TeCara Ayler is fighting to keep her Penn Ave. home. She has rented it from Mahmood Khan, who lost his rental license in November, for almost three years.

THE ROUGH REALITY
of being a Northside renter

Khan's license loss has led to uncertainty for 50+ families
Systemic issues keep many from housing stability

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ALSO INSIDE:
North Minneapolis goes big for the Super Bowl Page 6
Five local options (some free!) for getting your taxes done Page 8
New year, same focus: to provide informative, thoughtful news coverage

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the first 2018 edition of North News!

After a slightly longer than usual time between issues because of the holidays, we’re happy to be back in your hands. By the time this paper has printed, the Super Bowl will be just a little over a week away. Check out some of the ways Northsiders are participating in and benefiting from the festivities on Page 6. I know I can’t wait to stop by the soul food pop-up at Breaking Bread…

You may have noticed that our coverage has been especially housing-heavy lately. Last month we began a five-month series on housing, created in partnership with journalism students from Bethel University and our North High journalism program. In their first story they gave us an inside look at the new Hawthorne EcoVillage Apartments, the workforce housing complex on Lowry and Lyndale Ave. N. This month, they’ve brought us a more broadly focused piece — one that explores the various battles individuals and families face when seeking rental housing in our city (Page 12). Low income residents of color in particular often experience insurmountable barriers to stable housing, and North News is committed to telling stories that will hopefully shift hearts, minds, and policy around these issues.

This piece is unfortunately opportune timed given the struggle currently being experienced by tenants of landlord Mahmood Khan. Many families in Minneapolis are facing homelessness (Page 4) now that his rental license has been revoked.

As we reported on this story, we were faced repeatedly with ethical questions about storytelling on this topic. Traditional media so often requires oppressed folks to publicly reveal themselves and their struggles in order for information about injustice to be revealed. We encountered Khan tenants who were sick of telling their stories, being publicly vulnerable, and then not experiencing any change to their dire situations. We’re thankful to those who have trusted us to publish their experiences and we want those who requested to be left alone by media to know that we support, honor, and understand that decision.

This is something we plan to keep thinking about as we consider how to ethically report on realities in North Minneapolis. How do we create solution-oriented pieces versus ones that further traumatize and marginalize our community? How do we tell accurate stories without further burdening already overburdened folks? How do we ensure the community’s voices are represented without demanding significant work from residents? We’re committed to exploring these questions, and we welcome your thoughts on this subject.

Last but not least — our current semester at North High will wrap up the day this newspaper publishes. Big thanks to The Brand-Lab and Carmichael Lynch for hosting a final field trip for our students in January (check out the picture to the right!), and we look forward to the strong spring semester to come. If you’re a Northside high school student looking for a summer job and you’re interested in a career in media and communications, consider applying for a summer internship with us. Apply now at www.stepupmpls.org. Be sure to let us know if you’ve applied, so we can advocate for you to be part of our five-intern team.

Until next time,

Kenzie O’Keefe
Editor/Publisher, North News
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651-245-2647

For several years, Homewood Studios resident artist Bill Jeter has organized a gallery show for Black History Month. He’s inspired by history around the world, especially black culture. His work, along with five other North Minneapolis artists’ work — Richard Amos, Phyllis Chatham, Keiona Cook, Maria Johnson, and Shirley Jones — will be on display this year. Four of those six are women. “That’s really important. It’s part of a larger dialogue about women and girls that’s happening around the country right now,” Jeter said.

“This is a Black History Month show, but I’m calling it an emporium,” Jeter said, noting that the show will be a collection of different pieces and resources. You can watch movies here and borrow books and take them home. To Jeter, Black History Month is “a time for African Americans to be self reflective. It’s a time to look back at ourselves, our kids, our communities, and what we’ve done to try and make them better. It’s about the very recent times and what we were going to do to move forward.”

Jeter’s own creations are all handmade, and he uses a lot of materials to express himself, like painting, molten bronze, or just paper. When he was little, he said he didn’t know that you could be an artist if you were black. He always used to love to draw and make things but he didn’t know how he could make a career out of it until he was in college. Because of art, he says he has had opportunities to travel across the world, work with art, and work with students which he says is very rewarding to him.

The show runs Feb. 1 through Feb. 24. The gallery party will be from 2-5pm on Feb. 17. Homewood Studios is located at 2400 Plymouth Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55411. – Talina Hill, North High

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North Minneapolis at a glance

New council members inaugurated
First-term Minneapolis City Council members Phillipe Cunningham (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward 5) were inaugurated on Jan. 8. They’ll be producing a monthly column for North News moving forward. See their first columns on Page 5.

Premier sports complex planned for North Minneapolis
V3 Sports, a nonprofit, plans to build a sports training facility on the corner of Plymouth and Lyndale Ave. N. The center will feature an Olympic-size swimming pool, a 200-meter track, a spin room, a sand volleyball court, a study area, a café, other retail tenants, and more. The president of V3’s board, Erika Binger, says it will cost $40 million to build. 15% has already been fundraised. Read more at www.v3sports.org.

New restaurant will make a home inside former Victory 44 building
A new restaurant plans to take over the building at 2201/2203 44th Ave. N, says the Victory Neighborhood Association. The fully outfitted restaurant has been vacant since Chef Erick Harcey closed Victory 44 last summer. Beloved local soul food chef Eric Austin made public his hopes of taking over the building in early January, but he is not going to be the new tenant. He says he’ll continue to look for a new location.

Hanson leaves top WBC position
Rob Hanson’s last day as executive director of the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition will be Feb. 2. “I did not come to this decision easily. However, after much reflection and discussion with my fiance, I felt that now was the time to pursue a new opportunity that was presented to me, and fulfill some personal goals,” he said in a letter to community members on Jan. 12. Hannah Gary, the WBC’s Programs and Communications Coordinator will continue to manage the organization’s programming while commissioners search for a new executive director.

NSAMP envisions a future for Northside parks
The currently-being-developed North Service Area Master Plan (NSAMP) aims to create a long-term plan for North Minneapolis parks, focusing on how parks are operated, maintained, and improved. “It will include plans for all exterior facilities – athletic fields, playgrounds, trails, etc. – but not buildings or recreation centers,” according to a recent email update from MPRB. In January, MPRB held two public design meetings to develop concepts for Northside parks. These meetings followed months of community engagement. For more information, contact project leader Adam Arvidson at 612-230-6470 or aarvidson@minneapolis-parks.org.

MPRB to search for new superintendent; Merrill to serve as interim
Jayne Miller has resigned from her position as Superintendent of the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board to take a position as CEO of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, effective Feb. 4. Veteran MPRB superintendent Mary Merrill (formerly Mary Merrill Anderson) will likely serve as her interim replacement while commissioners search for a permanent superintendent. Merrill was the first woman and first person of color to serve as the MPRB superintendent. She has four decades of experience working for MPRB.

Gethsemane Lutheran Church receives a $50,000 miracle
Gethsemane Lutheran Church asked for neighborhood support – and prayed for a miracle – after its boiler broke in late December. The church aimed to raise $50,000 to replace the 60-year old boiler. It raised that and more in just over two days. The additional money is being used to pay off the church’s $100,000 loan used to fund its daycare. “I’m overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone who has donated. Grateful is even close to the right word,” said church council vice president Ben Knaus. Gethsemane is located at 4656 Colfax Ave. To support Gethsemane you can donate at www.gofundme.com/glcmps.

