

# N RTH NEWS

March 28, 2019

Serving the neighborhoods of North Minneapolis

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## A seat at the table

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## Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the April edition of North News. Our team has appreciated the warmer temperatures and brighter nights as we've been reporting, teaching, and being out and about in the community — and beyond — this month.

On March 19 and 20, our staff was at Hamline University, putting on the Truth and Transformation: Changing Racial Narratives in Media conference. We did so in partnership with six other media and community organizations: KMOJ, KRSM, Hamline, Minnesota Public Radio, The Minnesota Humanities Center, and ThreeSixty Journalism.

As part of the preparatory efforts for the conference, a Wilder Research study was commissioned that (unsurprisingly) showed that Minnesota media professionals "overwhelmingly believe racial bias in their ranks leads to inaccurate news stories and understanding that bias is necessary to be effective in their jobs." Yet, main-

stream Minnesota newsrooms are overwhelmingly white and most professionals have never received racial bias and other relevant training. And while many individual reporters believe they are capable of competently covering communities that are not their own, few believe their industry is doing so well as a whole.

As a multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial community that has experienced generations of structural marginalization, North Minneapolis has felt the consequences of white supremacy in media. Phrases like "gang-related" and words like "minority" are used to tell coded stories about who deserves to live and prosper in our cities.

In order to deeply understand and document these experiences for conference learning, our cross-sector team hosted over 15 listening sessions with mainstream and community media professionals and populations served (often harmfully) by them across the state prior to the conference.

What we heard was again, unsurprising, but also extremely helpful in beginning to discuss ways of tracking towards change. A few of the recommendations we heard from community members and addressed during the conference

were:

1. Cover people of color and indigenous (POCI) communities beyond stories about race.
2. Apply journalistic values and ethics by considering what "fair and accurate reporting" means within different community contexts.
3. Diversify access.
4. Build trust through relationships.
5. Turn critics into sources.
6. Embrace a role in opening up conversations about identity.
7. Get past preconceived notions.
8. Be informed.
9. Practice (and publish) self-reflective assessments.
10. Be intentional about hiring.
11. Allow journalists to proudly identify their race and ethnicity.
12. Follow through and follow up on reporting.

As I've helped pull together this edition of our paper in the immediate aftermath of the conference, I'm feeling an even greater urgency to do this work, and do it NOW. Changing the narrative will require more than just changing the words we use or hiring a few people from groups underrepresented in the industry (but we are com-

mitted to those things too; for example, I'm actively working to work myself out of my job). We need to think intersectionally about the topics we cover. We need to create all of our narratives as collaboratively as possible. We need to resist the urge to sacrifice depth in service of breaking stories. I'm inspired by the words of Mark Trahan, editor of *Indian Country Today*, who said, during a panel at the conference, "We're a small organization; we're always looking for ways to defy gravity." North News will continue doing our best to defy what we've been taught to believe about the gravity of journalism.

Huge thanks to conference attendees, particularly the people of color, queer folks, and other marginalized community members who educated and emotionally labored for those two days in service of beginning to create a media industry that better serves all of us.

Until next time,

**Kenzie O'Keefe**

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## INSIDE OUR "O"



A married couple in Victory plan to buy a vacant building on 44th and Thomas Ave. N and turn it into a multipurpose chocolate studio.

Read the full story on Page 8

# JORDAN WEEK OF KINDNESS

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# North Minneapolis at a glance

## North Commons renovated

North Commons Recreation Center is receiving a completely renovated gym with modern technology and new teen room due to its selection as the recipient of the 2019 NCAA Final Four Minneapolis Local Organizing Committee Legacy Project. Tri-Construction, a minority-owned, North Minneapolis-based community construction and development firm, donated its time and construction to help complete it. The project will be unveiled on April 2.

## Beloved coach to receive award during NCAA tournament

Larry McKenzie, the boys' basketball coach at North High School, is the recipient of the 2019 Guardians of the Game Pillar Award for Education from the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC). He will receive the award on Sunday, April 7, at the AT&T NABC Guardians of the Game Awards Show, which is held during the annual NABC Convention in conjunction with the NCAA Division I Men's Final Four. The Guardians of the Game Pillar Awards are presented annually for advocacy, education, leadership and service. McKenzie, the first African-American coach to be inducted into the Minnesota Boys Basketball Hall of Fame, is the first coach to win four consecutive state titles in the 100-year history of Minnesota boys' basketball with his team at Patrick Henry High School. Most recently, he is the first coach to lead two schools to multiple state titles. His North Polars won two straight state championships in 2016 and 2017.

## Northern Metals settlement services available to communitiy

As part of the Northern Metals Settlement, the Minneapolis Health Department has announced that residents of Bottineau, Sheridan, McKinley, or Hawthorne are eligible for a number of services, if they meet the appropriate requirements. More details on services and requirements, related to lead paint can be directed to Lisa Smestad at 612-673-3733 or [lisa.smestad@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:lisa.smestad@minneapolismn.gov), and Eliza Schell, related to asthma, at 612-685-8512 or [eliza.schell@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:eliza.schell@minneapolismn.gov). Services include in-home visits related to lead poisoning prevention, lead testing, asthma education for parents, and an in-home asthma consultation.

## New pool needs swim gear

Students at Franklin Middle School need your new or gently used swim gear: one-piece swimsuits, trunks, goggles, and swim caps. Gear is needed for youth, ages 11-15, men's small, boys' 14-18, women's size up to size 8, and girl's sizes 16-18. These tax-deductible donations can be dropped off at the Franklin Middle School main office.

## Northside doctor named family medicine educator of the year

University of Minnesota's Broadway Family Medicine Clinic's Andrea Westby, MD, has been awarded the 2019 Family Medicine Educator of the year award by the The Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP). Westby is a family physician and assistant professor at the University of Minnesota Medical School. Westby has also done work in the North Minneapolis community, being an advocate for health equity. Westby was given her award on March 28. By Daija Triplett

## Families celebrated in Northside Achievement Zone ceremony



The Northside Achievement Zone held a ceremony for graduates of its Family Academy at Sanctuary Church on Saturday, March 16. NAZ builds in a culture of achievement for North Minneapolis families and offers "cradle-to-college" support to develop kids into scholars and future leaders. Here, Liberty Perkins and other scholars perform an African dance for families and friends in attendance. Photo by David Pierini

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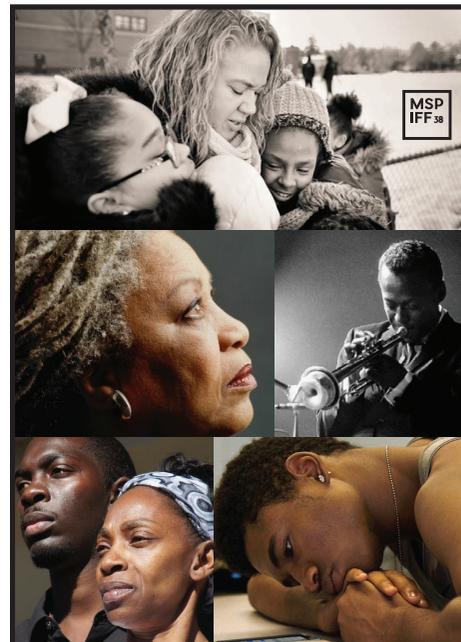
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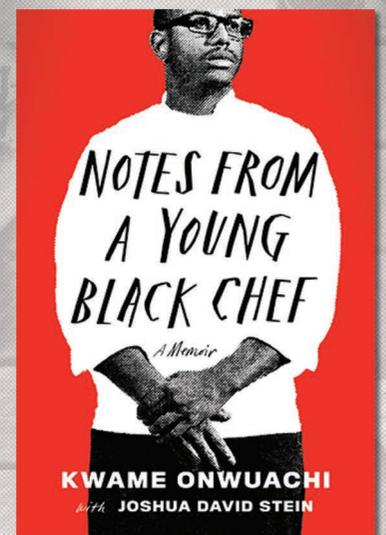
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# Polars take second in the state 2A basketball tournament

By Kenzie O'Keefe Editor

The North High Polars boys' basketball team won state championship 1A titles in 2016 and 2017. On Saturday, March 23, they had a shot at a third, this time in division 2A. They played against Minnehaha Academy, a dynastic team that took home 2A titles in 2017 and 2018.

The Polars played hard at the Target Center, but in the end, they came up short, losing 52-69. Minnehaha's Chet Holmgren, who is nearly seven feet tall, proved formidable under the basket, stopping shot after shot as Polar players like Senior Nasir El-Amin drove to the baseline.

After the game, Coach Larry McKenzie took to Facebook to praise his team: "They fought and never gave up, in the end our Seniors played in three state championship games and won two. Our young guys now know what it takes. Disappointed but the sun will shine again. Very proud of my Minneapolis North Polars."



The Polars will graduate four seniors this year: Omar Brown, Eli Campbell, Nasir El-Amin, and Josh Hodges. **Photo by Sam Wilbur**



The Polars defeated Esko High School in this year's 2A quarterfinals. Leading scorer Willie Wilson, a freshman starting guard, ended the game with the a dunk. **Photo by Eddie Beamon**

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WARD 4:  
**Phillipe  
 Cunningham**



Happy April, neighbors! Daylight Saving Time has arrived! Our days are getting longer, so we get to enjoy the sun a little more after this bitterly cold winter. Also, Earth Day is coming up!

Environmental stewardship is very important to me, and as I have learned from serving our community, it's also very important to many of you, as well. Now more than ever, we must consider how to preserve our planet to ensure that its best parts remain for the generations to come. I wanted to take some time this month to share a bit about the origins of Earth Day and share some actions you can take ahead of Earth Day – or every day – to be great stewards of our environment.

Earth Day's creation was led by a Wisconsin senator, Gaylord Nelson, and how he was moved to make change after a three-million-gallon oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, in 1969. This had a devastating effect on marine life, spurring the creation of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1970. In December of 1970, the federal government would establish the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, which is tasked with ensuring environmental protection by way of cleaner healthier environment for all. I would be remiss in not also addressing that the EPA is one federal agency that has faced significant funding cuts in recent years, despite the ever-growing importance of their work.

The first Earth Day occurred mid-1970, with thousands of colleges, schools and communities driving the efforts by participating in

peaceful demonstrations for environmental reform. There was another successful Earth Day event in 1990, and another in 2000, at which point efforts were directed towards creating an annual event.

