Letter from the Editor

Fall is here; the school year has begun, and we’re feeling this time of transition in myriad ways at North News.

Since our last edition, our summer internship program has ended. Mathias Durie is back at Bethel University to complete his final undergraduate semester. Daija Triplett is headed to MCTC to begin her freshman year of college and is also staying at North News as a part time intern thanks to grant from the TEGNA Foundation. Blessing Kasongoma has begun her senior year at Patrick Henry High School. Bryan Salinas will soon start his senior year at Columbia Heights High School. Regular contributor Azhae’la Hanson has moved to New Orleans to begin her freshman year of college at Xavier University. Myesha Powell is back at North High to finish her final year of high school and will continue on with North News as one of our “Trauma Troopers,” the group of youth reporters who interviewed 55 young people across the city about trauma this summer. We will publish their findings in our late September edition.

The last of our rockstar summer student work can be found throughout this paper. Blessing, Bryan, Daija and Myesha all wrote a personal column from the prompt “what do you wish adult changemakers knew about your educational experience?” Find their thoughts in our back to school package on Page 12 and in Pollen’s Unbound Project at pollenmidwest.org/unbound.

I also highly recommend checking out Bryan’s comic illustration of a day he spent at the Hennepin County Government Center with Commissioner Linda Higgins. He asked her what she’ll miss most about her job when she retires after her current term, and he learned who she has endorsed as her replacement. Take a peek at his discoveries on Page 7.

I’m also headed back to high school. I began my third year teaching our North News beginning journalism class at North High with my co-teacher Sam Wilbur on August 27. We have a bigger classroom and an earlier start time this year (first period!), and have plans to partner with many more media makers and entities, like 89.3 Current, to do instruction this year. If you are a North High student or the parent, friend, or other close person to a North High student with a passion for journalism, come find us in room 570! We also love when adults in the community visit and volunteer in our classroom. Let us know if you have a storytelling skill you’d like to share!

As this summer comes to a close, we here at North News are reflecting on how full it was of growth, productivity, and hustle. We also grappled with some very difficult moments, including coping with violence close to our home at Oak Park Community Center. I’m glad we could close out the summer with a newspaper cover image that reflects an enduring commitment to community despite its challenges: Londell Anderson and Tyrone Johnson from the Squad of Players Adult Kickball League (Page 22).

We hope you enjoy this issue and have a safe, smooth, and happy transition into whatever new beginnings September brings you. We hope to see you on Broadway for Open Streets!

Kenzie O’Keefe
Editor/Publisher, North News
kenzieo@pillsburyunited.org
651-245-2647

Letter to the Editor

[Editor’s note: last month the Northside Greenway Report was released. It evaluated community feedback on the idea of turning a three mile stretch of road in North Minneapolis into a bike pathway.]

Dear Editor,

The Greenway was a great gift to our neighborhood. We are on 35th and Irving, so we had the complete Greenway (no cars) and it made our area a lot more enjoyable. Kids were playing safely outside, families were riding by on bicycles, and there was none of the stress of having cars zooming by in front of our house. My impression was that the partial Greenway on the blocks south of 35th were getting a mixed reaction, but the people on our block, where the full benefits of a Greenway were evident, seemed to have very positive feelings about the experience. Many of us were sad when it was removed.

Stephen Lewis, Folwell Resident

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.
North Minneapolis at a glance

UROC searches for new leader
The University of Minnesota’s Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center has announced their second search for a new executive and operations officer. The deadline for applications was Aug. 15. Applications are currently being reviewed. Final candidates will participate in public roundtable discussions during the week of Aug. 27.

Phillips Family Foundation gives $2 million to Northside schools
The Phillips Family Foundation (a North News funder) has announced that three Northside schools will receive $2 million in grant funding, as part of the foundation’s partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS). Patrick Henry High School will receive a three-year grant of over $1 million to develop a social justice focused, project-based learning program. Olson Middle School will receive a grant of just over $900,000 for the implementation of its “My Story/My Brilliance” project through a one year grant. Franklin Middle School will receive $75,000 in order to continue developing its Student Advisory Council and mentorship opportunities for teachers through a one year grant. For more on the grant and the foundation’s partnership with MPS, visit phillipsfamilymn.org/2018/08/08/abundance.

City’s ReCast program announces results of Resilience 365 funding
The City of Minneapolis’ Resilience in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCast) department (a North News funder) recently announced that it would be funding $495,000 in community projects as voted on by community members. The funding comes through its Resilience 365 program and will support the work of 29 different community projects. Several Northside programs have been selected for funding, including: HWMR Camden Town Center vision, Minnesota Black Girl Magic, KIPP North Star Academy, and Appetite for Change.

Open Streets is this month
Open Streets: West Broadway will be held on Sept. 15 from 11am-5pm, between Lyndale Ave N and Penn Ave N. Locally, Open Streets is hosted by the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition (WBC). For participation details and to secure a vendor spot email the WBC at openstreets@westbroadway.org.

Upper Harbor Terminal draft plan available for public comment
Upper Harbor Terminal planners and developers are in the process of presenting a draft redevelopment plan to community members for review. Details on the draft plan are available on upperharbormpls.com. Councilmember Phillipe Cunningham (Ward 4) will host a community discussion about it on Sept. 8 from 11am-1pm at North Market (4414 Humboldt Ave. N). The meeting will include a presentation, a question and answer session, and a discussion.

City includes Village Trust Financial Cooperative in proposed budget
During his Aug. 15 budget address, Mayor Jacob Frey and the City of Minneapolis proposed a $500,000 investment into the Village Trust Financial Cooperative. Since June 2017, the cooperative, a project of the Association for Black Economic Power, has received over 1600 pledges totaling over $5 million. According to a press release from the cooperative, they hope to use the city’s investment to support community engagement, board development, and product services.

North makes its mark on the MN State Fair
Open Streets: West Broadway will be held on Sept. 15 from 11am-5pm, between Lyndale Ave N and Penn Ave N. Locally, Open Streets is hosted by the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition (WBC). For participation details and to secure a vendor spot email the WBC at openstreets@westbroadway.org.

African American Heritage Museum set to open September 8
This new museum and gallery will be located at the new THOR Companies Headquarters (1256 Penn Ave N). The museum will include exhibits, gallery showings, programming, and events. Admission is free. For more information visit www.maahmg.org.

Programming will remain at the Capri due to construction delay
First Thursday Films along with other programming will remain at the Capri Theater on Broadway for the time being despite earlier plans for temporary relocation due to the theater’s major expansion. Construction is now slated to begin in late winter 2019.

FREE Cervical and Breast Cancer Screenings for women who are uninsured or underinsured

seetest&treat October 2, 3, 4

NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center
1313 Penn Ave. N. Minneapolis, MN 55411

Register early, Space is Limited, Call: 612-543-2500

- Cervical cancer screenings (Pap test), ages 21–64
- Breast exams
- Mammograms for women ages 40 and older
- Same-day test results
- STD Testing ages 21 - 24
- Rapid HIV Testing

For More Info go to: www.northpointhealth.org

Calm Mind, Healthy Body

THE YOGA ROOM
Offering Yoga, Meditation & Acupuncture
Affordable Yoga $10 class rate
4153 Thomas Ave N
Class schedule and workshops:
www.northsidecenter.net
Long term planning for over 30 North Minneapolis neighborhood parks has been underway since late 2016. This fall, community members will have a couple final chances to shape this “North Service Area Master Plan” (NSAMP) before the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) votes on it.