Tooties reopens to much support
Tooties on Lowry is back following a July 9 basement fire and burglary that left the restaurant shuttered and under-construction for the latter half of 2017. “It’s been amazing, we’ve had a lot of support from the neighborhood and new people. Definitely, everyone has been in to see the restaurant,” said Krsis Johnson, Tooties’ manager and the daughter of Nick and Lili Johnson, Tooties’ longtime owners. Tooties is located at 2706 Lowry Ave N. For hours and more information check out www.totoxicsonlowry.com.
NORTHnow

By KENZIE O'KEEFE | EDITOR

Notorious Minneapolis landlord Mahmood Khan lost his rental license in November, after years of battling the city, state, and even the Federal Supreme Court to keep it.

Though the situation has been hailed by many as a victory against a slumlord, it has been deeply destabilizing for the over 50 families who currently reside in Khan’s 42 Minneapolis properties – almost all of which are located in North Minneapolis.

The loss of his license means Khan can no longer collect rent from the tenants still living in his buildings, which are mostly single-family homes. He says he plans to sell his properties and retire from his landlord responsibilities. “My licenses have been canceled and I’m working to transition out of that work. Hopefully I can fix the properties and put them on the open market,” he told North News in early January.

Late last year, tenants were told by the City that the situation required them to move out of Khan’s properties by Feb. 28, 2018. But after a court appointed administrator, Lighthouse Management Inc., was put in place in Dec. 2017, the vacate date was removed. In January it was announced that Lighthouse had selected North Minneapolis nonprofit Urban Homeworks to manage the properties for an undetermined amount of time, collecting rent from tenants and using it to make necessary repairs on the homes.

Kristel Porter, Executive Director of the Cleveland Neighborhood Association, has doorknocked many of the affected properties in her neighborhood. Inside the 22 properties she says she has seen, she’s witnessed flooded basements and crawl spaces, broken windows with cold air rushing through, and space heaters in every room: “I’m talking about one thing after another. Horrendous living situations,” she said.

Paul Bauknight, Director of Urban Placemaking at Urban Homeworks, says the properties “run the gauntlet in terms of what type of shape they’re in.” They have replaced two furnaces already this month.

TeCara Ayler has lived in one of Khan’s homes on Penn Ave. N for nearly three years with her husband, four kids, and several pets. She’s a small business owner who wants to plant a community garden on the vacant lot next door this summer. She hopes she won’t be forced to move.

“I’m going to try and stay here. Even though there’s stuff wrong with my house, I don’t feel it’s as bad as other people’s houses. It could be way worse. I like to be in a spot and kind of stay there,” she said.

Ayler faults both Khan and the City for the situation that has arisen. “He needs to answer for what he’s doing and the city needs to answer for their bullshit.

Continued on Page 15...
Minneapolis City Council newcomers Phillipe Cunningham (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward 5) were inaugurated this month. North News has invited them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our newspaper.

WARD 4: Phillipe Cunningham

First, let me start with a huge “THANK YOU!” from the bottom of my heart for your support and allowing me the honor to serve as our community’s City Council representative!

The biggest thing I heard during the election was how much you wanted a Council Member who engages with you and informs you about what is happening in City Hall. I started this monthly column as one way for me to do just that!

To start, a LOT of work has been happening since Election Day results were announced! I have been meeting with community members and the directors of various City of Minneapolis departments to build relationships and prepare for a smooth transition into office.

Former Ward 4 Council Member Barb Johnson has been incredibly gracious during this transition period. We will continue working together as I settle into the job and get things up and running.

City Council Members and Mayor Jacob Frey were sworn in during a private ceremony on Tuesday, Jan. 2, which was required by state statute. Our official inauguration ceremony was on Monday, Jan. 8.

It was a beautiful celebration of our city’s diversity that included: Native American, Muslim and Jewish prayers, a Hmong traditional ceremony, a Northside choir, and an ancient Aztec dance! A video of the event is available at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/tv/minneapolis14. The City Council elected its new President (Lisa Bender, Ward 10), Vice President (Andrea Jenkins, Ward 8), Majority Leader (Andrew Johnson, Ward 12), and Minority Leader (Cam Gordon, Ward 2). The organizational meeting also created the “standing committees.” Full City Council meetings are what often get the most attention, but almost all of the work has already been done in the standing committees prior to these meetings. Committees are key opportunities for me to step up and push the agenda you elected me to enact—a thriving local economy, greater housing accessibility and affordability, improved safety and livability, and much more. This term, I am the Chair of the Public Health, Environment, Engagement, and Civil Rights Committee. This committee is responsible for the oversight of work carried out by the Health, Neighborhood and Community Relations, and Civil Rights Departments as well as the Office of Sustainability. As a hardworking champion for the Northside, I am excited to drive racial, economic, and geographic equity across a wide-range of policies, programs, and initiatives in this role! I am also a member of the Economic Development and Regulatory Services, Public Safety and Emergency Management, and Ways and Means (Budget) committees. These committees are where I will be able to champion Northside entrepreneurs, hold MPD accountable for the service they provide to the 4th Ward, and ensure the City of Minneapolis continues to have structurally sound City budgets that also reflect the values and needs of our community.

This monthly column will be dedicated to updating you on important work happening in City Hall and in the Ward 4 City Council office. Also, please like the Ward 4 Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/CMCunninghamWard4.

Photo by Kenzie O’Keefe

WARD 5: Jeremiah Ellison

My first week at City Hall was largely about ceremony. I’ve got to be honest and tell you that it left many of the new Council Members (including me) a little anxious. We raised our right hands, we read oaths and said, “I do.” All of that stuff is important, but mostly I am very excited and eager to get to the work of serving you.

For those who didn’t follow this past year’s local elections, my name is Jeremiah Bey Ellison. I am an artist and organizer. I am your neighbor, born and raised on the Northside. I am also the new Ward 5 City Council Member, and I am proud and honored to represent you at City Hall.

During the campaign, my team and I worked hard to give you a real and honest sense of the issues and always put the ideas and concerns of Northsiders first. Now that I am elected, things will be no different. I want to thank North News for giving me the opportunity to give you a sense of what’s happening at City Hall, what decisions are getting made on your behalf, and how you can amplify your voice in the process.

Let’s get some basic things out of the way: Jacob Frey is your new mayor, Lisa Bender (Ward 10) is your new Council President, and Andrea Jenkins (Ward 8) is your new Council Vice President. I am one of five new members of the Council, and am excited to work with my new colleagues.

In these first weeks, there’s been a lot of talk about how Minneapolis can be a better place for all residents – Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian American, and white residents, recent immigrants, and, yes, even our undocumented residents. We can make this city a place where working class folks of all backgrounds can thrive. I’m serious about putting that talk into action.

To that end, let’s talk a little about committees and the roles that I’ve taken on at City Hall. I will be chairing Elections and Rules – where I’ll be fighting to create more access and transparency as it relates to future elections and the creation of new ordinances. I will vice chair two committees – both are new. One is Housing Policy and Development chaired by Cam Gordon (Ward 2), and the other is Economic Development and Regulatory Services chaired by Lisa Goodman (Ward 7). These two committees used to be one large committee known as Community Development (CD), but with the city’s stated emphasis on creating better housing options for all, and the vast workload of the former CD committee, it felt right to split them up and give both topics the attention they deserve.

Finally, I will be a member on both Zoning and Planning, and Public Safety and Emergency Management.

All that said, rest assured that my work and updates will not be limited to these committees. As we progress into the year, I’ll be sure to touch on all city business, especially more specific topics affecting the 5th Ward.

I look forward to giving you another update next month, but most of all, to connecting with you, my neighbors. Collaboration wasn’t just a buzzword of my campaign. I’ll be out in the community regularly, and my team and I are ready to respond to any questions or concerns ideas, truly whatever you might want to share with us. Just reach out to me or my office – my email is Jeremiah.ellison@minneapolismn.gov. Peace.

Photo by Anna Min
Downtown may be the epicenter of February’s Super Bowl celebrations, **but without North Minneapolis**, the festivities would be lacking fashion shows, food pop-ups, and other opportunities to see how our city really lives and celebrates.

