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Celebrating this month's opportune hellos and necessary goodbyes

Letter from the Editor

North News has an exciting update: our staff is growing! At the beginning of August we hired Cirien Saadeh (pictured right) to be our devoted education and small business reporter. Coverage of these topics often requires in-depth, investigative reporting, and we’re grateful to the Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation for enabling us to add this capacity to our operations.

Saadeh is an Arab-American journalist, educator, and current doctoral student who works at the intersections of journalism, social movements, experiential education, and sustainability. She has worked on the Northside for a decade, and we’re confident in both her journalistic expertise and her commitment to being a nuanced, ethical, and inclusive storyteller in a community that has been harmed in part by reductive journalism.

Just a month into her new role, Saadeh has already added new depth to our coverage. After the announcement that Victory 44 would be closing, Saadeh quickly got to work interviewing local full-service restaurant owners about their experiences here: why are there so few of them in North Minneapolis? What do they love about their work? What additional supports do they need? Read her findings on Page 6.

Additionally we bring you a back to school section packed with information about North Minneapolis schools. To read about test scores, school resource officers, why Best Academy left the Lincoln School building, and more, flip to Page 11.

Saadeh coming on board is not our only personnel update for the month. Our crew of North News summer interns has finished their summer commitment to us, and by the time this paper prints we’ll be wrapping up our first week of school back at North High, teaching journalism. I’d be remiss if I didn’t give a shoutout to our intern Joshua Mendez’s big award (see below!) this summer. Big thanks to STEP-UP for recognizing how hard our North News youth work and big thanks to our summer youth who really raised the bar for what we thought possible.

We’re also planning to offer paid, after-school internships on a case by case basis this fall, so if you’re an area high school student (or you know an area high school student) who could benefit from a rigorous reporting internship, please reach out.

Kenzie O’Keefe
Editor/Publisher, North News
kenzieo@pillsburyunited.org
612.302.3424

North News welcomes our new staff member, Cirien Saadeh, to our team. She now covers small business and education-related issues for the newspaper. “I’ve been a journalist for ten years. I’m excited to have the capacity to commit to a community and tell its stories and report on what’s happening here while also fulfilling my dream of being a staff reporter at a local, independent journalism outlet,” she said. Photo by Kenzie O’Keefe

Have a tip or story idea for Cirien Saadeh? Reach her at 612.512.0887 or ciriens@pillsburyunited.org.

North News STEP-UP intern given top summer honor

North News summer intern Joshua Mendez was awarded “intern of the year” by STEP-UP, a youth employment program in Minneapolis. Four of 1700 summer interns in Minneapolis received this honor. In addition to his impressive development as a writer and photographer this summer, Josh consistently supported the work and well-being of his peers. We’re so proud of Josh and our four other summer interns: Pa Nhia Moua, Tong Vang, Cyarra McNeal, and Tayven Smith. Thanks for a great summer! Find their final contributions to the newspaper in this edition of the paper.
Englund says she will resign as ED of Folwell Neighborhood Association

Longtime Folwell Neighborhood Association (FNA) Executive Director Roberta Englund says she will step down from her position in November following the organization’s board elections. She made this announcement at FNA’s monthly board meeting on Monday, August 7 but declined to speak further about it to North News. Her decision comes in the midst of a big shakeup at the FNA. Several long-time members of the board are also leaving their positions in November, putting 10 of the 11 board seats up for grabs. Englund is also the executive director of the Webber-Camden Neighborhood Association and the CARE Task Force. At this time she plans to remain in those positions.

Camden Farmers Market charms

Community members gathered Thursday, August 24 for a back-to-school event at the Camden Farmers Market. The market had its typical fresh produce, but also had school supplies for students and a space for haircuts and braiding, amongst other back-to-school activities. “Education is freedom. And health is wealth. It just goes hand in hand in my mind to connect the two. Students could pick-up a notebook or some extra pencils at the same time as they grab healthy food,” said Market Manager Chaz Sandifer. The Camden Farmers Market is in its tenth year and runs every Thursday from 8-7pm through October 5. Its next big event is tentatively scheduled for September 28: a “Knife-off” showdown between Chef Ma-teo Mackbee and Chef Lachelle Cunningham in a play on the TV show Top Chef that showcases farmers market produce. By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

Tooties plans to reopen but no date has been announced

Tooties bar and restaurant on Lowry Ave. is tentatively set to open in September following a July 9 burglary and basement fire which left the Northside establishment temporarily shuttered. While no opening date has been announced yet, the restaurant voicemail says they should be open in the next few weeks. The heat and smoke damage from the fire damaged electrical wiring, pipes, and equipment, forcing the restaurant to shut their doors for the summer. Tooties is a Northside institution opened 33 years ago and owned by Lili and Nick Johnson who purchased it 29 years ago. “All the diverse people of the Northside, we see here and are welcome here. It’s important for us to keep some stability for Northsiders, the things we’re used to. Tooties is one of those things,” said Lili, a longtime Northside resident. A GoFundMe page was organized following the fire and the burglary by local community members. As of August 29, all of their $5000 goal had been raised and the goal had been upped to $7500. The funding will help the pair make ends meet while they wait for their insurance pay-out and for the business to be back up and running. In part, because they have also continued to pay their staff. “We have gotten so many offers of help. It’s been overwhelming,” said Lili Johnson. While no opening date has been set, Lili and Nick Johnson are hoping that the restaurant and bar will reopen in September. By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter. Read more about the struggle of owning a full-service restaurant in North Minneapolis on Page 6.

Open Streets is September 9

West Broadway Ave. will be closed to cars and filled with performers, vendors and fun activities on September 9 from 11am-5pm. West Broadway Open Streets is an opportunity to explore your neighborhood and local businesses as you bike, walk, or roll on streets opened up to community. Visit www.openstreetsmpls.org/west_broadway to become an official event partner and to download a free bus pass to get to and from the event. Open Streets is hosted by Our Streets Minneapolis and presented by the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.

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Kimberly Caprini dances to music as she walks the Urban League’s Family Day parade route representing the new Wirth Co-op Grocery. Photo by David Pierini

See more photos from this year’s Family Day celebration on Page 17
OPEN STREETS
WEST BROADWAY
Lyndale Ave N to Penn Ave N
NORTH MINNEAPOLIS
Saturday, September 9th, 11am–5pm
For more information, visit westbroadway.org/open-streets
Biard officially assumes role as new Fourth Precinct Inspector

By Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor

Aaron Biard’s connection to the Northside is personal and professional. For the past year, the new Fourth Precinct Inspector has been the precinct’s daywatch lieutenant. He has lived on the Northside and has family members who still live here.

He says his time in the Fourth Precinct so far has been, “one of the most enjoyable assignments that I have had in 23 years in law enforcement.” Though the amount of people he supervises has now doubled, and he’ll have round the clock obligations, Biard says he won’t be reinventing the wheel now that he is the inspector. “We have seen the results over the last year that we’ve liked for the citizens. Violent crime is down. The morale of the officers is up. The goals we have set are working. I really wanted that continuity keep moving forward for the precinct,” he said.