MPRB staff, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) of community members appointed by MPRB commissioners, city council members and neighborhood organizations, and design consultants worked with the larger community to envision future plans for each of the 34 North Minneapolis parks involved in the process.

At this point, the work is strictly meant to provide a strategic roadmap for the future. No funding is yet in place for any of the changes being discussed.

**THE PROCESS**
The CAC completed their part of the process in July when they reached near unanimous recommendations for all of the parks after months of community engagement. “Overall, I think it was a good process. Perfect process? No. But I’ve never seen a government process that is perfect,” said CAC chair Jonathan Palmer. “Overall it had a pretty wide level of input from across the Northside.”

Soon, park staff will complete a document that comprehensively details those recommendations for each park. They will then ask board members to open a formal 45 day comment period where people will be able to review the plans and submit thoughts on them. Park staff will review the results and respond as they deem necessary.

MPRB project manager Adam Arvidson says the plan will eventually be brought to MPRB’s planning commission where a public hearing will be held. That will be the public’s last opportunity to provide feedback before the plan goes in front of the full board of commissioners for a vote. Arvidson says his hope is that the board will vote to adopt the NSAMP by the end of the year.

**CONTENTIOUS PARTS OF THE PLAN**
Though the CAC has completed its work, there are some lingering questions about the park plans. Aspects of the visions for North Commons and Farview Park remain particularly controversial.

Some members of the “Friends of North Commons” (FONC) group have voiced concern about a seasonal sports dome envisioned in the recommended plan for their park. They worry the dome will change the character of North Commons—creating a tall, bright, visual eyesore during the dark winter months—and potentially inspire gentrification by attracting users from outside the neighborhood.

At a meeting they held at the park on August 6, they expressed worry over potential negative environmental and health impacts of the artificial turf that might be inside the dome. The group also had broad criticism for the CAC’s community engagement work, with some members saying nearby homes should have been door-knocked and flyered. One member of the group shared a petition against the dome that he said had 196 signatures on it.

Two park commissioners, Kale Severson (District 2) and Londell French (At-Large), along with MPRB assistant superintendent Tyrize Cox, attended the August 6 meeting and assured the group that nothing is set in stone at this time. They praised the crowd for their passion and engagement and encouraged them to keep vocalizing their concerns throughout the public comment period. “This is healthy, what’s happening right now,” said Severson. “If our community showed up like this more often, we wouldn’t be left out.”

CAC member Brett Buckner has empathy for those who don’t want to see the dome in the North Commons plan, acknowledging that it could change the character of the park “to a point.” But he says North

Continued on Page 20
Minneapolis City Council members Phillipe Cunningham (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward 5) were inaugurated in January 2018. North News has invited them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our newspaper.

WARD 4: Phillipe Cunningham

I am proud to have been elected in November 2017 on a forward-thinking platform that emphasized transparency and accountability in my work as a Councilmember. As I promised, my office has launched our quarterly community meetings to update residents about work being done in the Ward 4 office so we can achieve that transparency and accountability during my term.

At our inaugural Camden Quarterly Convening, folks expressed to me their top concerns that they would like to see addressed while I was in office. They were: housing, public safety, economic development (small business development and job creation), youth programming, and environmental justice. Additionally, I included the following three priority areas in response to feedback that I received from community: health and wellness, building a positive community identity, as well as transparency and accountability.

For those who were unable to attend our second Camden Quarterly Convening, I introduced the strategic plan that I have been creating to embody these concerns expressed from Ward 4 residents. The presentation of our Ward 4 Strategic Plan from the event has been made available on our Facebook page for viewing.

Moving forward, I would like hear feedback from residents about the proposed strategic plan. What I am really looking for is whether you have any special interests or knowledge about how best to create change so it benefits you and our community. For example, to build a positive community identity, would having a new 4th Ward tradition help unify our community and bring a sense of belonging? Do you have an idea of a gathering that would make you feel more connected to your neighbors and the broader Ward 4 community? It is important to me that the work I do aligns with not only the platform I campaigned on but is also driven by what residents of the 4th Ward really need.

The recording of the event has been segmented so the presentation is split into individual videos for each priority area mentioned earlier. Staff from my office will be actively collecting comments made under each video and gathering feedback from e-mails submitted to our office’s inbox until September 29th, so folks who were unable to attend our second quarterly event can still have their voices heard in the shaping of this strategic plan.

To leave comments under a particular priority area video you can find them under the videos tab of our Facebook page www.facebook.com/CMCunninghamWard4/ or you can e-mail our office at ward4@minneapolismn.gov with the subject: “Strategic Plan Feedback” to let us know what you think about a certain priority area.

Folks can also come to my community office hours to discuss this plan further with me in person! On Tuesdays, office hours are held from 4pm-6pm at Corner Coffee Camden and on Thursdays they are held from 12pm-2pm at Serendipity Spot. The third Camden Quarterly Convening will take place during the month of November. More information for this event will be made public when available!

WARD 5: Jeremiah Ellison

On August 3rd we passed the Emergency Stabilization Pilot Program through the full council—a program designed to support some of the city’s most vulnerable tenants. The city has not had such a hands-on role in housing people since the early 80’s, but I believe that supporting folks in such a hostile housing market is exactly what I should be doing as your representative. This program involves many partners, including NorthPoint and Urban HomeWorks, and, perhaps most importantly, contains a built-in pathway towards homeownership for these tenants. If we can develop a model for transitioning folks from low-wealth to wealth-building in just a handful of years, this is how we can combat displacement and gentrification.

I’m really excited by this program. For those who don’t know, this pilot program will help rehouse people who have been displaced by harmful landlord practices. In Ward 5, most landlords hold up a good living standard and provide dignified housing for our neighbors, but there are those who look to prey on desperate tenants—we’ve seen our share of that too.

This program puts the City’s money where our mouth is. For the past four months, myself and Council Vice-President Jenkins have represented Minneapolis on a cohort of ten other cities from around the country looking to enact anti-displacement policies. Based on responses we’ve gotten from our colleagues from around the country, I believe this pilot program will act as a model for other cities.

This policy is one piece to solving the overall housing-crisis-puzzle. In conjunction with stabilizing people in homes, there are also policies moving forward that would offer greater protections for vulnerable renters. The council is moving forward on an inclusionary-zoning policy that would force all new development to have some percentage of affordable units. There’s a policy that would prevent domestic violence victims from being evicted for having too many 911 calls to their residence. There is a Renter’s Bill of Rights being moved forward by myself and Council President Bender. It seems like every council member has been kicked into overdrive trying to solve this issue. I want to remind folks that when we don’t protect vulnerable tenants, the end result is homelessness—as a matter of fact, our current homelessness issue has been exacerbated by the current state of our housing crisis.

If you have more detailed questions about the pilot program, please reach out or join me for coffee this Saturday, or any Saturday (you can find more information on my Facebook page and website).

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 ward5@minneapolismn.gov.
New one-stop real estate shop coming to West Broadway

Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

There is about to be a new business on Broadway. Raul Sanchez, and his business partner Steve Conklin, have moved in to 2800 W Broadway, where they plan to open a one-stop housing shop: RES Realty Group and Satori Mortgage.

