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Breaking Bread's leaders dish on two years of bringing the community together through globally inspired comfort food.
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Kenzie O’Keefe
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Letter from the Editor

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The 2nd Annual Community Eggstravaganza and Helicopter Egg Drop at North Commons Park

Photo and story by Mark Peterson

The Annual Community Eggstravaganza and Helicopter Egg Drop drew more than 2500 parents, children and residents to North Commons Park on Saturday, April 8.

Besides enjoying music, bounce houses, and food trucks, youngsters in three age groups got a chance to gather plastic eggs on the baseball field while a helicopter dropped more eggs from the air. The event was sponsored by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Strong Roots Foundation, and was aided by volunteers from local churches, the Minneapolis Police department, and members of the Twin Cities Sabercats football team. Event sponsors included the American Red Cross, Avenue Eatery, Arnetta Phillips, Cajun Twist, Shiloh Temple International Ministries, 89.9 KMOJ, The Neighborhood Hub, SHE IS, The Wishing Tree Play Cafe, Beautiful Classy Driven, Kona Ice Little St. Paul, Umoja Community Development-UCDC, Friends of North Commons Park, The Ogi Carter Family, The Holli Holmes Family, The Kevin Arrowood Family, and The Antrenese Jackson Family.

Strong Roots Foundation President Shemeka Bogan said that her nonprofit group was founded in 2015 to help provide more positive, family-friendly events in the Northside community. The group includes Bogan’s husband Brian Bogan, with Markella Smith, Valeta Moore, and Leon Beasley. Along with the Eggstravaganza, they do an annual Christmas Event called Cookies with Santa and intend to add more events to their calendar.

Bogan said the group had had fundraisers throughout the past year and noted, “The Movement Church did an outstanding job and provided the majority of our volunteers. We also had volunteers from my home church, Shiloh Temple International Ministries.” Asked about the future, Bogan added, “We’d like everyone to know that we are here for our community. We would love any feedback or suggestions on what types of events you all would like to have here in North. We also want to continue to grow as an organization but most importantly as a community. Going in to the warm spring and summer months we hope to help create a large sense of family fun and unity our community. We are always looking for volunteers for our events and fundraisers.”

View more photos on our Facebook page!
**North Minneapolis at a glance**

**Tour Northside homes this weekend**

The free Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour is April 29-30, with homes open Saturday 10-5pm and Sunday 1-5pm. North Minneapolis homes are clustered in Jordan, Hawthorne, and Old Highland neighborhoods. The tour features a mix of renovated occupied homes, homes renovated for sale, and non-house locations with special content and restrooms/water available. To plan your free, self-guided tour, go to www.MSPHomeTour.com for searchable listings or a PDF of the guide. Paper copies of the guide are available at most metro area libraries. The tour, a celebration of city living, is sponsored by both cities’ planning and economic development departments, and various corporate and nonprofit sponsors. For information, call Margo Ashmore (former editor and publisher of *North News*) at 612-867-4874.

**DFL Ward Conventions yield no endorsements for incumbants**

The Ward 4 and 5 DFL Ward Conventions on Saturday April 22 left both incumbents unendorsed. In Ward 4, no candidate captured the 60% needed to secure the endorsement. Phillippe Cunningham was blocked from endorsement by delegates for current council president Barb Johnson.

**Wendy’s House of Soul finds a new home on West Broadway**

Wendy’s House of Soul (formerly part of Corner Stone Café) opened in their new location, inside of K’s Grocery & Deli at 1021 W Broadway Ave, on March 24. Their hours are Tuesday through Saturday 11am to 7pm and Sunday 11am to 4pm. They are closed on Mondays.

**Wirth Co-op to open this summer**

General manager of Wirth Co-op Grocery, Winston Bell, announced in a recent blog post that the long anticipated grocery store would be opening this summer. Bell blogged that a federal grant has recently been awarded to the store allowing them to close with lenders and begin a 90 day build out process. The store already has two events planned after it opens including a Grand Opening Celebration and an Annual Party. In the meantime, Bell has asked co-op owners to lend a hand anywhere they can, from marketing to outreach and beautification of the space.

**Black-led credit union planned**

The Association for Black Economic Power (ABEP), a partnership of Blexit and The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota, hopes to establish a federally chartered black-led credit union by 2019. It would be the only black led financial institution in the state. The idea originated with Blexit, a community organization founded by Me’Lea Connelly after the 2016 police killing of Philando Castile. Blexit seeks to achieve equity by intentionally moving dollars away from “systems that benefit from our pain,” says their website. To learn more, visit www.abepmn.org. ABEP is asking North Minneapolis residents and potential members to assist in naming the credit union and to sign a pledge to move their accounts once credit union doors are open.

**Bim Bam Boo, a tree-free paper company founded by Northside resident Zoë Levin, visited Bethune Elementary School on Earth Day. She taught third graders about the importance of trees in generating the air we breathe and about deforestation due to paper production. Levin brought superhero capes for the students to encourage them “to be the guardians of our earth,” she said. Together they planted a honeycrisp apple tree at the school. Photo by Ryan Strandjord**
$250K aimed to reduce violence on West Broadway this summer

By Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor

After last year’s particularly bloody summer on West Broadway, $250,000 has being allocated for community members to creatively combat violence during the warmer part of this year. Those interested in proposing an idea have one week to do so, beginning April 26 (see link at the bottom of this page).

The money is half of the funds Mayor Betsy Hodges set aside for collaborative, community-driven safety strategies in two locations with high levels of youth violence. The other $250,000 was allocated to the Little Earth Community in South Minneapolis.

When the council approved the budget item in December of last year, it was determined that the West Broadway funds would be given to groups and organizations with a history of collaborative work on West Broadway Ave. and who employ staff focused solely on the improvement and safety of West Broadway. In late April, the city specified that all ideas submitted must bring together people from at least two of the following categories: accredited educational institutions, business associations, businesses located in the area of focus, community groups or cultural organizations, places of worship, residents, resident or neighborhood associations, and youth-serving organizations. At least one of the two must have a long-standing relationship with the area of focus (Broadway, between Lyndale and Girard).

Mayor Hodges says that this strategy – of providing technical and financial resources to local stakeholders to decide for themselves what public safety interventions now would best improve public safety for the future – is the first of its kind here in Minneapolis and in the country.

The initiative’s innovative nature led her to bring in Cities United (CU) for assistance throughout this year. CU is a national organization that specializes in supporting mayors to reduce gun violence, especially among black men and boys 18-24. They have worked with 92 mayors in 32 states, among black men and boys 18-24. They have worked with 92 mayors in 32 states, and the nonprofit does its own fundraising, so their services are free to cities said CU Executive Director Anthony Smith.

Since February, CU has been conducting outreach and engagements with local residents, businesses, and the organizations that serve them on West Broadway. Nicole Archbold, the mayor’s policy aide for public safety, says that there have been three “key nodes” of their involvement: The West Broadway Business and Area Coalition (WBC), Neighborhood’s Organizing for Change (NOC), and Shiloh Temple International Ministries.