He recognizes that he has big shoes to fill: “I follow in the footsteps of several well-respected inspectors. I am in agreement with their philosophies, and I will continue to attempt to carry that forward to the community as I know it was very popular – the community policing approach, being open and receptive. I basically want to keep that going is the intent here.”

He has particular admiration for his predecessor and current boss Mike Kjos. “He’s a genuine, caring human being, and that’s what I want to emulate. ...Frankly that’s why I’m comfortable taking this position because of the mentorship and the relationship and seeing how he conducts himself and [did] the job over the last year.”

He says his priorities for the precinct are aligned with those of the department and city officials: to achieve public safety. He says this means providing police services to the citizens of North Minneapolis while building community trust: “We want to be seen as legitimate partners in the community. That leads to better strategies for fighting crime and partnering with the citizens to keep their neighborhoods safe.” It also means keeping morale up amongst the officers on his team. “With good morale comes better service I believe to the citizens,” he said.

He says tension between police and citizens is less fraught in the Fourth Precinct than the media might make you believe. “That’s the beautiful thing about working here and that’s why I love this precinct and I love the Northside. I have so many great relationships with people and community members and citizens. It’s rarely adversarial,” he said, stressing that hard work building bridges with community while supporting and supervising his officers makes this possible.

When he’s not serving the Northside in uniform, Biard lives outside the city with his family and is a devoted sports coach for his four kids. “I’ve found that when I was in the city, I was a police officer 24 hours a day. You become irritable, and I don’t think you provide as good customer service if you’re constantly feeling like you’re at work. So I do have some separation by design.”

Annual Redeemer Block Party reflects on Charlottesville

The annual Redeemer Lutheran Church Block Party featured kid’s games, live music, and the beloved wood oven pizza. This year, the church also decided to show its solidarity for Charlottesville, Va., where white supremacy groups incited racial unrest last month. Organizers added a “Love Chain” in the church lobby where partygoers could attach prayers for Charlottesville. Children colored hearts to clothes-pin to the chain while the adults wrote out their wishes on slips of paper (right, bottom). Isaiah Clark, 9, below, puts his balloon hat on Ta’Vell Smith, 2. Hattie Anderson, 9, top right, requested the words “Track Star” be painted on her cheek. By David Pierini

New Fourth Precinct Inspector Aaron Biard talks with Ascension Catholic School students at their back to school block party on August 24. Photo by David Pierini
With the recent closure of Victory 44, full service restaurant owners in North Minneapolis are looking to the future and hoping for a little more help from local government.

By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Writer

It’s early-afternoon at Breaking Bread Cafe on West Broadway Ave. The restaurant is boisterous, the tables are full, and the smell of peach cobbler is in the air. Youth food justice leaders meet at one table, a couple are on a date at another, and a group of nonprofit leaders are planning an event at a third table. Breaking Bread Cafe is a newer business on the avenue and a newer restaurant in North Minneapolis. A project of nonprofit Appetite for Change, Breaking Bread seeks to connect its community to affordable, local, healthy food, while also providing job training to the local community.

The cafe is one of just a handful of full-service restaurants in North Minneapolis. Owning a restaurant is a difficult job and, even moreso, owning a restaurant in a community with so few of them.

“There is definitely a want for full-service restaurants in the Northside. People are looking for more variety for dining options in the Northside, rather than heading to other parts of Minneapolis or the suburbs. And I wish we had more of them on the Northside,” said Rob Hanson, Executive Director of West Broadway Business and Area Coalition.

Recently, North Minneapolis lost a full-service restaurant, Chef Erick Harcey’s Victory 44. His spokesman had this to say: “[Chef Erick Harcey] closed Victory 44 because there is a new building owner and his career is taking a new turn with the success and attention he has received from Upton 43. Chef Harcey loved the neighborhood and they supported his non-traditional perspectives on food for a long time.”

The Victory Neighborhood Association (ViNA) has some funding to help whatever business, preferably a restaurant, takes over the space and is also committed to connecting the new business owners with resources and networks at the city level and elsewhere. According to participants at a recent ViNA Business Committee listening session, they want to ensure that if a new restaurant takes over the former Victory 44 spot, it is committed to being a community-centered gathering spot.

“I want to go to a Patrick Henry Football game and see all my neighbors and say ‘meet me at such and such restaurant’ [afterwards],” said Katie Fitzpatrick, a Victory resident and staff member with ViNA.

That community support is exactly what is helping so many Northside restaurants succeed. Michelle Horovitz, co-founder and Executive Director of Appetite for Change, says that Breaking Bread has become a neighborhood gathering spot and many staff live in the surrounding community.

According to Darryl Weivoda, owner of The Lowry Cafe, the community has been incredibly supportive of both the restaurant and the hardware store he owns next door.

Still, their work has not been without its difficulties. For one thing, parking has been an issue, so has affordability, and so have real and perceived fears of community violence. For Weivoda, many of the challenges he faces at his cafe stem from the development and construction on Lowry Ave. in the early 2000s which he says left a number of vacant lots and abandoned storefronts behind. The development, known as the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan, was meant to increase access to transit and “congregate” businesses. “It used to be great to live on this corner. We could get anything we needed but for clothing. 47 different businesses. But six years before Lowry Ave. they went to the businesses and told the businesses they were going to take their businesses in six years and then the businesses became unrentable. Who is going to invest in advertising and promoting for a business that is not going to be there in the future?” said Weivoda.

Banana Blossom, a local Vietnamese restaurant also on Lowry Ave., is facing the same problem. “We have a lot of local supporters, but the location is bad. If there was more business around, it would be easier access. If there was more businesses around, it would lead to more business opportunities,” said Tony Vang, a manager there. Vang says that they really love the North Minneapolis community and want to represent it better. They are working to get their liquor license and on a new menu, including more sushi. They are also working on better parking options, a challenge echoed by Weivoda: “If we don’t have good parking, it’s too easy for people to go elsewhere to eat. Parking is a big issue,” he said. Weivoda says that when he expanded his 21-car parking lot by 6 cars, it was a huge hassle with the city.

Affordability is another issue. The average household income in North Minneapolis is $35,000, which does not leave a lot of room for eating out. “We are working on a dual pay model, one that is the true cost of the meal – food and labor – and one that is priced more affordably,” said Horovitz. “I think if we weren’t a social enterprise we would not be a full-service restaurant. We would probably be fast casual where you order at the counter. We would probably hire less and have less of a training program and our food might not be as fresh. We subsidize labor and our low menu costs through donations.”

Horovitz says she would like to see more support from the city: money for job training, support for the new higher minimum wage, and advertising for the cafe through...
city channels.