“This area is growing, so that is why I am here, investing now,” said Sanchez, who moved to North Minneapolis three years ago, though he had lived in North Minneapolis prior to that as well. According to Sanchez, people are moving to the Northside because housing is cheaper. He says that, specifically, he is seeing Latino and Hmong communities taking advantage of an opportunity to buy affordable homes.

“If people can only qualify for so much, this is what they can afford,” said Sanchez. “North Minneapolis is close to Downtown, the Mall of America, the airport. North Minneapolis has affordable homes for our clients and houses in good conditions. For my clients, North Minneapolis is their first or only option.”

Sanchez works statewide as a realtor, but he says that North Minneapolis has been “hot” the last five years. He works with mostly Latino and Hmong individuals and families moving to North Minneapolis, as well as Latino, Hmong, black and white Northside residents moving around in the community.

“I feel like soon Downtown Minneapolis is going to be expanding into North,” said Sanchez. Sanchez is a realtor with 17 years of experience under his belt. He purchased his new property in April, which encompasses 2808 W Broadway all the way through 2800 W Broadway. The space is still under construction.

‘Sanchez’ business partner, Conklin, will be running a mortgage brokerage which will provide “alternative options” for home mortgages. Sanchez and Conklin have been business partners for about four years. According to Conklin, the brokerage will have a diverse array of products and opportunities for everyone, including first time homebuyers and those with less than perfect credit.

“If you’re interesting in buying a home, come in to the office and talk to us,” said Conklin. While Sanchez is focused on statewide realty, he and Conklin see their one-stop shop as a way of connecting potential homebuyers with both a realtor and a mortgage broker that Conklin says provides a diverse array of connections to mortgage options and programs outside of traditional bank mortgages.

Sanchez and Conklin hope to have the 2808 real estate office and mortgage brokerage open by Sept. 15. Other properties on the strip are still available for leasing. To contact Sanchez and Conklin, call (612) 600-7880.

Midterm primary results

Kenzie O’Keefe | Editor

Voter turnout in Minneapolis for August’s midterm primary election was the highest it has been in the city since 1970. 93,534 people voted; 16% of them voted early. According to Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon, the statewide total of voters for the August 14 primary was 902,119 people or 22.7% of the state’s population, the highest it has been, percentage-wise, since 1994.

The high turnout trend was true for North Minneapolis too, where voter turnout is typically among the lowest in the city. For example, in the 2016 primary, 3,008 votes (both DFL and Republican) were cast for the State Representative District 59A seat. In yesterday’s election, 4,869 people voted on that seat. Part of the higher turnout is credited to no-excuses early voting which was legalized in 2014 and the ease of Minnesota’s same-day voter registration system. August’s DFL, Republican, and non-partisan race winners are listed to the right. These are the candidates that will face off in the November election.

Here’s who you can expect to see on the ballot in November:

State Representative District 59A
Kimberly Caprini
Rebecca Gagnon
Josh Pauly
Sharon El Amin

Hennepin County Commissioner, District 2
Irene Fernando
Blong Yang

Hennepin County Sheriff:
Rich Stanek
David Hutch

State Representative, District 59B
Raymond Dehn (DFL)
Lacy Johnson (GOP)

State Representative, District 59A
Fue Lee (DFL)
Fred Statema (GOP)

US Representative, District 5
Ilhan Omar (DFL)
Jennifer Zielinski (GOP)

Attorney General
Keith Ellison (DFL)
Doug Wardlow (GOP)

MN Governor & Lt. Governor
Tim Walz and Peggy Flanagan (DFL)
Jeff Johnson and Donna Bergstrom (GOP)

US Senate Races
Amy Klobuchar (DFL) vs. Jim Newberger (GOP)
Karin Housley (GOP) vs. Tina Smith (DFL)
MY DAY WITH THE COMMISSIONER

North News summer intern, Bryan Salinas, spent a day with County Commissioner Linda Higgins who is retiring this year.

LINDA HIGGINS

Hennepin County Commissioner Linda Higgins has served District 2 for six years.

District 2 is comprised of Golden Valley, Medicine Lake, Southeast Plymouth, St. Anthony and North and NE Minneapolis.

Higgins has endorsed former nonprofit leader Irene Fernando as her successor. “I’m voting for Irene Fernando! Irene’s life experiences prepare her to be a strong county commissioner,” she said recently in an endorsement video.

WHO IS RUNNING TO REPLACE HER?

Irene Fernando (who landed 33.21% of votes on primary election day) www.voteirene.com

Blong Yang (who received 26.33% of votes in August). www.blongyang.org

Commissioners have big jobs. They must oversee things like public transit, road construction, human resources, economic development, and more for the county.

I visited Commissioner Higgins at the Hennepin County Office Building downtown. “Why are you retiring now and not later?” I asked. She told me: “I just think it’s time for new people.”

During my time with Higgins, I learned that a county commissioner needs to be a people person. A commissioner works with many different people day to day and goes to a lot of meetings.

“What do you think you’ll miss most?” I asked.

“The people. They work hard every hour to help others,” she said.

“When you leave, what do you think you’ll miss most?” I asked.

“The people, they work hard every hour to help others,” she said.
Kidentrepreneurs: Northside youth reflect on an enterprising summer

From clothing, to ice cream, to internationally recognized hot dog brands, youth have brought a flurry of businesses to the Northside this summer.

Small business reporter Cirien Saadeh talked with a few of them about the inspiration for their entrepreneurship.

GREEN GARDEN BAKERY

Jasmine Salter, age 17, is the Urban Agriculture and Sustainability Chair of Green Garden Bakery. A senior at Patrick Henry, Salter describes the business as a youth-run bakery developed and build by Northside youth, including Salter, “driven by a passion to change the world one delicious bakery item at a time.” At Green Garden Bakery, youth grow vegetables and then turn those vegetables into baked goods. They use a pay what you want model for those outside North Minneapolis and don’t charge residents of North Minneapolis. Their goal is to raise money and then use a third of what they raise to support a local initiative and the rest to support the bakery and pay the youth staff. “It started as a fundraiser for one of our friends who was injured in a car accident a few years back. Our goal was to make $500, but we ended up making $1500, which ended up being the base of our business plan,” said Salter.

Salter says the project has taught her entrepreneurship, public speaking, and business management. Salter notes that there are approximately 150 youth from across North Minneapolis involved in all aspects of the bakery, ranging from Kindergarten through age 12.

Bakery items can be bought via the business’ website.

THE BAKERY ITEMS

There is an old fashioned ice cream truck in North Minneapolis and it’s run by two sisters, Isis (11) and Oya (7) Bridewell. The sisters dreamt of selling ice cream, so their dad bought a truck and drives it for them while they sell pre-packaged and by-the-scoop ice cream.

“We’ve been wanting to have an ice cream business for a while, maybe the last two years,” said Isis. “The idea came from us and our dad,” added Oya.

You can typically find Isis and Oya’s Ice Cream Truck at the intersection of 47th Ave. and Aldrich Ave. You can also find them on Facebook and request them for special events, including birthday parties.

YUMYUM BROWNIE

Jerilyn Sheppheard, 17, is the brains behind YumYum Brownies, a gourmet brownie business. Sheppheard brought the idea to life last summer. Sheppheard is not a Northside resident, but she can be found selling the brownies, which she handmakes, at the Camden Farmers Market every Thursday through the end of the market season. She will be attending St. Paul college in the fall and is publishing a book: How I Started a Business at 15 Years Old.

