REACHING OUT AND SPEAKING LOUD

Asian Media Access gives youth an opportunity to make their stories known. Page 21

ALSO INSIDE

Vacant schools: the plan for Willard and Lincoln
Page 12

The power of athletics
Page 14

Jennifer Phung, center, participates in a team-building game during lion dance practice at Asian Media Access on Plymouth Ave.
Letter from the Editor

It’s not every month that international news outlets reach out and request to use our content. On July 18, I got a call from a BBC reporter asking if she could run David Pierini’s photos of Jaequan Faulkner’s Old Fashioned Hotdogs in a story she was working on about the young teen’s business. With credit, we happily obliged.

We’re excited for Jaequan and honored to have played a small role in getting the word out about him and his business. I love that Faulkner and his story of hard work and entrepreneurship were the reason the BBC was interested in North Minneapolis.

In other news about large media entities interested in telling different stories about our communities – it was officially announced this month that North News is one of six partners on a $250K grant from The Saint Paul & Minnesota Community Foundations to address and change problematic racial narratives in local Minnesota news media. As we track toward a conference in Spring 2019, we plan to work collaboratively with Minnesota Public Radio, the Minnesota Humanities Center, KMOJ, KRSM, ThreeSixty Journalism, Hamline University, and more community partners and systems change experts to explore how to help news professionals become actively anti-oppressive. We’re grateful for the resources to do this work that we’ve so far been committed to in North Minneapolis on a larger scale. We plan to do this work transparently and collaboratively (with fair compensation to all who are involved in the project). I will keep you in the loop via this column and through our social media channels.

If you love stories by our youth reporters, this is the edition of North News for you. Our cover story about Asian Media Access and its founder Ange Hwang was done by Myesha Powell with help from Daija Triplett (Page 21). Triplett livestreamed a community meeting about Thurman Blevins for us in mid-July and reflects on her complicated, conflicted experience of being both a reporter and a black woman when covering racially charged events this community (Page 8). Blessing Kasongoma, a recent immigrant to the United States from the Democratic Republic of Congo, explored patriotism and how her neighbors related to America during the Fourth of July (Page 9). Azhae’la Hanson interviewed two candidates for Minneapolis School Board seats – Kimberly Caprini and Sharon El-Amin, both Northside women with deep roots in the community (Page 7). For next month’s paper, Bryan Salinas is working on an illustrated guide to the Hennepin County District 2 Commissioner’s race. I can’t get over how lucky we are to have smart, creative teenagers driving editorial decision-making and creating incredible content for us each month. I think the answers to our questions about how to create narrative change are already alive in them and the work they do each day.

Kenzie O’Keefe
Editor/Publisher, North News
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Correction

THOR HAS COME HOME

June 28, 2018: This story inaccurately stated that THOR is the contractor for the new Estes Funeral Home in North Minneapolis. It is not. Noor Construction Company is the contractor.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, North Minneapolis has endured the consequences of city sanctioned redlining and lack of investment. For this reason the economic and housing stability enjoyed in other areas of the city has been absent here. Northside residents are still managing the effects of these practices and disinvestment. In spite of these deleterious efforts, North Minneapolis has a thriving culture and currently has a reservoir of high quality affordable rental and for sale housing. It is critical that Northside’s thriving culture of so many historically marginalized residents is protected by the 2040 plan. The 2040 plan as it stands does not protect North Minneapolis residents with historically marginalized identities.

North Minneapolis boasts a diverse, thriving community of artists, entrepreneurs and civically engaged citizens. City sanctioned redlining and lack of investment by local government has led to the destabilization in housing and economic prosperity of long time community members on the Northside. While the Minneapolis 2040 plan proposes solutions to increase density in all areas of the city, it lacks a distinct, concentrated plan addressing the disparities unique to our area of the city. Over the years, Northside has been home to a myriad of marginalized communities. African-Americans, along with Latino, Asian and Jewish immigrants on the Northside have experienced predatory lending, gentrification, inaccessible resources and more on a more disproportionate level. Action steps in the 2040 plan imply an extreme increase in development that, while serving as a benefactor for the potential influx of future Minneapolis residents, does little to remedy the pre-existing critical conditions of the Northside for its current residents. In moving forward with the 2040 plan, NRRC asks for controlled, localized development that acknowledges the demographics and current conditions of the Northside, ultimately bettering its existing residents. Due to the uniqueness of the area, an individualized plan to meet the social and economic needs of this community is in order.

Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC)

North News welcomes letters to the editor. Please send to kenzieo@pillsburyunited.org or to North News, 125 W Broadway Suite 130, Minneapolis, MN 55411. They must be signed, under 300 words, and relevant to life in North Minneapolis.
The Trailhead opens at Wirth Park

The grand opening of the Theodore Wirth Park Trailhead took place July 17 with a ribbon cutting ceremony by Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board members and Loppet Foundation representatives. Speeches were made by MPRB President Brad Bourn, Superintendent Mary Merrill, District 2 Commissioner Kale Severson and the Loppet Foundation Adventures Director Anthony Taylor. “The Trailhead is a place where you can start your connection to the outdoors,” Taylor said. Following the ribbon cutting, the facility was opened up for all in attendance to tour the new space. The 14,000 square foot building contains an Adventure Shop complete with bike and ski rental services as well as bike repair opportunities. There is also a restaurant, Cajun Twist, that is expected to open sometime this Fall. A large open area with tables and chairs allows for up to 250 people to gather and relax before a bike ride or warm up after a cross country ski trip. A workout studio, locker rooms, bird-safe glass windows and an outdoor patio and bike repair/wash station round out the Trailhead’s many amenities. Photo by Mathias Durie

Affordable housing for artists planned for Harrison Neighborhood

Northside Artspace Lofts, a 100-unit, affordable housing development project by nonprofit developer Artspace, is planned to break ground in Spring 2019 at 212 James Ave. N. All of the apartments in the $32 million project will be offered to artists who make 60% or less of area median income. They’ll be set up as live and work spaces for artists and their families. 26 of the units will have three bedrooms. Project planners estimate that the first tenants will begin moving into the building in Spring 2020. Artspace is headquartered in Minneapolis, has an impressive portfolio of affordable housing projects for artists. It has completed 48 projects in 30 cities in 19 states – everywhere from major urban hubs to smaller towns like Elgin, IL. Its mission is to “create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations.” According to Artspace Senior Vice President Heidi Zimmer, the organization is committed to keeping their units affordable for artists regardless of gentrification that may happen in the neighborhoods where their projects are located. “We always sign at least 30 year affordability covenants,” she said at an informational meeting about the project at Harrison Neighborhood Association’s offices on July 19. Learn more at www.artspace.org/northside.

Development rights granted for 927 W Broadway

Exclusive development rights for the mostly vacant building at 927 W Broadway Ave have been issued. A joint proposal made by New Rules, The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation, and TRI-Construction has been approved by both CPED and the City Council. The proposal was one of five submitted to CPED. The developers plan to create office space on the second level of the building while creating an artist market and event space on the street level. Moving forward they also hope to obtain 1001 W Broadway Ave, located across the street from 927, and build housing directly behind the 927 building.

New playground at Ascension

After 125 years of serving North Minneapolis youth, Ascension Catholic school is taking the next step in providing a fun recess experience for students. The school is building a playground. Ascension is hoping to raise $30,000 in order to put in the new playground as well as benches, basketball hoops, and soccer nets. Roughly $10,000 has been raised to date and donations can be made on Ascension’s website (www.ascensionschoolmn.org/playground/) which will be matched two to one. The motivation behind the project is to provide kids with a safe space to play, be active, use their imagination, and learn important lessons like sharing and patience.

Northside greenway report released

An evaluation report for the temporary Northside bike greenway project was released on July 19. It contains community feedback regarding the project, which looked at making a three-mile stretch of road in North Minneapolis more accessible to pedestrians and bikers, that was put in place in 2016. It does not offer recommendations or decisions about future greenway plans. The temporary greenway tested three different designs: a one-block full greenway, a three-block bike boulevard with community spaces, and a one-block half-and-half greenway. According to the report, most residents (73% of all respondents) reported wanting some type of greenway installed or near their blocks at the end of the project. The report also notes that a smaller but vocal group is vehemently opposed to any greenway. Read the full report at www.minneapolismn.gov/health/living/northminneapolisgreenway.