"It's not that the city makes it harder on us, they just don't make it easier for us. We could use some help," said Lili Johnson, owner of Tooties on Lowry, which is temporarily shuttered due to a fire in July (Read more on Page 3). Johnson notes that the impact of city ordinances, like the minimum wage raise and eco-friendly to-go containers, make it more difficult for the restaurant to make ends meet. "There is a lot of people who come here who are on really tight budgets and they cannot afford price raises," said Johnson. "These small businesses are being priced right out of the market."

"The real challenge is finding someone to take a risk," said Kris Brogan, a former restaurant owner in the Victory Neighborhood. Brogan noted that the financial risk in opening and sustaining a restaurant is huge and that the unpredictability of Northside community support makes the risk even bigger.

"I think the City could help with at least tackling the availability of space issues or look at ways they can make commercial properties for folks. Coming up with financial incentive programs for folks. Trying to take away some of the barriers, the complexities around surrounding a business. It can be pretty daunting for someone who has an idea or a concept that works, but doesn’t know the process. The city can clarify that process," said Hanson of the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition.

The Office of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED), through the City of Minneapolis, is trying to attract new businesses to the Northside and is also working to provide some financial support for new business owners. "North Minneapolis is often overlooked by businesses that are not from North Minneapolis. Our team strategy is to work with businesses not from North Minneapolis so they don’t overlook North Minneapolis and to work with businesses in North Minneapolis to show how vibrant North Minneapolis is," said Casey Dziewczynski, a senior project coordinator. Right now, CPED offers a number of funding opportunities for local businesses, including a facade improvement grant and a 2% interest loan among others.

Lachelle Cunningham, Executive Chef at Breaking Bread, says that while the work of CPED and others is a good start, more needs to be done for restaurant owners and food service entrepreneurs in the Northside.

"We need infrastructure support. When it comes to the full support and investment that is needed for a full-scale restaurant, there is a lot of risk, there is a lot of hesitation, there is a lot of issues there. Those businesses need help with infrastructure," said Cunningham who also works to support black chefs. "They need that technical assistance, but they also need some hand-holding, some pushing, and these organizations that are in the community definitely work to do those things, but I think that there’s just a gap in that on-the-ground, frontline, in-the-moment, improvisation."
Youth confront stereotypes

By Pa Nhia Moua | Intern

Ever encounter an awful stereotype about your gender, race or simply who you are? Minneapolis is a diverse city where people tend to get along, but there are some negative things that happen here.

On August 5, an event exploring stereotypes was held at Boom Island Park in Northeast Minneapolis and hosted by '17 Patrick Henry High School graduate Blia Yang, 18. Yang’s vision was to encourage others to let their voices be heard and make a change in the community. Participants played games, listened to presentations, and ate food.

Yang has lived in North Minneapolis for thirteen years. She immigrated to the United States in 2005 from Thailand. Growing up, Yang says her childhood was easy and fun. As she has become an adult she has realized that she has been living in poverty. “I have to be aware of the challenges and recognize them in order to support myself and my family,” she said.

To support herself and her family financially, Yang has had to work hard. Yang along with her sister Va Yang, are the first people in their family to enroll in college. Yang will be attending the University of Minnesota Twin Cities this upcoming fall, and she hopes to become an English teacher. She wants to teach young kids to value their education and appreciate the opportunities that are out there.

Throughout her life, Yang says she would hear people stereotyping her about the way she looks or when she speaks another language. Yang realized that she may not be the only one who was hurt by stereotypes. She wants to prevent stereotyping by discussing it and understanding that stereotypes are hurtful and mostly inaccurate.

Yang was inspired to apply for a scholarship from YouthBank that wanted grant recipients to use this opportunity to help break stereotypes. She used the money to create her August 5 event. At the event, people gathered to interact with each other and compare and contrast their unique ethnic experiences. She involved food and music because she believes it helps bring people from different backgrounds to be closer together universally.

“Among the attendees was Patrick Henry graduate Stephen Patton who plans to join the military this fall. He is nineteen years old, African American, and born and raised in North Minneapolis. He found the event, particularly the controversial subjects like race that were being discussed, to be eye-opening.

“This event brings out a lot of our struggles and viewpoints as people of color in the Northside about living in poverty. It really opens my mind about where people came from and what they have to go through as they’re going into the world realm.”

Yang is willing to reach out to community members to discuss these controversial subjects. She wants to do another event when she has time: “I want my viewers to know that there’s supporters like me that welcome you for your background, your ethnicity and your racial identity. I want you to realize that you can make a change.”

CORE program prepares underrepresented youth to become successful college students

CORE offers support and networking opportunities to Twin Cities youth

By Kerzie O’Keefe | Editor

Now entering its third year of existence, the University of Minnesota’s CORE program offers support to hundreds of 6-12th graders of color in the Twin Cities as they track towards college.

The program is a response to the lack of diversity on the University of Minnesota’s campus, says Program Director Jonathan Brown, who works out of the Office of Equity and Diversity at the University.

Specifically, CORE aims to give access to the University of Minnesota to first generation college students, students and families “concerned about their ability to pay for college,” and students with African American, Hmong, Latino, and Native American backgrounds.

“We’re noticing that of all the students within the Twin Cities who attend schools, they’re not being reflected in the freshman admitting classes,” said Gloria James, an Americorps Public Ally who is beginning a second term of service working for CORE.

The program aims to serve these students by making college “knowable and digestible,” said Brown. CORE does this by supporting students prior to college and helping them understand and combat the academic, financial, and social barriers that they are likely to encounter in the college application process and once they arrive on campus.

Up until recently the CORE program was called CORE 2025. The CORE 2025 model involved formal cohorts of students that began in eighth grade, and the 2025 referenced the year the first cohort would be graduating from college. Now, Brown describes CORE as “an open access initiative. We’ll work with anybody in their communities where they are.”

The program has brought on three more Public Allies to build relationships with schools on the ground in Twin Cities neighborhoods this year.

James and the other Public Allies will lead groups of students through their “Ramp Up to Readiness” curriculum and other activities in schools, community centers, and anywhere else a need or desire for the program is expressed. Brown recommends that interested students and families “talk to your school about it so they will be ready to listen” when the Public Allies work to formalize their support this fall. They will also host quarterly events to bring students and inspirational professionals from all over together for networking and communal skill building.

James says she hopes the program ultimately prevents talented, underrepresented students from “having this mentality of automatically opting themselves out of higher ranking schools.” She also hopes college campuses “actually diversify.”

Long term the program aims to have all of its students enrolled in a four-year institution, ideally the University of Minnesota, but Brown says the program is helpful even for students who aren’t striving for college.

“We are building their skillset and their capacity. …Yes college is great, but we still want [everyone] to feel like [they] can benefit,” said Brown.

Though CORE doesn’t currently offer scholarships, Brown says they can “set you up to be super competitive for any one that you want.”