Sheppheard says owning a business is a lot of work for a young person. “Some people don’t take us seriously, because we’re young. The paperwork, taxes, licenses, I never took a class on any of it,” says Sheppheard, whose sister Seanna works alongside her. Sheppheard also employs a team of young girls, ranging from age 11-15, to help out at their popup shops and events. She hopes to eventually open a brick and mortar space.

ISIS & OYA ICE CREAM

There is an old fashioned ice cream truck in North Minneapolis and it’s run by two sisters, Isis (11) and Oya (7) Bridewell. The sisters dreamt of selling ice cream, so their dad bought a truck and drives it for them while they sell pre-packaged and by-the-scoop ice cream.

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You can typically find Isis and Oya’s Ice Cream Truck at the intersection of 47th Ave. and Aldrich Ave. You can also find them on Facebook and request them for special events, including birthday parties.

NIAEVERYGIRL

After Nia LeClair, 8, went to a department store with her mother and noticed all the little girls’ clothes that depicted white faces, she decided to be part of a change. Wanting to see girls of color on girls clothing and accessories, she and her mother launched “Niaeverygirl.” Nia is the inspiration for the designs, which her mother brings to life. They sell backpacks, shirts, dresses, skirts, tote bags, pencil cases/cosmetic bags, and hats for “every girl.”

“It makes me feel so excited to see my ideas getting shared,” said Nia. Nia is not a Northside resident, but she sells at FLOW and has developed quite a following amongst Northside youth.

MR. FAULKNER’S OLD FASHIONED HOT DOG STAND

Jaequan Faulkner is 13 years old, but the teenage hotdog whiz kid needs no introduction. Faulkner opened up his hot dog stand in 2016, took a break in 2017, and then burst back on the scene this summer due to a viral social media post about his business. When a complaint was filed against him with the City of Minneapolis (he didn’t have a permit), City employees rallied around him and helped him relaunch his stand bigger and better than ever. Global media picked up the story, business boomed, and Faulkner even got a visit from the famed Oscar Meyer Weinermobile.

“I used to see people do lemonade and other stuff, but my uncle always used to tell me to be different, so I asked him if I could use his old hot dog rotisserie machine,” said Faulkner. “People have seen the stand and they have wanted to support it.”

Faulkner says too many people think kids in North Minneapolis cannot be successful. He believes his own achievement and the community support he has received is a sign of the Northside’s power.

“Being over North, being raised over North, people think ‘he ain’t going to be nothin’’, but when you do something and you do it inside North, people think ‘we ain’t going to be there, because it’s all negative,’ but Northsiders will come over and buy some hot dogs. Good things do come from Northside, and this is one.”

Faulkner does have plans to sell hot dogs during the school year, but he does not yet have a schedule. Follow him on Facebook for updates.
UROC’s annual Community Day open house is always a popular event. But this year’s theme—Celebrating Place—makes it particularly special because the University of Minnesota’s Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) has planned a lineup of music, activities, and food honoring North Minneapolis’ vibrant history and culture.

Free and open to everyone, this year’s Community Day is part of UROC’s Neighborhood U event series and runs from 3 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, September 20. Enjoy live music and a variety of family-friendly activities, community-based programs and University research displays, including a Northside Slow Roll Bike Demo with bicycling activist Anthony Taylor. Co-founder of Major Taylor Bicycling Club of Minnesota, which aims to get more African Americans riding bikes, Taylor is an ultra-cyclist and longtime advocate for making outdoor activities accessible to everyone.

Have memories of Plymouth Avenue to share? Radiomaker Nancy Rosenbaum will be on hand to record mini oral histories — bring along a friend and take a minute to tell your stories! Be sure to say hello to Eric King, a North Minneapolis resident and new Extension Community Economics Educator who just moved into his new office at UROC where he will be working with the community on ideas and projects primarily within the North Minneapolis Promise Zone.

Students from the University’s Minnesota Design Center will also be on hand to talk about North Minneapolis-related projects. Presentations will focus on the Lincoln School Playground Reuse, a Glenwood Avenue study looking at employment and development opportunities — including early conversations with North High School about the possibility of establishing a school-based community design studio. There will also be an interactive family tree, for those who want to explore their ancestry, and delicious dishes to sample inspired by the gone-but-not-forgotten Lucille’s Kitchen.

“Over the past year, dozens of current and former residents have shared with me both happy and tragic stories about Minneapolis’s North side,” says UROC’s Interim Executive Director Marilyn Higgins. “From the high school student winners of this year’s Congressional Art Competition, to the voices of community elders, I have witnessed a fierce sense of pride and determination about the future of North Minneapolis. Though UROC’s work, the University shares that pride and aims to make that better future unfold, while celebrating our successes.”
Let your voice be heard on Upper Harbor Terminal Redevelopment!

The City of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and selected master development team have prepared a draft redevelopment concept for the redevelopment of the Upper Harbor Terminal site, and they are asking for your input. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the course of the Northside, and it’s important that voices from the North Minneapolis community are heard in the development process.

The Upper Harbor Terminal site is located about two miles north of Downtown, between the Lowry Avenue and Camden bridges. Initial plans call for transforming this former barge shipping terminal into space for private and public uses, including a riverfront park and a community performing arts center.

Coffee with Councilman Cunningham: UHT Presentation and Feedback
Saturday, September 8 | 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
North Regional Library, 1315 Lowry Ave. N.

Also, you can visit the project website at www.upperharbormpls.com to:
• Learn more about the draft redevelopment concept
• Take a survey to give feedback on the plan

NEW DAY LOAN
an alternative to payday loans

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Example of repayment plan options

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*monthly payment calculation includes added interest

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joe@abepmn.org

Scheduling
Makeda Toure
makeda@abepmn.org

OFFICE HOURS
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Drop in M-F: 9am-12pm
Appointment M-F: 12-3pm

*data from the Payday Lending Health Impact Assessment Fact Sheet
Minneapolis Public School students headed back to school on Aug. 27. The beginning of a new year brings a mixed bag of experiences and emotions: excitement, apprehension, and reconnecting with friends, families, and educators.

This year, in our annual back to school package, we bring you an update on the school board, reflections from students and teachers, and an overview of the school desegregation lawsuit being brought against the Department of Education.
How can we best support our schools this year?

Four Northside educators told us what they need to maximize the possibilities for 2018-19.

Emily O'Neill
First grade teacher at The Mastery School

Arielle Rocca
Science Teacher and Project Based Learning Coordinator, Patrick Henry High School

Alex McCoy
First grade teacher at Prodeo Academy

Amy Leuhmann
Principal at Nellie Stone Johnson

Our education reporter brings you the latest news from MPS

By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

School is back in session and so is the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) Board of Directors. This is what you need to know:

MPS Superintendent Ed Graff presented the State of Schools on Aug. 20 to a packed auditorium at North High School. According to Graff, MPS continues to be “MPS Strong.” He says that MPS’ focus for the upcoming school years is literacy for all grade levels, continuing to model and teach social-emotional learning, a deepened focus on equity, providing stronger student support systems, and further engaging the community.