National Night Out is August 7

The annual nationwide night of block parties, National Night Out (NNO), will take place Tuesday, August 7 this year. The event is designed to encourage neighbors to connect with each other and police to build community and prevent crime. In 2017, Minneapolis had the largest turnout of all NNO celebrations (1500 registered events) in US cities with a population over 300,000. The event registration deadline is July 30; that’s the last day you are able to apply for street closure. Street closure requires the permission of 75% of neighbors. Applications are due by Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board members and Loppet Foundation representatives. Speeches were made by MPRB President Brad Bourn, Superintendent Mary Merrill, District 2 Commissioner Kale Severson and the Loppet Foundation Adventures Director Anthony Taylor. “The Trailhead is a place where you can start your connection to the outdoors,” Taylor said. Following the ribbon cutting, the facility was opened up for all in attendance to tour the new space. The 14,000 square foot building contains an Adventure Shop complete with bike and ski rental services as well as bike repair opportunities. There is also a restaurant, Cajun Twist, that is expected to open sometime this Fall. A large open area with tables and chairs allows for up to 250 people to gather and relax before a bike ride or warm up after a cross country ski trip. A workout studio, locker rooms, bird-safe glass windows and an outdoor patio and bike repair/wash station round out the Trailhead’s many amenities. Photo by Mathias Durie

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Another vacate date looms for Khan tenants

Kenzie O'Keefe | Editor

After months of legal uncertainty and, for many, subpar living conditions, the last of Minneapolis landlord Mahmood Khan’s tenants have been told they must be moved out of his properties by August 31.

Khan still owns his homes, but they have been under court appointed administratorship by Lighthouse Management Group Inc. since he lost his rental license late last year. At that time, over 50 families lived in his properties. Northside nonprofit Urban Homeworks has been managing the properties for Lighthouse since January.

Khan says close to 20 of his 42 properties are already uninhabited at this time. The rest must be out by the end of August because that’s when the administratorship ends. “That’s the judge’s decision,” he said.

Khan says rent has not been collected from tenants in months. “They are saving a lot of money at my expense,” he said, alleging that he is still paying property taxes and other fees associated with homeownership.

He is in the process of trying to sell his homes. He says he’s had buyers interested in the whole portfolio, but “nothing concrete has happened yet.” He also said some of his current tenants want to buy their homes and that he’s open to that.

One of them, TeCara Ayler, says she along with up to 10 other current tenants want to go this route. In addition to renting her home from Khan, Ayler leases a vacant lot next door from the city where she has planted a community garden.

“Yeah, we’re supposed to go, but I’m still fighting for my house, and yeah, my garden is up for running,” she said in mid July.

Ayer says she’s hoping to either buy the home from Khan or do a contract for deed with him, but she’s wary. “I have to be careful with contract for deed messing with him,” she said. She has also explored land trust options through City of Lakes Community Land Trust.

Khan is defensive about accusations that he abused his tenants. He sees himself as a provider of affordable housing for people who struggle the most to find it. “Minimum standards were maintained. [My homes] were habitable, and they’re still habitable if people are living there,” he said.

Danielle Tietjen, community outreach and communications associate at Folwell Neighborhood Association (FNA), says FNA has been working closely with two families “helping them stay connected to resources and help them settle into what they want and need.” One of the families would like to buy their home from Khan. The other wants to move. Both experiences have been a struggle. “Finding a home for the second is proving very difficult, while helping the other family purchase their home simply has so many logistics, it’s very time consuming. There are so many moving parts with multiple invested organizations and city initiatives. It’s been difficult to truly stay up to date on where the overall project is, and how to respond with integrity to each individual family situation,” said Tietjen.

North News reached out to Anna Decrans at Urban Homeworks for comment. She told us the organization is not commenting on the situation publicly at this time.

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City’s goals of achieving waste reduction. The ordinance is very much aligned with the reduced emission of greenhouse gases. In 2013, Minnesota sent over 80% of its 1.6 million tons of construction and demolition waste to landfills. If some of the materials were deemed to be reusable and recyclable, the city shook with horror as they wondered whether or not the police—an institution they want to trust—would turn on them in that way. Ketamine, the powerful drug in question, has a dubious history and people have rightfully demanded answers. The entire situation has yet to be resolved, but the damaged trust settles in even further. Again, how can the community meet officers halfway on trusting one another? It’s impossible when the power feels so lopsided in favor of law enforcement.

Lastly, there’s the officer-involved shooting death of Thurman Blevins—a case that’s still in the hands of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension—which saw yet another life taken. The strict facts of the case are not yet completely known and the body camera footage has yet to be released, but the community knows one thing for certain—that one of their neighbors has been killed by someone meant to protect them. It is a deeply important conversation to have: who has governing power over our police, and who can constituents turn to when the police have ruptured the public’s trust? When policy decisions regarding the police are made, they are not made by the council, they are not made in public, they are not made by the council, they do not get your input. If you demand me to hold our officers to a higher standard—something completely reasonable for you to ask of me—I can use little more than my charm to make it happen. That’s the way it’s been, but that’s not the way it has to be. It all depends on what we believe we deserve, and I’m excited to have this important conversation with you.

Thank you, and as always, I look forward to seeing you out in the community! Call my office at 612-673-2205 or email me at wards5@minneapolismn.gov.
New tenants coming soon for 800 West Broadway building

Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

There are big changes on the horizon for the 800 West Broadway building which recently celebrated its one year anniversary since its major remodel.

According to George Sherman, principal developer at Sherman Associates and owner of the 800 West Broadway property, the ground floor retail space will soon be home to two new retailers, Minnesota’s Women’s Press and a restaurant or coffee shop. Details will be released as soon as July 21. The space is currently home to Jackson Hewitt Tax Service.

800 West Broadway is a collaboration between the Minnesota Workforce Center through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Northpoint Health and Wellness, Minneapolis Public Schools, and the City of Minneapolis. The project, as a whole, was initiated by the Officer of Governor Mark Dayton. Its retail space has been largely empty for the past year, but project developers say that’s because they have been committed to finding local tenants.

Despite the upcoming announcement, the delay in filling the retail space has been a concern for project partners.

“We’re disappointed that the street level retail has taken this long to fill in. It’s really the responsibility of the developer and owner of the building to fill the space. We continuously ask about and encourage them to fill the space,” said DEED Deputy Commissioner Jeremy Hanson Willis. “But I do think that we are fully operational. And that we have been for some time. I think that the Workforce Center and the school district, and the North Point Health and Wellness Center have been the three core partners from the beginning. We are all fully operational and we’re excited for the day that more of the street level retail fills in.”

There is still over 1000 square feet of retail space available for lease. The space rents for $12-$15/square foot or approximately $1200 per month. “We hope to finish filling the space by the end of the year,” said Sherman.

Comment period for controversial comp plan ends

The draft comprehensive plan is over 200 pages long and includes a slew of proposed policies and city goals. Many are concerned by its one size fits all approach to governance.

Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

The final stretch of the 100-day public comment period on the City of Minneapolis’ Comprehensive 2040 draft plan came to an end on July 22. All Minneapolis residents were urged by City officials to review the draft plan and respond. According to Ward 4 Councilmember Phillippe Cunningham, the 2040 plan offers an incredible opportunity for the Northside to come together and build political power.

Minneapolis 2040, which is currently in draft form, is a 265-page comprehensive planning document for the City of Minneapolis that is meant to shape the city’s future. The plan is divided up into several goals and topics including land use, transportation, housing, and environmental systems amongst many others. According to the plan’s website, the document is intended to be a guide for how the City of Minneapolis can create equitable housing, jobs, and investment.

Though he believes in its potential, Cunningham isn’t yet entirely supportive of the plan. He worries that it’s one-size-fits-all approach to affordable housing and equity issues will only hurt the Northside.

“I am not satisfied with the current draft of the 2040 plan because I think that the policies need to go much deeper into racial and geographic equity. There are downtown specific policies as it is an economic engine, but there are no policies that are Northside specific, from the opposite side of that, right? We need to talk about the disparities and the disinvestment” said Cunningham. “The policies will say things like, ‘not all areas of the city have been invested in the same way.’ But can you just say North Minneapolis and actually put that out there and be specific about how is the city going to undo old harms.”

Cunningham is not the only one concerned about the 2040 draft plan. The Old Highland Neighborhood Association in Ward 5 recently shared a letter with the Minneapolis City Council expressing their concerns about the 2040 draft’s affordable housing plan and other aspects of the draft plan.

“We are opposed to more density in the Old Highland neighborhood. We understand the need for more housing in the City, particularly for low-income families/individuals. We can anticipate why this proposed density increase may especially impact Old Highland as we are both close to downtown and on the #5 bus route, but it is wrong for many reasons. We believe that the City needs to take a balanced approach in addressing housing needs, applying proposed new policies differently based on current available data on each impacted neighborhood,” read the letter.

