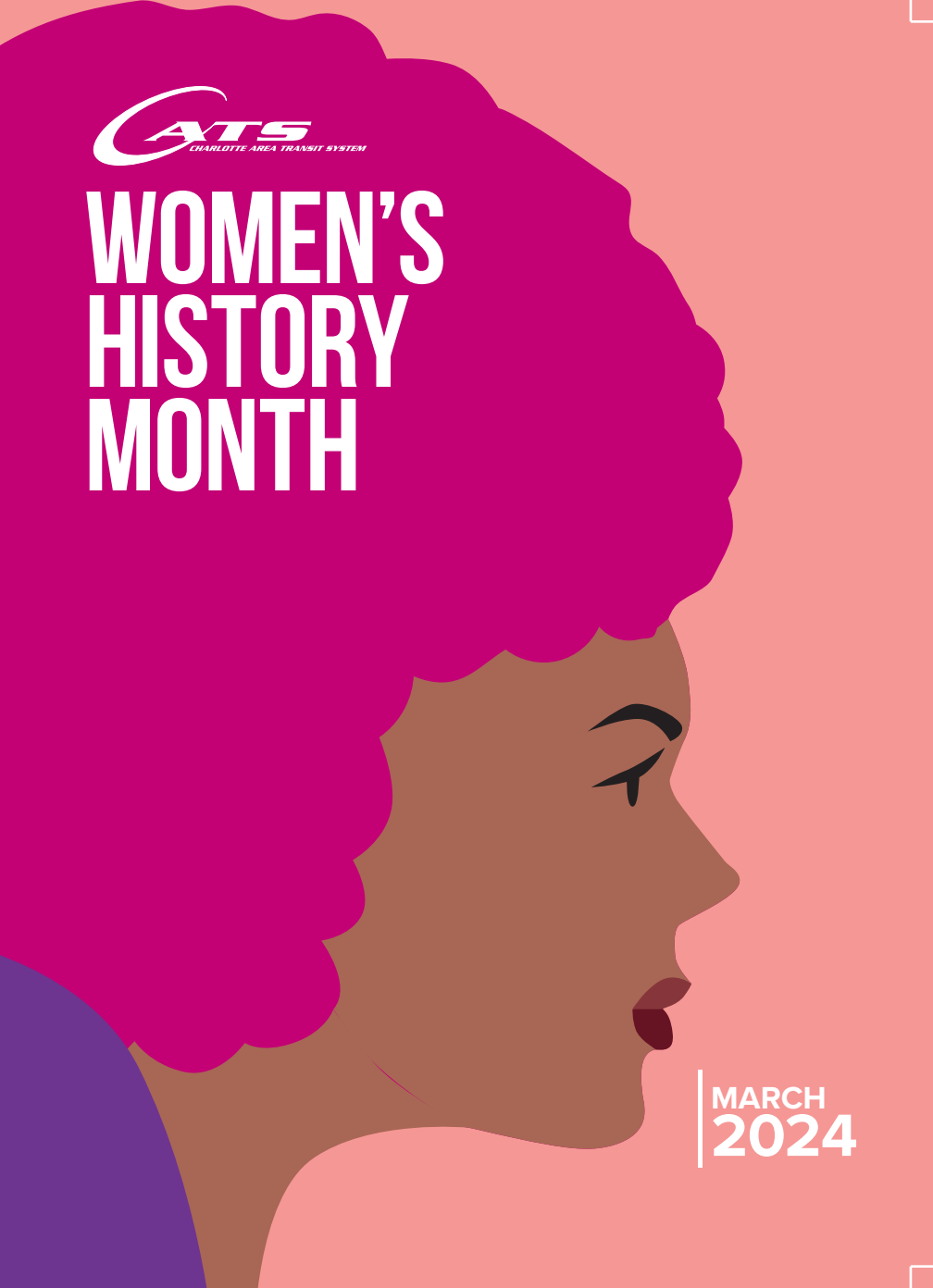




# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



MARCH  
2024



## Each time a woman

stands up for herself,  
without knowing it possibly,  
without claiming it,  
she stands up for all women.