MPS has begun campaigning around two November referendum questions approved by the Board this past June. According to an MPS press release, if approved, the referendum questions would support the district’s financial stability. The first of the two referendum questions would ask voters to increase the existing operating levy to the state-allowed maximum, which would mean $18 million in additional revenue for the district. The second question would authorize a levy to cover technological costs. If approved, this question would shift $12 million away from the district’s general operating fund in order to fund technology-specific expenses.

The last day of school for the 2018-2019 school year is June 7. The next Business Meeting is Sept. 4, beginning at 5:30pm. The next Committee of the Whole will be Sept. 25, beginning at 6pm. Both meetings will be held at MPS’ Davis Center (1250 West Broadway Ave).

MN Supreme Court agrees to hear desegregation case

By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

A handful of Northside parents are plaintiffs on a legal case against the State of Minnesota, alleging that it has failed to provide an equitable education for all Minnesota students and arguing that schools must be desegregated, in terms of funding, programming, teacher diversity, and transportation.

The case was opened up in 2015 by Alejandro Cruz-Guzman, a St. Paul parent of five. In 2016, a trial court judge ruled that Cruz-Guzman and other parents, including North Minneapolis’ Devin Daley, had the right to sue the state. The Minnesota Court of Appeals had thrown out the ruling in March 2018, but the Minnesota Supreme Court overturned the appellate court ruling in July 2018.

“This case is the perfect opportunity for the community to stand up and be a vanguard for our children,” said Daley, who is married to MPS Director Kerry Jo Felder. Daley is concerned about programming and funding in local schools. He also sees a need for more teachers of color in Northside classrooms.

The Lead Counsel on the case is Dan Shulman, a longtime lawyer who was also lead counsel on a 1995 desegregation case which resulted in Minnesota’s school choice policy, which gave parents the opportunity take advantage of free transportation in order to send their children to a school out of their neighborhood or out of district. According to Shulman, the legislative creation of school choice has not remedied the original complaint.

“We are not against parent choice. All parents should be free to choose the best schools for their children. But the choices that parents have now are not adequate and are not good choices. What the parents need now is better choices. Right now, their choices are segregated public, private, or charter schools,” said Shulman.

Because of the case’s focus on school choice, parents and organizations have strong emotions. Charter schools have come out strongly against the lawsuit, which they believe threatens the idea of school choice. Leaders like Sondra Samuels, Executive Director of the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), are reticent about desegregation. She believes it can lead to more harm to black and brown children.

“Parents choosing to have their whole child validated by sending them to a school that actually will validate them is my choice,” said Samuels. “It’s not about bussing black and brown kids into white schools, there is no equity in that. We need to start grappling with the segregation of our cities so it can help us address the inequity of our school systems.”

According to Shulman, the plaintiffs and others will meet with the Hennepin County trial court judge to set a timeline for the case and, hopefully, a court date. He would like to see the case go to trial by next year and for the State Legislature to take action right away if the court rules in the plaintiff’s favor. If the Minnesota Supreme Court rules in the plaintiff’s favor, it will be up to the Minnesota State Legislature to develop a remedy.

“The community can organize politically and offer suggestions. People can intervene in the case. The charter schools have intervened. There are avenues the community can take to let their viewpoints known,” said Shulman.
These stories were created in partnership with the Graves Foundation and Pollen as part of the Unbound program. Unbound is creating a new conversation about public education in Minneapolis.

Instability doesn't mean incapable

Daija Triplett | Student Intern

In my 18 years of life, I've been a student at nine different schools in six different districts in four different states. Moving around so frequently left the door wide open for teachers, family members, and school staff to stereotype me and my future because of the instability in my life. They expected me to cut class or not finish my assignments. I could tell by the way they treated other students with similar situations.

I began moving frequently after my stepfather passed away in 2008. He was the sole provider in our household, so when he died unexpectedly none of us knew what to do. Our first big move was from Des Moines to Minneapolis. I was a little sad because I was leaving my friends, but I was happy to be closer to my family who lived in Minnesota.

In Minneapolis, I started going to Anwatin Middle School. My experiences there were awesome; the teachers were engaging, and I made friends easily. I had a lot of support from the teachers, deans, and administrators. My favorite activity there was Beacons, an after school program where you could pick different classes to take, like art, dance, and singing. They also fed us snacks and had a school bus to take us home after. Beacons was my favorite thing because I got to meet a lot of new people and the instructors were also very chill and laid back.

During the middle of my seventh grade year my mom decided to move to Marietta, Georgia. At the time it wasn't really clear why, but now I know it was because she was having some trouble dealing with our family members. This was our second big move in a year, and I started at East Cobb Middle School in the middle of the school year. I had a hard time making friends there, and after I finished the year there, we ended up moving back to Minneapolis, and went back to Anwatin for eighth grade.

Once I graduated from eighth grade, we left Minnesota again and went to Decatur, Georgia where I attended Towers High School for my freshman year. That was my first time ever having to wear a uniform, and I hated it - not just because I wanted to wear what I pleased, but because I feel like individuality and freedom of expression is important. I should be able to have my own sense of style and not look the same as another person. I felt that they looked at me as if I was another student and not Daija.

The heavy weight of an ELL label

Blessing Kasongoma | Student Intern

I am a recent immigrant from the Democratic Republic Of Congo. I'm now about to be a senior in high school. I was in English Language Learner (ELL) classes my first two years of middle school, and that experience has hugely impacted my entire education in Minneapolis Public Schools. In my experience, being a former ELL student can feel like a negative shadow that follows you throughout your school career.

My negative ELL experiences began with our different learning environment. ELL students weren’t educated the same way our peers were. My ELL classmates and I were frequently separated from everyone else, and often taken out of classes to work in smaller groups. This method bothered me. I wanted a regular learning experience with the rest of my classmates, and I felt that staying in the classroom would help us adapt more quickly. It was embarrassing to be taken out of class. I felt like other students viewed us as the slow students. I remember the way they looked at us—like we were those people.

I’ve noticed in my school environments that teachers and other students often seem to define ELL students’ intelligence by their English level and their accent. That is a problem. Once, in physical activity class, our teacher asked us to pair up. The girl that I was partnered with talked to me as if I was a child. The treatment made me feel defenseless and powerless.

These situations—the shame, embarrassment, and frustration of them—pushed me to work harder towards learning English. My eagerness to leave the ELL program was because of those negative experiences. I wanted to prove that I could be in the mainstream class learning like everyone else. My English level improved day by day, and I got withdrawn from my classes for ELL classes less and less. Although my English level continued improving throughout my middle school years, I still felt that it was not enough—that I was not enough.

I don’t want to insinuate that the entire ELL program is bad. It had its benefits. It gives students a head start before stepping into the complete anglophone world. ELL helped me meet other students that were in the same boat as me, and allowed me to help them just as they helped me. We uplifted each other.

As I understood and learned how the high school system works, I decided to challenge myself by taking some IB classes for the last two years of high school. I went to a counselor to get more insight on how the program works. I wasn’t expecting to have problems getting into IB English, but my ability and intelligence were once again questioned. My counselor told me that I would not be a good fit for IB English because of my ELL background. He thought that I couldn’t handle it. When I pushed back, he verified with my former English teacher that I was qualified for the class. It was disappointing that he required proof of my abilities that wasn’t required for other students.

As a student, you need guidance and encouragement in new, unsure, and challenging situations from school teachers, counselors, and administrators. I felt like I needed to be pushed, and instead I was discouraged and made to feel incapable. It takes a lot to learn a new language, let alone following a course in that language. I speak three languages and I managed to pass all my IB classes with As.