Some key ways for us to celebrate Earth Day year-round are small adjustments to our daily lives. It does not have to be something big, such as installing solar panels on the roof or buying a zero emissions vehicle. Things like consciously conserving resources (like turning off running water while doing dishes), and educating our communities on ways to reduce our carbon footprint by recycling, composting and picking up litter. In my case, I made a lifestyle change to a plant-based diet. These are all things we can do to help the world we live in last for our future generations.

This month, I challenge you to find some small ways to help save the planet. If you have got some time to learn about how to take action, please take a look at <https://www.earthday.org/>.



WARD 5:  
**Jeremiah  
 Ellison**



I want to talk a little about the Renter-First policy Council President Bender, and I co-authored and passed this past full council meeting. It's an internal, and relatively technical effort that relates primarily to how the city will engage its code enforcement for rental properties. It might not be the sexiest work, but it's a big deal, especially when placed in the broader context of all the renter protection work forming at the city right now.

In short, the policy seeks to move us one step closer to addressing that seemingly impossible question: how do you hold slumlords accountable without displacing, thus punishing, their often-vulnerable tenants? Because when a landlord gets their license revoked (and, by that point, they often deserve it) the renter is the one left scrambling to prevent themselves from becoming homeless.

The answer was quietly happening within our Regulatory Services department itself, where housing inspectors and their leadership were recognizing the need to consider the consequences for tenants facing displacement, and the need to revive some underutilized tools at the City's disposal. One such tool is the Tenant Remedies Action (or TRA), a tool that could empower tenants to get repairs their landlord may be neglecting, preventing properties from falling into complete disrepair in the first place. In some ways, the Renter-First policy is a way to formalize and expand upon the work that's been quietly happening already.

The policy is broader than code enforcement, and not very long, so please take the time to read through it if you're curious to learn more about its purview.

I usually try to keep these columns City Hall specific, but I have to take a moment to express my deep anger and sadness regarding the New Zealand terrorist attacks that happened recently.

Minneapolis City Council members Phillipe Cunningham (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward 5) were inaugurated in January 2018. We have invited them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our newspaper.

White-Nationalistic terrorism has been a growing concern worldwide, and at one point or another, has felt extremely close to home for many in our community. Whether at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, or this most recent shooting, no faith community seems to be spared from this practice of hate and madness.

I'm a practicing Muslim myself, and the loss of life has been difficult to cope with. As a big believer in liberty above fear, it's been difficult to accept that many of our faith institutions are being forced to question whether their "open-door policy" could lead to loss of life. Can we afford to be welcoming if it leaves us defenseless against mass shooters? My idealistic self would like to think that we should double down on our open-door policies, because isolation is a part of the terrorist's goal. But I have to admit, I don't have simple answers.

I do know that it's more important than ever to galvanize around the concepts of community and justice. I believe that our collective efforts to right current and historic wrongs, to build coalitions in unlikely places, and to assert our value as a diverse community is a powerful and scary thing to the people committing acts of hatred.

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](mailto:ward5@minneapolismn.gov).

Mia Oi had a pop-up stand inside Corner Coffee in the Camden neighborhood during Saturdays in February and March, ending March 30, to make and serve Japanese-style crepes. Photo by David Pierini



## Micro-entrepreneurs create major impact

By **Cirien Saadeh** Staff Reporter

Additional reporting by **Datelle Straub**

These days everybody seems to have a side hustle, a side gig, a freelance job, some sort of something they do as a creative outlet and to make ends meet. Some are running their businesses on the go, not tied down to a specific location, but working to build a brand. Some work out of their own kitchens, some in their dorms and lockers; other times they're popping up in the community at local coffee shops, farmers' markets, or others' brick and mortar businesses. These are micro-entrepreneurs.

Micro-entrepreneurs are small business owners that employ less than ten people (and in some cases, just the one), who work with small amounts of capital (financial and physical resources) that typically work locally.

North Minneapolis is filled with successful micro-entrepreneurs.

"A lot of the businesses that I'm working with really see this as a way of kind of changing the trajectory of their lives," said Ann Fix, who works for the Northside Economic Opportunity Network in their Food Business Incubator Program.

According to Chris Webley, CEO of New Rules, one of the great challenges of becoming a micro-entrepreneur is not just about finding the resources one needs to do the work, it is about getting started.

"One of the challenges we see, how do you get started with what you got? And how do you grow what you have right now? For example, one of our members who just got a grant for building a housing foundation for a thousand bucks. And, I was pushing him to really think about it," said Webley. "If you're running a business, then how are you investing this thousand dollars to grow that to two thousand, five thousand, or ten thousand. Helping him put it into that context of, this is not a project, this is a business; helping him build sound strategy that enables them to continue to sort of 'flip their

money up.'"

Northside micro-entrepreneurs experience different and often greater challenges than those that are based and operate in other parts of the city.

"Within North Minneapolis, there's such a lack of trust with the government, with banking, with lawyers, all of those things that you need to start a business," said Fix.

Additionally, because North Minneapolis has been historically underserved, the community has a greater challenge accessing the physical and financial resources they need to build their work.

"Northside has been underserved forever," said Fix, "But a lot of the young entrepreneurs right now are, they're just jumping in and trying it, right? So they need someone to help them understand how

“We wanted to open up a storefront and we launched a Kickstarter, but it failed. We tried working on getting a loan and that did not work out either. We said fine, it's going to take longer than we wanted, so we're continuing to do the pop-ups.”

**Gerard Klass, owner of Soul Bowl MN**

to open a bank account and how to apply for a food license.”

According to Webley, a collaborative work space on Lowry Ave., the future of micro-entrepreneurship is about collaboration.

“A big part of our motto is unlocking the potential of micro-entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs in this space. From our vantage point, micro-entrepreneurs are going to be the future. I think you'll start to see more businesses moving away from this sort of large corporate idea of needing a ton of folks and things of that nature,” said Webley.

“What we're saying to micro entrepreneurs is, you got your business, I got my business, and we're all bringing all of our businesses together to collaborate,” he added.

For Webley, supporting micro-entrepreneurs means creating collaborative spaces and partnerships that connect people together. Right now, they're working in partnership with the formerly defunct Lowry Business Association, as well as First Avenue, on a block party. The event will bring together several micro-entrepreneurs, as well as New Rules, and other businesses on the Lowry Ave business corridor in the planning.

“Not one business is at the center of this,” said Webley.

Fix echoes Webley's comment. With NEON's support, pop-up restaurants are popping up all over North Minneapolis. Chef Gerard Klass, for example, hosts Soul Bowl MN at Breaking Bread on Sunday mornings. Additionally, starting in April, Breaking Bread will be hosting two pop-ups on Monday, one in

**“What I'm doing now is essentially prototyping.”**

**Philli Johnson, artist, curator, and event coordinator**

the morning offering breakfast burritors and a vegan pop-up in the evening. And, further North, Ichigo Tokyo Style crepes, owned by Mia Oi, is selling crepes at Corner Coffee Camden, every Saturday from 9am-2pm, through the end of March.

“The pop-up means we could provide food for the community and build a brand, build clientele, work on advertising, work on portion sizing, and do all the work we would need to do to sustain a business,” said Klass. “We wanted to open up a storefront and we launched a Kickstarter, but it failed. We tried working on getting a loan and that did not work out either. We said fine,

it's going to take longer than we wanted, so we're continuing to do the pop-ups, saving money and building the brand and waiting for the right opportunity to unfold.”

The West Broadway Coalition is in on the work too. According to Executive Director John Bueche, WBC is currently working to build up its pop-ups, bringing North Minneapolis to Downtown Minneapolis skyways, and expanding the pop-up scene in the Northside.

“Beginning April 1 we will host two Shop Northside spaces downtown in the Gaviidae Commons downtown Minneapolis, in partnership with the Downtown Council and Chameleon Consortium, leveraging the excitement around the final four, and building on the Northside Holiday Boutiques we hosted in vacant skyway spaces in 2015 and 2016,” said Bueche in an email to *North News*.

According to Bueche, WBC has been working since 2016 to “activate” vacant spaces on West Broadway, using them for pop-ups, which serve the organization's vision for community-driven economic development.

Patrick Henry High School juniors Avery Lewis and Titan Harness-Reed look at micro-entrepreneurship as an opportunity to make money while filling a need at their school, despite the school's repeated warnings to not do so. They sell snacks and sodas out of their lockers and backpacks to fellow students.

“We were broke, so we decided, we're young black men, I was thinking that we should put our two heads together. We could come together, get some money some way, so we decided we were going to sell snacks out of our locker. We took inspiration from this dude that was doing it before. Titan's dad was working at Walmart at the time, so we used his discount to get snacks,” said Lewis.

For Lewis and Harness-Reed, their work as micro-entrepreneurs gives them a chance to earn money and grow a business they would not otherwise have access to. At the same time, micro-entrepreneurship gives them, for example, financial and work freedom they would not otherwise have.

For example, at just 18 years old, Philli Johnson is an artist, curator, and event coordinator who has been doing the work for over three years.

“Well, I don't necessarily have a name for the business, but what I'm doing now is essentially prototyping,” said Johnson. As part of his work, Johnson curates spaces for young artists to present and share their work, in community. His first project was at Gallery 15 in Downtown Minneapolis.

“It is quite hard for a young artist who is serious and invested into their work to get the proper support and respect in their field, so I put together this gallery exhibition downtown and brought a group of Northside artists into the space and also some of my peers in Chicago as well. That was the first project,” said Johnson.

There are other benefits. Marissa Abara is a young multimedia design student at the University of St. Thomas, who is also partnered with New Rules.

“I love taking my ideas and then trying to make them a reality. I like working with other people, I find that super rewarding and being able to combine ideas with others and make them “our ideas.” I don't like really working alone so I find it really rewarding working in groups because I feel like my work is always enhanced so much more,” said Abara. “It's very fulfilling.”

Fix notes that while the benefits are real, the work is hard.

“When you're an entrepreneur, you're going to work harder than you ever have in your life. You're going to be challenged so much. You're going to be so stressed beyond any stress you ever felt. But at the same time, it's yours. You own it, and you're creating something that you can pass down to your kids someday. Even if it's a small part-time gig, at least it's something that you are creating and has potential to build into something bigger. But it takes great discipline, and it takes working smart, not necessarily hard. It takes really focusing on what it is that you want to ... It isn't easy. I guess what I'm trying to say is it isn't easy, but it's definitely worthwhile,” said Fix.