– MAYA ANGELOU



*Dedicated to all women  
in the transit workforce.*



## INTRODUCTION

Nicole Harris

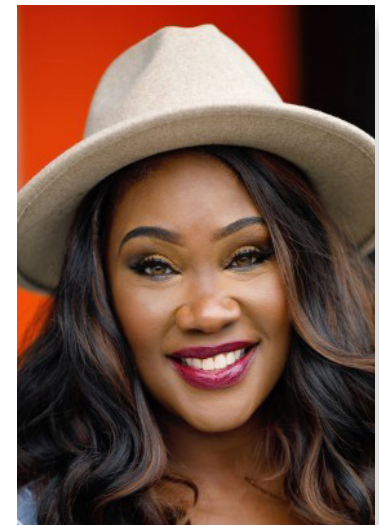
CATS DEIB Lead Administrator

▶ In commemoration of Women's History Month, we proudly spotlight a select group of remarkable women who play pivotal roles within CATS. These dedicated individuals have taken the opportunity to reflect on the significance of Women's History Month within the context of their work at CATS. Their insightful reflections have been thoughtfully compiled into a beautifully curated booklet, available both as a handout and a digital copy on the CATS website.

By amplifying the voices of these women, we honor their often unrecognized contributions to the transit industry. We invite you to explore the stories of these women, discover how their experiences at CATS have shaped their lives and work, and learn about their ongoing efforts to foster diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in our workplace.



**By amplifying the voices of these women, we honor their often unrecognized contributions to the Transit industry.**



# KIMBERLY O'NELE

## CATS Call Center Supervisor

### How long have you worked with CATS?

*I have worked with CATS for 12 years.*

### What does your day-to-day look like?

*As a supervisor it has changed. I always take the time to greet the agents with a warm smile and say good morning. I also do debrief with staff leads. Now, as a supervisor, I pull and track reports and help keep our department on track to reach weekly goals. I also do call monitoring for quality assurance, by listening to calls and give ratings on professionalism and customer service agents.*



### What do you love about your job?

*The main thing I love about my job is helping our customers and community by connecting to work, home and social events. I love to build positive relationships with each customer who calls in.*

### What does Women's History Month mean to you?

*Recognizing and celebrating the achievements of women both past and present, who have paved the way for me through their struggles and resilience so that I can be afforded new opportunities and be empowered.*

### Who are the women in your community or within CATS that you admire for their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?

*I do admire my manager, Jessica Lanier. She is always there to support us. I also admire Lacey Williams when I went through CATS Quest as a new supervisor. I learned so much about diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.*

**I am able to help our Spanish speaking customers and community. I am able to do outreach to our customer who have a specific cultural need.**

**Within your work role at CATS, how have you been seen as a woman who's making an impact in your area?**

*By being the only bilingual employee, I am able to help our Spanish speaking customers and community. I am able to do outreach to our customers who have a specific cultural need. I am also able to share my growth and experience with my team members that leads to inspiration for them.*

**As a woman within CATS, how do you feel that you are making an impact on elevating the work that you do?**

*It's important for me to be open and be available to the Customer Service agents. I really enjoy expanding my own career growth and development to be a role model for my team.*



# LEIGH-ASHLEY GRIER

## CATS Customer Service Supervisor

### How long have you worked with CATS?

*I have worked with CATS for 11 years.*

### What does your day-to-day look like?

*Run a daily report. Pull employee pass orders and online orders. I worked in the Lost and Found office at the Charlotte Transportation Center. I manage customer service complaints and follow up with customers.*

### What do you love about your job?

*I love the fact that I work directly with customers. I love helping CATS riders to points A and B. I treat our customers like they are family.*

### What does Women's History Month mean to you?

*I feel it's important as women, especially Black women, to spotlight our different achievements in the workplace.*

*Women's History Month helps us as women to be noticed.*

### Who are the women in your community or within CATS that you admire for their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?