So, to all my peers, teachers, counselors, and everyone else in education: Please don’t overlook us former or current ELL students. Having an accent, or having learned other languages before English doesn’t make us any less smart than the others. We are capable and talented too.

Continued on Page 20
We need dedicated teachers

Myesha Powell | Student Intern

Being a teacher comes with more responsibility than just showing up for work and delivering a lesson. We deserve teachers that greet us at the door with nothing but excitement when they welcome us into their classrooms. We need teachers that believe in us and still motivate us even after we feel like giving up on ourselves. Having a teacher that never stops pushing us and showing us that we matter to them can change our lives.

Most people think that if a teacher is present in their classroom, then students are learning. That’s not always true. I witnessed with that my own eyes. I had a teacher during my junior year who would always bring up the fact that he was getting paid regardless of whether or not he taught us anything of value. He would do this whenever someone did not cooperate with what he said or if the whole class wasn’t quiet while he talked. To me, that showed he didn’t really care about our future as much as he should. Either way, it showed that we didn’t affect him and what he had going on in his life.

We need motivation and role models. School is hard enough in itself; we need the adults who work with us to uplift us, not put us down.

My art teacher told me and a few other friends that we were not going to be anything in life, because she didn’t like the fact that we were holding conversation and drawing at the same time. She felt like good work had to be done in silence. We didn’t deserve to get talked to that way. She could have handled that so much better. She could have politely asked us to stop talking.

Who would want to even come to school when our teachers doubt and threaten us whenever they get upset? We are growing adults. We need motivation and role models. School is hard enough in itself; we need the adults who work with us to uplift us, not put us down.

Though I’ve had many teachers who didn’t seem to care about my future or education, I have had a few that have really made a difference. One of them, Mr. Lachermeyer, also known as “Lach,” was so outstanding that I wouldn’t miss his class for anything in the world. He brought life to education. He didn’t just sit at his desk and hand out papers. He didn’t stand like a statue in front of the class, teaching out of a textbook. He never once brought up getting paid. Most importantly, he never seemed to give up on anyone who stepped foot into his classroom. Not all teachers are like Lach, but we need them to be.

Lach teaches history at North High. When I would walk into his history class, I’d always think to myself, “I wonder what we’re doing today,” because every day he did something different with us. That’s what brought excitement; you never knew what he had up his sleeve. One day Lach told the class that we were going to learn about the Greensboro sit-in. When we arrived, we watched a video of college students protesting non-violently by sitting in the whites only section of a restaurant, reading books after being denied to be served. Nobody in the restaurant agreed with the choice they made so they beat the college students really badly.

Lach decided to bring this history to life by having us act out what happened at the sit-in, but he added his own twist. Instead of beating each other, we had to make the protestor laugh. Once you laughed, you changed spots with another classmate. That’s the type of dedication and thought we need teachers to put into their curriculum.

Each and every day, Lach showed that he wanted to be there for us, and he always was! Every time a hand went up, his eyes lit up. He would say things like “Yes, yes, yes! I love questions! Hit me!” That reaction alone further inspired me to ask questions and further my knowledge in the subject.

Arts education should have passion

Bryan Salinas | Student Intern

I am a self taught artist who wants to pursue a career in it—either as a graphic designer or comic book artist. I have a real passion for art. I have grown in my skill and plan to continue in it, but my arts classes in school left me sorely disappointed. In fact, they have at times turned me away from art. If art classes in high school can’t inspire someone who has a passion to do it for their career, something is very wrong.

There are many reasons my arts education hasn’t felt inspiring or helpful. I have seen, over and over again, students wasting time and destroying our art supplies. These are supplies that can go for twenty to forty dollars apiece. They’re paid for by the community’s taxpayers. Our community works hard for that money and we really need it. Wasting supplies is really a pain when we need better lunches, more supplies for other classes, or any necessary school repairs.

In ninth grade, I took “advanced painting and drawing,” but I didn’t learn anything I wanted to know or didn’t already know. The class was so boring and repetitive to me and the other students. Some of them even skipped class frequently and other never even showed up after the first day. It was a required class to graduate.

In my frustration, I talked to that art teacher and asked what we were supposed to be getting out of it. She told me that art helps with brain function and that students learn better by doodling. If that’s the case, I suggest that regular classes just have some free time for students to doodle. That seems like a better use of resources.

There are several ways I think my arts education could have been better. To create a meaningful experience for students, making the classes smaller would ensure that all the students get attention from the teacher. The classes could be smaller if art was an elective versus a required class. It would probably be easier to manage too, since the students taking the class would be the ones who chose to take it. They’d probably respect the supplies more too.

Another way to get students to want to take the class is to teach what the class is supposed to be about. If the class is advertised as a sculpture class, then teach sculpting. Don’t have kids etching on a piece of metal and call it a day. Have the students make what they want to make with what they have for that class and teach them new techniques every time they have another assignment. That will keep the students more interested.

What I want is a teacher whose art can inspire and push the students to want to get to the level of skill. I want my teachers to be as inspiring as the artists I watch on YouTube.

When I was learning art on my own, I just did it because I had nothing else to do. It was a great time killer for me, but now it’s more than that. It has become my passion. As I learned and drew on my own, my skills grew and I became better at what I did. On YouTube, I discovered other artists to learn from, and that inspired me to work harder to fine tune the skills I had already built. What I want is a teacher whose art can inspire and push the students to want to get to the level of skill. I want my teachers to be as inspiring as the artists I watch on YouTube.

Art is a wonderful tool and it can be used to deal with stress and boredom. It’s cool when you know you made something that people are willing to pay for. Art classes shouldn’t be forced on students, but I would like it to still be taught to kids who really want to know more and continue their path into the art world.

My time in my high school’s art classes felt negative, but I want to help change that and make someone else’s experience better than what I had. I want students to learn something in the class, so that they continue to want to learn more.
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Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) is the neighborhood organization for the Willard Hay and Near North neighborhoods. Comprised of 13 districts, NRRC’s mission is to inform, engage and facilitate the residents of the Near North and Willard Hay neighborhoods in Minneapolis to be primary agents for improving the social, economic, environmental and livability conditions in their community.

Board Elections for the odd numbered districts will be held Tuesday, September 25, 2018. NRRC residents should come vote between 1:00pm-7:00pm at UROC - the Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center, 2001 Plymouth Ave. N.

For more information go to NRRC.Org or call (612)335-5924
tute fun, family-friendly activities and displays with emphasis on Northside’s deep cultural roots and assets. Record a mini-oral history of your personal Plymouth Avenue stories; find your roots in an interactive family tree; take a trip down memory lane by sampling dishes inspired by Plymouth Avenue’s gone-but-not-forgotten Lucille’s Kitchen and more.

9/20 – The North Methodist Annual Church Buffet/Smorgasbord will be held 5pm-7pm. Tickets are $10.00 for adults, $4 for children ages 5-11, and children under 5 are free. The church is located at 44th and Fremont in North Minneapolis and is handicapped accessible. For additional information call 612-322-4497.

9/22 – African-American Genealogy. 1pm-2pm. Webber Park Library. How do you figure out where your ancestors are from? What can you find out from your family tree? Learn about the history and genealogical resources for researching African American roots.