For more information, visit:
https://diversity.umn.edu/coreprogram

This story is made possible by CORE
Menthol tobacco sales are soon to be restricted in Minneapolis

On August 4, the City Council voted to limit menthol tobacco sales to liquor stores and tobacco shops beginning next August. Northside community members have had mixed reactions to the decision which will reduce access to menthol products from over 300 locations to around 50 in the city.

By Kenzie O'Keefe | Editor

Stances on the city council’s new menthol ordinance sound like positions on the more controversial aspects of women’s healthcare. They depend on which a person values most: the rights of individuals to make decisions for themselves or the responsibility to protect life at all costs.

Ward Five Council Member Blong Yang voted against the sale restriction because he, “cannot in good conscience tell a full grown adult in Ward 5 that they have to go through hoops and extra trouble to get a product which other residents in other parts of the city will be able to get without any further hassle. …I am pro choice.” Sylvia Amos, director of programs at the Stairstep Foundation, lobbied in favor of the restriction because, “I’m more for life than I am death.”

The new law will make it more difficult for people to buy menthol products. It will reduce the availability of them from “318 tobacco outlets to 23 tobacco products shops and 24 liquor stores,” said a press release from the city after the council vote. It also creates uncertainty for businesses who get by because of their tobacco sales. Kevin Aldwaik, owner of Webber Mart on Penn Ave. N. says that a third of his gross annual sales are from menthol products. The dollar amount he makes per pack of cigarettes is low, but tobacco is a reason many of his customers come into his store. While they’re there they buy other things – milk, water bottles, snacks – that bring in more significant revenue. He says he has tried four times since 2008 to run his business without selling tobacco. “I got bankrupted once because of no tobacco,” he said. “It never worked.”

But it’s not fear of losing money that makes Aldwaik passionately opposed to the ordinance. He is vocally anti-tobacco and cards any neighborhood kid who tries to buy tobacco with conviction. “I smoke and I suffer with it. You shouldn’t start this,” he said. He is against the ordinance because he believes that this type of legislation will only be effective on a state or regional level. He worries about the unintended consequences of a city-wide restriction.

“We share the same bus lines as Brooklyn Center. Those guys don’t have a menthol ban. Those guys don’t have a flavored tobacco ban. We do. This is where we’re worried. We’re really just inconveniencing people and making more of a headache for me,” he said in reference to the new enforcement efforts he will have to undertake.

North Minneapolis city council members have been sensitive to concerns like Aldwaik’s. Both Yang and Fourth Ward Council Member and Council President Barb Johnson voted against the ordinance. Johnson took to Facebook to explain her reasoning: “I know the best thing you can do for your health is to quit smoking and the best scenario is never to begin, but I think it is a mistake to cut off access to adults who choose to smoke. This effort was targeted at North Minneapolis and will harm small and large businesses in our city.”

But it’s clear that many Minneapolis corner store owners are harming youth in their communities by behaving illegally. Earlier this year; Breathe Free North conducted a compliance check on 40 stores that sell tobacco in North and Northeast Minneapolis. Several failed by selling to minors. Taiyannna Morrow, a health educator with the program, says that store owners are being “selfish” in their desire to keep selling the products. “Menthol cigarettes have added flavor and I feel like anything with a flavor is appealing to youth. If they never start they’ll never have to quit,” she said.

It’s hard to argue with the societal damage menthol tobacco has caused, particularly in African American communities which have been heavily targeted by its marketing. Nearly 90% of African American smokers use menthol products, which make tobacco use easier to start and harder to quit. The health consequences have been devastating.

Amos, program director for the Stairstep Foundation, lost her mother, a lifelong North Minneapolis resident to smoking-related lung cancer. Three of her six siblings were smokers and her own daughter used to be menthol smoker. She feels the effects of smoking within her family and in the larger community around her. Three members of her church have experienced debilitating health crises related to smoking just last month. “Do we want to continue to suffer those kinds of losses?” she asked.

Because of the high use rate amongst African Americans, some, including Council Member Yang, have argued that the ban is inherently racist, inflicting burden on black smokers that is not being inflicted on people who use unflavored forms of tobacco.

Betsy Brock, research director for the Association for Non-smokers - Minnesota (ANSR) and co-chair of the Menthol Coalition, which lobbied in favor of the ordinance, disagrees. “What I saw the most was other white people and people who were not African American saying that – that this is racist and targeting African Americans. Who I saw the most saying we want this was the African American community,” she said.

Amos, says the Stairstep Foundation, which works closely with African American churches and other community partners, agrees. She says she supports efforts to reduce tobacco usage and regulate sales of it. “I definitely do not think it’s racist. Menthol is a tobacco that has been marketed to our community.”

“It is one of if not the most deadly products available for sale. When you are talking about a product that deadly I think it makes sense to regulate where it can be sold and try to keep it away from youth,” said Brock.

Despite having different opinions on the ordinance, Council President Johnson, Aldwaik, and anti-tobacco activists and educators Amos, Brock, and Morrow agree that the next step in the fight against tobacco in Minneapolis is upping the purchase age from 18 to 21, like Edina did earlier this year. “Upping the age is a no brainer. By graduation [high school students] are walking in dropping IDs like it’s an accomplishment,” said Aldwaik, whose convenience store is down the street from Patrick Henry High School. Aldwaik would also like tobacco displays to be regulated and to see the point of sale moment used as an educational experience. Morrow hopes for more things for people to do in North Minneapolis besides smoking: “More job opportunities, more free fitness programs, more things that keep their mind off smoking,” she said.

This sponsored article is made possible through a Tobacco-Free Communities grant from the Minnesota Department of Health for Pillsbury United Communities. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Minnesota Department of Health.
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2017 FALL GROUPS
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Intervention groups for men: Mondays, 9/11-12/18 from 6 - 9p.m. Court referrals accepted (intake and program fee required). Orientation held on Monday 8/28 from 7 - 8:30p.m.

QUESTIONS?
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From key dates to an in-depth look at several North Minneapolis schools, *North News* has you covered.

*Ascension Catholic School* has high test scores and satisfied parents. We explore how they do it. *Page 13*

Northside barber shops help students and parents put their best foot forward this year. *Page 12*

*How to be a successful high school freshman* *Page 14*
Back to school bulletin board

9/4: No school, Labor Day

9/12: MPS Farm to School Community BBQ, 4:30-7pm, 812 Plymouth Ave. N

9/26: MPS Board of Education meeting, 5:30-8pm, 1250 W. Broadway Ave. Topic: MPS test scores, school readiness (postponed from September 19th)

9/29: The Somali Parent Advisory Committee meets at 1250 W. Broadway Ave, 6pm - 8pm.