Community members gathered in Ward 5 on July 17 for two separate meetings on the 2040 draft plan. The office of Ward 5 City Councilmember Jeremiah Ellison hosted a meeting at the 800 West Broadway building. The meeting was attended by nearly 100 people and was standing room only, though only about half of the participants were from North Minneapolis. New Rules also hosted a discussion on the 2040 draft plan with representatives from the Office of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED). During both meetings, community members spoke up about their concerns and confusion related to the plan and planning process. City officials urged community members to continue sharing their thoughts online in order to ensure that the City of Minneapolis hears a diverse array of voices as continued 2040 planning occurs.

“There are gaps. We don’t get that unless you talk to us,” said Brey Golding, one of the Minneapolis city planners present at New Rules’ community discussion.

Councilmember Cunningham says that now that the public comment period is over Northsiders should continue to reach out to his office (or Councilmember Ellison’s) as he can include their thoughts in his continued advocacy and work on the plan.

Public comment will be integrated into the document and then presented to the Minneapolis City Council and the Metropolitan Council for review by Dec. 31.
Kimberly Caprini is deeply rooted in the Northside community and has served schools across the district. Born and raised in North Minneapolis, Caprini identifies herself as an active parent leader who is ready to take on issues that have an impact on the Minneapolis Public School district. Growing up in what is now the Old Highland Neighborhood as a child of nine, Caprini relates heavily to the importance of community. She takes pride in her strong relationships with her husband and two daughters who have lived on the Northside for 22 years and have given her infinite support throughout this campaign. She ran for the District 2 seat in 2016 but lost by a small margin to KerryJo Felder.

“I believe our children deserve leaders who are held accountable to better decision making, if we are to see equitable education for all children.”

Caprini has passionately advocated for specifically the Northside and Northeast schools for eleven years. Her children were raised in the Minneapolis Public School system which gave her first hand experience with its functionality. Over the last several years, Caprini has volunteered and served on numerous district committees and site councils while also volunteering numerous hours in classrooms. Through her involvement with MPS, she says she has gained unique insight into its strengths and challenges. Caprini acknowledges the progression that the district has been showing to address things that aren’t working and appreciates the willingness to improve the students’ and families’ day to day experiences. However, she is well aware of the lack of consistency by the district, to the students, families, and communities affected by the schools. Caprini is set on bigger and better gains for more reliable programming, extracurricular offerings, and trust.

“I will work with the board to ensure that funding is allocated, the way it’s intended to be; and is equitable throughout our schools.”

Sharon El-Amin has resided in North Minneapolis for the past 25 years and has three children who have attended Minneapolis Public Schools. El-Amin has demonstrated tenacity by owning the well known Northside restaurant El-Amin’s Fish House for over 15 years. The El-Amins have deep roots in the community of North Minneapolis stretching back to the 70s, paving ways to create their family legacy within the community. El-Amin has gotten to know lots of people through her business that created great relationships in her life which led her to become very active and involved. El-Amin eats, sleeps, and breathes the Northside. It is her place of worship, work, shopping, housing, and soon, she hopes, her place of politics.

“If we’re pushing them out of the door before they’re ready, then were setting them up for failure. We need better systems.”

El-Amin’s concern is education for the district’s students. As a mother, El-Amin demands to know more, want more, and play a more vital role in the education system. She is keen on creating commu-
A youth reporter reflects on the trauma of Thurman Blevins’ death

Thurman Blevins Jr’s family members were hurt and angry about how the community meeting with Drew Evans from the Bureau of Criminal Aprehension was handled at Webber Rec Center on July 12. Photo by David Pleinini

Daija Triplett | Student Intern

A community meeting about Thurman Blevins Jr, also known as Jun and Junior, was held at Webber Rec Center on Thursday, July 12. The impression was that my community would be getting some type of information about the investigation from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, which is leading the investigation into Blevins’ death. According to the meeting flyer it was a “Community Meal and Conversation.”

The Thurman Blevins shooting was a very confusing one. According to reporter Kelly Busche of the Pioneer Press, there was a 911 call about a man being intoxicated and shooting a gun in the air. MPD officers responded to the call and found Blevins and a women sitting on the corner of 48th and Camden Ave. N. Officers Ryan Kelly and Justin Schmidt chased Blevins into an alley and ended up shooting him, saying he supposedly fit the 911 call description. According to MPD, Blevins had a gun. MPD has said that the officers’ body cameras captured the incident but have not yet released the footage to the public.

At the community event, Blevins’ family was outraged because they said they were not informed about the event or respected by it. The family was also angry with reporters, who they thought were overstepping boundaries by blocking views and recording the chaos. As a reporter, I have been taught to get information out and to be the first to get to it, but this particular story made me think a lot differently.

As a young, black, African American woman, I can understand what the Blevins family was feeling. I have four older brothers and I worry about their safety all the time. What if they’re next? What if an officer decides that they are doing something wrong?

We as black people are tired of having to look over our shoulders or move away because we see red, white, and blue lights flashing in our rear view mirrors. We don’t leave because we’re guilty; we leave because we’re scared. I felt the anger and pain all throughout the room that night, and that is what the police and other leaders and non-black community members often fail to understand. The media should respect the boundaries and it doesn’t always happen. I’ve learned that by respecting the victims you often get the story you want.

I broadcasted the meeting on Facebook Live for North News, but as soon as the family requested that they wanted the cameras turned off, I did. Later, out of respect, I asked Blevins’ cousin Sydnee Brown if she was okay with us leaving the broadcast up on our page. She said she was.

I noticed that other media companies did not turn off their cameras when asked to do so by the family. As a young journalist and a black woman, I think we need to have a certain level of respect for people especially in a tragic situation like this. Reporters should be asking for explicit permission to record or speak to the victims and always make sure they are comfortable and aware of how their information is being used.

There have been so many police related shootings and they’ve all used the same excuse, “I thought he had a gun.” I’m tired of hearing it. I want justice to be served to the families because so many have lost someone that they cannot get back.

According to Blevins’ second cousin Sydnee Brown, the Blevins family wants justice by releasing the body camera video. In an interview after the meeting, she said: “...these officers had no true descriptions when they did approach, no defensively accurate approach or description of who they needed to respond to this call on. ...He was sitting on the curb with his girlfriend and her baby, they pulled up wildly with guns already drawn and didn’t even close the doors, so that means that they approached this man already unjustifiably.”

The Blevins family deserves justice. They deserve answers.
Amidst national controversy and reckoning, community remains patriotic

Youth reporter Blessing Kasongoma interviewed Northsiders after the Fourth of July about their relationship to America today.

Blessing Kasongoma | Student Intern

We currently live in an uncertain time in America. There is political division and regularly occurring traumatic realities such as the treatment of immigrant children at the border, overlooked police brutality, and Trump’s relationship with Russia. During this time of confusion and fear, many are questioning their relationship with America. Their senses of patriotism are being impacted. Despite that, happy families still gathered to celebrate independence day last month. Here at North News, we wondered: do North Minneapolis residents celebrate the Fourth of July out of patriotism or just for the family time?

Most of the people North News spoke with consider themselves patriotic, but they also see the Fourth of July as a great excuse to spend time with family. “I do like to celebrate the Fourth of July for fun, family and kids events. I think about fun summer activities, having a day off, and just celebrating with food and extra fun things. When I was young, we’d go to a carnival, and I like fireworks, and I like thinking about kids having a fun time. But I also do thank God that I am an American, and I’m very happy to live in the United States,” said Joanna Rosendahl, a library specialist and 13-year resident of North Minneapolis.

Despite what’s happening nationally, no one seemed to be celebrating any less this year than in other years. Some had barbecues. Others used fireworks. Ravinia Billups, a foster mom and 21-year resident of North Minneapolis said, “Yes! Independence day, that’s what it’s all about. And we’ve gone through a lot in this country, to be independent on this day. ...I respect that. I love, you know, what the Fourth of July means. Because if I didn’t, I wouldn’t celebrate it as much as I do.” She said she doesn’t limit her celebration to a single day. “We celebrate for the whole week. Firecrackers...It’s still going on in my neighborhood, they celebrate it the whole month!”

Billups is committed to bringing her foster children joy on the Fourth of July. This year they went to Bde Maka Ska (formerly known as Lake Calhoun). “It was as their first time going to see some fireworks, and they were so excited. It just gave me joy because it gave them joy...that’s what kids want, they want memories,” she said.