Information gathered from this work informed the call for project ideas. Organizers have intended to make the application process accessible – initial proposals only require a 300-word summary of the work a group would like to do. NOC will also host a space for people to come fill out applications at their office on May 2 from 6-8pm. They’ll be on hand to assist.

Archbold said that ideal projects will immediately lead to a reduction violence on West Broadway this summer and will meet three criteria: 1) encourage a more hopeful environment and create public activity outdoors, 2) foster collaboration with community residents, businesses, youth, and other community stakeholders, and 3) support cultural connections and authentic youth engagement.

After proposals have been submitted, a community review board will engage in a process to determine which projects receive funding. Community members interested in being reviewers can submit a notice to do so on the project website. By June 16 organizers aim to have all the funds dispersed to those chosen to implement their public safety strategies. Archbold indicated that a minimum of five projects will be funded.

West Broadway Business and Area Coalition (WBC) Executive Director Rob Hanson said in early April that the WBC has several ideas for proactive projects. He said his team is interested in proposing a safety and security grant program which would fund security upgrades for business facilities on the corridor. He also envisions working with organizations like MAD DADS and Brothers EMpowered to walk the corridor and engage with youth and at risk individuals proactively and direct them to services.

At a meeting held at NOC on April 12, community members brainstormed potential projects as well. Among the ideas that came up were utilization of vacant buildings, paid community patrols, and employment opportunities.

A parallel project is running concurrently by CU in Little Earth.
Four proposals on the table for Webber-Camden commercial buildings

By Mark Peterson | Contributor

In November 2016, Minneapolis’ Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) issued a request for redevelopment proposals (RFP) for two adjacent buildings located at 4140-4146 Fremont Ave N in the Webber-Camden neighborhood. The structures, built in 1926, are part of a small commercial intersection at 42nd Ave. N and Fremont Ave N.

Seven proposals were received, and CPED selected four finalists for further consideration. On April 6, the city hosted an open house at Webber Community Center to give community residents a chance to view the proposals and give their feedback.

The four potential developers are JB Vang Partners, Ideal Development Group, Urban Enterprises, Inc. and Real Cooks Kitchen. All of the groups had representatives present to outline their designs and answer questions.

Jamil Ford, president of Mobilize Design Architecture, said that their design addresses several possible uses for the buildings: a fine arts gallery, a bookstore/café, a “garden-to-table” restaurant, a professional office space, and a community event center/black box theater. He noted that, “the west facade [of the building] is critical in embracing the historical nature of the street car corridor of the past...the east side will lean towards the future with a modern design that is influenced by James Baldwin and his legacy through literature and civil rights."

Justin Fincher, a senior project manager for JB Vang, outlined his company’s project summary as, “restoring the existing building to be used as a multi-tenant space with outdoor seating/landscaping areas: an anchor tenant has been signed to a local non-profit group (Hmong American Partnership); the remaining space is designed for retail uses. The proposal includes applying for the City of Minneapolis’ Great Streets Loan program.”

Real Cooks Kitchen’s Orneary Conley and Sharon Harris of SaYou Design Event and Party Planning envision a one-stop event center including a full-service restaurant, careering service, event space and conference facility.

John Stiles of Urban Enterprises, Inc. said the Webber-Camden community is “underserved” in its need for common spaces where people can meet and work, and sees the remodeled buildings as rental spaces for entrepreneurs and co-working spaces. He estimates bringing the buildings up to code will cost $500,000, not including the exterior.

After considering community input and weighing the suitability of the submissions for the neighborhood, CPED staff will make a recommendation for one of the proposals to the City Council in late May or early June.
Mayoral candidates talk plans for

RAYMOND DEHN
“The success of our city is determined by what happens in the areas that struggle the most.”

As a North Minneapolis resident and state representative, Dehn is a regular fixture at North Minneapolis community events and meetings. He says he was part of the fight to keep North High from closing and worked to keep families in their homes on the Northside during the foreclosure crisis. He struggled with addiction as a teenager and spent time in prison for burglary. He acknowledges his white privilege and the role it had in the second chance he’s been given in life.

Biggest challenge(s) facing North: 1) Lack of real opportunities – we talk about them, but haven’t seen them. 2) The 13 city council members. They need to dedicate resources for transformational change. Police: We need to transform police culture and demilitarize them so that true community policing can happen. He is critical of the way the city handled public input on last year’s body camera policy. Youth: There is an opportunity for the mayor to work with the faith community, MPS, and MPRB to make sure space is available for healthy, safe engagement with youth. The city hasn’t stepped up with sufficient resources or coordination to do this. Public schools: Ensuring success for students requires top down and grassroots relationship building with all stakeholders involved, including the mayor. Balancing development with preservation of character: The character that we see in community isn’t necessarily the character we want – like check-cashing places. Supports the creation of a black-led credit union, encourages residents to keep purchasing power here in North, and says we need to invest in transportation. Addressing health crises: Education and assistance for mental and sexual health should begin in school. Stable housing is vital to health.

AL FLOWERS
“I’m not trying to bring the noise; I’m trying to bring the solution. How can we do it together?”

Flowers is a well known community activist and organizer. He hosts the Community Values Conversation show on KMOJ and says he previously ran an early childhood education center at Sabathani Community Center. He says he’s always reached out to the community and is upset with current mayor for not being connected. His campaign focuses on education and economics – “bringing people jobs.”

Biggest challenge(s) facing North: Gun violence. Police: He and his daughter have been victims of police brutality. The police have the most powerful lawyers in the city; the mayor needs to tell the city attorney to be more fair to citizens. Youth: North Minneapolis needs a youth center, like we used to have at The Way. Public schools: Says he’s a big public school supporter. Give the kids their money (“every dollar that comes in for that kid”) and let the teachers and principals work it out. Says he thinks schools will be most successful if the principals are in charge. Balancing development with preservation of character: We should leverage state funding that already exists for development in North. 70 million over the next three years. We can preserve everything by working on what we have already. Addressing health crises: Young kids now have chemical dependency problems. The schools can help, but help has to start at the home with parents. We put a lot of pressure on institutions to do what we should do ourselves.

JACOB FREY
“I believe we can create a direct correlation between hard work and success. That correlation does not exist right now.”

Frey, Ward 3 Council Member, says we need a more present mayor and promised to be available to North if elected. ”North Minneapolis shouldn’t be getting the short end of the stick, they should be getting the whole stick and I’m here to make sure that happens,” he told the crowd. He is a former civil rights and employment discrimination attorney.

Biggest challenge(s) facing North: 1) Jobs. Employment is necessary to progress. We have long relied on a few major employers to keep our city going: General Mills and Target. They are facing major headwinds. 2) Safety: we need to go out in community and listen to people so we can get them what they need. Police: There should be no tolerance for any police officer who is brutalizing people. We have a 47% satisfaction rate with police department here in North. He wants that to be 90%. Youth: He is a former MPS teacher. After school, extracurricular activities are important; so is helping kids get ready for the world of work. Public schools: Next to the police department, there is no greater responsibility than ensuring our kids are educated. The job of the mayor is to work with superintendent and board to make sure that barriers to learning are addressed. Then we can hold schools accountable for turning out kids who are educated. Balancing development with preservation of character: Access to capital is key. If you don’t have money you can’t start your business and keep your business. We need to make sure individuals have the skills and knowledge to succeed and that they’re connected to city opportunities. He would work with existing organizations to do so. Addressing health crises: Intervention in schools is important. Long term we need to think about prevention – more efficient and better outcomes. Jobs and stability are key. Poor outcomes are related to income. We need to make sure that everybody can make a better living.