9/29 – Comedy in Your Community. 7pm - 8:30pm. Webber Park Library. Local comic Brandi Brown will present a series of variety comedy shows featuring some of her favorite Twin Cities funny people and interviews with your Hennepin County Library staff. Each show will include different performers and guests. Stop by your library to submit questions for the guest staff appearances. These free events take place after library hours.

9/13 – The monthly meeting of the Northside Writers’ Group will begin at 7pm. Location: Homewood Studios (2400 Plymouth Ave.)

EDUCATION
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.

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The Minneapolis Business Portal is an online platform designed to connect entrepreneurs and small business owners to the information and resources needed to plan, launch and grow a business. It's available at business.minneapolismn.gov and features roadmaps, checklists, tools and resources.

Kindred Kitchen, an initiative of Appetite for Change, hosts a new member weekly kitchen tour every Tuesday at 10am at 1206 W Broadway Ave. events/14393350070021377

Northside Economic Opportunity Network is now accepting applications for their brand new private office spaces that feature windows, open workspaces and more. There are several office space and pricing plans available, ranging from a drop-in guest pass ($30/day) to a platinum plan ($500/month with private office). For more information visit https://www.neon-mn.org/spaces

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NORTHNOTICES
"Alive & Kicking" AND still singing

The high after a successful performance six weeks prior was still in the air when the Twin Cities' premier senior rock group "Alive & Kickin" reunited with laughter and a new book of songs last month. Alive & Kickin, some 30 singers older than 65, will need time to memorize their lyrics and refine their harmonies, but the theme of this year's music is instantly understood because it is what brings the men and women together at the Cora McCorvey Health and Wellness Center each Monday: love. Known for redefining age with energetic interpretations of classic rock songs from Queen, Janis Joplin and the Beatles, Alive & Kickin will spend the next year singing love songs in community concerts that will culminate with a big show in June 2019.

Ferrell convenes the group for the first official day of rehearsal to discuss the song book the group would be learning over the next year.

Alive & Kickin artistic director Michael Ferrell, center, helps Agnes Chik-Fufa belt out a song during an audition for the group. Afterwards, Ferrell told music director Jason Hansen, left, "We've got a new rocker and she's gonna be good."

During introductions, Pat Faunce introduces herself, unapologetically declaring herself a diva.

Norma Garfin, center, fills the space with her voice as she begins to learn Gary Wright's Love is Alive.

Dean Ferrell, who was unable to perform with the group last year, was greeted with many hugs as she rejoined her friends on the first day of rehearsal.
Teachers from Page 14

engagement process was adequate, noting that several members of the FONC participated throughout the 16-month process. He attributes remaining controversy to a "handful of residents" who "just don't want change."

Palmer says those involved with North Commons had the "healthiest debate" among those who came out to voice their thoughts on the plan. He says he doesn't know if the petition against the dome was ever submitted to staff. "We're talking about something that whether or not it has a dome, it's beneficial for North Minneapolis. If there are 196 voices saying we don't want the dome, that is something the park board should take into consideration."

Over in Farview Park, one CAC member voted against approving the final plan. According to Arvidson, that dissent was due to opposition toward the idea of a paved path to the top of the park's hill. Arvidson believes the desire not to see a path is due to safety concerns, but he says he has a "hard time budging" from a paved path to the top of the hill, which is where the tallest point in the city is. "We're interested in ensuring that privilege isn't just for the able-bodied who can walk out across the grass and climb up the hill," he said.

Questions also remain in Bryn Mawr Meadows, where Arvidson said questions around parking will need to be addressed during the public comment period.

NEXT STEPS

As soon as the drafted NSAMP is complete, Arvidson says it will be available on the MPRB website and printed out in rec centers throughout the Northside. Additional community outreach is planned as well. Palmer urges the community to keep the big picture in mind moving forward. "We're doing something for North Minneapolis," he said. "These are new improvements, new amenities, things that are going to be coming to North Minneapolis. It shows progress in North Minneapolis. There are always going to be people who agree and people who disagree, but the beauty of this is the people of North Minneapolis being engaged and working together to build a stronger Northside for everyone."

Instability doesn't mean incapable from Page 13

listening to him explain this new unit and not getting it at all. I would have to ask my friends or other classmates how to do the homework, finding out that they were just as confused as I was. I wouldn't turn in homework because I didn't understand it, and I didn't want to go to the teacher because I didn't think he would be able to clearly explain it either.

My mom checked my grades frequently, and she noticed my grade in that class was way lower than the rest, and she talked to me about it. I ended up staying after school with him at the end of every quarter to get my grade up just enough to pass. I never did feel like I understood the subject.

Later that year I had another negative encounter. It was the end of the school year and most of the students had finished their finals. One of the school's coaches approached me and a group of my friends, and said that we needed to go to class. As he walked away, I heard him say said that it was always us, the black folks, in the hallways doing nothing. He thought I didn't hear him, but I did. It made me feel like I was being profiled as a black student who didn't go to class. I was offended.

Those two encounters motivated me to transfer to North Community High School for my sophomore and junior year of high school. My experiences at North were the best I've ever had with any school. The faculty and staff at North were very engaging and helpful; I knew they wanted us to succeed and do better in school—which isn't something I always felt at the other schools I had attended.

North was like a big family to me. We fussed and fought, but we were all there to uplift each other and help. I was a cheerleader there, and my coach was like another parent.

North has always seemed underappreciated in the district. We didn't get the same treatment as the other MPS schools such as Edison, Washburn, and Southwest. You always see the positive educational things going on at schools in wealthier parts of the city, but you only see North getting noticed at championship games. It's wrong. People only want to uplift us when we win a state title.

I wanted to graduate from North, but unfortunately I moved again after my junior year. My mom and I moved to Arizona that summer, and I started my senior year at Dobson High School. In October of 2017, I began attending East High School in Iowa for the remainder of my senior year.

I graduated from high school on time in May of 2018, and I'm grateful for the unique education experience I had due to the number of schools I attended. I learned things I continue to carry on my journey. The two districts in Georgia taught me more about African American history than any other school I attended. They also helped me become more comfortable with tests by actively preparing me for them. In Iowa, I learned about college and adult readiness. I took a financial literacy class which was required by the state. I was always about building professional relationships and networking with people in the journalism field. I also got a lot of support as I was going through traumatic incidents. Lastly in the Arizona district, I learned a lot more about technology as a whole and how there are faster ways to look at your grades and keep up with how you're doing in school.

Being a student in six different districts was tough, but despite my struggles, I still came out on top. I graduated in the top 10 of my graduating class. I was on the honor roll my entire senior year, and am headed into college with 22 credits. Through every negative experience, I had a positive outcome.
His hope is to continue the momentum begun by recent multi-million dollar developments in the area. The new North Market and Webber Library are just across the street from his humble but sophisticated shop.

White has begun calling the area “Camden Town.” It’s a nod to both the area’s history and to a quirky, artistic and diverse neighborhood across the world in London with the same name. He is currently working with LSE Architects, who designed both the library and the grocery store, on the concept for his new multi-part building.

White hopes that Camden Town will help solve one of Minneapolis’ major problems: its struggle to retain talented professionals of color. He wants to “create a place in this city that resonates culturally” with young, urban, professional African Americans in particular.