Rosendahl feels similarly. “Right now I mostly celebrate it because I have kids. And I like to have good memories of the Fourth of July,” she said.

Despite their enjoyment of the day, Northsiders feel the weight of what’s happening in America right now. “I think a lot of us are scared by what we’re seeing on the news; the news comes so quickly and changes so rapidly, and some of the images are scary.” said Rosendahl.

Billups agreed. “I know some of the Americans are not happy of where we are right now. They are protesting. Some things are going to change, and some things are not going to change. I just believe in change,” she said.
Nicole Curtis, star of the popular DIY Network show “Rehab Addict,” says the North Minneapolis home she’s owned since 2012 will be complete by the end of August, according to the Star Tribune.

Curtis held a fundraiser for fans of her show at the house on Wednesday, July 11. A $5 donation to charity gave attendees a chance to connect with Curtis and tour the property at 1522 Hillside Ave. N. A construction crew was actively working on the home during the event.

Curtis declined an interview with North News at the get together and would not allow us to enter the home for a tour. Follow up requests for comment went unanswered.

During the event, Camden neighborhood homeowner Amber Ortiz protested across the street, holding a sign that read “Vacant houses contribute to a net negative effect on a neighborhood (but I bet you knew that). So finish this 1.”

Ortiz says she’s been frustrated both by how long it has taken Curtis to work on the house and by her actions in the neighborhood. “To kind of have her coming into this neighborhood to drum up support for whatever new show she’s doing or whatever strikes me as kind of using this house and our neighborhood for her own personal gain, and I’m not really ok with that so that’s why I’m here,” she said. In an ideal world, “either she would finish it or the city would finish it. It would be no longer vacant. That’s what I care about,” she added.

Curtis bought the dilapidated historic home from the City of Minneapolis for $2. Her agreement with the city required her to renovate it within a year of purchase. By 2017, the house was still in disrepair, and the City sued. They asked for the home to be returned to them due to breach of contract. Curtis said the city had prevented her from working on the house by not providing her with the permit she needed to do the work. She also ran into issues with contractors.

The two parties settled, and the home remained in the possession of Curtis’ company, Detroit Renovations. She agreed to complete the project by October of 2017. The deadline was then extended again to July of 2018.

In a Facebook comment on her event page, Curtis wrote that she is not planning to renovate more homes in Minneapolis. “This is our last Minneapolis project – we switched gears and invested where there was cooperation,” she said.
Firebox fuses all the Northside's comfort foods

The BBQ joint offers a mix of cuisines in a laid back, stylish atmosphere

Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

For mouth-watering barbecue, North Minneapolis' Firebox Deli is hard to beat. The humbly-sized, fast casual restaurant seats less than 20 and has been around just under four years. It’s menu, which includes beef brisket, pulled pork, mac and cheese, and egg rolls, draws in a crowd that consistently comes back for more.

“I work in North Minneapolis and found this place driving by. I’m not a big fan of hot food but I have the beef brisket sandwich a couple times a week,” said Tom Murphy, a regular at the restaurant.

Firebox is a family-run business. Wang Vang is the restaurant manager. His parents own the shop, his sister co-manages, and his daughter works the counter.

“This is a real, true mom-and-pop shop,” said Vang, who notes that all employees are either family members or friends of the family. Vang and his family are from St. Paul, but they have owned the building that houses the restaurant (and the next door tax agency) for almost two decades.

“It just made sense for the area. My mom’s a great cook and she always kind of wanted to be in the restaurant business. Both of my parents are entrepreneurs, doing their own kind of self-taught businesses, and it just kind of fell in our lap, really,” said Vang.

Their menu items are simple but meticulously made. Ribs are smoked in-house for upwards of five hours in small batches and their beef brisket is smoked for 13 hours. They offer a multitude of sides, including the popular collard greens and diced sweet potatoes. There are many portion sizes available and your food can be made in less than 15 minutes if you’re in a rush.

According to Vang, Firebox has been treated kindly by the neighborhood but it has had its challenges. “We are surviving. We rely on our lunchtime business, the local businesses coming here for lunch,” said Vang, who credits the local community for filling their tables every day and for keeping their doors open.

He says safety fears keep the restaurant from staying open late. “It’s tougher here in this neighborhood. Because you get a lot of problems, a lot of issues around the neighborhood, so we tend not to stay open too late,” said Vang, who mentioned crime-related violence as one issue that plagues the neighborhood and the restaurant after dark.

Vang says he and his family would like to expand Firebox into their native St. Paul. They have also considered physically expanding their North Minneapolis space.

“We can’t leave, you know. People tell us we’re a godsend, so we can’t go. But we’re from St. Paul, so we’d like to expand that way too,” said Vang. “We really don’t have that corporate knowledge about marketing, so we really rely on word-of-mouth. Just people in the neighborhood talking, and social me-

dia. It’s important. For us, that’s probably the biggest thing.”

Vang’s favorite meal? He recommends the sticky rice, rib tips, and egg rolls. “You have to have that combination. That combination is all comfort food,” said Vang.

Firebox BBQ also offers catering services. More information can be found on their Facebook page.
vacant schools keep community waiting and wondering

Neither Willard nor Lincoln School have operated as an MPS school in years. They are located blocks from each other in Near North.

Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

Willard School has been nearly empty for over a decade, but community members remember it differently.

Former Patrick Henry High School teacher Susan Breedlove reminisces about a school community that was crucial to North Minneapolis' social health. Breedlove lived next to Willard Elementary School in the 1960s. At the time she worked for Northside Settlement House, which partnered with organizations like the Metropolitan Cultural Arts Center (MCAC) and Willard Elementary School to put on children's theatre performances out of the school's auditorium.

"One of the things that the kids did through that partnership was "The Wizard of Oz." I can't remember where it was performed, but it was very well attended and advertised throughout the metro area. MCAC pulled kids, principally, out of Willard School to participate," said Breedlove. "The other factor is they used to have family nights there, and whole families would come. The auditorium and the gym; there were all kinds of sports going around. There were meetings from the community going on, as well."

That auditorium now sits empty. Willard was decommissioned and vacated in 2005 by the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS); students were moved to Lincoln School, which was then also shut down in 2007. According to reports from MPS, both schools were decommissioned due to declining enrollment, a problem which has continued to plague MPS schools in the Northside and across the district. Both Willard & Lincoln were built in the early 20th century and both remain technically operational.

"Vacant buildings are inspected and maintained by plant maintenance. Boilers are run and critical building systems are run, but to a lesser degree. There is only a minimal level of operational maintenance and no capital funding is being sent to vacant buildings. If a vacant building is re-opened, it would require an assessment and work would need to be done to get a permit to reoccupy," said Karen DeVen, Chief Operations Officer for MPS.

Many community members are concerned and even more are confused. Both buildings have been largely vacant for several years, which has had an immediate impact on community welfare. Both buildings are also largely inaccessible to community members.

"It does a disservice to the community. Vacant buildings do nothing good. So it's a disincentive for people to come over here and invest because it's around vacant stuff. Who wants to buy a house next to a vacant school?" said Kyle Rucker, a Northsider business owner who works and owns rental properties near both schools. Rucker contracts music education courses out to several Northside schools through his production company, Ruck B Music, and has a child in a Northside school.

Rucker works out of the Oak Park Community Center, owned by Pillsbury United Communities, where North News is also located.

The district does not yet have a plan for either building, though they hope to have one by December following the completion of the District’s ongoing Comprehensive Assessment and Design process in the fall.

"We are aware that there is interest, but we feel it is important to look at the future of these schools comprehensively," said DeVen.

According to DeVen the district hopes to reverse its enrollment problems and then re-open the schools as schools, but news reports from around 2007 discuss other strategic planning that the district completed in regards to the future of both schools and a lack of movement around those recommendations. According to those news reports, the district had worked with consulting firm McKinsey & Co who worked to help the district design a strategic reform plan to help stop the dwindling flow of enrollment. According to one MinnPost
Northside, voted to turn Gordon Elementary (which abuts their idea for what’s best,” said Felder. MPS what they want to see, instead of presenting and start the work organically, asking people
Minneapolis. They can open up the schools district do something positive for North
represents the Northside still sees that tension increasing enrollment was the higher priority.
T o reopen the buildings as schools, ac-
cording to DeVet, would require a significant amount of capital funding and maintenance work as neither building is currently being served by regular janitorial services and minimal amounts of capital investment. The roofs would need to be checked, systems and technology updated, and building codes brought up to date. According to DeVet, the Lincoln cafeteria would need hundreds of thousands of dollars of rehab and renovation, alone.
According to MPS officials, the comprehensive assessment and design period and its recommendations should be completed by the end of the year. According to DeVet, the district is not interested in selling either property as it would be more costly to build or buy a new school in their place.