TOM HOCH
“Government should make your life better. I have a long history of making people’s lives better.”

Hoch, the former chairman of the Minneapolis Downtown Council and founder of the Hennepin Theatre Trust says the city needs a prosperity plan, which it doesn’t currently have. He’s focused on jobs, safety, and housing. Plans to be a data-driven mayor, tracking his progress by surveying residents.

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The nine candidates answered questions about North Minneapolis in a forum organized by local community members at Shiloh Temple International Ministries on April 8. Larry McKenzie and Colinn Robinson moderated the event.

Betsy Hodges

“We needed a leader who could get in there and build a foundation for actual transformational change… That is what I have been doing.”

Hodges is the current mayor, finishing her first term. She says she has worked collaboratively and creatively with community to lay a foundation for equity in the city, and that she has prioritized North Minneapolis – “an extraordinary place” – in her investments. She cites the promise zone designation, current funds available for people to mitigate violence in their communities, and health testing for kids as examples.

Biggest challenge(s) facing North: The two biggest issues she hears about from constituents are: jobs and public safety. She says she has invested accordingly. Police: She is working with the chief to make sure we’re building a department for the 21st century: body cameras, CSOs, procedural justice and implicit bias training. Youth: The young people in Minneapolis aren’t getting what they need, like enough safe spaces. Says she regularly consults with youth. Public schools: Public schools are incredibly important. The mayor should bring community together and ask: how can we come together as a community to support our kids, make plans, and ensure resources? Balancing development with preservation of character: The Northside gets to lead the way on our prosperity and growth as a city. I’ve been investing in that as mayor – small business support, business technical assistance program, the business made simple initiative. We have to make sure we’re building and growing our transit system. Housing is important; so is safety – people say they would invest if it’s safe. Addressing health crises: We shouldn’t be able to predict outcomes by race, zip code or level of income, which is happening now in North. We must consider trauma when addressing mental and chemical health issues.

Nekima Levy-Pounds

“I am the mayor who can bring about change for the future. I am the mayor who can bring hope. I will work with our community to make sure that happens.”

Levy-Pounds is a civil rights attorney, former professor, and former president of the Minneapolis NAACP. She is a North Minneapolis resident and is “sick and tired” of government making empty promises to North. She says North needs jobs, at least a $15 minimum wage, and a clean environment so kids can play outside. She doesn’t see the Northside from a deficits-based perspective. She sees beauty in the people and “what’s possible for the Northside.”

Biggest challenge(s) facing North: My issue isn’t with the people in North, it’s about the people who create the conditions we contend with. Police: We need a change in leadership. We need better training – implicit and explicit bias. We need to focus on community policing and mental health issues. We need to hire people from within the city. Youth: City budget hasn’t given enough money for uplifting our youth. Young people need to be able to go to parks and rec and the libraries and be served by them. Children are missing hope. Public schools: Change is long overdue and I have experience demanding it from the school board. “There are so many young people in our community who are ending up in the juvenile justice system because of what has gone on in schools.” Balancing development with preservation of character: Preserving character is important. Business owners of color are often overlooked and underserved but they are more likely to hire people of color. We need jobs that pay a living wage. We need to lure companies to the city who are willing to hire people from North. If people can support their families, we will have a more vital, prosperous community. Addressing health crises: The next mayor needs to speak in specifics, not generalities. The solutions are already out there. Are leaders willing to hear them? Put the resources forward? I would.

Aswar Rahman

“What we need is economic empowerment, and the next mayor has the make that a centerpiece over the next four years.”

Rahman is a filmmaker from a family of small business owners. He spent part of his childhood living in North Minneapolis. He’s running for office because he sees the “condition of city worsening, and [he] had to do something.” Says “we do not want to stay the city that is rich but not prosperous.” Promises to do the practical hard work necessary for progress.

Biggest challenge(s) facing North: Crime – it’s “something we need to address immediately.” Police: This city is vast majority white police officers who live outside of the city – “That sounds like an occupation force.” I’ll hire 100 new people of color and women police officers over three years. We need to diversify the police force immediately and over the next four years. Youth: We need to move away from “vanity projects” downtown and move funding to under resourced youth programs that do good work. Public schools: At MCTC we have a program called Power of You. It offers two year degrees, debt free. It’s a very high return on investment. The city isn’t currently funding it to the level it needs to be. Even just the thought of student debt keeps people from finishing their education. Balancing development with preservation of character: When big companies come in and come in the form of gentrification, the city becomes sterile – no culture, no identity. To change that, we need to pursue a “route of economic empowerment,” by investing in our business assistance programs and incentivizing the use of currently empty storefronts. Addressing health crises: Mental and sexual health disparities are some of the biggest gaps we have in the city. Programs tend to exist but are undersupported. We need to properly invest, supporting the nonprofits and people doing this work on the streets.

Jeffrey Sterling Olson

“Are you tired of politics? ...I’m a taxpayer, and I want to work for you and with you.”

Olson says he has worked for the city for 28 years and was a first responder when the 35W bridge collapsed. He says he’s an average guy who believes upper management is “way too overpaid.” He promised to take an immediate $30K pay cut if elected mayor. He promises to be “out in the community, helping you folks out.”

Biggest challenge(s) facing North: Affordable housing, jobs, safety. Police: We need to weed out “bad apples.” We spend too much money on

Continued on Page 8

Captain Jack Sparrow

“I just do my research, document my statements, and say what’s on my mind.”

Sparrow says his priorities are ending poverty, violence prevention, and mitigating climate change. He’s been assaulted by police but thinks they need respect. He thinks Jamar Clark’s killers “acted appropriately” and is opposed to Black Lives Matter.

Biggest challenge(s) facing North: Unemployment is high in North and the minimum wage is part of the problem; it’s racist. Believes in a basic

Continued on Page 8
Mayoral candidates talk plans for North Minneapolis

Jeffrey Sterling Olson:
suits. I will work with the police department and fire department and won’t make cuts to them. Youth: We need to have things going on and safe places for kids to go so they aren’t getting into trouble. Public schools: Our kids need safe schools where there’s no bullying. I will work with the education system. Balancing development with preservation of character: We have a lot of vacant buildings here. They need to be placed with people who can afford them. Taxes are way too high. Addressing health crises: Mental health issues hit close to home for him – his mother is bipolar. Says Minneapolis needs funding to support programs to “help these people.” We need to make sure police are able to deal with people with mental health problems.