# Artisanal chocolate studio envisioned for Victory neighborhood

By **Cirien Saadeh** Staff Reporter

The corner of 44th and Thomas just got a little bit sweeter. Dancing Bear Chocolate, an artisan chocolatier owned by Northside residents, has announced its intention to expand the business by purchasing the building on that corner.

Their March 12 Facebook announcement conveyed elation, and a bit of nervousness: "Not sure how to explain the excitement we are feeling right now, a bit overwhelmed. We just signed a purchase agreement for the new home of Dancing Bear Chocolate. Our Northern Chocolate Studio will be a unique blend of brick-mortar retail, a learning/gathering space, and the heart of our creativity. We have so many ideas and can't wait to share them with you!" it read.

The chocolatier is the brainchild of Joe Skifter and his husband Steven Howard. Howard is a longtime pastry chef, who previously opened chocolate shops in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was also one of D'Amico's original chefs and

"We live just a few blocks away, and we both realized that it's too good to be true."

**Joe Skifter**

the Executive Pastry Chef at D'Amico Cocina for nine years. Skifter's background is more administrative; his 9-5 job is with Open Book, a nonprofit literary arts center. They started Dancing Bear Chocolate in Jan. 2018, doing pop-up shops and online sales through Etsy. When they started, they weren't dreaming of a brick and mortar space.

"We had one full year of operation and really had no intention of buying a piece of property, when we saw that this building became available," said Skifter. "We live just a few blocks away, and we both realized that it's too good

to be true. We questioned whether we were ready to make this leap, but the stars seemed to be aligned, and we wanted to do it, so we did."

The chocolate shop announcement was met with excited fervor by community members, who quickly shared the Facebook post and congratulated the business on their expansion.

"Awesome! How great to have a new business in our community! Welcome!!!" neighborhood resident Kris Brogan commented on the Victory Neighborhood Association's Facebook announcement.

The new chocolate studio's name will be Northern Chocolate Studio. It won't be a traditional retail location. Instead it will be a space for pop-ups, dinner parties, cooking classes, community gatherings, and a kitchen to serve their wholesale and online business.

The space was built in 1929 and has historically been home to a donut shop, corner store, dentist, and even a pregnancy clinic owned by a local church.

"That was my Dad's dental practice from the late 60's till the 90's, Dr. Vern Steffens. So many memories of that building, it hasn't changed a bit. Treat it well Dancing Bear, I hope it brings you as much success and fulfillment as it brought my Dad," Greg Steffens commented on the Facebook announcement.

The building will need rehabilitation. "Our first plan is to get in the space; we want it to be a bright, inviting space. We think there used to be windows in the front and we want to bring those back," said Skifter. "And we see no obstacles unless there is something that happens completely out of the blue. And then our first goal is to get the commercial kitchen space, so we can continue to supply our wholesale and pop-up sale customers," he said.

The name Dancing Bear Chocolate has its own interesting story. Howard wanted the name and logo to be a polar bear with an incorporated Northern Star, as a nod to their Minnesota roots. As for the "dancing," according to Skifter, Howard used to dance in the base-



Dancing Bear Chocolate was started in Jan. 2018 by husbands Joe Skifter and Steven Howard. The Northsiders have sold their artisan chocolate online and through wholesale, as well as via pop-ups, but recently took the leap and signed a purchase agreement for a property on 44th and Thomas, that has a long and interesting history in the neighborhood. **Photos courtesy of Dancing Bear Chocolate**

ment of their North Minneapolis home to lose weight.

"The life of a pastry chef. I came home one day and saw him dancing and we decided to name the company Dancing Bear," said Skifter.

Dancing Bear Chocolate sells a variety of chocolate, include eight flavors of homemade chocolate truffles; peanut butter cups; a "Kodiak" (rice krispy) bar; a fudge brownie with dried cherries in it called a Bear Paw; an extravagant chocolate mousse cake; and molded chocolate appropriate for each holiday.

A grand opening date has not been

scheduled yet. According to Skifter, they are not sure whether it will be one big event once the space is done or several smaller events. Follow them on social media for more information.

You can learn more about Dancing Bear Chocolate, and their chocolate, at [www.etsy.com/shop/DancingBearChocolate](http://www.etsy.com/shop/DancingBearChocolate) or at [www.facebook.com/dancingbearchocolate](http://www.facebook.com/dancingbearchocolate).



## The school board report

Our education reporter brings you the latest news from MPS

By **Cirien Saadeh** Staff Reporter

This is what's up with the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) this month.

Beginning in fall 2019, MPS K-5, K-8, and 6-8 schools will be able to hire a part-time "differentiation specialist." A differentiation specialist is a licensed teacher who will, according to a social media post from MPS, "help meet the varying academic needs of students." This is a \$2.6 million initiative on the part of the district.

The Minnesota State Legislature is currently debating snow day relief. If a bill is passed, and signed by the governor, MPS will not need to make up school days for weather-related closures. If a bill is not passed, snow days would be made up on June 10 and June 11, as part the approved 2018-2019 academic calendar. The bill would also provide relief for the district's hourly workers.

MPS has approved a three-year contract with Superintendent Ed Graff. Aside from a raise, the contract stipulates the superintendent's benefits and parameter for annual evaluation.

On May 2, MPS will host its 5th Annual Junior Iron Chef Competition. The event will be held from 5:30pm-7:30pm at Solar Arts by Chowgirls (711 NE 15th Ave).

There are fifteen large capital projects underway during summer 2019, including a "dehumidification" project at Henry and construction at North High's athletic field, slated to be completed in spring 2020.

The district also discussed its Quarter 2 Update during its March Committee of the Whole meeting. That meeting included a discussion of the district's strategic priorities and the district's efforts to meet the superintendent's priorities, which include social-emotional literacy and equity.

The next MPS Board of Education meeting will be held on April 16, beginning at 5:30pm. The next MPS meeting of the Committee of the Whole will be held April 30 at 6pm. Both will be held at the MPS Davis Center (1250 West Broadway Ave).

## Educator spotlight Debra Johnson & Katherine Chisley



Katherine Chisley (Right) and Debra Johnson (Left) were nominated for the Educator Spotlight because of the compassion and innovation they bring to their work. **Photo by Cirien Saadeh**

By **Cirien Saadeh** Staff Reporter

Every month North News publishes a new Educator Spotlight. This month we are spotlighting two local educators. Debra Johnson is a para-educator in Anwatin Middle School's special education department, having taught at the school for 14 years and been in the district for 21 years. Chisley is a special education educator, who joined Anwatin 8 years ago, but has been with the district for nearly 30 years. They were nominated by their co-worker, teacher John Knudson. "They are confronted daily with challenging situations and always, between the two of them, are able to come up with strategies and plans that not only improve the school for our students but help the students build the skills they will need for their future," said Knudson. As part of their work at Anwatin, Chisley and Johnson built a Chill Room for students, a space for their students and other community members to escape to. The room is decked out with comfortable couches, a rocking chair, calming music, and the smell of essential oils.

**What does a work day look like for you?** Chisley: Sometimes we have to be there just to support the kids in like a motherly fashion. Sometimes we have to be that enforcer for them.

Sometimes a cheerleader. It just all depends on how the day goes. Each student and each day is different.

**What's your teaching philosophy?** Chisley: I feel that all students can learn, but they all learn differently. And I feel that it's up to us as educators to find out how they learn. And to treat each kid differently, but fairly.

Johnson: As a duo, we work pretty well together. We both have our strengths and we lean on each other. And we're both committed to the students in this program.

**Tell us about the Chill Room.** Chisley: The chill room is not for students just when they're having a hard time. It's for them if they want to come in, just talk to each other. They can come in here, they can work if they want to. Sometimes kids do not get enough sleep, and they just need ten minutes. So it's not just what they're doing wrong. It's where they chill, re-fuell, reconnect.

Johnson: And sometimes, we come in here and we'll do homework, because we push into a large math class with over 30 students, and sometimes it can be overwhelming for them. So sometimes we'll come in here and we'll do more small group. We have computers or we have an

area free, for each individual to work in.

Chisley: They love it. Sometimes they say, "I just need to go to the chill room. Will you take me to the chill room?" And we don't question it. They know when they need to chill. They chill and come back.

**Where do you think your partnership is strongest?** Johnson: I believe in our commitment, to each other and to our classroom. We're rarely out, and that says a lot, even when we're sick, we're still committed to come in, because it is a hard job when one person is out. Cause the other one just has to pick up and keep going. I'm not saying that it doesn't happen, so we're committed to each other as well, as a classroom.

**What do you think are each other's greatest strengths?** Johnson: Ms. Chisley has high expectations. She is firm, and she is consistent. But she's also loving, and compassionate. So with that mix, you just can't lose.

Chisley: And with Ms. Johnson, she's patient. Very caring. Very straightforward with me, she doesn't sugar-coat it with me. If she's here, she's here not only for the children, but also for me, working with me, and I love it. And she can tell when I'm not doing my best, it's like, "You go, and you take a little break, and I'll do it." So we know each other like that, and I feel like she has great strength. She's very strong when it comes to helping me to realize that sometimes you just have to let it go. Don't push it. It will fall in place, it will happen.

North News launched this column to highlight the work of Northside educators doing innovative and socially just work in our North Minneapolis classrooms. If you have any recommendations for our upcoming spotlights, email North News at [ciriens@pillsburyunited.org](mailto:ciriens@pillsburyunited.org). Please provide contact information for the person you recommend.

# Developments across the Northside

Major construction, renovation, and innovation are underway in North Minneapolis. Here is the latest news on some of this side of the city's biggest developments.