Both Willard and Lincoln have had tenants in the years since they were decommissioned as schools. MPS Plant Operations uses Lincoln as a training ground for its engineers; it has licensed 11 new engineers through Lincoln. Patrick Henry High School’s Robotics team has used Lincoln’ gymnasium as a practice space. And Best Academy, one of the schools belonging to the now restructured Harvest Network of Schools, rented Lincoln as a school, though they left the building in June 2017. Willard Elementary School was used as a training ground for the Minneapolis Police Department in 2017 for a short term, several month contract, though DeVet noted the district would not be interested in renegotiating that contract at this point.

article from that time, Lincoln and Willard were crucial community assets, despite the poor -performance of Lincoln school. According to the article and the original report, Northside families did not feel comfortable or welcome in MPS’ Northside schools. According to those same news reports the recommendations were too costly at the time for the district and increasing enrollment was the higher priority.

MPS Director KerryJo Felder (District 2) who represents the Northside still sees that tension between Northsiders and MPS in her work.

“The trust isn’t there. I would like to really see the district do something positive for North Minneapolis. They can open up the schools and start the work organically, asking people what they want to see, instead of presenting their idea for what’s best,” said Felder. MPS voted to turn Gordon Elementary (which abuts

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Beyond the game

THE REAL IMPACT OF ATHLETICS

North Minneapolis has seen its fair share of typical athletic success stories: state championship teams, NBA and NFL players, and D1 talents. However, there is an untold story of success in athletics on the Northside. A story that impacts a far wider range of people than the few that make it big.

Mathias Durie | Intern Reporter

Michael Tate was 17 years old when he started volunteering as a Minneapolis Parks and Recreation coach. Tate, called “Coach Talley” by his players, now has over 40 years of coaching experience. He’s taught everything from football to tee ball. Though he has dedicated his life to sports, he doesn’t see them as the most important part of coaching.

T’nia Riley started running track at 12 years old when her future track coach and next door neighbor saw her running through the neighborhood. She then started running for the park board and finished fifth in Nationals when she was just 13. Riley won two state titles as a sophomore at North High and is now headed to Barton Community College in Kansas on a full athletics scholarship. Riley is an extremely accomplished runner but feels that athletics have humbled her more than anything.

Larry McKenzie has been the head boys basketball coach at North Community High School since 2013 and has 37 years of coaching experience. Now entering his sixth season with the Polars, McKenzie has led the team to two state titles. Despite the enduring success he has seen at North High, Coach McKenzie isn’t primarily focused on winning.

Malik Rucker was the No. 2 ranked high school football prospect in the state of Minnesota in 2013. The Northside native attended Robbinsdale Cooper High School and signed on to play at the University of Iowa to continue his successful football career. After desiring a change of scenery and culture, Rucker landed at Western Michigan University where he finished out his final three years of eligibility. However, being the first football player from Cooper to play at a power five conference school isn’t what the former corner back is most thankful for.

None of these individuals have gone on to make millions playing or coaching sports. The thing they do have in common is that they can point to a specific lesson sports have taught them. Rucker is thankful for the attention to detail he’s developed. Riley has grown in humility. Tate and McKenzie are devoted to passing on what they’ve learned to the athletes they work with now.

Though involvement in athletics is typically viewed as a positive force for young people, few achieve success in the form of fame and riches from it. The reality is, most athletes don’t make it far enough to attain this kind of life changing success. For example, a study done by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 2017 shows that .03 percent of high school basketball players (male and female) reach the professional level. If the goal of athletics is to help kids become the next LeBron James or Serena Williams, it is extremely unsuccessful in doing so.

But Northside coaches, other athletic mentors, and athletes have a different view. They argue that athletics have a far bigger and more important purpose than providing a potential route to fame and fortune. The life lessons, values, characteristics, and way of thinking athletics teach have had an impact on all these people firsthand, so many of them are

Continued on Page 17
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Coaches continued from Page 14

Tate wants to create relationships with his players. He wants to push them to build relationships that are built around respect, trust, encouragement and positivity. Tate hopes the investment he’s making causes his athletes to hold each other to high standards. He also makes a conscious effort to be involved with the parents of his athletes. He believes a real positive change starts at home so he is intentional about building a relationship with parents and speaking into their lives as well.

“That’s what this is about; changing one life at a time, one family at a time,” Tate said.

And a business owner is exactly what Rucker is working to become. He has since graduated from Western Michigan with a degree in sports management and a minor in sociology. He is working on starting his own foundation designed to train and develop athletes for the next level. As a kid, Rucker traveled to the EJ Henderson Foundation in Eden Prairie to train; now he wants to create a similar elite training opportunity closer to home in North Minneapolis. A major aspect of his foundation will be to teach some of the life lessons that he has learned over his years as an athlete, like having a great attention to detail in all aspects of life.

“Without those details you might not reach your full potential,” Rucker said. “The details have brought me a long way.”

Coach Talley’s philosophy for coaching is quite simple: “If I put good in you, good’s going to come out,” he said. This translates to athletics being about the relationships. Relationships between coaches and players, players and family members, and teammates.

“Coach Fleck always preached, if you can make it through your program, you can be a business owner,” Rucker said. “Because of the real life perspectives he offered.”

Caprini insisted on revisions to policies that will support systemic changes. She is an avid researcher, brainstorming solutions by talking through different scenarios with either her family, friends or colleagues. A few of her goals are to push for more mental health support, more ethnic studies in the schools and an increase in hiring teachers of color as well as in position of leadership at the Davis Center. Her inspiration for running is remembering her own struggles in school. As a mother, she wants to ensure that not only her children do well but that all children receive the best education possible.

“To have the honor to represent our district isn’t about power to me at all; it’s about making the kinds of decisions that will best serve our students, their families and school staff and I’m ready to hit the ground running.”

El-Amin continued from Page 7

nity inclusive assessments that address the wrongs and the rights of MPS. El-Amin is making the youth her number one priority. She is very passionate about instilling systems that apply to all public schools equally and not individually so that the challenge and the triumph are equitable for all schools and demographics. She plans to fight for raising the standards and expectations for students of color, having more open spaces to discuss mental health, more inclusion of families, what’s going on in the schools, and is planning on bringing light to all of the influences that affect the performance of district students. Her goal is to create what she describes as a “path to yes” for district families and students when facing trauma, or triumph.

“My inspiration is wanting to bring my knowledge of business, my passion for community engagement, and transparency within the district. I can hear ALL concerns. I will bring that missing piece to the board. We must act now! Together we win.”
GRADUATIONS
Central Lakes College, Brainerd and Staples
Natasha Hamilton
Normandale Community College
Kouassi Aman Adou
Jeremy William McGeehan
Jenavieve Olson
Brenda K Marcos
Christina Marie Brenke
Fouad Hassan Dhisow
Carie Ann Gbedijangni
Ayehsa Patrice Sharif
Abdulqadir Abdisalan Sheikhmo-

University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
University of Wisconsin - Stout

ACADEMIC HONORS
Edgewood College
William Lund

ACADEMIC HONORS
Carleton College
Shealuck Vang

RESOURCES
Neighborhood HealthSource hosts free and reduced cost mammograms for eligible women every month at one of their three Northside clinics. Call 612-287-2433 or visit neighborhoodhealthsource.org for more info.

Northside Boxing Club (1704 33rd Ave N) offers free lessons to kids ages 9-21. Training includes boxing drills, technique work, running and strength conditioning. Each session ends with a healthy meal. Hours are 4:30pm to 6pm, M-Th.

Hennepin County funding assistance for lead paint – Homeowners and landlords may be eligible for a free home test and as much as $8,000 in lead reduction costs, such as new windows. Contact: healthy-homes@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.minneapolismn.gov/organics. There is no extra cost, but you have to sign up.

Tuesdays – The Twin Cities Mobile Market delivers affordable and healthy food weekly to locations across North Minneapolis and the Twin Cities. 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.

For a limited time until August 10, Summer Library is offering resume writing assistance and computer instruction. This was made possible, thanks to a collaboration with AmeriCorps Community Technol- ogy Empowerment Project. The bilingual (English/Somali) instructor will help you to write or revise your resume and teaches basic computer skills (Internet, Email, Micro- soft Word Excel and PowerPoint) and can guide you toward Northstar Digital Literacy Certification, which can enhance your resume.