Captain Jack Sparrow:
income guarantee. Police: Police activity in some instances is “torture.” Police should carry their own insurance. We need a civil rights department that can investigate police misconduct. Lack of response is another huge problem. Youth: Our youth, especially African American youth, need jobs. Public schools: Children need adequate nutrition and good homes in order to learn. We need to offer them on-the-job training. Balancing development with preservation of character: One of my solutions to poverty and jobs growth is to help homeless and unemployed people. Teach people building skills. It’s important to train people and have capital to do it. Addressing health crises: Supports decriminalization and free treatment on demand for drug users. We need proper sex education for people in age groups that can benefit: third and fourth grade.

Taking a historical and political look at domestic violence

I am Niema Broadnax and I have been a youth, domestic violence and sexual violence advocate in Minneapolis, fighting violence against women since my emancipation from foster care in 1993. I have a Criminal Justice degree and a passion for teaching youth crime prevention. I created this “Advocate’s Corner” to shed light and open the dialogue on domestic violence here in North Minneapolis because the grandmother in this feature is mine; I’m also part of the 1 in 3 women who have experienced some form of physical violence and many victims are suffering in silence. Here is our voice.

College is a time of independence, finding adulthood and for some, love. In the olden days, many girls went into college as students and came out as wives. With a college degree and husband in tow, my grandmother saw herself with a bright future. It wasn’t long before children came into the picture and my grandfather was married to a woman who was married to a woman. She was married to a man who was married to a man. They were coming home to blood spattered steps meeting them in the entry way. The bloody trail lead them to my grandmother at the end of it, battered and beaten, trying to clean up the horror that had just taken place. “PTSD was unheard of at that time,” says my aunt, an African American woman now in her late 50s. “You didn’t call the police for spousal abuse, and it was a way of life.” The abuse ensued with the increase of alcoholism and squandered finances due to my grandfather’s gambling addiction. Black eyes and bruises were not taboo and the laws were lax against batterers with the common solution of “just walk it off.” The final straw for my grandmother was when the violence hit the road, the combination of drinking, driving, along with violence, almost drove her to a deadly fate in a car crash that sent her flying through the windshield. My grandmother was able to recover, divorce and move on to a life free of violence. This is one woman’s story of domestic violence in the 1950s – 60s, but how much has really changed today?

It’s only been 97 years since “wife beating” became illegal in the US in 1920, and it wasn’t until 1991 that Senator Joe Biden announced a legislation to prosecute individuals who commit crimes against women called the “bill on violence.” This bill made gender-based assault a violation of civil rights. In 1994, President Bill Clinton enacted the Violence Against Women Act, which established the Office of Violence Against Women within the Department of Justice. Today, in the US (according to ncadv.org) nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner. In Minnesota, intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime. President Obama renewed the Violence Against Women Act in February of 2013, allocating more money to improve our nation’s response to violence against women, but despite our nation’s efforts, many will tell you that here on the Northside, our response to domestic violence has a long way to go. The Fourth Precinct Crime MStat shows that (year to date) for 2017, there have been 90 incidents of Domestic Aggravated Assault and 215 incidents citywide. Over the next six months we will explore this epidemic in effort to bring awareness, resources and community voices. If you want to tell your story of Domestic Violence or give us your insight feel free to contact me at mnbwv@gmail.com.
Teens talk tobacco use

The North High student journalism team has spent the last several weeks exploring youth exposure to tobacco and their attitudes towards it in North Minneapolis. All of them live at least part-time with someone who uses tobacco. This story was made possible by the Minnesota Department of Health.

**Ashley Powell** Junior

**What keeps her from using:** being constantly burdened by secondhand smoke as she moves through her day, especially when she uses the bus

I know so many teenagers that hate how often they’re exposed to secondhand smoke. Recently, I was on my way to work and it was raining. Smokers were smoking under the small bus shed, and everyone was arguing because nonsmokers don’t smoke for a reason and didn’t want to have to breathe that. Smokers need to understand that, and non-smokers need to be protected. I think smoking should be illegal at public areas like bus stops because there are so many non-smokers that don’t want to breathe smoke. 480,000 people die every year from tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. It’s the leading cause of preventable death in country by the American Lung Association. People need to know how harmful secondhand smoke can be. Just sitting around a person that’s smoking a cigarette is a problem. The smoke will stick to your clothing and you just inhaled the cigarette’s smoke. The nonsmoker that inhales the smoke get the SAME harmful chemicals that the smoker inhales.

**De’najzah Starr** Junior

**What keeps her from using:** having asthma, not wanting to hurt anyone else with secondhand smoke, and the cost

The cost is the biggest reason I don’t smoke. There are healthier things I could spend my money on. I was diagnosed with asthma when I was a baby. I notice it affecting me when someone is smoking around me. I start wheezing and having trouble taking a breath. I don’t like that. I am very active, and I don’t want cigarettes to affect my brain and lungs. It can damage you badly. People smoke because people around them smoke, because it’s a stress reliever, and because it’s an addiction. About half my family smokes. At my grandma’s house I have to literally step outside because of the smoke sometimes. The struggle is real.

My teacher Patrick Karr started smoking when he was in college. He wishes he had never started because it makes him cough, turns his teeth yellow, and costs a lot. Another North High adult, Laterrel Harrell, started smoking when she was a teenager because people around her smoked, and because she was a little bit stressed. Now, she wishes she could stop, but it’s not easy. She feels like cigarettes control her sometimes.

**Lache Dietz** Senior

**What keeps her from using:** witnessing her uncle’s death from tobacco use

I lost my uncle to lung cancer. I witnessed daily what smoking did to him before he passed, seeing up close and personal what using does to you changed my whole outlook on the situation. Some smokers mainly young smokers do not realize the horror behind tobacco use. When I think of smoking and tobacco use, cancer comes to mind.

**Dalvin Crockett** Freshman

**What keeps him from using:** the effect it has on your physical appearance

When Justin Goldstein, my math teacher at North High School, was in his late twenties, he almost lost his hand. He had a throbbing pain in his left hand, and he went to the doctor and found out he had a blood clot in his left hand. The cause of the blood clot was smoking, and his doctors said that if he didn’t stop smoking that he was going to lose his limb. He said after the first few days of not smoking he drove himself crazy then afterwards he noticed he was breathing a lot better, and he didn’t really need a cigarette. As a teenager who’s not currently a smoker this story makes me feel uncomfortable. The thought of not having a hand or having yellow teeth definitely makes me not want to smoke.

**Luul Yusuf** Senior

**What keeps her from using:** being talked to about tobacco at a young age

Talking to your kid at a young age about tobacco is the best way to prevent them from doing it in the long run. In my experience, kids who frequently see smoking are more likely to become smokers when their parents don’t talk to them about it. The ones that have been talked to, are aware. They’ll know what’s better for them.

It seems like a majority of parents don’t talk or even mention tobacco use to their kids, thinking them not knowing is better for them.

**Tayven Smith** Sophomore

**What keeps him from using:** knowing what it does to your lungs

Smoking cigarettes can turn your lungs black and make them and you unhealthy. One sign that your lungs are unhealthy from smoking is getting out of breathe easily. I play sports. If I get out of breathe easily, how could I play a sport that involves a lot of running, up and down a court or field? My brother, a seventh grader at Franklin Middle School, feels similarly. “My mom keeps me from smoking, and I play sports. I want to have good lungs so I can keep energy during games,” he told me.

