those who paved the way for the healthcare choices we are able to make. In this newsletter we will highlight one pioneer that made great strides for this very community.



### Have you heard of Nurse Compton?

Nurse Adelia Compton played a huge role in Chapel Hill’s Civil Rights Movement through advocacy, creation of spaces for Black residents, and providing services to residents in their homes. Within her first month of work, she completed 200 house visits to support “clean up” campaigns that would improve sanitary conditions of the community. She worked with Durham doctors to provide access to baby clinics and perform tonsillectomies, which took place at Rock Hill Baptist Church (now First Baptist Church) and later at the Orange County Training School. She set a precedent in Chapel Hill by offering free health/vaccination clinics and public health screenings to residents, which was picked up in 1936 by the Tri-County Department of Health established to serve Orange, Chatham, and Person counties. These were all programs started and maintained by Nurse Compton for Black residents in Chapel Hill.

Her salary was ultimately fundraised by community members via the “The Negro Health Club”. In 1929 they held a Negro Health Week to fundraise.

Nurse Compton is just one person’s story of a community of pioneers who faced discrimination in the face of change. There are many other unsung heroes who championed the healthcare field for Black community members to lay the foundation for the community care, informal caregiving, and public health programming.



Q&A with Ms. Wanda Weaver

Growing up, who took care of you when you were sick or injured?

When I was young, my mother and babysitters cared for me. Once my parents passed away, my sisters, family members, and friends were there for me.



Ms. Wanda Weaver

If someone needed professional medical attention, where would they go? How did they get there? Can you share a story or example?

To my knowledge, in the late 1950-1960s, people of color in Chapel Hill and Carrboro were not allowed in North Carolina Memorial Hospital, now UNC hospital. We would go to the nearest hospital, which was in Durham, North Carolina. I believe it was Lincoln Hospital. Family members, friends and neighbors would travel there by any means possible.

Can you share about the services your father provided for the community to help patients in need of care?

Yes, my father was running a funeral home and ambulance service in the Chapel Hill community. I remember the ambulance was a light blue and white station wagon. It may have been an actual ambulance, but it looked like a station wagon to me as a child. It had a big round red light on top when he was on a medical emergency call. It was a legal way to get someone the help they needed more quickly. It was truly a blessing for so many during such cruel times.

What was your time like working with geriatric patients? What was the most rewarding aspect of this experience? What impact did this experience have on you?

I started working with geriatric patients when I was 15 in nursing homes and private home care. Additionally, I have been working with individuals with autism and developmental disabilities for the past 14 years. Now that I am retired, I have been working with patients with dementia for the past 5 years. The rewarding parts are when a resident reaches out to take my hand, or pats my arm, smiles, or if they can speak, they say “thank you”. I feel I am leaving them in a good place mentally. These experiences have taught me to never stop trying. Kindness, kind facial expressions, or a gentle appropriate touch can make a big difference. And when it doesn’t, don’t stop.

What does community care mean to you? How do people in this community care for one another? Is there a particular story of community care that you would like to elaborate on?

Personally, interventions within this community are great. It’s what I call a pipeline of support. They call each other. They make short visits. They give people rides to appointments. They give people rides to church. They drop off meals, desserts, and flowers. I love how the birthday celebrations come together. The community does drive-by celebrations for those that have been sick and shut in for a while. Community members close to and over 100 years of age get to sit out on their porch and see how they are still loved in the community and not forgotten.

What do you believe are aspects of a healthy body? Mind? Spirit?

A healthy body is properly nourished, exercised, no addictive habits and well rested. A healthy mind is clear and processes well. I would say is not troubled; maybe have concern but not troubled. A healthy spirit is full of joy, positivity, and helps keep the body and mind in order.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Our young people are our future. We need to remind them who they are and where they come from. They have some great role models out there to encourage them. We need to encourage them to incorporate a healthy diet, exercise, and explore the world around them.

Can you share a quote, saying, mantra, scripture, story, or words that you carry with you to help you in through healing?

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5 KJV

Ethnopoetic transcription of Ms. Pat Jackson Interview

“We’ve *all* experienced grief.  
Mm-hmm.  
And in our church and community-  
*all* through this COVID have experienced so much loss.  
You know, we want to know how you’re *standing* in that grief-  
If you have the courage to move on.  
And if you don’t-  
what do you *need* to be able to do that.  
And if you are moving through it in some kind of fashion  
**shout it out!**  
You know so that others- you know,  
may be able to see that there is *healing*.  
But it only comes from one place.  
It’s through the word of God.  
That’s the only way the *healing* going to come.  
You can try it all.  
We all have.  
We’ve tried it all.  
But until you settle yourself,  
RECOGNIZE that you need to hear something from the Lord.  
And in order to do that  
you gotta seek out his word.  
And if you don’t choose to seek out his word  
you gotta be somewhere where you *hear* the truth of his word.  
Cause some, you know- just think about our ancestors.  
They couldn’t seek out the word of God because they couldn’t read the book,  
but they sure could hear it.  
And somebody had read something to them.  
That’s how they knew all those scriptures.  
Yeah.  
And once they heard it, they did not forget it.  
Yeah.  
And they were able to live it out.  
To **stand** on it,  
you know,  
to move *us* here.”



Ms. Pat Jackson

Neville House  
Open House

Saturday, June 3 from 12-3pm

107 Cobb St, Carrboro  
4 bedrooms | 2 full bathrooms  
\$455,000-\$485,000\*



The Open House will feature a Northside-style potluck and kids’ activities. Bring a dish to share with your potential future neighbors!

Steeped in local history, The Neville House bears witness to the craftsmanship of the African-American masons who labored to create the buildings, stone walls, and brick pathways in the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, primarily from the turn of the 19th Century through today. The home is one of four homes in Northside built by John Wesley Campbell, a local Black mason with a deep history in the community.

\*Final sale price will be dependent on construction costs and realtor fees.  
\*\*Due to deed restrictions, the home must be the buyer’s primary residence. No investors.

In Memoriam



Mr. Elvin Munn  
June 26, 1955 ~ April 20, 2023



Mr. Bernard DeWitt “Bum”  
Farrington Sr.  
Dec. 30, 1944 ~ April 26, 2023

June Birthdays

- June 9 Louise Felix
- June 9 Phyllis Joyner
- June 9 Michael Parker
- June 16 Clem Self
- June 16 Neill Goslin
- June 16 Vickie Weaver
- June 18 Boyd Jackson
- June 18 Imasha Adisa
- June 19 Mark McDaniel
- June 24 Loretta Perry