By Cirien Saadeh and Kenzie O’Keefe | Staff
Legacy Fund gives game-changing grants
Juxtaposition Arts, Appetite for Change, the Minneapolis Public Schools Culinary and Wellness Services Center, North Market, and Anwatin Middle School were all awarded grants of $50K+ as part of the Minnesota Super Bowl Host Committee Legacy Fund's 52 weeks of statewide giving for Super Bowl 52. Both their first and last grants were given in North Minneapolis. "It was a happy accident that we've come full circle," said Dana Nelson, Vice President of Legacy and Community Partnerships at the MNSBHC. Photos courtesy of Steffenhagen Photography

Business agreements draw from North
268 businesses, from food vendors, to entertainers, to marketing and media firms, have agreements with the NFL for the Super Bowl. Many of those are North Minneapolis businesses. Some, like Avenue Eatery and Breaking Bread, have been repeatedly hired by the Minnesota Super Bowl Host Committee for work during the two and a half years leading up to the Super Bowl, said VP of Business Connect and Corporate Affairs, Alex Tittle. Others have top secret agreements – meant to preserve the "wow factor" – that will be made public during the festivities. Long term, Tittle says the diverse business database he has developed will offer connections for others to make with veteran, minority, women, and LGBTQ-owned businesses. "We're eliminating excuses," he said. "We do appreciate the support from the Super Bowl business connect and resource guide as it has garnered interest from a number of companies and have gotten contracts from those resources," said Sheltonn Johnson of Avenue Eatery.

FOOD & FUN

Northside Spectacular Bus Tour
Super Bowl fans have an opportunity to see North Minneapolis by bus and learn about its storied history. The tour will be operated Feb. 2- Feb. 4, every day, 10am-5pm. Buses will depart every 30 minutes. Ticket Price: $50, include designated hotel pick up/drop off, all Bus Stop events, and unlimited hop in/out options. More info can be found at www.northmpls.com.

Tito Wilson's Jazz Brunch
Kick-off Super Bowl week with a mimosa jazz brunch, hosted at Wilson's Image Barber's and Stylists (2124 W Broadway Ave.) on Jan. 28, 11am-2:30pm.

Detox and do yoga
Wirth Co-op is planning a detox and yoga event on Feb. 3, 11am-1pm. Event details have yet to be finalized. For more information, contact Kristel Porter at kristel@clevelandneighborhood.org.

Pop-up soul food
Breaking Bread Cafe will be home to a Soul Food pop-up restaurant from Jan. 31 through Feb. 2, 5-10pm each day. The pop-up will be hosted by the Onyx Culinary Collective, a Twin Cities-based cooperative of Black chefs and food enthusiasts. For more information, check out WhereTheSoulFoodATMPLS on Facebook.

Arctic Bold Fashion Show
On Feb. 1, Northside community members – Noir Elite Fitness and Richard Moody – will put on Super Bowl LII’s biggest fashion show. Stella’s Elba to celebrate several local clothing lines. There will be food on every level, multiple DJs, and a cigar room on the roof. $5 raffle tickets will be sold with the grand prize being a weekend-long Mazerati rental. “We started out small and then we said forget it, let’s do it big,” said organizer Chaz Sandifer, of Noir Elite Fitness. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available online: https://www.arcticbold.com.

The Super Boil
On Jan. 29, the Loppet Foundation will put on a public party from 5-8pm, featuring Cajun food, DJ Chuck Chizzle, free tubing, ski rentals, and dancing at the future home of The Trailhead, 1221 Theodore Wirth Parkway. The foundation is a Super Bowl Legacy Fund grant recipient and has worked with the Minnesota Super Bowl Host Committee to “integrate winter activities into the downtown Super Bowl Live festivities, including on-snow events that will showcase the skills of Northside youth who are part of our school-based programs,” said Marin Byrne, the foundation’s development director.

Black Excellence
Designer, culture maker, and barber shop owner Houston White hopes the Super Bowl will bring his locally beloved brand, Black Excellence, national recognition. “The world is coming to Minnesota and they’re going to be looking for authenticity,” White said a few weeks before the big game. He plans to do a pop-up clothing shop at a celebrity bowling event being held at Pinstripes in Edina. “We want prominent individuals to take pictures with the brand, learn about it, and [we hope to] gain as much traction from that as possible,” White said. The pop-up will highlight two of White’s collections -- “1905” and “BE the Change." 1905 pays homage to Bobby Marshall, a Minnesota Gopher from 1904-1906 and one of the first black NFL players. With “BE the Change” White hopes to inspire a collective conversation about creating societal change. Photo by Andres Perez

Football
North High will be on the field
To recognize their accomplishments as a team in the past couple years, the North High football team has been invited to US Bank Stadium the Friday before the Super Bowl. “This is a tremendous honor,” said Dana Nelson, Vice President of Legacy and Community Partnerships at the MNSBHC. The team’s coach, Charles Adams III, also received two tickets to the game. “To be the first Minneapolis team to win a state title in, what was it, 40 years? They’re just such a great Cinderella story,” said Nelson.

Watch party in the neighborhood
Wilson’s Image Barbers and Stylists (2124 W Broadway Ave.) will be hosting a Super Bowl Sunday watch party from 2:30pm-8:30pm on Feb. 4. The BYOB party will have food and snacks, two 50-inch TVs, as well as original halftime performances. More information and updates can be found on the shop’s Facebook page.
TAKE ADVANTAGE
of your local tax service offerings

Taxes must be filed by April 17, and there’s no reason to wait! There are tax filing locations all over North Minneapolis, from nonprofits and community centers to large tax filing corporations and locally owned tax services. Many of these options are free.

By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

NON-PROFIT OPTIONS

PREPARE PROSPER+

P&P is a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)-certified, 40-year-old financial wellness organization. P&P provides tax and financial services paired with money mentorship. Tax services are provided FREE for individuals who make less than $35,000 annually and families making $55,000 or less, though there are other requirements, as well.

“Free is free,” said Katy Schultz, tax and financial services director for P&P. “Tax season is a money moment, an easy actionable time to get ahead.”

During tax season, from Jan. 20 through April 17, P&P provides services at the Minneapolis Urban League (2100 Plymouth Ave. N.), by appointment only, and the East Side Neighborhood Council (1700 NE 2nd St.), for walk-in appointments. The rest of the year they work out of their St. Paul offices off of University Ave. They provide services for individuals, families, and some small businesses, but not members of the military.

For more information visit http://prepareandprosper.org/free-tax-preparation/make-an-appointment/ or call 651-287-0187.

EMERGE provides FREE, VITA-certified tax assistance services for low-income communities out of 1101 W Broadway Ave. EMERGE’s services are aimed at those who receive the Earned Income Tax Credit.

EMERGE is an appointment-based site. Tax clinics are offered on Saturdays 9am-1pm beginning Feb. 7, though people can begin making appointments right away.

EMERGE serves individual and joint filers. They offer limited services for small business filers.

The AARP, in partnership with the IRS and Minnesota Department of Revenue, provides FREE, personal income tax, rent credit, property tax refunds and other tax issue support for senior citizens and low-income individuals. Services are offered at Pillsbury United Communities’ Oak Park Center and the Hennepin County North Regional Library.

Oak Park Community Center is located at 1701 Oak Park Ave. Tax preparation begins Feb. 5 and continues on Mondays and Tuesdays through April 17 from 10am-1pm on those days. Clients are served on a first-comes-first basis.

Hennepin County North Regional Library is located at 1315 Lowry Ave. N. Tax preparation begins Feb. 3 and continues through April 17, continuing every Wednesday and Saturday, from 10am-1pm.

Bring a photo ID, Social Security Cards for yourself and your dependents, and tax documents from employers, pensions, banks, including any documents pertinent to rental properties or homeownership.