Having good lungs isn’t something you can take for granted in North Minneapolis. The 55411 zip code has the highest asthma hospitalization rate in the metro area, according to MPR. Tobacco smoke is one cause of asthma. I see a lot of kids with asthma, and I struggle with breathing issues sometime. Sometimes it’s hard to be active in my neighborhood without being exposed to secondhand smoke. The danger to your lungs is real. According to an organization called Breather, The Lung Association, smoking permanently damages your lungs. According to the American Lung Association, smoking is directly responsible for approximately 90 percent of lung cancer deaths and 80 percent of deaths caused by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
Releasing by revealing:
Shvonne Johnson publishes her poems

By Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor

Shvonne Johnson became a writer in sixth grade. While she was growing up in North Minneapolis, her aunt and four young cousins moved in with her family. The chaos of the living arrangement, along with the stress of the violence in the 1990s, became overwhelming. One of her teachers suggested she deal with her stress by journaling.

“I was like, ‘This lady has lost her mind!’ How is journaling going to make these people move out of my house?’” she said.

But she picked up a pen, and she has been writing ever since. Now 37, she self-published her collection of original poetry in March. *Release: A Journey of My Soul* chronicles her experiences growing up in North, living with parents who love her (and each other) but still experience hardship. She unpacks her relationships with men who have broken her heart and damaged her ability to trust. She gives thanks to God, who lifts her up. Her understanding of her own creativity deepens; her depression has its seasons.

The book enables her to explore and “release” experiences of hardship – personal, cultural, and historical. She says bad things happen when we don’t face our pain.

“We have a lot of addiction, promiscuity, buying crap. People are numbing pain versus dealing with it,” she says. Though she has, “lived through stages of doing that,” she says her book has forced her to face it, look at herself, and learn to love herself through the process. “A lot of us are walking around dead, but we can be resurrected. Hope can be restored,” she says.

Her pain is prominent, but so is her optimism, hope, and resiliency. Some of her poems are love notes to her body, her spirituality, creativity, and the Northside, where she’s lived nearly her entire life. She is fed up with the negative narrative about the Northside. “It’s very frustrating when people throw a rock, hide their hand and then blame the people getting hit,” she said.

Her Northside is a beautiful place full of people who inspire her, like Jamil Ford, Chanda Smith-Baker, Shannon Smith-Jones, and Jamez Staples. She finds purpose in being present to the challenges here. “Be the change you want to see literally. If all the people who care about the community move out of the community than who is going to take care of the community?” she said.

Though her ties to the Northside run deep, she has honed her craft and lent her talents far outside the boundaries of this place. She went off to Alabama State University to pursue a Bachelor’s Degree, attended Howard for her Master’s as a Bush Fellow, and was an assistant dean of students at St. Catherine University in Saint Paul. She has recently served as an adjunct professor at both St. Kate’s and Metro State University (where she also ultimately received her Bachelor’s).

But Johnson, who has been working jobs for other people since she was a young child, is now shifting her focus to herself. She plans to take a break from the exhausting work of trying to teach privileged, white Europeans that “racism exists” and devote the next six months to a year on her book – doing book readings, speaking at conferences, being involved with the NAACP, and seeing where it all takes her. Someday she plans to write a memoir.

“A lot of us are walking around dead, but we can be resurrected. Hope can be restored”

- Shvonne Johnson, Poet

Expression

In a world of inopportunity
I found you
Floating on
Drifting on
Sailing along pain
I found you
Putting my mind at ease
Calming my realities

In this cut throat, cruel beguiling world
That Peace that radiates expression
The Peace that compels confession
In a world of STATISTICS and poverty
and winning and
hurting
Not so much me, but me
Amid, amongst, within, above, below
I found you
You were waiting for me
Standing still, angelic
I found you
Waiting, patient, enduring. I found you.
I found my
expression, I found my release
Upscale, market-rate apartments envisioned for West Broadway

By Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor

Tim Baylor of Pinnacle Management, LLC says North Minneapolis housing options lack balance. He sees a “fair amount” of affordable housing (which he says he supports), but he sees limited options for folks in higher income brackets.

“Where is the market-rate? Where is the upscale housing, particularly on Broadway Ave.?” he asked a small crowd at the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition’s (WBC) Planning, Zoning, and Development meeting on April 10.

Baylor attended the meeting to present his solution: the Satori 800 Project, a 54-unit apartment building with upscale amenities and market-rate rent. “We’re not proposing any subsidized units at this time,” he said. Among the upscale amenities are wood and tile floors, stainless steel appliances, and granite countertops. Every unit would have its own washer and dryer.

The ground floor of the building, which will be located on the south side of West Broadway between Cub Foods and Bryant Ave. N, is slated to be commercial space, currently planned to be home to a restaurant and one large regional or national chain retailer.

Monthly rent will run $1,125 for a studio to $1,980 for a two-bedroom. Residents will have access to a rooftop garden, lounge, and ground-floor greenspace. A parking garage will be built under the building.

Despite the higher price tag, Baylor doesn’t anticipate any trouble filling the units, and he says his feasibility study and appraisals back him up. He anticipates it taking nine months to fully lease all the units. “If you build it, they’ll come. That’s what I believe about this project,” he said.

Baylor requested a letter of support from the WBC Board, which he says will aid in the uphill battle he is about to fight against banks who are leery of giving loans to Northside development and retailers who are wary of coming here. “I’m about to take on City Hall to say we need what everybody else has, on Broadway,” he said.

Community members in attendance expressed a strong desire to have their input not just collected but input in the final design if this project is to come to fruition. Despite some vocal opposition to the project, the crowd’s recommendation (determined by a hands-in-the-air vote) was to recommend that the WBC write a supportive letter but make the support conditional on addressing key community concerns.

Those critical of the project worry about its potential to spur gentrification and displace current residents. In the neighborhood around the site, 58% of households make less than $35,000 per year. Baylor acknowledges that the building will attract some new, higher-income residents to North Minneapolis. That’s intentional, and he views it as a benefit. He says potential residents and retailers want to come to North Minneapolis but currently lack facilities that meet their needs.

Construction of the project would require the demolition of the current historic buildings on the site and the removal of the businesses that currently operate there. Baylor says none of them are currently envisioned as part of Satori. The WBC would like to see Pinnacle assist current tenants in securing new spaces. They will also ask that new construction stylistically complement the corridor and not create new barriers between the current community and new tenants. When asked why he didn’t build Satori on a vacant lot instead, he said that the 800 block’s proximity to 94, Cub Foods, and the Old Highland Neighborhood make it ideal.

Additionally, the WBC will ask that Satori house more than one retailer and ensure that new tenants are given opportunities to get to know and become involved with the community.

Baylor, a former professional football player, lives in North Minneapolis. He operates the McDonald’s franchise on West Broadway Ave. His Satori visioning began several years ago. “I’ve spend a lot of energy building and preserving the community here in North Minneapolis,” he said.
United Way invests 1.5 million in North Minneapolis food system projects

25 North Minneapolis-based programs have received a cumulative $1.5 million in funding under Greater Twin Cities United Way’s newly launched North Minneapolis Food Systems Grant Program.