*I admire my mother. My mother is a hard worker. She is a nurse who is dedicated and motivated. I model after her, to go to work each day, be the best I can be and help others.*

### Within your work role at CATS, how have you been seen as a woman who's making an impact in your area?

*I focus on boosting the morale in our area. I try to make the place we work a better place. I ask: "What can we do better differently to support our workplace?"*



**I love the fact that I work directly with customers. I love helping CATS riders to points A and B. I treat our customers like they are family.**

**As a woman within CATS, how do you feel that you are making an impact on elevating the work that you do?**

*As a new supervisor, I'm always open to feedback. I am able to train our team on newly created processes such as how to improve our lost and found space, and create new opportunities for cross-training. I received good feedback from our team members that they appreciated the opportunity to be cross-trained.*



# LASHIKA WILLIAMS

## CATS Marketing Coordinator

### How long have you worked with CATS?

*Eight years in August.*

### What does your day-to-day look like?

*A rollercoaster. My day-to-day currently is maintaining marketing collateral for CATS, making sure that we are creating things that are part of our brand guidelines. Make sure whatever we are putting out is branded well. Also in charge of planning community engagement, specifically two signature campaigns – stuff the bus and holiday express train. Also working on internal campaigns to increase ridership and to continue some of our routes – express route campaign.*



### What do you love about your job?

*I really love marketing. I tell everybody this. I didn't know I was going to love public transit as much as I do. Knowing that I played an integral role in getting people from one place to another every day and increasing their experience when they get on a bus or train. Coming up with different ideas to make their experiences worthwhile. Working on a Spotify playlist to increase the experience our customers have when they're coming in on an express route. Impacting somebody's lives in that way. You never know what people are going through when they're getting on a bus or train, and those little nuisances we create can make or break someone's experience or day. I take pride in knowing I do a little bit to make a lot in someone's life.*

### What does Women's History Month mean to you?

*Women's History Month should last a whole year. It means a sense of coming together to congratulate and encourage each other. Even though it's only 31 days, it's a way of telling each other you're doing a great job and adjusting each other's crown, and preparing us for the rest of the year.*

### Who are the women in your community or within CATS that you admire for their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?

*In community – my mom. I admire her so much because she didn't graduate from high school, but she is the director of food and beverage at her job. When she's not there, the organization is definitely affected. She has instilled in my work ethic and my drive. Just because you may have a bit of a flaw in the blueprint of your life, that's not your end all, be all.*

*In CATS – I admire front-facing women of CATS. A bit of a masculine organization, but a lot of our female leaders have stepped up to the plate and shown they are just as good as any man. Every woman leader in CATS, I admire.*

### Within your work role at CATS, how have you been seen as a woman who's making an impact in your area?

*I was part of EnoMax program in 2022. Since then, my business plan has been implemented and some upcoming changes in our signage. QR signages give customers real-time information at their bus stop. Moving into June, we will have new signage with my business plan implemented.*

### As a woman within CATS, how do you feel that you are making an impact on elevating the work that you do?

*I am a perfectionist at heart, so I am my worst critic. So when I do a project, I try to elevate it higher than it was the year before. I think I have been successful in that, especially with the holiday train. People were calling in excited about an event that I created. It makes me feel like I'm impacting my community and leaving a lasting legacy at CATS.*

**She (mom) has instilled in my work ethic and my drive. Just because you may have a bit of a flaw in the blueprint of your life, that's not your end all, be all.**

# JILL BRIM

## Engineering and Implementation Manager for CATS

### How long have you worked with CATS?

*I've worked at CATS for 14 years.*

### What does your day-to-day look like?

*I spend most of my time coordinating with my staff and with other departments. We're here to facilitate projects that other groups need done. I coordinate with real estate (CATS and General Services), City Attorney's Office, Safety & Security, NCDOT, QAQC, prepare project management plans, Sustainability Group (EV chargers, BEB), Facilities and Gold Line/Blue Line rail operations.*

*I work with any one of those groups multiple times during the day. Owning projects within CATS – pedestrian bridge over I-277, pedestrian crossing safety improvements, new South End Station, support Silver Line in engineering reviews and those plans, develop construction plans.*



### What do you love about your job?

*I love that my work has tangible outcomes, so I can go out and see the things I have helped bring to fruition and know that I am making my community a better place. That means a lot to me; I really enjoy that.*

### What does Women's History Month mean to you?

*I was the Director of the Blue Line Extension, which was hugely successful. We delivered it on time and under budget. Mega project (over \$1 billion). First FTA mega project brought in on time and under budget. I was the first woman to be over a FTA mega project. I didn't really think of it in those terms. It's both exciting that I was the first, but it's sad that I was the first. I think it's important to know all the efforts that have gone before you, but sad to know that history is still being made by women's firsts.*

**I think it's important to know all the efforts that have gone before you, but sad to know that history is still being made by women's firsts.**

### Who are the women in your community or within CATS that you admire for their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?