FOR-PROFIT OPTIONS

AARP

Both Jackson Hewitt and H&R Block provide online and in-office tax assistance services. Appointments are required and typically cost at least $50, depending on the in-office services used. They both also offer a free online tax service option. Services are offered for individual, families and joint filers, and well as small businesses.

Jackson Hewitt has an office at 800 W Broadway Ave. You can schedule appointments online or call (952) 428-7300. H&R Block is located at 607 West Broadway Ave. Appointments can be made online or by calling 612-529-7729.

Adams is a locally owned tax service and accounting firm located at 3354 Sheridan Ave N. The business, named for owner and accountant Christopher Adams, is rated one of the top ten places to get your taxes done in Minneapolis by Prime Buyer’s Report. Services are provided for individuals, families, and small businesses.

Adams recommends that tax filers unsure of how to prepare for their appointment call him.

“I’d rather spend 30 minutes on the phone talking you through how to prepare for your appointment, than you not have what you need to get your taxes done,” said Adams.

Tax services cost $75 for a 1040EZ, $100 for a 1040A, and $120 for 1040 – these are the forms you receive after filling your taxes. There are additional charges for self-employment and rental property taxes. Refunds are offered via direct deposit or mailed as a check.

Call 612-529-5356 or email adamstaxservicemn@gmail.com.

THINGS TO PREPARE BEFORE GETTING YOUR TAXES DONE

☐ Your Social Security number and the Social Security number of your spouse and dependents if applicable
☐ Rental and/or property tax documentation
☐ Copies of last year’s tax return for yourself and your spouse
☐ Records of miscellaneous income
☐ Bank account and routing numbers in case you want to set up direct deposit
☐ Student loan payment statements
☐ W-2 forms for you and your spouse
☐ Employment receipts for mileage, travel, etc.
Despite disparities, black Minnesotans are most optimistic residents

By Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor

Black Minnesotans are more hopeful about our state’s future than their white counterparts, according to a recent survey commissioned by MPR News and APM Research Lab. They contrast white Trump voters, who appear to be the state’s most fearful population.

To explore what African American hope is made of in Minnesota, Tom Weber of MPR News hosted a conversation about it in North Minneapolis on Jan. 4. He and three panelists – Lis sa Jones of KMOJ, April Graves from the Minneapolis Health Department and Brooklyn Center City Council, and Terrall Lewis of the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board – discussed hope in the black community with a crowd of Northsiders at this month’s Hawthorne Huddle at Farview Park Rec Center.

Weber, who is white, said the data initially surprised him. “I was of the assumption that black Minnesotans, if we just look at the history of what life has been, that their numbers would be down. It was a learning moment for me,” he said.

Neither the three panelists nor the community members in the crowd who spoke up seemed to share his surprise. “We’re surprised by the fact that you’re still surprised,” said Lewis.

Graves said hope has been essential to survival for African Americans who have endured hundreds of years of oppression in the United States. “What’s the alternative to hoping? That’s despair. …Hope expects that change is possible and that things can get better,” she said.

Jones agreed: “In the African American community, hope springs eternal in some ways. Born out of our struggle, we have found a place of resilience, a place where we have to believe in ourselves, a place where we have to exist separate from what the dominant narrative talks to us about and tells us about the value of ourselves and our people.”

Community member James Everett spoke up to say he sees hope in the African American community stemming in part from investments made by the philanthropic community in the area. “A full belly gives you hope. One thing you won’t do in Minnesota is starve,” he said.

Graves feels a responsibility to be optimistic. “Things aren’t really where we’d like them to be, but they still have improved. There are still a lot of things that have improved. Our ancestors didn’t lay down and give up in worse situations, so we damn sure shouldn’t do that now when we have a future to build for future generations,” she said.

Jones says hope creates energy for change: “Hope is something that provides us with the opportunity to get up and move.”

Weber asked what lessons the fearful white Trump voter could learn from resilient black Minnesotans. Jones spoke up with a warning for them: “Your beliefs and your system of reality are keeping you from any kind of hopefulness. Anybody who believes in that kind of polarization, that kind of isolation, that kind of difficulty and yuck on a daily basis has got to be miserable.”

Graves sees universal benefit in finding opportunity within hardship: “We should all be hopeful. Obstacles shouldn’t be reasons to despair. They’re actually opportunities, not just for African Americans, but for everyone. I think that if we approached things that way, we would actually see all of us doing better.”

The whole conversation is available at mprnews.org.
After delay, Harrison Education Center opens culinary and music rooms

By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

Harrison Education Center (HEC), a MPS alternative school for students with special needs, recently opened up its new culinary labs and a new music room – though it is still waiting on its new computers and software – following a six-month delay. The rooms were slated to open prior to the 2017-2018 school year. The delay was caused by process issues within the Minneapolis Public School District (MPS).

Improvement planning and learning upgrades for HEC were initiated in early 2017. HEC had been on-deck for improvements, a process which comes around to each school every few years. But MPS lost the project in the weeds of larger capital projects and delaying the opening of the new spaces. MPS’ funding of small capital projects is aimed at projects that are not identified within MPS’s 18-month to 4-year capital bonding program planning that MPS takes for larger projects.

“It certainly has highlighted that there were some problems in our process. We recognize that this project did not go as intended. And it did have a negative impact on our students when they came back to school in August,” said MPS Chief of Operations Karen DeVac.

DeVac noted that the evaluation of and changes to their planning processes are ongoing.

The music room was completed in Nov. 2017, the culinary lab and kitchens were completed in Jan. 2018, and the PAES – Practical Assessment Exploration System – lab and classroom partitions should be completed within the next six weeks to three months.

Kimberly Caprini, a HEC site council parent, spoke on the delays at the Dec. 12 MPS Board meeting during the public comment period. Caprini does not have any children at HEC, but she joined the site council at HEC, because of prior familial connections and a love for the school. She is excited for the school’s new spaces, but was concerned about the district’s broken promises during the Board meeting.

“I’m looking forward to our kids getting their hands dirty in the culinary room and what they produce in the music room,” Caprini said. Caprini is looking forward to community meals and school concerts.

Caprini recently announced her decision to run for an at-large director seat with MPS but says that the delays at HEC did not impact her decision to run.

According to HEC Principal Nathan Hampton, who envisioned the learning upgrades, the delays were both material and infrastructure-related. But now that the spaces are open for use, HEC students have the opportunity for new learning they did not and could have not have had before.

There is new culinary programming in the kitchen and kitchen labs, including a food handling certificate course which students can take and receive. HEC covers the cost of the $7 certificate exam. The food handling certificate and other culinary classes are being taught by Derrin Turnage.

The music labs are also being used for project-based learning. “We are finding out kids are reading now. Silent, sustained reading has gone up from seven minutes to 21 minutes. That has gone up because they want to take those spoken word pieces and put them to a beat,” said Hampton.

Separate from the capital bonding projects, Harrison also opened a STEM and robotics lab midway through the first quarter of this school year.

HEC has been the subject of innumerable lawsuits and investigations, including a 1997 lawsuit which resulted in the school being raised and rebuilt, but in 2015 MPS announced a fresh start for the embattled school.
What is your teaching philosophy? Relationships. Expectations have to be high. And then you have to know your kids. Not just who they are or who their mom or dad are, but you have to know a little bit about that kid and go into their culture so you know how to reach them. Culture is the software for the brain’s hardware.