Funded through a grant from the General Mills Foundation, the program operates under the premise everyone needs access to affordable, healthy and nutritious food in order to live a full and productive life, and that a person’s zip code should not be a deterrent to access.

“These grants move beyond the ‘traditional’ hunger relief and emergency food models. These are organizations doing excellent work and we recognized that interconnections are just as important,” said United Way president and CEO Sarah Caruso in a press release.

Alyssa Banks, a program manager at United Way, described the grantees as “high quality projects and organizations that have been doing really amazing work towards advancing the food system in North Minneapolis for many years.” She says each of the grantees will be doing their own data collection to determine the impact these dollars have through their programs. “We’re looking at a range of different ways that we can measure the impact of the collective work,” she said.

Groups that received funding are:
- The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation for Twin Cities Mobile Market.
- Appetite for Change for Extreme Makeover: Corner Store, Northside Fresh Coalition and Youth Employment and training program.
- CAPI USA for CAPI’s Community Gardening Project.
- North Point Health & Wellness Center, Inc. for Healthy Food Access – fruits, vegetables and more.
- Northside Economic Opportunity Network for NEON Food Business Incubator.
- Pillsbury United Communities for North Market.
- Project Sweetie Pie for the Greenhouse Initiative.
- Urban Strategies for the Green Garden Bakery (Heritage Park).
- Victory Neighborhood Association for the Camden Healthy Food Systems Project.
- West Broadway Business and Area Coalition for the West Broadway Farmer’s Market and Food Hub and the Farmers Market Project with the City of Minneapolis.
- North High School Community Partnership.

“I choose life, not menthol tobacco.”

88 percent of African American adults who smoke use menthol, compared to 26 percent of adult smokers overall.

www.BeautifulLieUglyTruth.org
RESOURCES

Beginning Tuesday, April 7th The Twin Cities Mobile Market, an affordable, convenient and fresh grocery store on wheels is coming to North Minneapolis. Every Tuesday from 10-11am the Mobile Market will bring affordable and healthy food directly to Camden Neighborhood Center at 1210 37th Avenue North. A wide variety of fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy product and staples like rice and dried beans will all be available at below-market prices. Cash, all major credit cards, debit cards, SNAP/EBT, and Market Bucks are accepted! Get on board! Questions? Call us at 612-529-8054

The Salvation Army at 2024 N. Lyndale Ave. is partnering with Loaves and Fishes to offer a free produce giveaway every Monday from noon - 1 p.m. This will continue at our location through the colder months, then it will move outside in the summer time (date and location to be announced).

MN Comeback and Great MN Schools – sister organizations building a community of great schools – has launched “Minneapolis School Finder.” This resource guide for parents provides objective, relevant information on schools across Minneapolis so parents can find schools that are the best fit for their kids.

Do you live in Near North or Willard/Hay? Then your block could be eligible for a mini block club grant through the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, NRRC. Funds are available for a project or event you want to create. Call (612) 335-5924 or email contactus@nrnc.org.

Interested in upgrading your storefront? The West Broadway Business and Area Coalition has two matching grant programs that can provide up to $22,500 in matching grants per storefront. Any existing business (with property owner’s approval) and/or commercial building owner whose building are located on West Broadway between 26th Avenue to the west and the River to the east and the one block contiguous (East and West) to West Broadway are eligible to apply. More information: http://westbroadway.org/facade/ or email carla@westbroadway.org or call 612-353-5178.

The City of Minneapolis is offering free home visits from energy-saving experts to qualified households with an income less than $48,100 for one person, $54,950 for two people, $61,850 for three people, or up to $90,650 for eight people. If the Home Energy Squad recommends insulation or air sealing, income-qualified residents also have special access to zero percent financing to complete that work. Call 612-335-5874 or visit mcnee.org/ches-mpls.

EVENTS + ENTERTAINMENT

4/29 – Our Northside! Neighborhoods 20/20. Join us for lunch and help shape the future role of neighborhood organizations in North Minneapolis. RSVP by calling or texting 612-440-0569. Penn and Lowry, outdoors under the tent, 10am-2pm, free.

4/30 – You won’t walk away hungry from the Northeast Kiwanis Club’s 63rd annual all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast, which will include all-you-can-eat pancakes served with your choice of two toppings, whipping cream and the famous Sentryrz sausage links, hot coffee, cold milk, juice and blueberry muffins. Sunday, April 30 from 7 am – 1 pm at the Northeast Armory and Community Center, 1025 Broadway Avenue NE, Minneapolis. Adults: $9 in advance, or $10 at the door. Children: $4. For tickets, call Walt at 612-781-3484.

5/3 – “Trans Plants” artist gallery and talk by artist D. Helene Woods explores the joyful moments for a family with a transgender child symbolized through the progression of real and imagined plants. Serendipity Spot, 3300 Lyndale Ave N, 5:00-7:00pm, free.

Community Coffee & Conversation, every Thursday. Hang out with neighbors and on first Thursdays meet officers from the Fourth Precinct in a casual and friendly setting at Serendipity Spot, 3300 Lyndale Ave N, from 11:00 - Noon.

T'ai Chi classes, every Saturday at Homewood Studios, 2400 Plymouth Ave N, 9-10:30 am.

Asian Media Access has added more FREE classes for area youth at AMA’s Multimedia Arts Complex. Classes such as Kpop Dance and a youth ensemble vocal class are offered. Contact chou.xiong@amamedia.org for more info.

Tuesdays – Through the month of May the West Broadway Coalition is partnering with Minneapolis Police Departments to do 11am-1pm coffee with cops at the McDonald’s on Broadway. Join for free coffee and the chance to win gift cards.

Mondays – Mahjong game play at Serendipity Spot, 3300 Lyndale Ave N, 1:00-3:30 pm. Free and open to all levels, Mahjong uses tiles and is similar to rummy. Game hosts available to teach beginners.

Mondays – Vinyasa Flow yoga at Serendipity Spot, 3300 Lyndale Ave N, 6:00-7:00 pm Suggested donation of $5.

Fridays – SAT prep taught by taught by Harvard graduate Thomas Madsen, who is National Merit Scholar with 6 years test prep tutoring experience. Xi Ling Urban Arts Complex, 3300 NE 5th Street, Mpls, 55418 - The PARK (2nd floor), 6:30-8:30, free.

Saturdays – SEW VERY EXCITING! Queen Lewis Sewing School is now at Camden Neighborhood Center (1210 37th Avenue North). Join us every Saturday from 10am-12pm. Classes are FREE and open to the community. Sewing machines and materials provided. All levels of skill are welcome. Bring projects to work on, or begin a new one. Call 612.787.3718 for details.

Saturdays – Family Storytime. Webber Park Library, 11am. For children of all ages and their parent or caregiver. Talk, sing, read, write and play together in a format appropriate for young children. Share books, stories, rhymes, music and movement.