FREE FOOD
MPS will be providing free meals throughout the summer in North Minneapolis outside of North Market to any youth ages 18 and under. True Food Bus will be serving meals on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thurs- days, and Fridays from 12:45pm-1:05pm. The MPS Street Eats Food Truck will serve food on Tuesdays from 12:45pm-1:45pm.

Come summertime, free nutritious meals for kids can be a click away. For the second summer, a mobile phone app showing kids where to get free nutritious meals includes approximately 700 sites across Minnesota. Hunger Impact Partners (HIP) is a local nonprofit aimed at nourishing children so they get a healthy start in life to support acad- emic performance. The app, called Sum- mer Eats Minnesota, is free at the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. Powered by GPS, it shows locations of summer food sites, their menus and days/hours of operation. Kids 18 and under can show up without prior signup for free meals at these open site locations, including park and recre- ation sites, community centers, libraries and schools. The app shows the distance and directions to the nearest sites. For more information about summer meals: https://www.summereatsmn.org/

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT
07/26 - 07/28 – FLOW Northside Arts Crawl is a three-day celebration of the arts in North Minneapolis. Since 2006, FLOW lage. Homeowners and renters can call 612-328-6220 or visit mncme.org/hes-mpls to schedule a visit.

Early voting has begun for the Aug. 14 primary election, and Minneapolis voters may cast their ballots at the Early Vote Center, 217 S. Third St., in downtown Min- neapolis. Standard hours throughout the absentee voting period are 8 am-4:30pm, Monday-Friday. The center will also have Saturday hours for the last two weekends before the primary. All early voting hours are posted on the Elections website: vote.minneapolismn.gov.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
University of Wisconsin - River Falls
Wartburg College
Carleton College
Paul Slack

Resumes
Bard College at Simon’s Rock
Annik Alderink
Knox College
Naja Woods
Lewis University
Rachel Aubart
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Matthew Benbenek
Alec Keehler
Josie Madden
Matthew Nyberg

Bethel University
Gao Nou Yang
John Smith
St. Olaf College
Elle Paine
Ruby Roettger
Pazong Yang
Hannah Webb
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
Paul L. Herr
Julian C Barber
Jack M Barthold
Grady W Cromer
Kristen N Dasilva
Timothy J Druschke
Christopher D Eastman
Miranda A Edwardsen
Arna S Essiomy
Matthew L Fistic
Julia R Frazte
Oseven Funwi
Yaniv Garama
Keara V Hallberg
Mitchell J Hockenberry
Richard G Huntley
Crystal Lee
Anna M Loken
Kia Lor
Xai Lor
Michael A McCollgan
Henry C Meeker
Nash P Meeker
Estela G Mejia Ortiz
Quinn O Morris
Seth D Newhouse
My Chi Nguyen
A’nia-Nicole Rae
Garet D Reichenbach
Hannah C Reichl
Ian K Reinl
Sierra M Roderos
Grace A Rude
Johannah M Schocker
Samantha D Siebman
Imogene Silver
Thadeus C Staton
Shea G Swenson
Isabelle S Thompson
Lee Yang
Alycia N Welsh
Imala V Wthenspoo
Bita Yang
Jack V Zeglovitch
Marquette University
Nicholas Bauer
University of Iowa
Aesia Rose-Hill
Normandale Community College
Luke Tuzinski
Selam Weldekidan
LaWanda Akins
Christina Brenke
Bennett Frey
Naciala Guzman Jara
Victoria Shold
Jordan Stephen
Nicholas White
Mount Mercy University
Cassidy Courcy

Minnesota State University - Marshall
Joseph Stlewro
Hlee Yang
Valerion Bradley
Kameron Cook
Sophie Finntery
Dejah Frazier
Makayia Harvey
Taylor Kueng
Miranda Mier
Samantha Robinson
Gausheng Yang
Chong Xiong
Pachee Xiong
Miami University
Jillian Christie
St. Mary’s University of Minnesota
Monet Datari
Denise Quizhi
University of Dubuque
Naomi Amanti

What’s Up 612! is an online resource for children and youth, ages 5-21, where city- wide after school activities can be found. More information can be found at: http:// www. whatstup612.com

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/implsart.

The City of Minneapolis offers qualifying residents access to free energy efficien- cy home visits and 0% financing on recommended energy-saving upgrades while funding lasts. Home Energy Squad visits bring energy efficiency experts to participants’ homes to install energy-saving materials and make recommendations on energy-saving upgrades such as wall and attic insulation. They will install energy-saving materials such as door weatherstrip- ping, a water heater blanket, LED bulbs, a programmable thermostat, and high-effi- ciency showerheads and faucet aerators. They also test homes for air leaks, inspect attic and wall insulation using an infrared camera, and safety-check heating systems and water heaters. They may recommend energy upgrades such as insulation and/ or air sealing based on the test results. For any recommended upgrades, participants will receive a personalized quote and an opportunity to schedule the work with a qualified contractor. The City of Minneap- olis offers free Home Energy Squad visits and 0% financing to qualified households with a family income less than $94,300.

Additionally, all residents living in a Minne- apolis Green Zone are eligible regardless of income: Bottineau, Cedar-Riverside, East Phillips, Hawthorne, Marshall Terrace, McKinley, Midtown Phillips, Near North, Phillips West, Sheridan and Ventura Vil-
Northside Arts Crawl has become both a community celebration and premier art event in North Minneapolis. FLOW is a non-juried, self-guided tour of studios, galleries, theaters, commercial and vacant spaces over a mile and half of the West Broadway corridor. From b-boys to ballet, graffiti to graphic, rap to rapscallion, fine artist to artisan, practicing to professional, FLOW showcases the great art being made every day on the Northside. FLOW is a program of the West Broadway Coalition that showcase over 300 artists of all ages and experiences at 35 different locations with an exciting day of indoor and outdoor activities.

Ongoing Thursdays – 11am-1pm, Community Coffee & Conversation. Get to know neighbors and enjoy complimentary beverages. All are welcome. Serendipity Spot (3300 Lyndale Ave N).

07/27 – The documentary film Risking Light will be screen at The Capri Theater, 2027 W Broadway at 7pm during FLOW Northside Arts Crawl. Admission is free. Risking Light tells the story of how Mary Johnson, a longtime Northsider, moved from her experience of unimaginable grief over the murder of her only child when he was 21, to a place of profound compassion and forgiveness that today includes a powerful bond and friendship with O’Shea Israel, the man who murdered her son. Audience members are encouraged to stay for the conversation after the film, led by Mary Johnson and Director Dawn Mikkelsen. Donations will be accepted at the screening for From Death to Life, a non-profit organization dedicated to ending violence through the facilitation of healing and reconciliation between families of victims and perpetrators. Ms. Mary is the founder of this non-profit.

07/31 – Try rock climbing. 3pm-7pm. Get introduced to the sport of rock climbing with a 25-foot tall portable climbing wall! A Three Rivers Park District waiver signed by a parent or guardian will be required for each climber before they can participate in the program. Waivers are available at the library. Sponsors: Friends of the Hennepin County Library, MELSA (Metropolitan Library Services Agency). Collaborator: Three Rivers Park District. Entering grades 2-12.

8/6 - 8/17 – St. Olaf Lutheran Church is offering a Vacation Bible School and week at Bible camp for children grades K-7 after Minneapolis summer school is finished. The Vacation Bible School will run from August 6-12 at the church and the Bible Camp will be the week of August 12-17. Registration forms are available at St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2901 Emerson Ave N. For more information, call 612-529-7726.

8/8 – Senior Surf Day. 10am-12pm. Learn computer basics, how to navigate and search the Internet and practice reading and do literacy activities with a practice reading and do literacy activities with a licensed librarian. Applications for Housing Tax Credits must be due no later than August 20, 2018 and should be addressed to the attention of Ester Robards: ersetrobards@minneapolismn.gov

CenterPoint Energy would like to remind the public of the following important natural gas safety tips when there is severe weather: Following a severe storm, be alert for leaking natural gas. If you smell, hear or see a natural gas leak, leave the area immediately on foot and call the CenterPoint Energy hot line at 1-800-296-4278 or near a natural gas leak or vapor cloud. 2) Once safely away from the area, call the CenterPoint Energy emergency natural gas leak hot line at 1-800-296-4278 and 911 to report the location and description of the leak and CenterPoint Energy will send a trained service technician immediately. If the pipeline operator is not known, call 911. 3) If natural gas is leaking, do not turn the lights on or off, smoke, strike a match, use a cell phone, drive a car or operate anything that might cause a spark including a flashlight or generator. 4) Do not attempt to turn any natural gas valves. Improper operation of valves could make the situation worse.