By Cirien Saadeh

## 1 Village Financial Cooperative Location not-yet-decided

The Village Financial Cooperative (VFC) plans to open this year and plans to make a major announcement on June 16, during Juneteenth celebrations in the community. "We are really excited about the accomplishments of Village in 2018. We've been really working with our heads down," said Me'Lea Connelly, Director of Development for VFC. In 2018, the Minnesota Department of Commerce approved the cooperative's charter; credit union

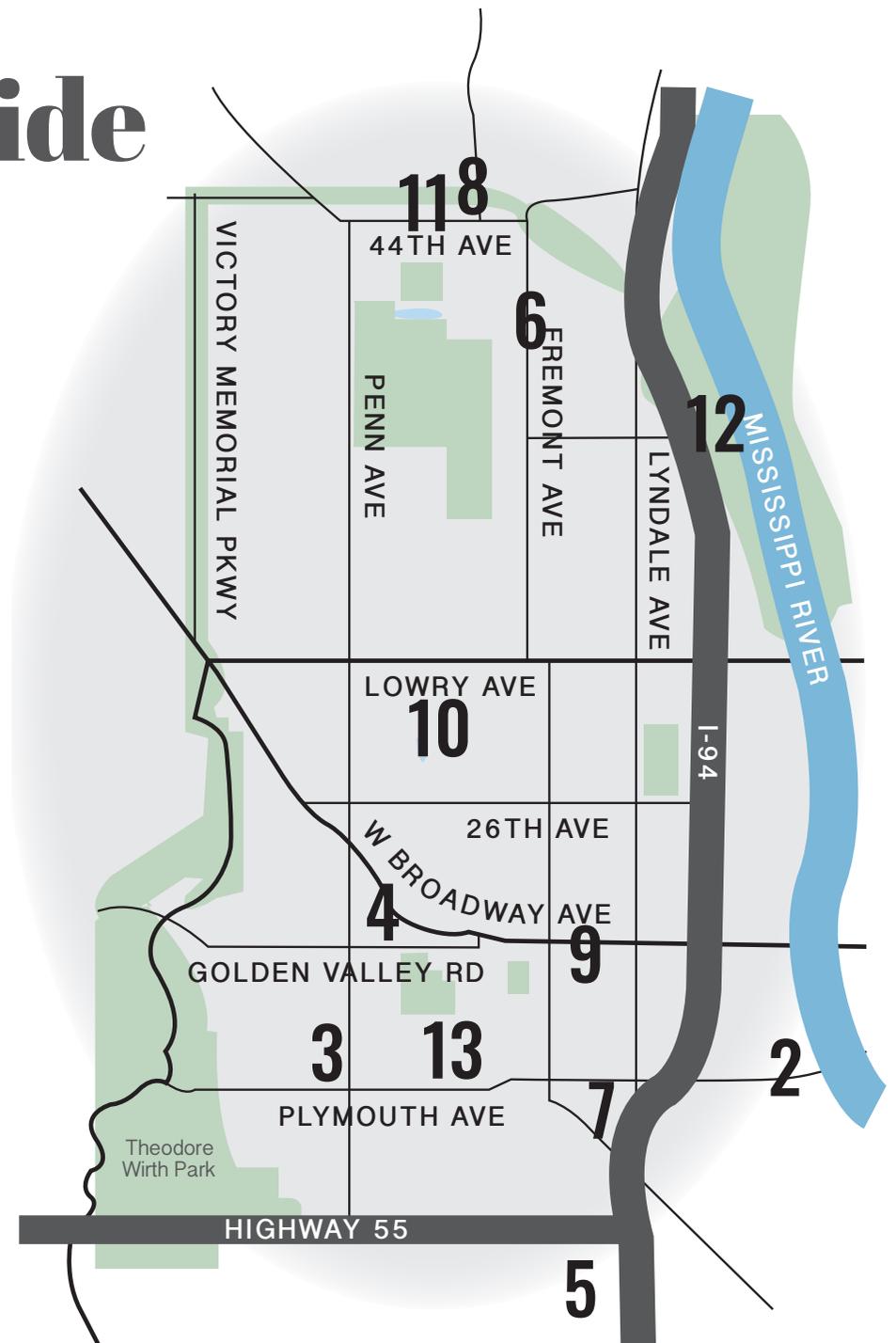
leaders are now moving the charter through the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), which regulated credit unions similar to FDIC regulation of banks. While there have been delays in moving the charters forward, Connelly believes the credit union is still on track to open this year. VFC is also in the process of nominating a new Board of Directors; more information can found on their website.

## 2 River Loop Apartments Plymouth and West River Rd

The River Loop Apartments are set to open in Spring 2020 according to project developers with Opus Development Company. According to Nick Murnane, Director of Real Estate Development for Opus, more information will be coming soon. "We're very excited to deliver another new multifamily development to West River Parkway in the vibrant North Loop neighborhood," said Murnane.

## 3 NorthPoint Campus Expansion Penn and Plymouth

The NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center says it will break ground on its campus expansion late this Spring; the medical center had initially expected to host its groundbreaking in April. Sara Lueben, Community Engagement Coordinator for Northpoint, says a new date will be announced at a later time. Aside from the groundbreaking, Northpoint's food shelf has moved into the former Wirth Coop space (1835 Penn Ave N) and its human services has moved onto the 5th floor of 1256 Penn Ave N, the Thor Companies building.



## 4 Capri Theater Expansion Broadway and James

Construction on The Capri Theater will begin in the Spring, with a groundbreaking planned for mid-May. Developments include a renovation and 20,000-square-foot expansion. During that time, the theater will be closed, with programming occurring elsewhere. A grand opening is planned for Summer 2020.



## 5 The Leef Building Currie and James

The Leef Building is a 66,000-square-foot office building that is slated to open in June 2019, a delay from the proposed Jan. 2019 opening, in the Harrison neighborhood. The building will feature office and retail space, with Way to Grow, a Northside nonprofit, already signed up to move in. The project developer is Wellington Management and, according to Executive Vice President and co-owner David Wellington, the development is 80% there. The development's opening was delayed, in part, due to two surprise wells found on the property. Wellington Management has several other developments in the immediate area:

1) **Artspace's Northside Lofts** (construction slated to begin in Fall 2019).

2) **The Townhomes @ Leef**, fifteen owner-occupied, income-restricted townhomes to be built in partnership with the City of Lakes Community Land Trust (construction beginning Spring 2020).

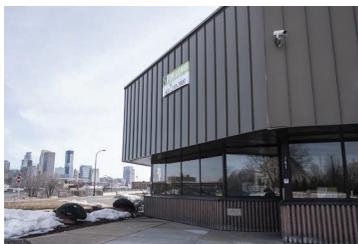
3) A 90,000 square foot office-building on city-owned land that requires major brownfield redevelopment (construction beginning in Jan. 2020) located near Creekside and Van White Memorial Boulevard.

4) A mixed commercial and retail development happening near 2nd Ave and Van White Memorial Blvd.



## 6 Baldwin Square Fremont and 42nd

By the end of 2019, architect Jamil Ford and his firm, Mobilize Design and Architecture (MDA), plan to develop "Baldwin Square," bringing African-American culture, arts and entertainment to the Northside. The project, which is estimated to cost a minimum of \$3.5 million, and the city of Minneapolis funding the project with \$1 million, will take six months to complete and will feature a stage and theater performance space, bookstore, office space and serve as the new location of MDA, who will also own the facility. *Reporting by Jessica Enwesi*



## 7 V3 Sports Plymouth and Lyndale

V3 Sports, an organization which has worked to bring triathlon training to Northside youth, purchased the empty publishing house on the Southwest corner of Plymouth Ave and Lyndale Ave in early 2018. They needed an additional \$44 million to develop the space and build a training track and olympic size pool, amongst other uses for the space. V3 Sports could not be reached for comment, but Fall 2018 news reports note that the organization had raised less than \$7 million. A "for lease" sign is on the building, though whether that is new or old is unknown.



## 8 North Market 44th and Humboldt

North Market is now into its second year of operation. The grocery store, owned by Pillsbury United Communities (PUC), which also owns North News, opened in Dec. 2017 after years of development and construction. According to Vanan Murugesan, Director of Design and Innovation for PUC, year one was about lessons learned. "Last year was a year of learning in terms of pricing, management, and products. This is the year of executing our learning: repricing, new items, new services," he said. According to Murugesan, North Market staff are exploring a concierge service for new mothers and a deli revamp (that would keep the much loved chicken pot pie), amongst other projects.



## 9 927 West Broadway Broadway and Emerson

Development on 927 West Broadway, a collaborative project of New Rules, TRI-construction and Phillips Foundation, continues. According to New Rules CEO Chris Webley, the project has been fully financed, by drawing on Phillips Foundation assets. Project developers are currently seeking design bids and are applying for varying tax credits. According to Webley, the biggest hold-up is the state's announcement of the new market tax credit.



## 10 Pesca Cafe & House of Fresh Lowry and Newton

In spring 2018, New Rules announced Got the Juice, a smoothie and juice shop, to much community fanfare. According to Chris Webley, New Rules' CEO, there is more to come, despite delays moving through the city licensure process. According to Webley, New Rules will be officially announcing Pesca Cafe & House of Fresh in late May, with plans to do pop-ups in the days leading up to the announcement, as the restaurant staff test out cocktails and recipes. "Things are still on track, they just never move at the timing that you want them to go at," said Webley.



## 11 Camden Town 44th and Humboldt

Camden Town is the grassroots rebrand of the Webber Camden neighborhood. "We've officially formed the Camden Town business association. We'd not had one for years," said Houston White, owner of HWMR. 44th, from Penn Ave. to Lyndale Ave, has been designated a "Great Street," which will allow Camden Town organizers and local businesses to incorporate city dollars for arts, entertainment, and cultural development. Camden Town has also received money for matching facade grants for local business and Camden Town organizers are currently in conversations with Councilmember Phillips Cunningham around technical assistance for economic development.



## 12 Upper Harbor Terminal Dowling and 2nd

In early March, 2019, the proposed UHT concept plan was approved by the City Council. As part of that approval, Councilmember Phillippe Cunningham (Ward 4) stipulated that a community advisory committee had to be formed, with fifteen members nominated from different Minneapolis neighborhoods. The role of the committee is to study the concept plan for any possible environmental or socio-economic roadblocks, while also developing three alternative plans. They will have sixty days to do this work. Additionally, according to Northside legislators, dollars are being proposed for UHT development in the Minnesota State Legislature, through a bonding bill.

## 13 The RATC Plymouth and Fremont

The Regional Apprenticeship Training Center was acquired with the purpose of bringing in more hands on career and technical education into the working in an effort to create a community asset that supports student success. According to Jamez Staples, the founder of Renewable Energy Partners, project organizers are currently working to finalize potential partners, who will decide on programming and help lead the design of the space as it is build out. Additionally, over the past year, they have received several sustainability grants.



# 100 Black Men Strong teaches power through politics

Patrick Henry High School brought “100 Black Men Strong” to the Minnesota State Capitol on Friday, March 22, where they met with role models and learned how to claim power through politics. Students started the day in the capitol rotunda where they listened to speakers before breaking off into small groups to discuss topics ranging from political power to changing narratives about their community. **By David Pierini**



Patrick Henry students arrived at the steps of the capitol, some of whom chose to race to the top.