Did you know Camden Neighborhood Center offers time and space dedicated to seniors age 65+? Snacks, lunch, and limited transportation are provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays with RSVP. 1210 37th Avenue N. Call for details: 612-787-3718

EDUCATION

Rediscover the joys of reading by volunteering with PPL’s after-school youth programs. We strive to empower students from low-income communities to achieve success in school and in life through academic support and hands-on enrichment opportunities. Volunteer Tutor-Mentors work with youth on literacy skills, relationship-building, and enrichment activities. One-on-one support makes all the difference in helping students achieve their goals! Tutoring takes place on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday from 5-7pm or 6-8pm at 4046 Lyndale Avenue N. For more information, contact Caitlin (caitlin.dougherty@pplinc.org or 612.455.5108).

Homework Help is held Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 3:30-7 pm at North Regional Library during the Minneapolis Public School Year. Homework Help is for all students, K-12, at no cost and with no advance sign-up needed. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old, have
some experience with school age children and be available 2 hours a week for one semester. Training is provided; a criminal background check is required. Applications may be submitted online at hclib.org or contact Barb McKenzie at 612-543-8579 or at bamckenzie@hclib.org.

Teen Tech workshop is held every other Thursday. North Regional Library, 5-7 p.m. Get creative and make music, videos, animation and other projects using high- and low-tech tools, everything from iPads and 3D printers to synthesizers and sewing machines. Led by the library’s Teen Tech Squad. More information at http://www.hclib.org/about/locations/north-regional

BE AWARE

With the warmer weather, some of us are spending more time outside and enjoying outdoor fires. Following these Minneapolis fire laws will help keep our neighborhoods safe and livable; outdoor fires are permitted between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m., fires must be no larger than three feet in diameter and two feet high and a fire must be constantly attended by someone 18 years or older and completely out before being abandoned. Illegal open burning or recreational fires could result in fines that start at $200. For more information on recreational fires or to register a complaint about a recreational fire, call 311 or email Minneapolis311@minneapolismn.gov, or to register a complaint about a recreational fire outside 311 hours, call 911. The Fire and Police departments are authorized to extinguish a fire immediately if it is hazardous.

The City of Minneapolis comprehensive street sweeping program begins Tuesday, April 11. Some sweeping, including a limited amount with parking enforcement has already begun, but the major efforts begin this week. Drivers should watch for temporary “No Parking” signs to avoid a ticket and tow. From April 11 through May 5, sweeping crews will take care of nearly 1,000 miles of city streets. To make sure the crews can do the most complete job possible, temporary “No Parking” signs will be posted at least 24 hours in advance to make sure streets are clear of parked vehicles. Drivers need to follow street sweeping parking rules or they may have their cars ticketed and towed to the Minneapolis Impound Lot.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) passed a resolution approving a new Tobacco Policy at its March 8, 2017 MPRB Board of Commissioners meeting. This new policy bans all tobacco products on Minneapolis park properties and owned and/or operated facilities as of May 8.

As warmer weather approaches, the Minneapolis Police Department wants you to be aware of copper thieves. Their new target is air conditioning units. If you see something suspicious, call 911. 5 tips to guard against copper thieves: 1) Place motion sensors around your air conditioning vent. 2) Mark your copper coils with spray paint. 3) Join a neighborhood block club or start one. 4) If you have a home alarm system, get a pressure gauge for the air conditioning system. 5) If you think that you have been breached, call the police immediately.

The Minneapolis City Council has passed an ordinance prohibiting discrimination against Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher holders. Under the ordinance, landlords will only be obligated to consider renting to voucher holders. That means a landlord can’t refuse to rent, impose unique standards, or otherwise treat HCV holders differently from tenants without vouchers. Landlords retain their ability to screen the voucher holders like other tenants using legal criteria.

The City of Minneapolis is addressing discrimination in businesses through education, extensive investigation and enforcement. All people have the right to receive service, free from discrimination, from any business that obtains or solicits customers from the general public. Minneapolis bans discrimination in public accommodations based on race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status, and status regarding public assistance. Find out what Minneapolis is doing to investigate and stop discrimination at http://www.minneapolismn.gov/civilrights/

BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT

The City of Minneapolis launched a new program expanding opportunities for small businesses to compete for City contracts. As part of the Target Market Program, qualified small businesses will have the ability to bid for City contracts up to $100,000 alongside other similarly situated small businesses instead of larger, more established companies. Key goals of the program include increasing competition for contracts, expanding opportunities for historically underutilized small business and stimulating the local economy. For more information about the Target Market Program, visit www.minneapolismn.gov/finance/procurement/TargetMarketProgram.

The City of Minneapolis is seeking development funding proposals for the 2017 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program. ESG program funds may be used to renovate, rehabilitate and convert buildings for use as emergency shelters for people who are homeless. There is approximately $400,000 available and proposals are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 9, 2017. For more information regarding this RFP please visit the City’s web site: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/rfp/index.htm

ACTION

A number of board and commission positions are open for City Council and mayor appointments this spring. Board and commission members in the City of Minneapolis provide valuable insights, help shape key policy decisions and provide community-based input into administration of services. The City is seeking applicants with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to strengthen the work of the City. Translation and interpreting services are available upon request to ensure all residents have the ability to participate. Visit the City’s web site, http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm for a list of appointment opportunities, position descriptions and the applications.

To place your notice: Email kenzieo@pillsburyunited.org or call 612.302.3424

NORTHnotices
What does a principal do? What does your typical day look like?
Berry: A lot of our work is behind the scenes. My job here is to make sure student have an educational environment where they are challenged, safe, and that they are prepared for college and careers. I create business partnerships. I deal with parents when they have questions. Every day is different.

What is the hardest part of your job?
Berry: Even though North High School is very challenging, this position and this job best suits me, my personality, and my skill set. The hardest part to be honest is students not recognizing, appreciating, and taking advantage of what we’ve done here. We’ve hired staff that build great relationships with students. Another hard part is that our students are exercising their right and opting out of testing. They have a right to do that, but we need our students to take the test so we can show the quality of students, teachers, and instructions we have here. We have something to prove. We need to tell that story.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments as principal of North High?
Rasmussen: When I see things like graduation rates going up. When you have visitors coming here and they’re impressed by kids. North has a reputation and we’re always trying to rise above that.

What are your goals for North’s future?
Rasmussen: To be a school of choice. Back in the day, North High was a school of choice. We had kids who bussed from way over near the airport to come here. We had staff member’s kids coming from Hudson, Wisconsin to go here every day. Shakopee. St. Paul. This was the place to be. Berry: I want more families in the community to come back to North High and not go out in the suburbs. I want them to realize that their students can get prepared for a college education or career here.

Do you think North is running at its full potential?
Berry: The NAAC is fully developed but STEM is not. Rome wasn’t built in a day. It’s going to take time. When I think about walking into this building in March of 2012 and it was just me. I gathered people around me, and that first class was 67 students. Now we’re at 400 students. That’s a lot of growth in 5 years. We haven’t reached our full potential yet, but I hope I’m here when we do.