The City of Minneapolis will add to its home visiting nurse program for pregnant women and infants; later this year, it will also reach out to the fathers with services such as connections to education and job training, employment skills, mental health and parenting skills. The program provides home nurse visits for families at high risk for prematurity births, low birth weight, infant mortality, child maltreatment, childhood injury, and maternal low education and income and high unemployment. The City will partner with the Minneapolis Visiting Nurse Association (MVNA) and the Goodwill-Easter Seals FATHER Project to deliver home visiting services and fatherhood advocacy work.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and Council Members Jeremiah Ellison and Phillippe Cunningham are urging the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to step up enforcement of pollution standards in the area surrounding Northern Metals Recycling in North Minneapolis. The letter from the lawmakers follows reports that the levels of air pollution – including the dangerous airborne particulates (PM10) – near the shredder are again exceeding the national standard. Anticipating administering an allocation of $1,570,578 in Year 2019 funding for seven transit-oriented development (TOD) projects. Projects include a mix of infrastructure, housing, retail, and services — all located within walking distance of transit. These projects will create 1,045 housing units, more than 52,000 square feet of commercial space and 97 jobs. Among the many benefits of TOD, the program helps reduce disparities through greater mobility and access to places to live, work, and play. Increased household income opens access to transportation; increased walkability for a healthier lifestyle; and diminished pollution and environmental destruction.

The City of Minneapolis is seeking public comment on the proposed Small and Medium Multifamily Land Banking Pilot (SMMF Pilot). The Land Bank Twin Cities (Land Bank), Local Initiatives Support Corporation-Twin Cities (LISC), and Family Housing Fund (FHFund), in partnership with the City of Minneapolis, have developed a Small and Medium Multifamily Land Banking Pilot Initiative (SMMF Pilot) to help stabilize 2-49 unit buildings that are occupied by low to moderate income tenants throughout Minneapolis that are particularly susceptible to market pressures resulting in property sales, increased evictions and rising rents. The goal of the program is to remove these properties from the speculative market and restrict them as affordable for the long-term. Comments are due no later than August 20, 2018 and should be addressed to the attention of Ester Robards: esterrobards@minneapolismn.gov

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The Health Rural and Urban Kids Project measures chemicals in children living in Minnesota urban and rural communities to monitor and help prevent harm child development. Children ages 3-6 from zip codes 55111 and 412 can join when they complete the Minneapolis Public Schools Early Childhood Screening. Families can make an appointment for screening by calling 612-668-3715 or visiting https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/7r9eymy98

Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) is pleased to announce it is accepting applications for reservation and allocation of Year 2019 Housing Tax Credits. CPED, acting on behalf of the City of Minneapolis, is anticipating administering an allocation of $1,570,578 in Year 2019 tax credits for the City of Minneapolis. CPED is accepting applications immediately. A Procedural Manual and Qualification Allocation Plan explaining the application process and a set of application forms is accessible via the CPED’s website http://www.c1.minneapolis.mn.us/cpd/ftp/cpd_lihtnc_rp. Home. Applications for Housing Tax Credits must be received no later than 4:00 p.m., August 23, 2018. If you have any questions, please contact Angie Skildum at (612) 673-2495.

The board for Hennepin County’s Housing and Redevelopment Authority has approved $2.2 million in funding for seven transit-oriented development (TOD) projects. Projects include a mix of infrastructure, housing, retail, and services — all located within walking distance of transit. These projects will create 1,045 housing units, more than 52,000 square feet of commercial space and 97 jobs. Among the many benefits of TOD, the program helps reduce disparities through greater mobility and access to places to live, work, and play. Increased household income opens access to transportation; increased walkability for a healthier lifestyle; and diminished pollution and environmental destruction.

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Northpoint Health and Wellness has announced an eviction prevention pilot program. This program is open to anyone who lives in Hennepin County, lives in a rental unit, and is concerned about being evicted or being unable to pay rent. Mediation services, legal help, and housing case management is available for renters; services are also available for landlords interested in assisting their tenants. To enroll in the pilot contact NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center, Inc. at 612-767-9159 or visit 1315 Penn Ave N.

The City of Minneapolis can help renters who want smoke-free housing, and it can help property owners make their buildings smoke-free. For smoke-free rental housing help, renters and property owners and managers can call 311 or visit www.minneapolis.gov/smoke-free.

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 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.

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 1/1/2018. 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.

In response to the rapid growth of shared motorized foot scooter networks, the City Council’s Transportation and Public Works Committee passed an ordinance amendment today requiring the sharing networks to obtain a license agreement with the City and follow rules for parking in the right of way. State law already regulates how low power vehicles like foot scooters operate in the street. The City’s proposed regulatory framework is intended to be welcoming to new transportation options like motorized foot scooters, but requires networks to operate in an organized manner consistent with City rules.

Through its 311 service, the City of Minneapolis has opened a new hotline for reporting hate crime, harassing behaviors motivated by prejudice. The hotline number is 311 for anyone calling from within the city or 612-673-3000 for outside Minneapolis. 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.

For planting season, the City of Minneapolis urges all Minneapolis gardeners, landscapers and farmers to protect pollinators. That means avoiding pesticides that poison bees, butterflies and other pollinators: avoiding applying pesticides and avoiding buying plants that were already treated. Protecting pollinators also means landscaping or gardening with the kinds of plants that nourish pollinators. Find more resources and more information about how to protect pollinators here: www.minneapolismn.gov/environ-ment/bees.

The Minneapolis City Council and Mayor Jacob Frey have set goals for Minneapolis to move to 100 percent renewable electricity: for municipal facilities and operations by 2022 and citywide by 2030. These goals serve as a strategy to meet the City’s aggressive greenhouse gas emission reduction and climate change goals by moving away from fossil fuels. The City of Minneapolis is committed to ensuring that all residents and businesses, no matter their race, income, wealth or credit history, can access and benefit from renewable energy and energy efficiency. Find more information about Minneapolis’ action on climate change in the resolution and the City website.

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 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 and Recreation Board (MPRB) has banned all tobacco products on Minneapolis park properties and owned and/or operated facilities.

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

8/2 and 8/15 – The City of Minneapolis is sponsoring a free workshop, offered twice in August, for restaurant owners looking for strategies to adjust to the Minneapolis minimum wage ordinance. The workshop will offer restaurants an opportunity for free one-on-one business consulting through the City’s Business Technical Assistance Program (B-TAP). The sessions will be facilitated by Cue the Accountant, a local consulting firm focused on the restaurant and hospitality industry. The City aims to help restaurants increase wages and maintain or increase profitability. The August 2 workshop will be held from 9am - 10pm and the August 15 workshop will be held from 3pm - 4pm. Both will be held at the Minneapolis Central Library (300 Nicollet Mall). For more information and information on registering check out: minimumwage.minneapolismn.gov. Questions can be directed to Emily Peterson at emily.peterson@minneapolismn.gov.

The Minneapolis Business Portal is a new online platform designed to connect entrepreneurs and small business owners to the information and resources needed to plan, launch and grow a business. The online portal, available at business.minneapolismn.gov, features roadmaps, checklists, tools and resources to help both new and existing businesses.

Kindred Kitchen, an initiative of Appetite for Change, hosts a new member weekly kitchen tour every Tuesday. 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/.

Northside Economic Opportunity Network is now accepting applications for their brand new private office spaces that feature windows, open workspace, and more. There are several office space and pricing plans available, ranging from a drop-in guest pass ($10/day) to a platinum plan ($500/month with private office). For more information visit https://www.neon-mn.org/spaces.

Northside Economic Opportunity Network’s Thinking About Business Workshops will be held the third Saturday of every month from 9am - 1pm at NEON’s office (1007 W Broadway Ave). These workshops are ideal for pre-venture entrepreneurs who consider going into business for the first time. The August workshop will be held August 18. The workshops are free; tickets and more information are available at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/thinking-about-business-work-shop-tickets-37517470765.

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As a Chinese American immigrant who came to America in the 1980s, Ange Hwang found her voice through arts and media. She also felt blocked out of both industries – because of racism and cultural differences.

In fighting for her voice to be heard, she founded Asian Media Access (AMA), a nonprofit that inspires youth to find their voices and amplify them through various forms of media.