Right: On a tour of the Minnesota House chambers, Michael Donald and Marcus Zachery take a long look at its ornate ceiling.



## Legislative sessions has been a “lively debate” with still uncertain outcomes

By **Cirien Saadeh** Staff Reporter

This year’s legislative session is halfway there. And while there is an end in sight (it legally has to end on May 20), nobody is quite sure what that ending will look like.

“It’s going to be a lively debate from now until the end of session,” said Senator Bobby Joe Champion, who represents North Minneapolis.

North Minneapolis Rep. Fue Lee echoes that: “It was a good first half. Right now, we are waiting to see what funding we can get for priorities that are not the Governor’s,” said Lee. “And with a GOP Senate, but a DFL House and Governor, many things will likely go to conference committee.” A conference committee is a space for legislators from both bodies to gather to negotiate legislation in order to ensure that movement happens in the legislature.

North Minneapolis legislators have introduced legislation in the House and Senate. Legislation can be introduced this year and continued to be worked on in 2020, before the two-year session ends. The State of Minnesota does have a \$1 billion surplus, but that surplus is several

hundred million dollars less than the forecast originally released in Nov. 2018. Because of a slowing economy and the smaller surplus than expected, legislators will likely need to agree on raising or cutting taxes (including gas taxes, which Governor Walz is pushing for), or even maintaining the status quo, as they make the decision on what to fund and what not to fund.

Despite these status updates, however, both Champion and Lee are quick to remind Northsiders that legislation can live or die, as a surprise. And, even if legislation never makes it out of committee, it can end up being voted on by the House or Senate after going through conference committee

Here is a breakdown and status updates on some of this year’s legislation.

**Working Family Credit:** One of Rep. Lee’s priorities is the “working family credit”; he is a co-author on house legislation that would increase the tax credit, though there is no Senate companion.

**Upper Harbor Terminal:** Additional funding for the Upper Harbor Terminal is being carried

in the Minnesota House by Rep. Lee and other Northside Rep. Raymond Dehn and in the Senate by Senator Champion. The proposed legislation is for First Avenue’s proposed Community Performing Arts Center (CPAC). Legislation in the House has moved through several committees, but is paused the Senate Committee on Capital Investment. “The money has been introduced on the planning side,” said Champion.

**Marijuana:** Rep. Dehn has introduced legislation and co-authored other legislation aimed at decreasing marijuana penalties, modifying medical cannabis requirements, and to allow individuals 21+ to consume marijuana. The medical legalization legislation has no Senate companion, the medical marijuana modification legislation has not moved out of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services Finance and Policy.

**Tax Reform:** Several Minnesota state legislators have introduced legislation to conform the Minnesota tax code with the federal tax code. Most legislation in the House and Senate is paused in their various committees.

### What is a legislative session?

The Minnesota Legislature operates one term every two years. This is called a “biennium.” In the first year of the biennium, legislators meet for five months and discuss the state’s two-year budget. In the second year of the biennium, legislators meet for three months and discuss the state’s infrastructure needs and spending.

Minnesota has the only split legislature in the entire country. In every other state, either Republicans or Democrats control both houses of their state legislature. Minnesotans have historically preferred a split legislature.

The legislative session must end by May 20, 2019. Neither Senator Champion nor Rep. Lee are expecting (or hoping for) a special session.

## NEWS



### How mass incarceration has affected my family

By Daija Triplett Intern

Mass incarceration is a racial issue that's been going on for generations in the United States. The United States justice system has torn families apart, including some families right here in Minneapolis.

According to oxfordbibliographies.com, mass incarceration is comparatively and historically extreme rates of imprisonment among young, African American men.

Mass incarceration has affected my family tremendously. I spoke to my mother and my great grandmother both about the issue and their own personal experiences. My great grandmother Evelyn Cifax who has been a resident here in North Minneapolis for over thirty years spoke about her sons who were all incarcerated at one point in time. "It hurt me very much when they sentenced my son," she said.

"My children was raised in church. They know what it is to go to Sunday school and go to church on a Sunday night. He hurt me to my heart when [my son] went to jail. He went to juvenile first at the age of 14. He came out; I thought he had learned his lesson, but he hadn't learned anything. He wasn't home for no more than two years, and he went back again to the juvenile system."

When her two other sons were also imprisoned, she said she felt disappointed. "I had all three of my son out there in Stillwater doing time. ...You can imagine how I felt when they came home."

My mother who has lived in North Minneapolis all her life is married to a man who has been incarcerated since the 90s in Iowa. "Joe was originally in jail for a drug charge," she said.

"He was later charged with murder and kidnapping. He was involved with some associates who later blamed him for the crime at hand. Although the courts waived the murder charge, they later gave him a life sentence without the possibility of parole for kidnapping. Joe has spent his entire adulthood in prison. He's done multiple appeals that have been turned down. Although there were four people who acted in this crime they were granted their freedom with parole while Joe is still currently incarcerated," she told me.

Joe was a month shy of his 18th birthday when he was charged. Since being incarcerated, he has volunteered in hospice and mentors younger inmates. "Joe is looked up to and respected by several staff members and is currently working to obtain his GED diploma," she said.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, "sentences imposed on Black males in the federal system are nearly 20% longer than those imposed on white males convicted of similar crimes." Black and Latino offenders sentenced in state and federal courts face significantly greater odds of incarceration than similarly situated white offenders and receive longer sentences than their white counterparts in some jurisdictions.

Mass incarceration is an issue that needs to be addressed. Black men continue to have longer and harsher sentences than white men. These racial disparities are continuing to rise and will continue if we don't improve. It is important that we wash away these labels and uplift our black men and encourage them. We want to keep them out of the jails, juvenile centers, and prisons. It is an injustice to many people of color who sit and rot in our prisons.



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# Nonprofit that sought to buy Emily's Cafe raises community concern

By **Christine Stark** Contributor

*Stark is a writer, organizer, and speaker of Native and white ancestry. Her first novel, Nickels: A Tale of Dissociation, was a Lambda Literary Finalist. The views expressed in this piece are her own and do not necessarily reflect those of the paper.*

Emily's Café has been a community anchor for over 50 years in Victory Neighborhood. Last fall the owners, Emily and Elliot, put the café up for sale. Stories Foundation, a non-profit, announced its interest in purchasing Emily's to create a café that would educate customers and provide internships for trafficked youth. They held fundraisers online and at GracePoint Church to help purchase the café. After the announcement, confusion ensued about whether Emily's had closed and some Victory neighbors expressed concerns about the non-profit. Ultimately Stories was unable to purchase the café and Emily's remains open.

A major concern raised by some community members has been Stories' collaboration with homophobic churches, like GracePoint Church. On an Oct. 11 North News Facebook thread, Kale Duden said, "Their association with a church that is anti-gay means they get zero support from me. We don't need this kind of bigotry in our neighborhood." In addition, Stories's financial officer, Brian Stephany, is a board member of The Wilderness Fellowship Ministries, a Christian retreat that disavows same-sex marriage. Also, Page has a background in ministry and her husband is a youth minister at a church that links to the anti-LGBT Presidential Prayer Team, Family Research Council, and Minnesota Family Council, a sponsor of Parents Action League, deemed a hate group against LGBT people by Southern Poverty Law Center.

Community members also expressed concern about the safety of youth working in the potential café, especially if they were iden-

tified as trafficking victims. Pointing out the connections between LGBT youth and vulnerability to trafficking on the North News thread, Emily Spiteri said, "And I would say it's extremely tone deaf to ONLY partner with churches with non-inclusive stances on marriage and gender and claim you want to help fight sex trafficking. Those communities are one of the most vulnerable to be exploited."

As part of their fundraising efforts last fall, Stories stated they were working with The Link (a non-profit that assists vulnerable youth) to provide internships for trafficked youth at the café. Yet, according to Beth Holger, The Link's director, The Link never worked with Stories. Even after Holger told Page The Link would not work with them because "they publicly advertise that they are hiring youth victims...and we would not want to put the youth in situations like this," Stories continued to state they were working with The Link, raising questions as to whether they misrepresented their connection with The Link to establish legitimacy to raise money.

In February, a Victory Neighborhood Facebook post asked, "what happened with the money collected for the purchase [of Emily's Café]? In an email, Page said the money is "in holding until the time for a building is right." She said they are still interested in North Minneapolis. Stories also won money in an online vote-in contest through Mill City Credit Union, beating out direct service non-profits. Stories Foundation has a history of using public donations to buy infrastructure for the organization. For example, their fall mission statement stated they provide direct resourcing and micro-grants; however, their

2016 taxes indicate \$949 of the \$66,996, or 1.4% of their revenue, went to two direct service organizations. The rest went to purchase a food truck, accounting fees, other professional fees, miscellaneous, and sav-

"Their association with a church that is anti-gay means they get zero support from me. We don't need this kind of bigotry in our neighborhood."

**Kale Duden**

ings. Their assets in 2016 were \$30,902, roughly half their total revenue for the year. Their 2017 taxes have not been filed.

Stories Foundation's website states "Say that your cup of coffee goes toward abolishing a \$190 billion industry...sounds incredible, right? That's our café vision." To some it does sound incredible—incredibly disingenuous. Beckers views Stories as "chas[ing] after non-profit monies to start a venture..." She believes more for-profit businesses are needed to create a healthy economy in North Minneapolis.

Meanwhile, Elliot and Emily are still searching for a buyer. Elliot anticipates returning to the cafe under new ownership, as a customer this time.

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# Black History Month essays



In February, for Black History Month, North High students were challenged to write essays about how they have been inspired to be the change they want to see in their city, community (inside or outside of school), state, country, or even the world. It asked them to identify their sources of inspiration and their plans for taking action. Here are the three award-winning essays.

## Inspiration to change

By **Demetria Jones** North High

"What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? ...or does it explode?" - Langston Hughes

Dreams, goals and even failures are the key to success. If you wait too long to accomplish something, what happens to the goal? Does it die or does it shatter? Langston Hughes is an inspiration to me because he taught me to never wait to achieve something even if the dream is as fundamental as freedom. He was born at a time when his grandmothers were slaves and his grandfathers were slave owners on both sides. That's how common it was for black women to be raped and forcefully impregnated. Even through that, his grandmother still instilled racial pride in him. He is the outcome of all the strong women in his life, as am I, which is why I feel inspired by him. He became one of the most influential men in literature, despite the oppression placed on his race and that's what I aspire to do too. But he knew to be able to reach real success, his people had to be free, and he was only thriving off the fruits of his ancestors' labor as am I from the barriers that he broke. I re-

alize now that my accomplishments aren't just for me; they're for my sister, for my mom, for my grandma and for my ancestors who died for dreaming of becoming even somewhat educated.