What is your favorite quote? Can I give you two? There’s one that comes from the Common and John Legend song “Glory” and I have it framed here: “The movement is a rhythm to us, freedom is like religion to us, justice is juxtapositioning us, justice for all just ain’t specific enough.” The second one is from Socrates, “The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” It’s been a quote that has really helped ground me this year. That applies so much to Northside schools. We have been, for so long, fighting old stuff. We really should stop doing that and start on building the new stuff, because what we have been doing isn’t working.
Ashaundria Prowell sat in her office with a rock in her gut. She had just gotten off the phone with an ecstatic client who just finished a walkthrough for an apartment rental. All she had to do was send a money order of $3,000 to the rental owner and the place was hers. Finally, a place she could call her own. Prowell thought her client's story sounded too good to be true, but how could she talk her out of her excitement? By the time she looked up the property owner and found it was fraudulent, it was too late. The money was sent, and he was gone.

Prowell is a housing specialist at the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) who works directly with families to get them placed into rental units in North. NAZ collaborates with nonprofits such as Urban Homeworks and schools that then partner with North Minneapolis families. Its mission is to prepare children to be equipped for college after high school graduation. Prowell often sees housing instability standing in the way of that. “I know that when you’re not housed, or properly housed, everything is put on hold,” she said.

North Minneapolis is home to 64,826 of the over 400,000 people that make up Minneapolis’ population. According to a study by the Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) released in 2017, renters must earn $21-$23 an hour to afford a modest, one bedroom apartment in North Minneapolis. Today’s minimum wage is just $9.50 for small businesses and $10.00 for large. A $15 minimum wage was passed into law in Minneapolis last summer, but it won’t go into full effect until 2024. Despite residents often needing to work overtime to pay the rent, the population in North has grown 15 percent since 2010. “It’s a community where I think there are a lot of relationships and folks that have been living there for many years being close to their families,” MHP’s director of communications and partnerships, Carolyn Szczepanski, said. “I think there’s a fallacy that folks who have lower income have the ability to move.”

Jon Lundberg, the equity and engagement program manager at Urban Homeworks has been working directly with housing issues for 10 years. Urban Homeworks manages 115 units in North Minneapolis, housing predominantly families as well as young adults, professionals and students.

“This is an onion problem. There are infinite layers to this.”

Jon Lundberg

They strive to create a community that empowers family stability through housing. He describes housing as the center of basic human needs - without the stability of housing, everything else is unobtainable. Living in the Jordan neighborhood, Lundberg estimates 65 to 70 percent of housing is rental property. “This is an onion problem,” Lundberg said, mimicking peeling with his hands. “There are infinite layers to this.”

Although affordability may be the most obvious issue in renting in North, Lundberg sees other big issues too. Lundberg breaks down these layers into three main pillars: affordability, gentrification and control, all working in tandem.

Gentrification can’t be stopped until the control of the market is changed, which in turn affects the affordability in North. Lundberg describes this cycle as a “hot housing market.” People living outside of North see cheap property, buy it, then flip, renovate and jack up the prices, leaving Northside residents, “taking what they can get.”

Yuri Harper, a coaching family specialist at NAZ,
Renting is hard enough as it is in Minneapolis, but it becomes even harder with an unlawful detainer on your record.

By CONRAD ENGSTROM, BERET LEONE & JOSH TOWNER

Jon Lundberg, equity and engagement program manager at Urban Homeworks, recently stepped outside of his Jordan neighborhood home to see a nearby neighbor and friend loading up a moving van with her children. Despite working three jobs, she could no longer afford to rent her home there. Lundberg says this happens all the time.

“People are moving into places they cannot afford and the landlords know they cannot afford it,” Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) housing specialist Ashaundria Prowell said. “And [then they] give them another unlawful detainer.”

An unlawful detainer (UD) is given when a tenant violates their lease. In Minnesota, a UD is required for eviction. A tenant can get a UD for not paying their rent on time, failing to move out after 30 days of notice, or cancellation of contract for deed. Tenants can also be evicted for having too many family members in their rental unit.

Having a UD on your record can make it harder to rent again. “Unlawful detainers are like scarlet letters in the renting world,” Prowell said. “If you have one in the last five years, it is almost impossible to rent again.”

Prowell and coaching family specialist at NAZ, Yuri Harper, have seen people with as many as seven UDs on their record. They’ve also seen rental properties give little to no notice before evicting their tenants.

Even if someone is able to find another place to live with a UD, it usually is not a place up to standard of living, Prowell said.

In some situations, tenants can get their UDs expunged from their records. Minnesota law allows expungements when it is determined that a landlord filed an unfair or unjust eviction case. More information can be found at www.mncourts.gov.
Continued from Page 12

sees gentrification and control being an issue with her clients all the time.

“There’s an overpopulation of people coming in from other states, swallowing up, buying because they can, any and all of the housing, doing minimal work to the unit and putting it out there for an extreme amount of money,” Harper said. “And people in their neighborhood just have to deal with it. It’s not fair.”

One single mother Harper works with pays $1,200 monthly for an “OK” two-bedroom apartment. Harper doesn’t pay that much for the mortgage on her house.

“If we look at what I’m getting for that same amount of money...that’s ridiculous,” Harper said. “But she’s taken what she can get. ... She’s struggling to pay the rent, but she’s maneuvering it.”

A few years ago, Lundberg and his team at Urban Homworks presented the state with a possible solution. It would cost $72 million to refurbish and fill every vacant home in Minneapolis. Although the state was happily surprised it would cost so little, the plan was turned down because it didn’t fit in the budget. A few months later, the state approved $500 million toward building U.S. Bank Stadium.

“This is not a money problem,” Lundberg said. “It’s a will problem.”

“There’s an overpopulation of people coming in from other states, swallowing up, buying because they can, any and all of the housing, doing minimal work to the unit and putting it out there for an extreme amount of money and people in their neighborhood just have to deal with it. It’s not fair.”

– Yuri Harper, a coaching family specialist at NAZ

Anna DeCrans of Urban Homworks (right) manages Minneapolis landlord Mahmood Khan’s properties now that they’re under administratorship. Here she talks with TeCara Ayler, a Khan tenant, who wants to find a way to stay in her Penn Avenue rental home. Urban Homworks is in the process of assisting with inspections and making repairs on the homes, some of which are in unlivable conditions.

Photo by David Pierini
They allow him to be here and do it,” she said.

She says the past few months since Khan officially lost his license have been stressful.”I just want my house. I want the tenants to be ok. I don’t be homeless. I’m tired of stressing constantly. I just want to be ok,” she said.

Finding new housing looks to be a nearly impossible task for Khan’s tenants. The vacancy rate for rental housing in the city is just 3.4% and average monthly rent is $1,279, according to City data. On top of that, many of these tenants experience barriers to housing like low credit scores and unlawful detainers on their records. These realities are reasons they ended up in Khan’s often above-market-rate, problem-filled properties in the first place. One Northside resident who rents a Khan property spoke up at a community meeting about the situation on Dec. 20. “It was a good thing because our credit was bad, but he charged us over,” he said.

Ayler feels similarly. “He knew about me just getting evicted from another place, and he was ok with that. He gave me a place. I just didn’t know he was having all these issues with the City,” she said. Ayler aspires to be a homeowner but says her credit score has kept her from achieving that dream.

“As we work to find housing, resources and legal aid for these families, bringing a little bit of hope to these families, reaffirming that we see them and the struggle and we care is very important,” said Danielle Tietjen, one of the event organizers.

Community organizations have stepped up to try and ease the burden with legal aid and other resources as well. On Saturday, Dec. 30, community members held a holiday party for Khan tenants at New Rules on Lowry Ave. N. In addition to dinner, families were gifted with giftcards from H White Men’s Room and manicures, and presents. Residents contributed pies and Kemp’s donated ice cream.

“For now, Khan’s tenants wait in limbo without a clear answer about when and if they’ll have to leave their homes. Bauknight says Urban Homeworks will manage the properties as long as Lighthouse is the administrator of them. “How long it goes is controlled by the administrator, the courts, and the city, not by us,” he said.