Barbershops do their part to prepare parents and students for school to start

Harvest Network of Schools President Eric Mahmoud (left) and Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent Ed Graff (right) evaluated their past performances as education leaders in the community and their goals for the upcoming school year at a discussion hosted by both men’s barber Tito Wilson at Wilson’s Image Barbers and Stylists (2124 West Broadway Ave) on August 20. Mahmoud described himself as an optimist but says he thinks “the reality is that we’re in crisis. If education is the lever for change, if economic and social mobility all depends on the level of education of our children, we’re not adequately preparing our children for those challenges. ...In order to get African American children on track, we need to step up significantly.” Mahmoud says he plans to focus on school culture this year. Graff says MPS will emphasize literacy. Both men stressed the need to develop, retain, and value talented teachers. A video of the event can be found on the North News Facebook page. By Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor

Minneapolis School Board takes an uneasy vote for police in schools

School Resource Officers will remain in MPS in slightly smaller numbers.

By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

Following nearly five hours of public comments – including speeches and spoken word – and discussion, the Minneapolis School Board voted to reduce the number of school resource officers (SRO) in Minneapolis Public Schools by two, on a three-year contract with the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). The vote, which took place August 8, was nearly unanimous with KerryJo Felder (District 2) being the only board member to vote against the contract.

“I do think I made the right decision in voting no. I think we need to make a concentrated effort to moving towards a future of no SROs. That means doing deeper work in mental health services. That is what I am looking at and I don’t think we are doing that deeper work,” Felder said.

Despite nearly ninety minutes of public comments, most of which focused on the SRO program, few Northsiders spoke, though according to Felder, 74 Northsiders have signed a petition against the SRO program.

“I think even though the Northside wasn’t really present, they were heard, the Board heard them,” said Gabriel Spinks, Student Representative for the Board and incoming junior at Edison High School.

During the meeting, Felder proposed a SRO reduction plan, based off of an older SRO reduction plan, passed by Minneapolis Public Schools, and discontinued/forgotten in 2014. Felder’s proposal would have brought the SRO contract down by three, with one SRO in each high school and four rovers, including one in Harrison and another in Riverbend, on a one-year contract. If the older SRO reduction plan was still in place, there would currently be seven SROs in Minneapolis Public Schools. The amendment failed, however.

There was also much discussion and debate on the connections between the SRO program and the test scores, as well as SRO funding and the need for restorative justice, by many of the Board members. Opponents to the SRO program argue that the focus on police in schools takes away from the money and attention that they believe should be given to mental health alternatives.

“Deep fixes are what is going to really help the test scores. SROs are band-aids for an issue that we haven’t fixed,” said Felder.

During the meeting the Board asked the

Deep fixes are what is going to really help the test scores. SROs are band-aids for an issue that we haven’t fixed.

KerryJo Felder

Office of the Superintendent and the site councils, as well as a newly formed climate and safety committee, to research and share information on alternatives to the SRO program and climate-related best practices.

“Having police officers in the school are not social-emotional learning and it’s not taking holistic care of our children. Because you’re still going to have that centralized military presence in our [schools] and so, with that being said, if we can make amendments to what we’re doing tonight then let’s do that,” said Ira Jourdain (District 6).

Felder is not sure the approved SRO policy will make much difference to the Northside schools. She believes that the school board must invest in mental health services and what she calls “deep tissue massage” rather than continue to invest in the SRO program. “I think the vote is going to have very little impact. It’s a work in progress. The more we do things right in schools, the more we create students and children who have a different mindset,” said Felder.

The Minneapolis Public Schools are expected to use the money saved from their cuts to the SRO program to support the officers and training.
Ascension inspires excellence

The private school offers affordable tuition, holistic support and above average test scores.

By Kenzie O'Keefe | Editor

Ascension Catholic School students have some of the highest test scores in North Minneapolis, but their educational experience offers families far more than proficiency.

Despite being a 120-year-old, private, Catholic school, its K-8 student body looks like most others in the area. Most “scholars” live within five miles of the school, are of color, and qualify for free and reduced lunch. Only a third identify as Catholic. But unlike nearby public and charter options, more than half of their eighth graders test at or above grade level.

“It’s such a bright spot in this community. …Ascension represents what North Minneapolis should be,” said Jean Hawkins-Koch, mother of Isabel, an incoming first grader at the school.

How do they do it? Principal Benito Matias says there’s no magic formula: “Every scholar is different, and every year is different.” He says one of many elements that contribute to the school’s success is its teachers: “Having great teachers who work hard, who do a great job working with scholars, is critical.”

One of those teachers is Jill Miller, who is beginning her third year teaching fifth grade at the school.

It’s such a bright spot in this community. …Ascension represents what North Minneapolis should be.

Jean Hawkins-Koch
Parent

Previously she taught third grade for 29 years in St. Paul. She says she was hesitant to apply for the job at Ascension because of her Master’s degree and decades of experience – qualifications that typically cost schools more. But Miller said Ascension welcomed her expertise and pays her accordingly for it. “That’s what they wanted – people with experience, the knowledge on how to do it. It was meant to be,” she said. “The kids and the families all expect and want the best for their children. Then the community supports it,” she said.

Matias says another crucial element of the school’s success is its emphasis on measuring proficiency “alongside the conversation about growth.” Students are tested multiple times during the school year, and each student’s results are evaluated and responded to individually. “We work very hard to make sure we understand where scholars are and some of the best ways that we might be able to pull them forward and bring them along,” said Matias.

Ticiea Fletcher’s 10 year old daughter Logan Shields has attended the school for three years. During that time Shields’ reading and math skills have improved. After struggling at her previous North Minneapolis school, Ascension is “where she made the turnaround,” said Fletcher.

Though Ascension is a private school, it comes without the hefty tuition price tag typical of comparable institutions. The school offers some form of scholarship to all its students. It costs $7400 per year to educate an Ascension pupil, yet published tuition is a fraction of that at $1400. Matias says the average student pays much less: on average just $200 per year; the rest comes from individual, corporate, and foundation donors. “It’s always been a perspective of both the parish and the school that we don’t ever want to turn a family away due to their inability to pay,” he said.

The decision to charge tuition at all – when it’s such a small piece of the actual cost of attendance – is indicative of the school’s attitude that it requires intentionality, responsibility, and communal hard work to enable students to succeed. Matias says charging tuition gives his families “skin in the game.” He says opportunities are treated differently when “we feel like they’re given to us versus feeling perhaps like we’re contributing to that benefit we’re receiving.” In addition to tuition, all families are required to contribute volunteer hours at the school.

The school offers more than just financial support to its students. Its partnerships with organizations like the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), Catholic Charities, and Ready, Set, Smile offer students and their families additional psychological, medical, and academic supports for a holistic support experience. “The school acts like a family. If you ever have any issues you can go to them and address them and they’ll try to push you in a direction,” said Anita Banks, mother

Continued on Page 14...
Harvest Network slows growth to focus on quality

Best Academy has moved out of the Lincoln School building.

By Tayyen Smith | Intern

The Harvest Network of Schools will begin the school year with one less school building this year. Best Academy has moved out of the old Lincoln School building at 2131 12th Ave N and back into the Network’s Olson Memorial site at 1300 Olson Memorial Drive.