As a young black woman, it registered to me that I'm always fighting two battles: the one for my freedom and equality and the one of my goals and dreams. To get one, I have to have the other. But to me, no one person is free until everyone is, and that means to me in modern times that everyone is educated and treated the same despite their race. That's why I lead by example with my grades and having all A's, and I even tutor my fellow peers and encourage them. My friends and I wrote letters to the Minneapolis Police Department discussing the problem of police brutality and incarceration, especially on African Americans. Having panels with history breaking people like Ilhan Omar, where we talked about change and how she uses her position to help the minority, but also having panels with police officers who patrol Minneapolis and other places in Minnesota where we discussed police officers' minds in those situations through or-

ganizations like AVID and YPE who gave me the opportunity to make a difference in my own life and others'.

Real change starts in individuals and that's why I start with myself and my own triumphs and achievement and did after school activities like Freedom School and Brothers and Sisters Unite. Any writing or performance chance I get, I pick something I'm passionate about. That's why when I was doing history day last year, I researched W.E.B Dubois, Booker T. Washington, and the Atlanta Compromise, and the year before that it was Bantu education and Apartheid in South Africa. These are all things that were not taught to me by teachers but I did my own research on. Anything about progression and education and how that affects African Americans is what interests me and that's why I aspire to help my community. Whether I become a lawyer, social activist or a famous writer I know I am going to make a difference. I have to.

"I have discovered in life that there are always ways of getting almost anywhere you want to go, if you really want to go." - Langston Hughes

## Being the change

By **Khadija Ba** North High

"First ship 'em dope and let 'me deal the brothers. Give 'me guns step back watch 'em kill each other." - Tupac Shakur

Tupac Shakur was very original and influential to all people. He brought us together through his music and acting skills. More specifically, his rap career informed the black community of issues that we weren't aware of at that time: drugs, gang violence, and homicides are huge issues that have negatively affected the black community.

Now that we have identified the issues, what can we do about them? Respectively, we need to get out and act together to decrease drug trade, and, more importantly, keep our children and families educated. It is shown that 78% of black/minority families are scammed because they aren't properly informed about what they are doing when it come to people of authority, which means that basically 78% of us are being used by the system. Drugs, guns, and gangs are all the same old tired story in this community. So, when Jamar Clark was killed by a police officer, I was wrecked. It was a very heartbreaking story and could have been avoided on both sides.

So, at age 12, I sent an email to President Barack Obama. I told him how I was heartbroken, terrified of the police, and I wanted to do something about it, but no one would listen to a 12 year old black female. I asked him if he could help us. On November 28, 2016 I had gotten a personal reply from the President. Obama said, and I quote:

"Dear Khadija, Thank you for your powerful message. Your email reached my desk, and I appreciate that you took the time to share your thoughts and feelings with me. It's clear the issues you raised weigh heavily on your heart, and I want you to know that I care a lot about them too. There is no denying that even with the significant progress we have made as a country, painful aspects of our Nation's history continue to cast a long shadow with regard to race relations—and important work still lies ahead."

I immediately broke down in tears. I loved how he understood exactly what I was saying. He also said, "Again, thank you for sharing your perspective with me—it's messages like yours drive me to keep doing everything I can to address these challenges. It's clear you recognize that all people are equal and deserving of respect, and if you maintain your dedication to helping others and commitment to your studies, I'm confident you can achieve anything you imagine. I believe in you!

Your friend,  
Barack Obama"

After receiving this letter I was inspired to create a website and reached out to activists, and talked about these issues. My sister and I are now starting a book drive for prisoners, and we're trying to get lights set up. Prisoners don't get an education, and if they aren't educated they're likely to repeat the same crime that had them arrested. Blacks are 3.6x more likely to be incarcerated in local jails; 40% of people in jail are black.



**GRADUATION**

Bethel University  
Jimmy Perdomo

**DEAN'S LIST**

University of Dubuque  
Naomi Amani

St. Olaf College  
Eleanor Goodnow  
Ella Paine  
Sophie Zahran

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Kevin T Yang  
Samantha A Mikulak  
Olufemi E Akindumila  
Samira Ali  
Gisell Ayala-Corral  
Jack M Barthold  
Eliot E Berven  
Abigail R Clapp  
Grady W Cromer  
Matthew L Fistler  
Julia R Fratzke  
Maria E Godinez  
Isabella Gold

Hannah M Greenstein  
Ikran Hassan

Bruce Her  
Mitchell J Hockenberry  
Phillip Howard

Cynthia Lee  
Tejlim Lee  
Chanelle M Logan  
Anna M Loken  
Kia Lor

Xai Lor  
Vai Lovan

Regina K Markert  
Michael A McColgan  
Henry C Meeker

Seth D Newhouse  
My Chi Nguyen  
Zachary T Olson  
Vanessa G Pesantez  
Hannah C Reichl

Ian K Reinl

Sierra M Rodero  
Ruby J Roettger

Grace A Rude  
Johnathan M Schocker

Aubrey Smith  
Laurel Struwe

Rosamond G Sturgis  
Shea G Swenson

Ariel Vang  
Lee Vang

Nicholas J White  
Whitney T Wildman

Chong Xiong  
Kathy G Xiong  
Blia Yang  
Mai Blia Yang  
Molly N Yang

Bates College  
Quinn Kiernat

Drake University  
Sara Feldman

Hamline University  
Halima Ahmed  
Hakima Siyad

Minnesota State College-Mankato

Kayla Haugen  
Nina Tarley  
Chazzy Evans  
Makiyia Harvey  
Taylor Kueng  
Pader Lee  
Miranda Mier  
Joshua Vang  
Chong Xiong

**RESOURCES**

**The City of Minneapolis is seeking community partners to host City-owned parklets for the 2019 season.** Parklets are unique public gathering spaces built in the right-of-way with seating, plantings and other amenities for people to relax and enjoy city life. The application deadline to apply to host a City-owned parklet is Friday, April 5. The City has three parklets to find hosts for. Find more information about the parklet host application process on the City's website or by contacting Kelsey Fogt at Kelsey.fogt@minneapolismn.gov. City crews will setup the parklets at host locations in the spring after street sweeping is completed and will remove them in the fall.

**The Census Bureau is hiring temporary employees for the 2020 Census.** The jobs offer weekly pay, competitive pay rates, flexible hours, and paid training. By joining the 2020 Census team, you can support your community while getting paid to do it. Learn more here: <https://2020census.gov/jobs/>

The City of Minneapolis is now accepting applications for the **Minneapolis 4d Affordable Housing Incentive Program**, which helps property owners obtain property tax reductions for agreeing to keep a portion of rental units affordable for 10 years. For more information check out: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/housing/WCMSP-214366>

**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](http://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 Monday-Thursday from 4pm-5:30pm and 6pm-7pm. On Fridays, youth open boxing is offered from 4pm-7pm.

**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: [healthyhomes@hennepin.us](mailto:healthyhomes@hennepin.us) or 612-543-4182.

Minnesota Solid Waste & Recycling customers who have not signed up to participate in the **organics recycling** program may do so at any time by visiting [www.minneapolismn.gov/organics](http://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 612-280-2434. Their delivery schedule does change. For schedule and map information, check out: <https://www.wilder.org/Programs-Services/tcmm/Pages/default.aspx>.

**Do you live in Near North or Willard/Hay? Then your block could be eligible for a mini block club grant through the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council.** Funds are available for a project or event you want to create. For more information call 612-335-5924 or email [contactus@nrcc.org](mailto:contactus@nrcc.org).

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

The City of Minneapolis offers **free energy efficiency home visits and 0% financing on recommended energy-saving upgrades** while funding lasts to qualified households with a family income less than \$94,300. Homeowners and renters can call 651-328-6220 or visit [mncee.org/hes-mpls](http://mncee.org/hes-mpls) to schedule.

Pillsbury United Communities' Oak Park Center (1701 Oak Park Ave N) hosts **free community dinners** on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 5pm-7pm.

**EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT**

**La Doña Cervceria's brewery futbol league**

**registration is now open.** Spring season starts April 7 and the leagues are filling up. To register, visit [www.dameladona.com/futbol-at-la-dona](http://www.dameladona.com/futbol-at-la-dona) or [www.ladonasports.com](http://www.ladonasports.com).

**Registration is on now for the Capri Glee! Adult Community Choir** under the direction of J.D. Steele. Spring session rehearsals take place on Tuesdays from 7-8:30pm, April 2-May 30, culminating in a joy-filled concert at 7pm Tuesday, May 7. Rehearsals and the concert are held at the Capri Theater. Anyone age 18 or older is welcome to sing, and there is no fee to participate, though contributions to the Capri will be accepted. Register online at [thecapritheater.org](http://thecapritheater.org) or call 612-643-2058.

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

Mondays – **Sign up for a weekly 30-minute session to practice reading and do literacy activities with a teen mentor.** 2pm - 5pm. Visit or call the Webber Park Library to register. 612-543-6751 Sponsored by the Webber Park Friends. For kids entering grades K-3.

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

Tuesdays – **Boot Camp at The Trailhead:** Tammie's most popular class - Boot Camp is a multifaceted and high-energy class that combines elements of strength and cardio to create the perfect morning workout. As you work your way through the various stations, you'll find this session challenging you in varied ways as each targets a different muscle group. Boot Camp is a great way to get in a well-balanced and challenging workout before you start your day. Theodore Wirth Parkway Trailhead, 6:15am-7:15am.

3/30 – **The UROC 2019 Annual Youth Summer Resource Fair** is a summer showcase for parents and children. It will be held 2001 Plymouth Ave N., from 11am-2pm, and is free and open to the public.

4/3 – **Cardboard Creations.** 11am-4pm. Kids and families are invited to drop in and use your imagination to construct your own cardboard creations. We'll provide the supplies for you to build whatever you can imagine! Held at the Webber Park Library (4440 Humboldt Ave N).

4/4 – **Healing Circle: Post-Traumatic Stress from Bullying.** 6pm-7:30pm. Webber Park Library. A mental health practitioner from The Zen Bin will present this community-healing circle. It will be a safe space for discussion, support and resources, as well as an opportunity to learn self-healing tools that can be personally applied to your life right away! Do not suffer in silence; we are here to join you on your healing journey.