Located on Plymouth Ave, AMA provides different types of multimedia programming: education, production, technology, performance, and exhibition, including hip hop and Asian dances. They also offer a program called Reaching Immigrants with Care and Education (RICE), which supports youth in their lives beyond media: working on scholarships, college tours, and financial literacy. A concept Hwang calls “bicural healthy living” underlies all the work they do – celebrating cultures, learning from each other, and integrating to accept the best of both.

Normally a staple of Plymouth Avenue’s FLOW festivities, AMA will play a quieter role this year because Hwang is leading a group of 20 AMA youth on a trip to the Korean International Junior Arts Festival in Korea. Instead of street performances, AMA will host an open house at their building this year for FLOW.
Asian Media Access continued from page 21

A week before her trip to Korea, Ange Hwang spoke with North News about bicultural healthy living, youth voices in media, and her motivation to do her work each day.

What is Asian Media Access? What inspired you to start it? When I first graduated from my Master’s Degree in Arts Management and moved up to Minneapolis, I felt a lot of barriers as a foreigner and also as a minority woman. My passion is for theater, video and films, and I wasn’t able to find a job. That inspired me to start AMA in 1992, to really offer that opportunity for myself but at the same time to inspire more voices to diversify particularly the multimedia fields.

As a Chinese American, you’ve said that in your culture, you’re taught not to speak up. How did you become a media maker? Growing up in Taiwan, my community was very conservative and Chinese-culture centered. As girls, we were taught to obey everything our parents said. We were never given opportunities to speak up or do things different than what other people do. For example, I learned piano because “every girl should learn piano.” I was so miserable. Later I studied Chinese Operas. That really gave me a lot more pressure to look like, act like, what Chinese culture expected from a young lady. That pressure really grew so strongly, and finally I decided to study abroad to be able to get away from such confinement. My personality is very different than what the culture expected from me. I really want to do things my own ways first and then if I make a mistake, I bite it, and then I move on to other conventional ways. I don’t want to fight without a try.

After you graduated from your Master’s program, what did not being able to find a job look like for you? People would say they didn’t need someone with a Master’s degree. Then they asked me improve my English. They would say my background wouldn’t be able to fit within the company culture. People would say to me “you’re very different.” A lot of those are very subtle, hidden racism. When I first applied I didn’t know that type of aggressively-seeking-a-job American culture. I didn’t grow up that way. It gave me a lot of barriers.

What did those barriers look like? I got a chance to work part time in a Chinese restaurant. One time, I was sick, and instead of calling in to say I was sick and that I wouldn’t be able to come in and be the hostess, I sent my boyfriend to the restaurant to work for me so we could earn that money. That’s our Asian way to handle it. They were so surprised. I didn’t realize those cultural differences until much later in my life. Not until 1992, did I finally realize that there was a lot more I needed to learn. I noticed there were a lot of cultural differences; there was a lot of hidden racism nobody was talking about. How could I become the bridge for my own community to really break those barriers? To really say; we do have a voice and we want to be here and bring in a different perspectives to enrich American culture.

It’s taken time and sacrifice to get to where you are today. What motivated you to get through the obstacles to get to where you are now? To see my community getting better is a motivation for me; to see the young people having opportunities beyond what has been offered to them. Many are refugees, and their opportunities have been very limited and at the entry level. They are never encouraged to be public servants or to produce their videos and films to get their voices across. They aren’t encouraged to go into IT, which gives them more potential for economic gains. Their talents have been limited. That really motivated me to start AMA to use multimedia to get their voice across and at the same time to promise a better economic future.

How has your work changed under the Trump presidency? Because of this anti-immigrant wave, society is going backward, so instead of pushing for bicultural healthy living, we have to talk about identity issues and anti-racism and why we are all together as Americans. It’s really a déjà vu for me. I believe it’s a cycle. I believe we will come to that comfortable place again. We will continue our fight.

What do you wish the larger community understood about the youth and community you serve? At the beginning, we served a lot of Asian American youth, particularly a lot of Southeast Asian refugees when they first came. Right now we serve a mix of about 60% Asian Americans, 20% African Americans, and another 20% Caucasian, Hispanic, American Indians, and also multiracial. Society has particularly discriminated against youth of color; it sees them not as assets but as trouble. But they are so talented. My Asian youth can pick up instruments and play just by listening from YouTube videos. Our African American teens can just rap with rhyme to every subject we give to them. We want to showcase their talents through performances, videos, and through these creative avenues to inspire their inner entrepreneurship.

What is your favorite thing about AMA being in North Minneapolis? North Minneapolis is always a first stop for immigrants. It increases the diversity we love. We never feel we are outsiders in North Minneapolis. People treat us for who we are. In other communities, we were told to go...
"You can be you, but you have to be proactive about thinking about other people’s needs as well. Then we have a future. Then the society will improve."

ANGE HWANG

Dancers challenge each other with partners on their shoulders to see which team will be the last standing. There are many games played in lion dance class to build trust and camaraderie.

back to where we came from. People always seem open to change and are willing to accept differences and are willing to treat people as their families. I think this is a very different feeling when you go to other parts of the cities. Although we do have a lot of issues on the Northside, people are always willing to work on all the levels and aren’t afraid to face, talk about, and embrace challenges together.

What has been your biggest challenge or trial working in the community? In Western culture, you have to take care of this legal side. In Eastern culture, we take care of the people first. We hope to promote a cultural integration model - Bicultural Healthy Living, for people, who masters the rules and norms of their new culture without abandoning their own language, values and social support. Such concepts are built upon a foundation of cultural practices and pedagogy that are integrated with, but not diminished by, western philosophies. We have had a lot of those cultural clashes with the Western community. We have to continue to explain and push for the bicultural aspects, instead of just Western ways.

What do you think about all the development in your neighborhood, particularly at Penn and Plymouth? We have been in our building since 2004. We see a lot of developments happening on different levels in the neighborhood. Some successful, some [not]. We would like to see smaller and slower developments that focus on neighborhood needs and supports the continued wellbeing of the neighborhood, even if it’s just in a block. We feel that’s a better type of development than a larger development. Those bigger developments bring jobs and needed services for community, but at the same time it starts the gentrification of the neighborhoods. It is very important to look for a balanced approach, instead of just favoring one over another.

What do you hope for AMA’s future? Our goal is to close ourselves down. We are serving as a bridge organization. We are helping our community to access the mainstream information. We bring our community voices to the society at large and vice versa. The future of AMA is for there to be no need for this bridge service like ours anymore. People will practice bicultural healthy living and won’t need a bridge organization anymore.

How close are you to that? I think we are close. I feel this generation of youth has a lot more tools. They have social media. They are much more vocal and they have experienced that globalization culture. We are still in need now with some of our population in poverty and some are isolated. I really see we can take on a totally different role as well. We could encourage the youth to think better and make better judgements. Instead of being the media provider, we could be a media think tank, helping the community understand the overwhelming information and how to make the best decisions out of that with arts.

What do you wish mainstream media did differently in regards to Asian communities in Minneapolis? When there is an incident, all the communities get stereotyped. The stereotyping has been a huge issue for our community. We hope we can be covered as individuals and our culture is brought into those stories. Individualized stories bring in a more balanced picture.

Do you have advice for people who want to be business owners in the community? They should start to look at the environments around them. When a business comes in here, it’s important that you remember why you chose here to start your business, because the community matches you the best. In return, you should serve the community as well. What services does the community need? Sometimes you have to put that above and beyond your individual gain so the community has a future. Having that social consciousness when you start a business is very important to me.

Who in community inspires you? Michael Cheney from Project Sweetie Pie. He really is grounded. Every time we get a chance to meet and chat, I learn so much from him and his knowledge about the neighborhood, how he wants to change the neighborhood to improve the neighborhood from agriculture and food aspects of it. He talks about people and “this is what we need to do together.” Regardless of resources, he is willing to charge forward with a team of volunteers.

Is there anything else about AMA and your youth that you’d like to share with the community? The youth are really proud of who they are; they want to be who they are. That’s very important, but I also want them to think about the bicultural healthy living perspective. You have to incorporate your environment into your living experience, like your neighborhood. You can be you, but you have to be proactive about thinking about other people’s needs as well. Then we have a future. Then the society will improve.
FLOW NORTHSIDE ARTS CRAWL

THURSDAY, JULY 26
4:00P-8:00P

FRIDAY, JULY 27
3:00P-10:00P

SATURDAY, JULY 28
11:00A-6:00P

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FLOW Northside Arts Crawl
Northside Arts Crawl
Thursday, July 26, 4:00P-8:00P
Friday, July 27, 3:00P-10:00P
Saturday, July 28, 11:00A-6:00P

Visit flownorthside.org to download Metro Transit Passes for FLOW