Bringing care to the streets

A Mother’s Love addresses violence by going to some of the most traumatized people in the community and asking them what they need.

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Welcome to the July edition of North News. It's been a big month for our team. New voices have joined us, and one of our staff members has departed. We're excited for this new season and grateful for the groundwork that came before it.

Cirien Saadeh, our education and small business reporter, left North News on June 27. She completed her PhD in sustainability education at Prescott College in November and will now lean more fully into her role as Executive Director of the UpTake, a digital news source based out of the state capitol. Cirien has been a staff reporter for North News since August of 2017. During her time with us, she broke stories about new businesses, asked tough questions of the school district, and taught journalism classes at Patrick Henry High School. Cirien is unwavering in her commitment to building power in marginalized communities, and we'll miss her leadership, company, and tenacity as we carry our work forward. Luckily, she'll be spending her days just a short ways away at the capitol, and we're certain she won't be a stranger to the Northside.

As part of filling Cirien's role, we have hired Abdirahman (Abdi) Mohamed to be our new staff reporter focusing on small business and entrepreneurship. In his own words, he is a Saint Paul native whose family arrived to Minnesota 20 years ago from Somalia. In the last decade he's worked as a writer, an educator, a filmmaker and freelance videographer. In his free time, he likes to frequent the lakes, listen to podcasts or try out a new restaurant in town. He also considers himself an amateur film critic. His main focus in media has been to help find the voices and stories that the mainstream outlets tend to ignore or overlook. Abdi's first round of stories is in this paper; some of you might have met him at the Folwell Resource Fair on June 20. We're grateful for his energy and expertise and can't wait to see all that he brings to North News.

Our summer Step-Up interns have begun their nine-week internships with us as well. Kailen Branson is an artist and will be a senior this fall at Minnehaha Academy. Kailen generally likes to sketch, sometimes of characters and people, sometimes abstract art. He also has experience with graphic design. He took a graphic design class during his freshman year. Throughout his life he has had great art teachers that have taught him valuable things about art, and have inspired him to improve his own art. Over the years, Kailen has cultivated his love for art and has become pretty proud of his progress. Kailen doesn't have any experience with journalism but has been told that he writes great stories. He really enjoys fiction, especially sci-fi. Ever since sixth grade he's been coming up with stories. But he's never written about a real person and their real problems, so she would like to continue journalism. She wants to go to college to study journalism and communication. She likes to write, and she's thinking about writing a book that is a fictionalized account of events that have happened in her own life. She also likes to take pictures. In 2018, Myesha was invited to participate in a photography show called “Our Truth Through Our Eyes,” an event focused on people facing trauma. As she looks toward the future, Myesha hopes to do a lot of traveling and see new things.

We also have a new freelance writer joining our network: Anthoni McMorris. We met Anthoni while reporting on A Mother’s Love this month. He is part of the A Mother’s Love team and contributed a first-person piece to our story package (Page 21). We’re flattered and excited that this young community builder wants to amplify his voice on our platform.

Our team will be hard at work on a special edition of our paper focused on the Mississippi River in July. If you have a connection to the river (professional, personal, historical, psychological) please consider sharing your story with us. We’re working in partnership with Minnesota Public Radio, Pollen Midwest, Mississippi Park Connection, and more to make it happen, and we can’t wait to release the story just in time for FLOW, the Northside Arts Crawl on July 25-27.

Until next time,
Kenzie O’Keefe
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Part of Plymouth Ave. will be named to honor the late Richard Estes

Plymouth Ave. between Penn and Queen will be bestowed with an honorary second name—Richard Estes Avenue—on Sunday, June 30. Mr. Estes, who passed in 2013, owned Estes Funeral Chapel for over 50 years. His wife April Estes, who continues to own the family business, pushed local officials to honor her husband in this way. “My husband loved the community. Everything he did was for the community,” she said. She believes her husband’s legacy has a lot to teach the community, particularly young people: “I want our community and the young kids to know that he had hope. Don’t lose hope. He had good times and bad times, nothing was easy,” she said. A celebration of the renaming will be held from 2-4pm on June 30 in the Estes Funeral Chapel parking lot (2201 Plymouth Ave. N). Ward 5 Council Member Jeremiah Ellison’s office has helped make the honorary name a reality. “It’s a way to honor the legacy of Richard Estes as founder of the funeral chapel in 1962. He helped hundreds of struggling families lay their loved ones to rest. ...It’s past time to make sure that he gets recognized in some way,” said a representative from Ellison’s office.