4/6 – **Explore Nature!** 10:30am-12:30pm, Webber Park Library. Enjoy nature-themed activities, meet a live critter, and learn about

the Mississippi watershed and our regional ecosystem. Collaborators: North Mississippi River Regional Park, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. Kids event.

4/13 – **Teen Geekery Club** 12:30pm-2pm, Webber Park Library. Are you an anime and manga fan? A cosplayer? A fan of Doctor Who, Steven Universe, Voltron, Gravity Falls, Homestuck, Supernatural or other fictional works? If yes to any of these, Teen Geekery Club is for you! Watch anime, create and share your artwork, and discuss your favorite fandoms. All fandoms welcome! Sponsors: Friends of the Hennepin County Library, Anime Twin Cities. Grades 6-12.

4/13 – **Gardening for Wildlife in the City, Creating Habitat and Co-Existing with Nature.** 9:30am at Webber Recreation Center. Your landscape can support pollinators, birds, and animals. In this free workshop you will learn how to use your yard to create an urban habitat for wildlife, and gain tips to humanely control critters.

4/14 – **Celebrate Jazz Appreciation Month with some of Minnesota's most notable jazz legends**, hosted by award-winning vocalist and KBEM Radio host Patty Peterson in an intimate afternoon of live music and inspiring stories. Peterson will reminisce with several Twin Cities jazz legends who have achieved local and national acclaim. These jazz legends will entertain with music that they love and discuss how their individual journeys have become the musical history of Minnesota. This program is presented by KBEM's Jazz88 and will be recorded for later broadcast, and archived for on-demand listening at [www.jazz88fm.com](http://www.jazz88fm.com). Support for this program has been provided by the Marney and Conley Brooks Fund and an Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund to KBEM. The event will be held at the Minnesota History Center (345 W. Kellogg Blvd), from 2pm-3:30pm, \$20 for adults and \$10 for youth ages 5-17.

4/15 – **Club Book, a program of the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA), is thrilled to announce an exciting new season of author events hosted in public libraries throughout the Twin Cities.** Winter headliners include chart-topping novelist Don Winslow, Top Chef finalist and memoirist Kwame Onwuachi, and Minnesota's own Leif Enger. Club Book events are free and open to the public. Seating is on a first come, first served basis, and doors open 45 minutes before each program. Club Book with Kwame Onwuachi will be held on April 15 at the North Regional Hennepin County Library at 6:30pm.

4/18 – **Design a Skateboard.** 5pm-7pm, Webber Park Library. Using permanent markers and templates, create art on a skateboard deck. Materials provided, including a skateboard deck. Collaborator: Rivard Art. Funded by Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

4/20 – **Spring Egg Hunt.** Victory Park. 10am. Bring the little ones out to celebrate spring and hunt for candy-filled eggs. Please bring your

own container. Co-hosted with Corner Coffee/Corner Church and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board.

4/22-26 – Prince fans, especially those in town for the Prince Celebration 2019 are invited to visit the Capri Theater where, on January 5, 1979, Prince played "the gig that started it all." **Prince Legacy Tours at the Capri** will be offered on the hour from 10am-4pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, April 22, 23, 24, 26; Thursday, April 25 tours are available from 10am to 12pm. Tickets are \$20 and are available online only at [www.thecapritheater.org/prince-legacy-tours-2019](http://www.thecapritheater.org/prince-legacy-tours-2019). (No walk-ups.) Proceeds from ticket sales go to Capri Theater arts programs including the Capri Youth Apprentices.

4/26 – **Join the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) for an entertaining evening in appreciation of trees at the 2019 Minneapolis Arbor Day Celebration** at Theodore Wirth Regional Park, 4pm-8pm! The award-winning festival is full of tree-themed activities and educational opportunities, music, food, beer and, of course, new trees! Anyone can help MPRB Arborists plant 200 new trees. The event will be held in the area of the park between Wirth Lake Beach and JD Rivers' Children's Garden, near the intersection of Glenwood Avenue and Xerxes Avenue. Share this event with anyone who may be interested using the easy-to-remember web address, [www.minneapolisparkevents.org/arborday](http://www.minneapolisparkevents.org/arborday).

5/7-12 – **In celebration of its rich history and bright future on Minneapolis' Northside, the Capri Theater presents six days of performances** just before doors close and construction begins on the theater's 20,000 square foot expansion and renovation. All events take place at the Capri. Admission information for each event can be found at [thecapritheater.org](http://thecapritheater.org).

## EDUCATION

April 16 – the next **Minneapolis Public School Board Business Meeting** will be held on April 16, beginning at 5:30pm at the Davis Center, 1250 West Broadway Ave.

April 30 – The next **Minneapolis Public School Board Committee of the Whole meeting** will be held on M, beginning at 6pm at the Davis Center at 1250 W Broadway Ave.

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

Mondays – Sign up for a weekly 30-minute session to **practice reading and do literacy activities** with a teen mentor. 2pm - 5pm. Visit or call the Webber Park Library to register. 612-543-6751 Sponsored by the Webber Park Friends. For kids entering grades K-3.

Project for Pride in Living (PPL) seeks volunteers interested in **mentoring and tutoring**

**youth in grades K-5th grade** who are living in supportive housing in Camden. Volunteers are matched 1:1 with a youth to build a strong relationship, tutor in literacy concepts, and engage in enrichment activities like arts & crafts, games, creative play, etc. To apply, visit [www.ppl-inc.org/volunteer](http://www.ppl-inc.org/volunteer) or contact Volunteer Coordinator Caitlin Dougherty at [caitlin.dougherty@ppl-inc.org](mailto:caitlin.dougherty@ppl-inc.org) / 612-455-5108.

**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>.

**MN Comeback and Great MN Schools launched Minnesota School Finder.** This resource guide for parents provide objective, relevant information on schools across Minne-

apolis so parents can find schools that are the best fit for their kids.

## HOUSING

**Starting over the next few years, homebuy 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 interesting in assisting their tenants. To enroll in the pilot contact NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center 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**

# PROPERTY FOR RENT!



**3650 Fremont Avenue North  
Minneapolis, MN 55412**

**Monthly rental fee: \$8,355  
4,800 square feet  
Price per square foot: \$1.75  
Available June 1, 2019**

### FEATURES:

- 16 individual office spaces
- 2 conference rooms
- Separate lobby area
- Kitchenette
- Abundant parking



**Please contact:**  
**Shirl Chouinard**  
**Pillsbury United Communities**  
**612-302-8434**  
[shirlc@pillsburyunited.org](mailto:shirlc@pillsburyunited.org)

**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.minneapolismn.gov/smoke-free](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/smoke-free). **ers and renters will be able to learn energy information about a Minneapolis home or apartment before they sign on the dotted line.** In February, the Minneapolis City Council approved three policies that combined touch all housing types in the city: residential energy Benchmarking, time of rent energy disclosure, and time of sale energy disclosure. The goals of these policies are to reduce overall housing costs, ensure homeowners and renters have reliable information about their energy costs when deciding where to live, and reduce carbon emissions. These policies are recommended in Minneapolis' Climate Action Plan and will help the City make progress toward its community-wide greenhouse gas reduction goals. Minneapolis joins nearly 20 other cities in adopting residential energy benchmarking for large buildings.

CenterPoint Energy is reminding customers about certain rights and their responsibilities as it relates to the **Cold Weather Rule (CWR)**. The CWR protects residential customers who are experiencing difficulty paying their natural gas bill from having their natural gas service disconnected between Oct. 15, 2018 and April 15, 2019. While the CWR does not prevent customers from being disconnected for nonpayment, it does provide customers with extra protection as defined in the CWR. However, residential customers must contact CenterPoint Energy to set up a payment plan. Call CenterPoint Energy to set up a payment plan at 1-612-372-4680 or 1-800-729-6164. For additional information, please visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/ReadyForWinter](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/ReadyForWinter).

**The City Council passed a measure on Nov. 2 reforming the way the City works with landlords and renters when complaints are made about disruptive criminal and nuisance conduct to provide more protections for tenants and resources for landlords to resolve problems.** Highlights of the amendments to the City's Conduct on Licensed Premises ordinance include: 1) A violation of the ordinance cannot stem from 911 calls reporting domestic violence, domestic abuse,

a health-related emergency or any other similar tenant assistance response. 2) When a Minneapolis Police Department crime prevention specialist determines that an incident at a rental property requires City intervention after reviewing a police report, a letter is sent to both the landlord and the tenant about what needs to be done to resolve the problem issues. 3) A new interdisciplinary panel convened by the City's Regulatory Services Department will review the issues and help determine a community-centered approach that encourages landlords and tenants to resolve problems with a goal of discouraging unnecessary tenant displacement.

**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 to 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.

## BE AWARE

The City implemented Winter Parking Restrictions Feb. 27 after significant snow accumulation had narrowed city streets, making access difficult for emergency vehicles. Milder weather has allowed the snow pack to melt, returning streets to more normal conditions. **Beginning March 22, normal parking rules were reinstated.** Although the restrictions have been lifted, it is still possible to have additional Snow Emergencies. Sign up for alerts to stay informed of the parking rules at [minneapolismn.gov/snow](http://minneapolismn.gov/snow).

**Carbon monoxide (CO) exposure incidents increase during the winter months** and CO is often called the silent killer. It is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that when inhaled, enters the blood stream preventing proper absorption of oxygen, leading to illness and even death. Treatment for

CO exposure is fresh air or oxygen. Severe exposure requires medical attention. Do not return to your home or building until the source of the problem is discovered and corrected. For more information about natural gas safety, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/BeSafe](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/BeSafe) or call 612-372-4727 or 1-800-245-2377.

Just like eating greasy food can clog people's arteries, grease and fat can build up in drainpipes in homes and restaurants and out under the streets. Clogs in the pipes can cause sewage backups into basements and call for expensive repairs. The City is hoping to raise awareness about the impacts that grease can have on plumbing at individual properties and in the City's sewer system. **A new rule has passed that allows the City to charge property owners for cleaning, repairing or replacing City pipes clogged with grease.** The grease rule sets up a framework to mitigate risks and decrease the costs to rate payers. Problem spots in one-tenth of the sewer system have cost the City close to \$1 million since 2012 to keep pipes flowing. The clogs divert money and time from other critical sewer system needs as crews are inspecting pipes and cleaning out grease every two weeks. The costs of these services in a small number of locations are borne by sanitary sewer rate payers across Minneapolis. Find more information here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/sewers/fats-oils-grease>

**People must be at least 21 to buy tobacco products in Minneapolis as of 10/1.** Minneapolis raised the age from 18 to help protect younger generations from lifelong nicotine addiction, tobacco-related illnesses, and the tobacco-related health disparities between white populations and people of color. Research shows raising the age to buy tobacco will keep an estimated 30,000 young people from starting to smoke over a 15-year period in Minnesota.