Jim Bartholomew of Lighthouse says the city is in the driver’s seat. “The vacate was a result of a lack of license. The administrator has a provisional license. The city controls that vacate date.”

“There is no current vacate date, but pending the next steps for the administrator, one may be set. If one is set, we will continue to work with tenants throughout the process,” said Casper Hill, media relations coordinator for the City.
A NORTHSIDE SKATE PARK COMING SOON TO THE JXTA CAMPUS

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Love Songs from The Great American Song Book
Featuring Judi Doneghy Vinar with The Wolverines Jazz Trio
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Our North High journalism students were tasked to tell stories through photos in January. Here are some of their submissions.

Men's basketball at North High is more than being on the court

Top left – Teammates relieve stress in their weekly yoga session.

Top right – “If you don’t have the grades, you can’t play,” says head coach Larry McKenzie. Polars have study hall everyday after school. Here, Polars’ manager Corshon Davis finishes a project during it.

Right, center – In January, the team took a trip to Chicago for an MLK tournament where they did some other activities that included Nike sponsors. In this photo, the Polars divided into groups and were challenged to design their own shoe and come up with a story behind it.

Near right – A group of Polars came up with this shoe and called it the “Polar Express.” Their theme of the shoe was “Excellence” so they covered it with words that describe an excellent person. Photos by Tayler Johnson

Right – One of the team’s leading scorers, Odell Wilson, goes up for a shot at a recent game. Photo by Azhaar’a Hanson

Left – These songs are ones me and my ex created memories to. When I hear these songs play, no matter where I am, I start thinking about her. But I keep thinking how she broke my heart like the cracks on the screen, so I had to boss up, get in my bag, and remove my heart like that home button. Photo by Myesha Powell

Right – This is the produce department inside North Market where I work. I get paid $12 an hour with the chance of getting a raise to $15. I’m in charge of keeping things looking neat and stocked which means full, take inventory, and keep stuff clean. I like working here because it is in the community. Photo by Carter Johnson

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Right – This is the produce department inside North Market where I work. I get paid $12 an hour with the chance of getting a raise to $15. I’m in charge of keeping things looking neat and stocked which means full, take inventory, and keep stuff clean. I like working here because it is in the community. Photo by Carter Johnson
Far left – Two STEM students work on an essay in school at North High. Photo by Jaylen Green
Left – Journalism class student Britney Price works on an assignment in class. Photo by Eli Campbell
Below – My sister turned eight years old, and kids at her party danced and played games to win these candy bags. Photo by Talina Hill

I have a deep love for shoes. I have over 50 pairs of them. I always liked shoes, but it wasn’t until I was 13 or 14 that I really started to get into them. My brother had some but I couldn’t get them because I didn’t have a job and they were expensive. I work now, and my work shoes make my collection happen. I treat my shoes with respect. I don’t go to parties because I’m afraid my shoes are going to get stepped on.

Photos by Dalvin Crockett
The Youth Sports grants were announced by Hen-centers across Minneapolis, thanks to funding improvements coming to parks and recreation Ave. N) For more information visit http://www.Lucy Craft Laney Elementary School (3333 Penn and Camden Lions! The event will take place at questions all in one place. Free lunch provided by shops, and find answers to your housing related organizations, first time home buyer programs, community groups and everything in between. Visit tons of vendors, participate in mini-workshops, and find answers to your housing related questions all in one place. Free lunch provided by Asian Culture Club at Patrick Henry High School and Camden Lions! The event will take place at Lucy Craft Laney Elementary School (3333 Penn Ave. N) For more information visit http://www.northhousingfair.com!

Swimming equipment, soccer goals and a skate park are among the new equipment, facilities and improvements coming to parks and recreation centers across Minneapolis, thanks to funding from the Hennepin Youth Sports Program (HYSP). The Youth Sports grants were announced by Hennepin County’s Board of Commissioners at their meeting last week, and were awarded to 22 cities, school districts, and parks and recreation agen-cies throughout the county.

The City of Minneapolis youth employment pro-gram STEP-UP is accepting applications for 2018 summer internship placements. Eligible Minneapolis youth ages 14-21 who are interested in participating in the 2018 STEP-UP class have until Feb. 16 to complete an application which can be found at http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cpdp/met/step-up_home

Hennepin County funding assistance for lead paint – Homeowners and landlords may be eligi-ble 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 or-ganics recycling program may do so at any time by visiting www.minneapolismn.gov/organics. There is no extra cost, but you have to sign up.

Tuesdays – 12pm-1pm, Northpoint Health & Wellness, 1313 Penn Ave. N. The Twin Cities Mobile Market delivers affordable and healthy food. A wide variety of fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, and staples like rice and dried beans are available at below-market prices. Cash, all major credit cards, debit cards, SNAP/EBT, and Market Bucks are accepted! Questions? Call 612-529-8054.

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. For more in-formation call 612-335-5924 or email contactus@nrcc.org.

The Northside Residents Redevelopment Coun-cil-NRRC is partnering with Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid to connect residents of Near North and Wil-lard 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 neighbor-hood visit their clinic at the NRRC office Mon-days and Tuesdays from 10am - 3pm or set up an appointment by call 612-335-5925.

Spend Diversity Dashboard – The City of Min-neapolis 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 Minne-apolis contracts.

The City of Minneapolis has posted the delet-ed Environmental Protection Agency climate change data. The information is available on the City of Minneapolis sustainability website.

What’s Up 612! is an online resource for children and youth, ages 5-21, where citywide after school activities can be found. More information can be found at: http://www.whatsup612.com

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 Ave N. Call for details: 612-787-3718. 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: arcg.is/ mplart.

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

2/7 – The grand opening of the Hawthorne Eco-Village Apartments will be held from 11:30am- 1:30pm. There will be both building tours and comments from public officials and community leaders. The building is located at 617 Lowry Ave. N. and free parking is available.

2/10 – Registration has now opened for the sev-enth annual Community Connections Confer-ence at the Minneapolis Convention Center Sat-urday, Feb. 10, 8:45am - 3:30pm. The conference is free with speakers, exhibitors and learning labs, featuring topics ranging from immigration to tenant rights. The conference will also feature a Minneapolis neighborhood showcase and deli-cious food from American Indian, African Amer-ican and Southeast Asian caterers. Anyone is welcome to register and join nonprofits, elected leaders and community organizations to learn about civic engagement opportunities, commu-nity partnerships, social justice initiatives and ways to shape local government policies. Attendees can register and find out more information at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-connec-tions-conference-2018-tickets-41218142574

2/14 – Senior Surf Day. 10 am-12 pm Learn computer basics, how to navigate and search the Internet and how to access websites of interest to seniors. Get hands-on computer experience with help from representatives of the Senior LinkAge Line. Registration required. Register online or at 612-543-KNOW.

2/18 – Join Mount Olive Music and Fine Arts for a contemplative service of lessons and carols for Lent! Typically associated with Advent and Christmas, this service is designed especial-ly for those caught up in preparations for the com-ing Easter and spring seasons. It provides an opportunity to withdraw from the busyness of life to pray, sing, listen, smell – an opportunity to fully enter into the season of Lent, a time to renew our lives as baptized children of God. The event takes place at 4:00 p.m. and is the fourth event in the 2017 - 2018 Mount Olive Music and Fine Arts sea-son. For further information on this event and on the Music and Fine Arts program, please contact Dr. Cherwien at the church office by phone at 612-827-5919, by email at cantor@mountolivechurch. org, or online at www.mountolivechurch.org.

2/24 – Woodson Lecture Series: Silent Cov-enants. 2pm-4pm Black history honored here! Discover the motive behind 20 captive Africans sold into slavery in the British North American col-onomies to farm the first commercial tobacco crop and an assess-ment of the landmark Supreme Court decision of 1954, its meaning and value to American soci-ety. Lissa Jones and Professor Mahmoud El-Kati will discuss the idea of race and the function of white supremacy as the foundation of America’s racial problems. They will analyze the U.S. gov-ernment’s inability, over many generations, to address the Civil Rights Movement.