The Network, which includes Best Academy along with Best Academy East, Harvest Preparatory Academy, and Mastery School, will now provide all but one of its educational opportunities inside its Olson Memorial site. The Mastery School will continue operating at 4021 Thomas Ave. N. This is their second year at this site.

Harvest Network’s President Eric Mahmoud says moving out of the Lincoln building was due to changes in the network’s growth plan. Back in 2013, the network planned to expand from 1000 students to 4000 students in North Minneapolis. At the time, the schools’ test scores were some of the highest in the state. To house the growing number of students, they leased the Lincoln building from Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS). The lease and the number of students in the building were planned to increase annually.

But the school quickly experienced growing pains. Some of their test scores declined. “As we expanded what we didn’t have was a solid foundation on which to expand,” said Mahmoud. More students required more teachers, and the school didn’t have a “solid training program” in place. Mahmoud says the network is now “beefing up our teacher training” programming to respond to it.

Instead of staying in the Lincoln building for another year, the network decided to move the Best Academy middle school entirely back into the Olson building. This plan allows them to save money while focusing on academic quality. “Long story short we decided we were not going to grow for a short period of time and focus on quality. We decided that instead of paying an increasing lease [this year], we would move the middle school back to the Olson Memorial highway facility. We’re not on that growth plan that we had initially planned,” said Mahmoud.

Enrollment is not down, says Mahmoud. The school anticipates serving 1200 students this year, which is just about what they had last year. He says he will be particularly focused on “having a solid school culture” this year. “We want students to understand the growth mindset. It’s not about how smart you are but how smart you’ll become by applying grit and hard work. If they’re willing to put in the effort, they’re going to be successful.”

Wondering how to start school successfully?

North News summer interns Joshua Mendez and Cyarra McNeal collected back to school advice from community members who are headed in positive directions.

My advice that I would give a freshman is the same advice I got five years ago as an eighth grader. I would really recommend a lot of freshmen come in and get to know the school and use your resources. Use them to the best of your ability. Have fun, make new friends, get involved, and talk to people, but also make sure homework is your number one priority.

— Mayier Vue
Patrick Henry High School Senior

I would say don’t be afraid to put yourself out there. It’s good to be unique. You don’t want to be like everyone else because you are your own person. Make sure to get all your work done and focus on school. Don’t try to impress everyone.

— Mayier Vue
Patrick Henry High School Senior

Freshman year is the starting block; you gotta hit it hard. It’s about being serious about this opportunity and getting yourself established and organized. Listen to your parents. There are so many things that can happen in high school that can completely ruin your life. Listen to people who have wisdom and follow it.

— Stephen Patton
Graduate of Patrick Henry Military pre-enlisted

I would say take freshman year seriously. I know you come in thinking it’s all fun and games because you are coming in from middle school because things are a little less strict and you have more freedom. I know my biggest mistake coming into freshman year was not being focused, so I would say stay focused, build a good relationship with teachers and find the right group of friends that will help you become a better person.

— Jonathan Brown
Director, University of Minnesota Office of Equity and Diversity, CORE program

My advice to incoming freshmen would be to learn about who you are and what you are interested in. Find something extracurricular to be a part of – whether that be sports, social clubs, academic, or a job. Everything you do as a freshman will impact your high school career and beyond. Additionally, do not be afraid to ask for help or make mistakes. Being new to something – like high school or the state legislature – means that you will not have all the answers, but that is why we have resources like staff and our peers to go to for assistance. Overall, befriend everyone and have fun! Best of luck to the Class of 2021 and our current scholars!

— Fue Lee
State Representative, District 59A

Overall 8th Grade Proficiency (2017, Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Ascension</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>53.6</td>
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<td>MPS Overall</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Academy</td>
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<td>44.4</td>
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</tbody>
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Ascension continued from Page 13...

of Jeremiah Russell, a seventh grader. In addition to the school’s supportive services, Banks says she also appreciates that educators have “control here in the building.”

Despite the schools’ success, Matias has a humble attitude. “If you think you’ve arrived, there’s probably a pretty good chance that you haven’t.” He says considering the ways the school measures student success from a holistic “whole child” perspective is among his top priorities for this school year.
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Legends @ the Capri Theater
Family Day brings fun, despite rain

Dark clouds and the on-and-off rain couldn’t dampen the family atmosphere for the hundreds who gathered for the Minneapolis Urban League’s Family Day on August 26. The festivities kicked off with a parade that started at Shiloh Temple and marched to Lincoln Field, where hundreds strolled throughout that Saturday afternoon, greeting friends, sampling food and dancing to some of the Twin Cities’ most talented musicians. Along two rows of vendors, families could get a quick dental check-up, learn about green energy or talk to candidates running for political office. The musical acts include disco and funk band Snak Attack, Mighty the Gospel Hiphopper, Niles, Mike DeCole and Ashley DuBose, star of The Voice. Photos by David Pierini

Laura and Kurt Taken-Holtze wander around the Family Day festivities with their daughter, Regina, 11 months, and dog Hildy.
ADVERTISING IN NORTH NEWS

CADES LISTS

North Dakota State University
Paige Johnson

Riverland Community College
Makayla Henry

Whitworth University
Abigail Nyberg

UW – Milwaukee
Luks Dommer-Koch

University of Northwestern – St. Paul
Nicole Fuller

Drake University
Sara Feldman

University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
Alexandria Cannon

Honors Students
West Virginia University
Kyle Noreen

Graduations
Whitworth University
Ryan Schiferl

UW – Whitewater
Abigail Nyberg

UW – Stout
Mason Couillard

Yaniv Garama
Mohamed Hadafow
Taylor Haefele
Stephen Harrington
Lauren Harvey
Daviesha Hubert
Tyler Hutchinson
Craig Marson
Estela Meija Ortiz
Angela Mertz
Curtis Mullings
Daniel Murzyn
Lila Page
Alix Poliszuk
Darrin Rickbeil
Grace Rude
Levi Schwartzberg
Rosamund Sturgis
Chue Shee Yang
Nathan Vik
Hailey White
Jack Zeglovitch

Academic All Conference

Knox College
Jessica Petersen
Naja Woods

RESOURCES

Explore public art using interactive map tours developed by the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board. To take a self-guided tour or more information: arcgis.mparsrec.

The Penn Avenue Community Works Project is providing financial assistance to individuals who currently own a home or are looking to buy in the Penn Ave. Corridor. The Front Yard Fix Up initiative provides up to a $5,000 forgivable loan for homeowners on Penn. It seeks to beautify the neighborhood by funding home improvement projects that can be seen on the street. Visit http://www.hennepin.us/residents/transporation/penn-avenue-community-works for more information.