According to the Star Tribune, our graduation rate was 81.5 percent last year. What will you and students need to do to keep that number increasing?
Berry: The way the state calculates graduation rates impacts the percentage. The number I would use for last year is 93%. We did a 39% increase from the year before. We need to continue providing students safety nets while giving them opportunities to advance their education. I believe that anybody can be successful with time and effort.

North High principal, Shawn Harris Berry, poses with three members of the school’s journalism team: (from left) Luul Yusuf, Dalvin Crockett, and John Dickerson. The students interviewed Harris Berry and assistant principal Natalie Rasmussen about rebuilding the school.
Flowers taste awful.
Get mom something good this year.

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This month marks two years since Breaking Bread Cafe and Catering opened. Founded by Princess Titus, Latasha Powell, and Michelle Horovitz in 2015, Breaking Bread is one of just a handful of sit down restaurants in North Minneapolis. The idea for the gathering place, which serves globally inspired comfort food, came from youth working with Appetite for Change, the nonprofit that owns the café. It was brought to life through community input gathered at events like FLOW.

That spirit of creative collaboration is reflected not only in the way the café came to be, but also in the way the leadership team tirelessly works together day in and day out. Despite being “three women from different backgrounds,” Titus says they seek similarities over differences. “We all are open to food challenging our world view and admitting that we don’t know what we don’t know. I feel like we have a model here that the whole world could use to just get along.”

The three of them say they identify with the story of “The Three Sisters” – an ancient agricultural practice that references the way corn, squash and beans are planted strategically together to symbiotically grow better and create healthier soil. The corn provides the trellis for the beans to climb. The squash provides big leaves so it shades the soil to keep it cool and keep water in. The beans produce a lot of nitrogen which is good for the soil. “All three play a role. It’s an ecosystem,” said Horovitz.

As they’re telling this story, Titus is quick to acknowledge the fourth leader among them: Executive Chef Lachelle Cunningham. The corn, squash, and beans are nothing without a chef to “harvest all that stuff and cook it,” she said. Cunningham was just finishing culinary school as the idea for the café was being generated. She was introduced to Horovitz and, “things just lined up,” she said.

This issue, North News broke bread with the three co-founders and Cunningham. Over lunch at the café, we talked about their triumphant moments, their pervasive struggles, and their visions for the future of Breaking Bread and food access in North Minneapolis.
How did Breaking Bread come to be two years ago?

Michelle: The origin really goes back to the first community cooks workshops we hosted to bring people together to cook, eat and dialogue about the change they wanted to see in the community around food. People expressed a desire for more restaurants and home-cooked food.

Latasha: We wanted to open a restaurant because there are not many places for people to come and sit down and eat and have access to a patio in North Minneapolis. Our youth counted 37 fast food, convenient food, gas station food options in the area. They wanted some real food for real people right here in the community. That’s now our tagline.

Princess: The kids teamed up with Michelle, did a Kickstarter, and called the Pohlad Family Foundation to ask for support. Everything that Breaking Bread is came from the community.

What has been your most triumphant moment or experience in these last two years of running Breaking Bread?

Latasha: The grand opening. It put a vision, a dream from us and our community members and the youth into reality.

Princess: My highest moment was when the young people found out that North Minneapolis had been declared a promise zone.

Michelle: The highest moments for me are just walking in to the café every day and seeing such a diverse group of customers. So many connections happen here. Every day you see someone you know.

Lachelle: The grand opening, the publicity we’ve gotten through a lot of articles, and the awards we’ve won – Best Soul Food from the City Pages and an award for best grits in the state.

What struggles have you experienced?

Princess: The biggest struggle is still having community members, people of color, poorer people who represent North Minneapolis, think that our café appears to be here to serve somebody that’s not them – white people. To get them to challenge that $12 for a burger that’s ground fresh from turkey isn’t a lot of money when you spend the same $12 at one of these fry joints. Really getting people to value what we’re offering here and getting them to see that it’s for them has been a struggle.

Lachelle: Figuring out how to make this model sustainable and replicable.

Is the social enterprise currently sustainable?

Michelle: Yes, but we need public support. We aren’t breaking even from a sales perspective.

Describe your ideal vision for Breaking Bread’s future.

Latasha: I envision having a second or third location in North Minneapolis or nearby. I also see Breaking Bread being a full-fledged culinary training program for both youth and adults.

Princess: I’d like to see a Breaking Bread food truck.

Michelle: A second Breaking Bread or a second food concept that comes out of Appetite for Change just to give more variety and choices for people and as a way to expand job creation and business incubation.

Lachelle: We have a menu that we keep approachable, but we need to keep coming up with ideas that are approachable but innovative and fuel that appetite for change in what people choose to eat and spend their money on.

You’re trying to change what people in this community eat. How do you do that without shaming or judging what people are currently eating?

Princess: Step by step and inch by inch. People will say to me, “you’re the ‘Grow Food’ lady. Why are you in the deli getting six pieces of sliced American white cheese?” I’m like, “I used to get a pack of yellow cheese!” It’s the whole framework of right and wrong that America has. We walk it and we live it and we try to display the balance of drinking more water, using better salt, using apples to sweeten your oatmeal, and things like that.

Latasha: The struggle is trying to find a balance in giving people what they want while offering them something new.

Who or what in the Twin Cities food scene inspires you all?

Latasha: We inspire each other. The grassroots work that we are doing is very unique.

Michelle: Places like Common Roots and Birchwood Café inspire me in the ways they support local farmers and try to get all their food from local producers.

Princess: I’m inspired by the community members in Northside Fresh who with or without funding said that they were going to do this work before Appetite for Change became an entity. I’m also truly inspired by my 11-year-old daughter Princess-Ann.

How do the youth inspire what you do?

Princess: I really believe youth are the truth. There are only a certain number of hours they can work here because of budgeting, but kids will come in even when they’re not on the schedule. They’ll say, “I’m volunteering because I don’t want to be standing on the corner with my homies and I don’t want to be at home playing video games.” We’re winning against the video games! I’ll give the kids a little bit of money to get something at the café, and they’ll come back with a Northside Homerun Salad; that inspires me. Food is the tool to create health, wealth and social change!

What are your hopes for the future of food in North Minneapolis?

Michelle: I would like to see a permanent farmer’s market like the Midtown Global Market, food trucks everywhere, more gardens and farms, more restaurants, and more community owned food businesses.

Princess: I want to see food be the beginning of the conversation around other social issues. I want to see our schools really consider how we’re feeding our kids in the morning. Are we feeding them a brain-based diet? We have tension between the community and police. What are the police eating? I used to get pulled over a lot and I would invite the Sheriffs to Breaking Bread. We have some transit cops that come in here a lot.

Are you going to celebrate the two-year anniversary?

Princess: We work too hard to celebrate! We’ll party when we’re rich and we’ll sleep when we’re dead. We’ll be out to do some beautification on May 20. Maybe we’ll make that a celebration.

From left, founders Latasha Powell, Michelle Horovitz, Princess Titus, and executive chef Lachelle Cunningham enjoy a few of their favorite lunchtime menu items, including grilled shrimp, the kale salad and the biscuits and gravy. Photo by David Pierini
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