Mondays – Community Yoga at Serendipity Spot (3300 Lyndale Ave N) 6pm - 7pm. Vinyasa flow for all levels; $5 suggested donation.

Thursdays – Community Coffee & Conversa-tion, 11am-1pm, complimentary beverages at Serendipity Spot (3300 Lyndale Ave N).

Fridays – Family Storytime. 10am-11am. For chil-dren of all ages and their parent or caregiver. Talk, sing, read, write and play together in a format approp-riate for young children. Share books, stories, rhymes, music and movement.

Hockey and figure skating for girls and boys ages 6-14 are offered at North Commons Park and Northeast Arena during the months of No-vember through February. All equipment is pro-vided and the cost is minimal. Transportation is available for those who need it. Register and get
Free in-person and online tutoring for K-12 students, begins Feb. 13. 4:30pm-7:30pm at the Webber Park Library. No advance sign-up needed. For more information, see www.hclib.org/homework. Sponsor: Friends of the Hennepin County Library.

Sister organizations, MN Comeback and Great MN Schools, have launched Minnesota 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.

Teen Tech workshop is held every other Thursday. North Regional Library, 5pm - 7pm. 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**

Due to the uniqueness and size of the Super Bowl LII events, the City has worked with the Minnesota Super Bowl Host Committee and NFL to reasonably accommodate both current parking users and large event parking demands. There will be no change for monthly contract parking in municipal facilities until game day. On Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 4, some municipal parking facilities will require total use for event purposes. As required by the monthly customer contracts, the City posted notices in January of its plan to not allow contract parking at eight facilities on Super Bowl Sunday. Municipal monthly parking contracts will not be revoked. Residents and visitors will be able to pre-purchase parking for any event in downtown Minneapolis at a guaranteed rate through the NFL Mobile Fan Pass, which is expected to go live soon. Visit mnsuperbowl.com/transportation for more details and parking updates.

The City of Minneapolis can help renters who want smoke-free housing, and it can help property owners make their buildings smoke-free. To help create more smoke-free living options, Minneapolis teamed up with the Live Smoke Free program. For 10 years, Live Smoke Free has helped property owners, managers and renters with smoke-free housing policies. During this time, the number of smoke-free buildings has increased from 50 to 3,000 across the state. The partnership with Live Smoke Free offers:

**For Renters:** Tips, resources and assistance approaching their property owners or managers and a list of smoke-free rental properties.

**For Property Owners and Managers:** “Thank you for taking it outside” posters, door hangers, postcards and yard signs, a step-by-step process for making buildings smoke-free, tools and resources including sample documents and signs, one-on-one troubleshooting and assistance, and help understanding Minnesota laws about prohibiting smoking indoors.

For smoke-free rental housing help, renters and property owners and managers can call 311 or visit www.minneapolismn.gov/smoke-free.

Sidewalks are a critical part of Minneapolis’ transportation system and they should be open for everyone. With the snow season upon us, here’s a refresher on the City’s rules. Minneapolis ordnance requires property owners of houses and duplexes to clear sidewalks within 24 hours after a snowfall, and all other property owners must clear their sidewalks within four daytime hours. People should call 311 to report unshoveled sidewalks and learn more about resources available to people who may need help clearing their sidewalks.

The City Council has approved the creation of a new division in the City Coordinator’s Office to help drive the City’s work to reduce and eliminate racial inequities throughout City government. The Division of Race and Equity will include staff of the City’s equity team who will engage with City departments to set goals and expectations around race equity, assist in accelerating the City’s efforts and progress around racial equity goals and create accountability.

The Minneapolis City Council approved two ordinances to support programs that will help the City accelerate toward its energy and climate change goals. One ordinance for gas and one for electricity raises the franchise fees by half a percentage point – about 59 cents monthly for the average household. The rate increase will take effect in the spring.

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Superintendent Jayne Miller announced her resignation. Miller’s last day with the MPRB is Feb. 3. Miller’s resignation means the newly elected and re-elected MPRB Board of Commissioners that take office in January 2018 will need to fill her position after she departs in February to serve as President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

The Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour, April 28-29, 2018, is accepting nominations at www.MSPHomeTour.com, click on "submit a home" for the option to apply online or download an application. For 11 hours, homeowners and contractors open their doors to share ideas with other home enthusiasts, based on their remodeling experience. Visitors are particularly interested in period-accurate restoration/adaptations and expansions sensitive to the surroundings. Being on the tour gives homeowners great feedback as well as the incentive to finish those last few projects. If you or someone you know needs more information, contact coordinator Margo Ashmore at mfasmorch@aim.com or 612-867-4874. Selections are made in January-February.

Minneapolis has joined a statewide program to help reduce homelessness among veterans. Since the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs launched the Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry in 2014, it has housed 1,218 homeless veterans – 613 in Hennepin County. Minneapolis* and Hennepin County have the highest concentration of homeless veterans in the state. Anyone who served in the U.S. armed forces, Army Reserve or National Guard can join the registry regardless of the type of discharge. Homeless veterans or their representatives are encouraged to call 1-888-LinkVet (1-888-546-5838) or complete the application online at the website for the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs Homeless Veteran Registry.

CenterPoint Energy is reminding customers about certain rights and their responsibilities as it relates to the Cold Weather Rule (CWR), which protects residential customers experiencing difficulty paying their natural gas bill from having their natural gas service disconnected between Oct. 15, 2017 and April 15, 2018. While the CWR does not prevent customers from being disconnected for nonpayment, it does provide customers extra protection as defined in the CWR, but residential customers must contact CenterPoint Energy to set up a payment plan. Under the CWR, special payment terms are available to customers who apply for and receive Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding assistance in Minnesota; or meeting the guidelines set by the state of Minnesota and providing proof of income. Call CenterPoint Energy to set up a payment plan at 1-612-372-4680 or 1-800-729-6164. For additional information, please visit CenterPointEnergy.com/ReadyForWinter.

The City’s Municipal Minimum Wage Ordinance took effect 1/1/2018. There will be a tiered phase-in period for small and large businesses. Large businesses that employ more than 100 workers will be required to pay employees a minimum of $10 an hour beginning Jan. 1, 2018. Small businesses with 100 or fewer employees will be required to pay workers at least $10.25 beginning 7/1/2018. Large businesses have until 7/1/2022 to reach a minimum wage of $15 an hour and small businesses have until 7/1/2024 to reach $15 an hour.

Through its 311 service, the City of Minneapolis has opened a new hotline for reporting hate crimes. Which are harassing behaviors motivated by prejudice. The hotline number is 311 for anyone calling from within the city or 612-673-3000 statewide. The 311 hotline will be answered 7am-7pm weekdays and 8am - 4:30pm weekends. Those with a report to make can also call the Department of Justice at 612-664-5600. As always, in the case of immediate physical violence, property damage, or threats, people should call 911.

Following Minneapolis fire laws will help keep our neighborhoods safe and livable; outdoor fires are permitted 9am-10pm, fires must be less than three feet in diameter and two feet high, and a fire must be 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 Minneapolis 311@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 U.S. Department of Justice is awarding the City of Minneapolis a $1.2 million grant to help combat gun violence. These funds will make it possible to add 10 sworn officers to the Minneapolis Police Department.

The City Council has authorized the City Attorney to initiate a lawsuit against manufacturers and distributors of opioids. The proposed litigation will seek to recover monetary damages incurred by the City in responding to the opioid crisis in Minneapolis and injunctive and other relief. The City of Minneapolis joins a number of states, counties and cities across the country that have filed similar lawsuits against drug makers to help recoup costs associated with fighting the opioid epidemic.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) has banned all tobacco products on Minneapolis park properties and owned or operated facilities as of 5/8.