*When I first started working, I worked for City of Dallas, Texas. I worked for the woman who was the 9th woman overall to graduate from the University of Texas in civil engineering. It was amazing to me to hear the stories of what she experienced through her career. Women who have gone before me in educational and engineering opportunities, so it's not as rare as it used to be. It was so much harder for her, and her work made it easier for those who came after her, like me.*

*She told a story once about going out in the field to look at some construction activity and she put on pants to go out into the field. It was the 60s. She was told after that meeting that she should've changed into a skirt before going to talk to the director.*

### Within your work role at CATS, how have you been seen as a woman who's making an impact in your area?

*I'm making an impact by just being present and doing a damn good job. It's not that big of deal that I'm a woman; I'm a capable person. Judge us by our capability and our work.*

### As a woman within CATS, how do you feel that you are making an impact on elevating the work that you do?

*As a woman with impact, as a person with impact, what we do makes a difference in our community. I get a lot of personal job fulfilment. We are providing rides, opportunities for work. Look at BLE... it will be there 100 years from now. I won't be here in 100 years, but my work will still be here and will still be making an impact.*



# LATONYA BLACK

## Transit Operations Service Manager - Rail

### How long have you worked with CATS?

April 11, 2016 – Rail/Operator Streetcar

May 17, 2017 – Rail Dispatcher/Supervisor

December 03, 2022 to February 24, 2023 –  
Interim Transit Operations Service Manager-  
Rail Transportation

June 22, 2023 to January 06, 2024  
– Interim Transit Operations Service Manager-  
Rail Transportation

January 06, 2024 – Transit Operations  
Service Manager- Rail Transportation



### What does your day-to-day look like?

I work directly under the General Manager of Rail Operations. I oversee Rail Operations for the Blue Line and Gold Line for about 100 employees (Rail Operators and Rail Supervisors). Ensuring adequate staffing, verifying schedules, on-time performances, investigating incidents/accidents, reports writing and preparing for special events, such as Bank of America stadium for NFL games, Spectrum Center for NBA games, soccer games, concerts, and all large crowds needing attention for events on our rail line. Write and review rules and policies/procedures, payroll, collaborate with the human resources department for DOT medical cards and drug/alcohol tests, provide employee safety, complete employee performance evaluations, provide corrective actions, respond to customer complaints, commend employees, and receive employee recognition, awards, and luncheons.

### What do you love about your job?

I believe I have a unique job role. My experience in transportation and at CATS rail, from an internal operator to manager, allows me to understand my role from

**I care about helping others and having an opportunity to make a difference for the needs of the organization.**

*working in each position I oversee, making the experience exciting! I can relate to my employees and understand their concerns about what they face in operations. I care about helping others and having an opportunity to make a difference for the needs of the organization.*

### What does Women's History Month mean to you?

*It excites me to see diversity, equity, and inclusion demonstrated in my job, and I am a part of it. Furthermore, I am a woman, and to be recognized demonstrates that I am supported for being a woman.*

### Who are the women in your community or within CATS that you admire for their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?

*I will focus on CATS because adding my other list, starting with my mother and daughter will take longer. The women I admire start with the COO and those in the other departments I collaborate with. They are in HR, training, rail operations and administration.*

### Within your work role at CATS, how have you been seen as a woman who's making an impact in your area?

*My leadership role to help build teams, demonstrate a woman of positivity, demonstrate diversity in the workplace, perform gifts and talents for the needs of the operation. Provide inspiration for those aspiring to be a woman in leadership.*

### As a woman within CATS, how do you feel that you are making an impact on elevating the work that you do?

*I demonstrate the ability to wear many hats in a high volume role for transportation at CATS rail, provide employee development to help employees achieve job performances, demonstrate confidence in a diverse work environment with a professional and courteous manner to compliment effective team building.*







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