Hennepin County funding assistance for lead paint – Homeowners may be eligible for a free home test and as much as $8,000 in lead reduction costs, such as new windows. Contact: healthyhomes@hennepin.us or 612-543-4182.

Minnesota Solid Waste & Recycling customers who have not signed up to participate in the organics recycling program may do so at any time by visiting www.minnesotasmn.gov/orc/organics. There is no extra cost, but you have to sign up.

9/9 – Fairview Youth Grief Services will be hosting Camp Lift, a free, day-long bereavement camp for children and teens dealing with the death of a loved one. A light breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be provided. To register, visit: www.fairview.org/youthgrief

Tuesdays – 10am-11am, the Twin Cities Mobile Market brings affordable and healthy food directly to Camden Neighborhood Center (1210 37th Ave. N). A wide variety of fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, and staples like rice and dried beans are available to the public, that details the city’s diversity climate change data. The information is available on the City of Minneapolis’s sustainability website.

Do you live in Near North or Willard/Hay? Then your block could be eligible for a mini club grant through the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, NRRC. Funds are available for a project or event you want to create. For more information call 612-335-5924 or email contactus@nrrc.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. More information: http://westbroadway.org/facade or email carla@westbroadway.org or call 612-353-5178.

The City of Minneapolis has an online interactive map that makes it easy to find farmers markets all over the city. Find your nearest farmers market by clicking on the map pins at www.minneapolismn.gov/farmersmarkets to show the address, season dates and opening times for each market.

Neighborhood Community Relations is hiring a Community Relations Specialist. The closing date for applications is 9/4. For more information on how to apply go to: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/jobs/

The Northside Residents Redevelopment Council-NRRC is partnering with Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid to connect residents of Near North and Willard Hay with free attorneys. If you are having legal troubles that relate to your home or business and live in the Near North or Willard Hay neighborhood visit their clinic at the NRRC office Mondays and Tuesdays from 10am-3pm or set up an appointment by call 612-335-5925.

Spend Diversity Dashboard: The City of Minneapolis has developed a new tool, available to the public, that details the city’s discretionary spending and the improvements the city can make in increasing participation of women-owned and minority-owned businesses in City of Minneapolis contracts.

The next Homegrown Minneapolis meeting will be held 9/13 from 5:30-7:30pm at the Corcoran Neighborhood Association at 3451 Cedar Ave. S. The meeting will be preceded by a 5pm Food Council information session.

The City of Minneapolis has posted the deleted Environmental Protection Agency climate change data. The information is available on the City of Minneapolis’s sustainability website.

The Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council

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NORTHnotices

The Capri Theater is looking for members for its Capri Glee Adult Community Choir. Rehearsals are on Tuesdays from 7pm-8:30pm, with a final concert at 7pm, October 17th. For more information contact Janet Zahn, Capri Communications Manager, 612-643-2058.

9/13 – Senior Surf Day, 10am-12pm. Learn computer basics and get hands-on computer experience for senior citizens. For more information: https://hclib.bibliocommons.com/events/search/index or 612-532-KNOW.

9/14 – Monthly meeting of the Northside Writers Group, 7pm-9pm, Homewood Studios, 2400 Plymouth Ave. N.

9/17 – The photo essayist for “The Newport Trail” will be hosting a discussion on litter, mental, and tobacco in North Minneapolis, 3300 Lyndale Ave. N, 3-5pm.

9/21 – The annual Community Church Buffet will be held at North Methodist Church from 5pm-7pm. Tickets are $10 for adults, $4 for children age 5-11, and children under 5 are free. For more information call 612-522-4497.

9/23 at Serendipity Spot – The Wildwood Theater will host a safe space to ask questions and discuss mental health. 3300 Lyndale Ave. N, 12pm-2pm.

9/26 at Webber Park Library – First Pages: Write Your Own Silly Story. For grades 1-3, 4pm-5:30pm. For more information: https://hclib.bibliocommons.com/events/search/index or 612-532-KNOW.

9/28 – Black Master Storytelling Festival. All events are free, family-friendly, and open to the public. For more information: https://www.blackstorytellers.com/home.html

10/19 – Join the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, the Minneapolis Health Department and the department of Community Planning & Economic Development for its annual Partners with Youth Conference, 9am-3pm, Whittier School. For more information call Phil Rooney at 612-607-4091 or phil.rooney@minneapolismn.gov

T’ai chi class every Saturday from 9am-10:30am, Homewood Studios, 240 Plymouth Ave. N.

Thursdays - Community Coffee & Conversation at Serendipity Spot, 3300 Lyndale Ave. N, 11am-1pm.

Mondays – Community Yoga, 6pm-7pm at Serendipity Spot, 3300 Lyndale Ave. N.

Fridays – Family Storytime, Webber Park Library, 10am-11am. For children of all ages and their parent or caregiver.

Tuesdays – Free yoga class at New Rules (2015 Lowry Ave N.) at 6pm.

9/12 – Master Gardener: Fall Yard and Garden Care, 6pm-7:30pm, Webber Park Library. For more information: https://hclib.bibliocommons.com/events/search/index or 612-532-KNOW.

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Juan Reed sees art everywhere

Juan Reed is a self-taught graphic artist who was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Now he lives in North Minneapolis. He got into art at the age of five. He started off doing family greeting cards and birthday cards, and he also draws a lot of Marvel characters because as a kid he was really into comics then he started making them into his own and started drawing everything that he sees or inspires him. He initially came to Minneapolis to dance in his brother’s hip-hop group and to be a part of the big art scene here. There are lots of events and shows with many opportunities. “If you can do something and get paid for it, especially something you love, that’s a blessing. If you’re able to do something but you’re not getting paid and you still love it, that’s a blessing,” he said during an interview with North News on August 3.

Story and illustration by Tong Vang | Intern

What inspired you to get into art? All of the old school, hip-hop, boogie down productions. Grandmaster Flash, Nas, and Jay-Z inspired my art. Not how they are now, but when they first started. [It’s] not just music; everything inspires me. It could be a movie or something that I saw.

How long does it usually take you to finish one piece of artwork? Anywhere from seven to ten days depending on the detail or what I’m working on. If it’s a commissioned piece, I will take longer because I want it to be right. All of my work is hand-drawn and hand-painted.

Is it tough being an artist? Do you have time for friends and family? Yeah, I do foster care too. So, I take care of some kids. I do have a big family, and we don’t get to see each other all the time but we try to make time to see each other. This is actually the first year I really pushed myself to sell my work cause I got so much work. I entered a couple of events like FLOW Northside Art Crawl. I got invited to do the St. Paul one too. It’s called Flat Earth Brewery, so I had a display there and I think they have Open Streets West Broadway [on September 9], so I’ll be doing that one too.

What are some challenges you’ve faced as an artist? Probably trying to please everybody and not please myself. People say, “You should’ve done this and you should’ve done that,” but they’re not you. They’re not sitting there with the pencil and the paint brush for hours, trying to do the work. A lot of people don’t understand it.