**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.

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

## BUSINESS DEVELOPEMENT

**Every month the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition meets for lunch** on the third Thursday of the month from 11:30am-1pm at 1101 West Broadway Ave. The next lunch will be held on March 21.

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](http://business.minneapolismn.gov), features roadmaps, checklists, tools and resources to help both new and existing businesses.

**Every month the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition meets for lunch on the third Thursday of the month** from 11:30am-1pm at 1101 West Broadway Ave. The next lunches will be held on Jan. 17, Feb. 21, and March 21.

## ADVERTISING IN NORTH NEWS

### RATES

SIZE	B&W	COLOR
Full Page	\$1100	\$1100
1/2	\$600	\$600
1/4	\$350	\$350
1/8	\$200	\$200
1/16	\$110	\$110

Please inquire for pricing if you'd like a different size than the ones listed.

### RIVER OF LIFE LUTHERAN

22nd & Fremont Ave. N.,  
612-521-7655

*We are an empowered multicultural people of God serving and sharing God's love in the North community.*

**Worship 10 a.m. Sunday**  
*Hospitality and Welcome to all.*

### REDEEMER LUTHERAN (ELCA)

Logan & Glenwood  
612-374-4139

Adult Bible Study 9 am Sunday  
Prayer & Praise 10-10:30 am Sunday  
Worship 10:30 am Sunday  
After School Program Tuesday 4:30-6:30pm.  
Pastor Kelly Chatman

### ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH

2901 Emerson Ave. N.  
612-529-7726

Sunday School/Adult Bible Study  
at 9am  
Worship at 10:30am  
Nursery provided

*Pastor Dale Hulme*

[www.stolaf Lutheran.org](http://www.stolaf Lutheran.org)  
and on Facebook

**We are LGBT affirming.**  
**Diversity thrives here!**

To place your notice:  
Email [kenzieo@pillsburyunited.org](mailto:kenzieo@pillsburyunited.org)  
or call 612.302.3424



# Bringing perspective to power

**Jen White has served as a senior policy aide to both Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and former City Council President Barb Johnson.**

By Kenzie O'Keefe Editor | Photos by David Pierini Contributor

Jen White has spent her entire career working at Minneapolis City Hall for some of the city's most recent influential leaders: Mayor Jacob Frey, former City Council President Barb Johnson, and Council Member Elizabeth Glidden. As Frey's senior policy aide for public safety, and youth and family development, she also works closely with Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo.

This month she talked to North News about her passion for making city hall accessible, her deep love for the Northside, and being a strong woman of color who feels community pain personally—and brings it to her job.



As the senior policy aide focused on public safety, White works closely with Police Chief Medaria Arradondo.

**You've worked at Minneapolis City Hall for 13 years. How did you get your start?** Through one of my regular customers at the 50s Grill in Brooklyn Center. I was working there in 2005 after I graduated from the U and could not find a job. The customer, Patty Marsh, was an associate for Council Member Don Samuels. She said "give me your resume and I'll bring it down to City Hall." I got my foot in the door as a paid intern in Public Works Administration. One day everyone was like "council member so and so is coming down." I didn't know what a council member was at that point. Elizabeth Glidden and [her policy aide] Andrea Jenkins were the ones who walked in. Andrea and I really hit it off in that moment, and then they had an opening [for policy associate on their team]. I applied. Ultimately, I think Elizabeth let Andrea decide because the aide and associate work so closely together. Andrea decided to take a chance on me. I was the youngest person on the floor. There weren't very many people of color working for the council at the time.

**Why devote your life to civil service in Minneapolis?** I never intended to get involved in politics, but I've always been a helper person and a people person who wanted to make a difference.

**Would you ever run for office?** I've thought about it. People have brought it up to me for a long time, even when I

was working for Elizabeth. I've considered it; I've thought about it. Maybe!

**When Barb Johnson lost her reelection, you were hired as one of Mayor Jacob Frey's Senior Policy Aides. Do you feel a more palpable pressure working for the Mayor versus a City Council person?** Yes, it's very different. I remember when I was on the council side, I'd be like "what do they even do down there? Why do they have so many staff? We move all the policy." But I get it now. It's a really high profile, high volume office. You're representing the entire city, not just a portion of it. With my area too, public safety, it's a lot of pressure.

**Your current boss is Mayor Frey. Your previous boss was former Council President Barb Johnson. What have you learned from each of them? What do you think they've learned from you?** I learned patience from Barb. It really took a lot to ruffle her feathers. Her quiet leadership—she let you come into your own and do the things that you wanted to do. She led the council in that way too. The importance of relationships in getting things done and recognizing staff when they did a great job. Barb also held a lot of power, but she did so in this very graceful, unassuming way. I always called her a political ninja. So many times, I would see her as the only woman in the room, but everyone listened to what she had to say – I think



A white board in White's office showcases both her busy schedule and how beloved she is in community.

in part, because she brought people in close in a very personable way. She always sat in this sitting room chair and had everyone sit on the couch in her office for meetings, so it felt as though you were in her living room chatting with a friend. She would always begin meetings by asking people about their families and lives, always remembering very specific, intimate details before talking business. It put people at ease.

**What do you think you taught her?** I like to think I was able to offer up new perspectives at times, about race in particular. She got it. She would always talk to me and have a conversation and really would listen. I felt really valued working for her.

**What about Mayor Frey?** He is very high energy, and I think that's infectious. He works really hard; if you put in the hard work, that matters a lot to him. Jacob is like go go go all the time. He is a lot of fun to work with and he has a really good heart. He really cares about people and is very open to learning new ideas and perspectives. He is not afraid to be vulnerable with what he doesn't know and has an eagerness to learn.

**What do you bring to him and his office?** Diverse perspective and experience. He's not from Minnesota, and

I'm from here and have worked for the City now for almost 13 years. My relationships working on both the south and north side of the city. Being able to move in spaces that he can't as a woman of color. Being able to talk to people and identify with different communities in different ways.

**You mentioned bringing diverse perspectives to both of them. I imagine that's hard, draining, difficult work. How do you think about that?** I'm mixed race and from Minnesota, so being "the only" is not foreign to me. I'm used to that in a lot of situations. Sometimes I get frustrated being that person all the time, but I feel like it's kind of an honor and privilege to be able to represent and give voice to people in communities who aren't in those spaces in City Hall, the halls of power. I hear it from community and the chief that they're really glad that I'm in my role because I can be helpful navigating issues and policies. That kind of keeps me going when it gets tough, because it's really a tough position.

**Did you know it would be this tough going in?** I had somewhat of an idea, but no. The volume of work is huge. In our first year we had the Super Bowl, two officer involved shootings, Ket-

"I'd like to see what we can do as a city to create policies that are supportive of BIPOC families so we can bring everyone up and make this a great place for everyone to live."

Jen White

amine, and we had the sexual assault investigations series, "Denied Justice," that brought to light various ways we were failing women who were reporting sexual assaults. It's been major things one after another.

**You're helping with the selection process for the new Fourth Precinct Inspector. Describe your ideal inspector.** What the community is really looking for is someone who will connect with them and not be afraid of coming into the neighborhood and getting to know

the people and being in tough positions. The Fourth Precinct is a tough precinct. [We need someone] with [former inspector Mike Friestleben's] finesse and genuine relationships with community but also someone who can handle the administrative aspects of that role.

**Tell us more about the youth and family development component of your work. What are you advocating for now?** A big thing for me is the equity and inclusion piece. We talk about how Minneapolis and Minnesota are a great place to live and raise a family and yada yada. I'm always saying: "but for who?" We have such a great racial disparity in outcomes for people of color, and black and indigenous people specifically. I'd like to see is what we can do as a city to create policies that are supportive of BIPOC families and communities so we can bring everyone up and make this a great place for everyone to live.

**Who do you look up to in our city?** Andrea Jenkins. I call her my forever work wife. I wouldn't be where I am without her. She supported me through all of my major growth. I had my first real professional job because she decided to take a chance on me. She has always been true to herself and has stood up for those of us who are on the margins; I still call her when anything's hard or I need to vent or I need advice. That's a lifelong thing.

**Who do you look up to on the Northside?** Chanda

Smith Baker is my dear friend and mentor. I always joke with her that I want to be like her when I grow up, both personally and professionally. She has a blended family like we do. She has been such a steadfast community person who has used her position to uplift the community and bring resources and highlight the good things that are happening. She is definitely an inspiration. Her sister Shannon as well.

**How has your work changed moving from the council side of city politics to the mayoral side?** I worked with and for very powerful women my entire career. Now I work for a very powerful man. That was a big difference for me. I had to get used to that more masculine, bro-y energy, [but] Jacob is a lot of fun and he will admit when he doesn't know something. He wants to argue and banter and back and forth to get to the best outcome. I had to learn how to embrace that debate team kind of style and work differently.

**Working for city leaders, you're often on the receiving end of community pain and anger. How do you handle that?** The most important thing is that you can't take it personally. It's not about you; it's about the systems, issues, or underlying problem. You have to recognize and know that whatever people are angry about, it's valid. It's for a reason. Their stories matter and their perspectives matter. Sometimes people just need to vent and know that people who have access

to power are listening to them. I learned that you cannot bullshit anybody on the Northside. People see through that in a heartbeat. Even if you can't give them the response they want to hear, be honest and truthful about that and people really appreciate that. I have also dealt with a lot of pain, loss, and trauma in my personal life, so I can identify with people who are going through it with their own battles. I can empathize with them and feel that pain very deeply. It helps me lean in and get closer to the struggles and then I am able to take that and translate it to help guide my work and ultimately influence the policies and decisions being made that can have an impact to address those issues.

**Anything else?** I also want to say that there is something very special and unique about North Minneapolis. The community has a way of drawing you in and holding you close. If you spend any significant amount of time there, you fall in love with the people and the culture. You become a part of the fabric of the community in this really profound way that is very special and unique.

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