So far, support for his idea has been widespread. White was recruited to join the Webber Camden Neighborhood Organization board (WCNO) just over a year ago. His Camden Town idea has the full support of WCNO Executive Director Roberta Englund. “Camden Town is one of the most promising, totally realistic growth stimulus that could occur in the Webber Camden Neighborhood,” she said. “It has a huge future ahead of it.”

As White begins the long process of look for partners to help finance the $2.5 million project, he’s making small but noticeable moves to raise awareness for the Camden Town brand. Over the summer, he hired artist St. Paul Slim to paint a colorful Camden Town mural on the side of his building. “These are some small examples and some small things we can do to change the narrative around our community and start to create some new energy and synergy amongst folks who are doing great work,” he said.

He wants Camden Town to focus on the arts. “Street art gives a lively and interesting appeal to urban settings. Also, that art culture helps to break down cultural barriers,” he said. The mural is already inspiring community members to take action in their neighborhood and bring about a new way of being in the neighborhood.

Brandon Burbach, also a WCNO board member, has lived in the neighborhood for 14 years. Soon after the new Webber Library opened, his wife encountered the term “placemaking” there. Quickly, they became invested in that model of neighborhood development.

“Placemaking is bottom up instead of top down and hopefully that’s what Camden Town can be,” he said.

He says White’s creative, transformative ideas for the area have inspired them. “It’s a grassroots kind of spirit that’s driving it,” he said. “I’ve come to see placemaking as the community’s hedge against gentrification.”

Burbach has become particularly passionate about bringing a “significant art piece” to Camden Town. “This intersection of Webber and Victory Parkways at Humboldt Ave is really becoming the crossroads of four vibrant neighborhoods,” he said, “and it could have a little something for everyone”. Inspired by the Minnehaha Parkway’s “Cottontail on Trail,” Burbach is exploring the possibility of creating a large metal turtle, perhaps designed by the same artist, to be placed on Webber Parkway behind the library. The two art pieces—a tortoise and a hare—would then exist at both the North and South ends of the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway.

“There’s a symmetry that the tortoise and hare establish,” he said. “It evokes this idea of unity.” Burbach sees a turtle being a fitting mascot for the neighborhood. “We can be known for moving forward. How did the tortoise win? It just kept moving forward.”
Every Sunday afternoon in the summer, the baseball diamond in North Commons Park is packed with a multi-generational crowd of kickball players and their devoted spectators. Camp chairs encircle the backstop; food is served hot off grills, ice cream trucks make their way down the block, and the kickball competition is fierce but friendly.

Founded five years ago by Tyrone Johnson and Londell Anderson, the Squad of Players Adult Kickball League has quietly become one of the biggest community events in North Minneapolis during the summer. This year, 12 co-ed adult teams competed in a 12 week season. Hundreds turned out to watch. Community violence created more than one tragic moment, yet the league preserved.

This month, Anderson and Johnson discussed the league’s origins and how it’s building community amidst some major challenges.

By Kenzie O’Keefe
Photos by David Pierini
How did the league begin? Londell: Back in 2014, Tyrone called me and told me he got the field over at North Commons and said he wanted to start some kickball. I got a team in and he got a couple other teams in and we started with four adult teams. Tyrone: A lot of us are teachers, mentors and coaches, and a lot of us never had time to hang out with each other. I wanted to do something where we could get a chance to hang out with each other and show the kids how they’re really supposed to compete.

On your Facebook page, you wrote that 75% of the adults out here are educators. Does that still seem about right? Tyrone: Oh yeah. Teachers, mentors, coaches, deans of students, principals. I’m a teacher at City View Elementary. Londell: I’m a football coach at North High.

Kids are out here playing too. How did they get involved? Tyrone: They’re out here all the time. They love what we’re doing and they wanted to be a part of it. This is an adult kickball league; the youth teams play on Saturdays. The Park Board loves what we’re doing and they wanted to branch off of us. Londell: Most of these kids out here, their parents play in our league.

Why kickball and not some other sport? Tyrone: It was something different. We coach basketball, baseball, football, soccer even sometimes. We wanted to do something different. [Kickball is] an elementary game that really gets people together.

You started in 2014, has it just steadily grown into what it is now, 12 teams and hundreds of spectators? Londell: Teams get formed by individuals or groups that want to put teams together. Every year it just got bigger and bigger. Some of our teams have sponsors for uniforms. It’s pretty open for anybody. Tyrone: As long as its coed. Every team has to have at least three females playing at all times. There can be up to 15 players per team.

Why is it important for teams to be coed? Tyrone: So we can get everybody involved. Not just males on males or females on females. We wanted everybody to get along with everybody. Londell: Kickball is for everybody as you can see. The young, the old. Our oldest player is 57. We have young players as young as 18. There’s a real wide range of players in this league. That’s why you get everybody out here. The grandmas, the little kids, kids coming back from college kicking it with their families. It’s a good thing.

What do you want to bring to this community through kickball? Tyrone: I love the family reunion atmosphere. It’s about people coming out, socializing with each other, networking if they get a chance to. They can show their faces instead of using Facebook. We’re on social media too much now. We’re always on our phones. It’s hard for us to even interact with each other sometimes. This brings us together.

What have been some of the highlights in your five seasons of existence as a league? Tyrone: Seeing it grow. Seeing the community come out and supporting us the way they do. Sunday, July 29, was amazing to me. The whole community came out. There was a stage. The churches came out. They were singing and all that. A little bit of me hates it, because it was for a negative [reason – Nathan Hampton’s death during league games week before]. But the community made it into a positive and made a bright story out of what this is.

Has kickball changed since Nate’s death? Are you going anything differently? Tyrone: Nate’s death wasn’t about kickball at all. We might have a little more security present or what not. We know as teams and individuals and community members and leaders around here, we need to secure our space as well. We shouldn’t just look for police to police us all the time. We can police ourselves in ways that benefit our community as well and let em know we’re not tolerating the nonsense over here.

What’s up with the food? Tyrone: It’s bring your own food and grill out here. August 5 was All Star Sunday and the first annual Mama T’s rib cook off. It was our fourth year doing an All Star rib cook-off but we switched the name for my mom who passed away. The kickball winners and the rib cook-off winners get trophies. We have competitions as well: furthest kick, fastest to first base, things like that. We have both male and female awards for that.

What else do you want the community to know about kickball and what you’re trying to do with the league? Londell: the old traditional Northside is still here. Back in the days when we had the old functions, the parades down Plymouth Ave and all that. The old school Juneteenth where the atmosphere was just good with vendors and things. That atmosphere still exists out here.

What do you think has changed? Why do people need reminding that that still exists? Londell: I think it has a lot to do with the perception of what goes on around here that’s put on TV. If you all see is negative about something, that’s all you know. They need to highlight more of this stuff. Realistically, it’s tragic what happened to Nate Hampton. We love him. But I think a lot of people should have came out here before that happened. We embrace all of them. I’m not trying to say nothing. But we’re here. Tyrone: it’s our fifth year. Come on out and enjoy some community fun. That’s all we ask.

If people want to get involved next year, what should they do? Tyrone: Look us up on Facebook: Squad of Players Adult Kickball League.
Open Streets
West Broadway

September 15th
Saturday 11-Am-5PM

West Broadway Ave
From Penn Ave N to Lyndale Ave N.

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WBC West Broadway Business and Area Coalition
NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center
Our Streets MPLS
Minneapolis City of Lakes
BlueCross BlueShield Minnesota
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