In your opinion, what role does an artist have in society? A big role. Especially now. Social media, advertising, TV, and everything. All the logos and T-shirts, clothing and everything has art in it. Art is everything because art is in everything. Everything you look at is art.

Do you ever hesitate to display your art to the world? I used to because you get that feeling like they’re not going to understand what mindset I was in when I came up with this. There’s people that just don’t appreciate the art, but what I do like about it is I get to express myself.

You won an award last year for your Prince artwork. Did you get a prize? Yeah, a company by the name of CANDO [Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization] put up the artwork on the electrical boxes [in South Minneapolis]. There were other artists too that were involved, and their art will be display too.

Who has influenced you to do art? My biggest influence is Salvador Dali. Just his details and his ideas. He’s got that art that you look at and you’re like, “Wow I want to see that again,” and that’s how I want people to look at my art too.

Is there anything that you want people to know about you and your art? I want them to know that I’m here. I’ve been here for over twenty years now. My artwork is available, either original or in print form. You can get me for shows, exhibits, displays, whatever.
Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) is the neighborhood organization for the Willard Hay and Near North neighborhoods. Comprised of 13 districts, NRRC’s mission is to inform, engage and facilitate the residents of the Near North and Willard Hay neighborhoods in Minneapolis to be primary agents for improving the social, economic, environmental and livability conditions in their community.

Board Elections for the even numbered districts will be held Tuesday, September 26, 2017. NRRC residents should come vote between 1:00pm-7:00pm at UROC – the Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center, 2001 Plymouth Ave. N.

For more information call (612) 335-5924 or email contactus@nrrc.org.

The University of Minnesota is looking for Black / African American cigarette smokers to participate in an e-cigarette study.

This study requires 7 visits.

Participants will receive up to $200 and e-cigarettes.

For more information, call 612-624-9407.
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—Governor Mark Dayton

“As a registered nurse, Barb understands and appreciates the important work that nurses do every day. It was Barb’s leadership that led to the passage of Minneapolis’ Sick Time Ordinance. We are proud to support her candidacy.”
—MNA President Mary Turner

“Barb understands how important public safety is to the residents of North Minneapolis. Barb believes that every resident of the 4th Ward deserves prompt, respectful, and effective policing and that is why I will be voting for her this November.”
—Sherman Patterson
MPD Community Engagement Coordinator, McKinley Neighborhood

Prepared and paid for by the Barb Johnson Volunteer Committee - John Rainville, Treasurer - 4318 Xerxes Ave No., Minneapolis, MN 55412

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MOBILIZING his neighbors

Ariah Fine got his start building neighborhood power in 2010 when he was a full-time dad raising his kids in Near North. He joined his neighborhood organization and in 2012 became the executive director of Cleveland Neighborhood Organization (CNA). A year ago, he moved on to support neighborhood organizations at the city level, in the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department. This month he spoke to North News about fathering and organizing while helping envision the future for neighborhood organizations in the city.

By Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor

You’re a neighborhood support specialist for the City of Minneapolis. What does that title really mean? My role is to ensure residents are informed, connected and feel represented through my work supporting neighborhood organizations for 16 neighborhoods throughout the city – 9 of which are in North Minneapolis. My goal is to support the organizations in their local community engagement. The city funds them, so there are administrative aspects to that as well. My hope is that I can help ensure every Minneapolis resident knows about their neighborhood organization and the opportunity to be involved to impact positive change and influence decisions that impact their lives.

You used to be the Executive Director of Cleveland Neighborhood Association, now you work for the city. What made you switch your position? In my time at a neighborhood organization, I saw the potential of the Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) department. They can play a significant support role in helping neighborhood leadership reflect the neighborhoods that they are in. I wanted to be a part of that. Currently the city is looking at what the future of funding for neighborhood organizations will look like.

I was excited about helping make sure that residents have an influence on what the future of neighborhood organizing looks like. I wanted to be involved in making sure residents have a voice in this. North Minneapolis gets nearly one million dollars a year to do neighborhood engagement. How best should that money be distributed to support grassroots localized community engagement? Taking this job has been about making sure residents get to answer that question.

What motivates you to do this work? I love knocking on a neighbor’s door and asking about their passions and interest and what they’d like to see in their community, it’s not about my agenda or issue. I love that every door you knock on is answered by someone who has something positive they can bring to community, they just might have never been asked. I met both my neighbors when I first moved here because I left the lights on in my car and needed a jump. They both willingly helped. That was the beginning of a 10 year friendship. I was honest about a need and they were able to meet that need. When we know our neighbors by name and remove those often negative labels we have for people, we see we have a lot to offer one another far beyond some jumper cables.

What do you wish community members knew about their neighborhood orgs? Neighborhood organizations are hyper-local independent nonprofits, they’re very easy to get involved with, and they are the city-recognized voice for a neighborhood. That means when the City government has a decision to make about something in a neighborhood, say what should happen with a vacant lot, they’ll typically go to the neighborhood organizations to get the opinion of the neighborhood. They are a chance to influence decisions that impact and dollars that can be invested in your neighborhood. My goal is for every neighbor in every neighborhood to have some connection to their neighborhood organization, so that when those opportunities come along to give input on something, they can do it if they’d like to.

You’re currently partnering on neighborhood power events being put on by the Northside Neighborhoods Council, a collective of Northside neighborhood orgs. Why? The goal of them is to get people thinking about their passions and self interests and how those might tie to neighborhood orgs or cultural orgs in the city. The city did a neighborhood board diversity survey in 2014 and 2016, and we found that neighborhood boards are whiter, made up of more homeowners, and older than in the city as a whole. Those gaps in representation exist within many neighborhoods as well, meaning the decision-making leadership for a neighborhood does not reflect the demographics of that neighborhood. One of my goals is to do what I can to close that gap by working with neighborhood organizations and boards to be more inclusive in their format and engagement, and to encourage more people of color, renters, and more young people to join neighborhood boards.

You live in North Minneapolis. How did you end up here? What keeps you here? I’ve lived here for 10 years. We moved here because it was close to family. This is the kind of community I wanted to be a part of and raise my kids in. It’s important to recognize that I relocated here, that I’m not here to replace or speak for anyone, but rather to learn from and be in solidarity with those who have been here and have come before me. When we moved here I had the great privilege of spending several years raising my kids playing at the parks, attending community meetings, and volunteering. I love the tight knit community that North Minneapolis has. That brought me here and it’s what keeps me here.

What do you hope your kids learn from your work? I hope that my kids learn the value in every human being. I hope they learn that when a group of people come together and find common ground, they can make incredible things happen in their community.

Want to Connect with your Neighborhood Organization? Call or email Ariah, 612-673-2243, Ariah.Fine@minneapolismn.gov or check out Facebook.com/NorthsideNeighborhoodCouncil. The next Neighborhood Power workshop is September 18, 6-8pm at North Regional Library.
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