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 cannot 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.

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

2/21 – Kindred Kitchen, Appetite For Change, and Northside Economic Opportunity Network are partnering with the Hennepin County Library to offer a Food Business 101 class. The class will take place from 6pm - 8pm at Minneapolis Central Library Downtown Minneapolis (300 Nicollet Mall) in room N-270.

The City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is seeking development proposals for the Metropolitan Councils LCD & LCD-TOD Program. Pre-applications are due to CPED no later than Feb 5.

Kindred Kitchen, an initiative of Appetite for Change, hosts a new member weekly kitchen tour every Tuesday until Dec. 18 at 10am. Tours are hosted at Kindred Kitchen at 1206 W. Broadway Ave. Tours are your time to learn more about becoming a commercial kitchen member and our Northside Food Business Incubator, ask food business related questions, and jump into the kitchen. For more information visit https://www.facebook.com/events/1493935500702137/.

We want to feature your notice!

Email your information to kenzieo@pillsburyunited.org

January 25, 2018 • North News • 21
Niles flows upstream

Creativity runs in Chadwick “Niles” Phillips’ blood. He grew up in Lansing, Michigan alongside artistic brothers. His father, Sam Gill, the longest tenured African American in a United States symphony orchestra, has inspired Niles since he met him as an adult.

After graduating from Park Center High School in Brooklyn Park and then Michigan State University, Phillips moved to New York City, was signed by a major record label and worked for a string of well-known media entities: BET, CBS, and NYC Fashion Week among them.
This month, Niles talked to North News about moving back to Minnesota, starting his own production company, The Avant Garde, paying homage to his historical heroes through his work, and his unwavering belief in the power of positive thinking. He plans to release his first album later this year.

By Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor
Photos by David Pierini

Describe yourself in a couple sentences. As a person, I am a personification of art. I am a believer in optimism, in the better things in life, regardless of what’s presented. I always believe in the bright side of life. I filter that out artistically through the gifts that I was given. I’m a historian too.

How so? I look at everything I do as paying homage to the people who have sacrificed so much for the next generation. Without their sacrifices, we wouldn’t have what we have.

Who are some of those people for you? My mother. My brothers. My uncles. My family. My older brother, Segrin Phillips, was a very prominent hip-hop artist when we were young. He was like 14, and he was already recording. He introduced me to hip hop, to style, to how to carry yourself and still be influential without compromising yourself, musically. My brother Sebastian is an amazing painter. There was a lot of inspiration around me in my household. Outside of that, Miles Davis inspires me. So does Josephine Baker, Bruce Lee, John Lennon, Nas, Common, and Queen Latifah.

Where do you see yourself five years from now? I see myself touring, releasing another album, expanding The Avant Garde nationally and internationally. I see myself motivational speaking and teaching the youth. I developed a “Hip Hop History and the Arts” curriculum that I have taught from now?

Where do you see yourself five years from now? I see myself touring, releasing another album, expanding The Avant Garde nationally and internationally. I see myself motivational speaking and teaching the youth. I developed a “Hip Hop History and the Arts” curriculum that I have taught from now?

You’re from Michigan. You lived in NYC for a while. How did you end up here in Minneapolis? I lived here my senior year of high school. I graduated from Park Center. I have family here. It’s always been a second home. I went back home to go to Michigan State University, and after I graduated I moved to New York. Then I wanted to start a new chapter, building my own enterprise. I picked Minnesota because it was the best place in terms of support and price of living. I knew my next step would take time and I wanted to be in a place where everything was balanced. Seven years later, here we are.

That enterprise you started is The Avant Garde. Tell us about it. It’s a music, arts, and entertainment production company that gives light to the eclectic artist on the scene – neo soul singers, R&B singers, conscious hip hop artists. I used to host an open mic called the Poet’s Groove at the Blue Nile restaurant. I met so many talented artists there. I wanted to start The Avant Garde to preserve and showcase that side of the scene. It ended up growing. We’ve been presenting at so many different places: Bedlam Lowertown, the Amsterdam, Como Dockside Pavilion, the U of M, The Dakota. We presented for Black History Month last year at the Machine Shop for US Bank. It has gradually grown.

Your stage name is Niles. Where does that come from? My artist name means going upstream in life like the Nile River in Africa. I’m Caribbean (Barbados), but my origin is in Africa. The land that is near the Nile is some of the most fertile in Africa, and I see the art that I do as fertile ground for the people to consume. I’m a big connoisseur of ancient Egyptian life. I’m a historian. A lot of the ways of life of the Ancient Egyptians have revolved around the Nile River. Also, my alias is Niles Davis and I’m a fan of Miles Davis.

Why is paying homage to the past so important to you? I look at you the past times, times like the Civil Rights Movement, the Great Depression, the Great Migration, and it’s like, wow. People’s sacrifices and inventions have kept the world going. We’re creating history now for future generations to be fueled by. My dad says, “He who exalts himself the same will be humbled; he who humbles himself the same shall be exalted,” It’s about the admiration of greatness that you’ve been blessed with because of what you’ve been inspired by. It’s very important to keep that in mind because history can be forgotten so easily.

You put on an event for MLK day at the University of Minnesota this year. Tell us about that. The U of M contacted me to present this production to show different elements of art being presented in homage to Dr. King. It was the 37th annual tribute event. It’s something that’s very special to the University. From the first one to now, it’s always been a unifier of a lot of different ideologies, generations, and cultures of students and staff on campus. When they contacted me I was flattered because I put Dr. King to a very high degree of admiration. When you’re in elementary school, he’s the first person you learn about. Ashley DuBose, Jovonta Patton, Delphin Starr, Daonna Lewis, Meash Ismail, music director Ryan Bynum, and I all came together to pay homage to Dr. King through music, visual arts, and dance.

You seem like a fundamentally optimistic person. Where does that optimism come from? My foundation is God. That optimism comes from a deeply rooted bright light that I have. It’s not me, it’s through the creator. My salvation.

Why is positivity so important to you? I think life is meant to be lived on that side of the tracks. Tests are meant to be brought to you, but you’re supposed to be on the bright side of it. You have to work to maintain that. It’s the best experience you can have to be among positive people. It makes life worth living.

Who inspires you? You! People who document. We need newspapers. We need television, film, photography, and transcription. We need snapshots of times. It’s very very important to document what’s going on now. Art will remain when the smoke clears. Art is always going to unify. It’s going to inspire.

Who else inspires you? Joe Davis. Because his art is very bright. He brings a similar perspective of “we can prosper” regardless. He’s a friend and a brother. Thandisizwe Jackson-Nisan is another one. She is an incredible virtuous woman. She personifies art and strength and empowerment. She goes the extra mile to make sure the presence of dignity is felt. Casey Golden too. He is a music engineer. Very very creative, different and unique. Jesse “Big Jess” Semanko. He’s a music producer who has been on the scene for a very long time. He’ll work with anyone and shift to make sure...

Don’t Get Disconnected! Energy Assistance Can Help.

When heating prices skyrocket or a financial situation changes, many families worry about their heat being shut off.

For those having trouble paying their heating bills, Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County (CAP-HC) can help! CAP-HC’s Energy Assistance Program (EAP) provides financial assistance to eligible Hennepin County residents, to help with home energy costs.

Energy Assistance Program offices are now open in St. Louis Park and 3 Minneapolis locations:
Minnesota Council of Churches, Sabathani Community Center and Minneapolis Urban League

For more information, call 952-930-3541
E-mail eap@caphennepin.org
or text 4WARMTH to 555888

www.caphennepin.org
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A program of Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County, sponsored by:
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