Pop-up boutique temporarily opens on Broadway

Over 15 Northside vendors are selling their items—clothing for people of all genders and ages, shoes, accessories and more—in a temporary shop at 931 W Broadway Ave. through the end of July. The project is organized by the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition. The boutique is open on Fridays from 4-8pm and Saturdays from 11-3pm. “We want to make West Broadway great,” said Felicia Perry, business resource coordinator at WBC. “There are things in here for everybody.”

Northside pool updates

The Webber Natural Swimming Pool has opened for the season after a tumultuous last year. According to a report from the Star Tribune, the pool’s bacteria levels this year are normal after being closed 30-plus days during summer 2018 because of bacteria levels. North Commons, however, is closed for major repair work and is not set to re-open until mid-July. The park’s official opening date has not been announced, nor have its summer hours.

Devean George’s second housing project is soon to take form

Devean George, a Northside native and former LA Laker turned developer, has announced his new development, a building complex across the street from his Commons at Penn. The complex will include 64 housing units, a ground-floor community space, and a nonprofit office space. “You have to have stable housing before you do anything. Because people need to have places to live, safe place to play and a place to call home, so once you get people stable housing then you can start trying to help them out in areas, that’s my main goal,” he said. Additional details on the development have yet to be released. A groundbreaking is expected later this summer.

Gary Cunningham leaving Meda

Gary Cunningham, the longtime President and CEO of the Metropolitan Economic Development Agency (MEDA), has announced that he is leaving MEDA. Cunningham has accepted a position in Washington, D.C. with Prosperity Now! which does economic justice work. Cunningham was with MEDA for five years; his last day with the organization is June 28.
In 2020, an overlook will arrive on the North Minneapolis riverfront

By Myesha Powell, Alissa Dummer-Simmons, Kailen Branson Intern Reporters

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation (MPF), Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB), and the RiverFirst Initiative announced in a June 18 press conference that they will be teaming up to create the Great Northern Greenway River Overlook, an oval shaped trail that will sit above the Mississippi River bank and extend over the river’s shore with a 50-foot-tall beacon in the center. It will also include temporary art and other interactive entertainment and provide outdoor furniture and lighting. The overlook’s design and other elements are being created in part through a partnership with environmental designers at Juxtaposition Arts.

The overlook is set to be located on the dead end of 26th Ave. N at the river. The land there is undeveloped and overgrown and currently unsafe for visitors. Project leaders hope to give this unused space a new look that will provide the nearby community with a fun place to explore, fish, and enjoy art. The plan is to start construction in the Fall of 2019; the grand opening is anticipated to be sometime in the Spring of 2020.

According to Twin Cities Business Magazine, the overlook will cost $4.5 million, with $1.5 million coming from the RiverFirst campaign, “a generational vision for transforming 11 miles of once-industrial Mississippi Riverfront as it flows through the heart of Minneapolis,” according to the RiverFirst website.

The overlook is being created to give the Northside community and visitors visual access to the Mississippi. According to Executive Director of MPF Tom Evers, “For too long North Minneapolis been separated from the river, and this is an opportunity to really start opening the door again for the neighborhood and for the community. RiverFirst is this bold vision.”

The overlook sits at the end of the Great Northern Greenway, a bike path that currently stretches from Theodore Wirth Park to the river. There is also a desire to have a pedestrian and bike friendly bridge go across the river and into the Northeast area sometime in the near future.

There is also a companion project to the overlook project called WaterWorks. The project will look out over the St. Anthony Falls and Stone Arch Bridge. It is an expansion to the Mills Ruins Park. The expansion will bring new amenities such as a park pavilion, new restaurant, and new picnic and play areas. The hope for this project is to increase annual visitors and revamp the area.

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Hello Neighbors!

I hope everyone is having a safe and happy summer so far. I wanted to take some time this month to highlight a bit of policy work that is very important to me. I have had the incredible honor of working alongside Council Members Fletcher and Palmisano on the work they are leading in wage theft. Wage theft is defined as the denial of wages or employee benefits that are rightfully owed to an employee. Wage theft can happen in several different ways: failure to pay overtime that was worked, being asked to complete work off the clock, deductions from pay that were not noticed ahead of time, misclassification—the list goes on.

Wage theft impacts an estimated 40,000 workers in Minnesota. Our offices have heard stories from a variety of industries—workers in construction, restaurants, janitorial services, and many other service industries, all who have experienced wage theft. The numbers for Minneapolis are also significant. Between 2005-2014, the United States Department of Labor found over 5,500 violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act by employers in Minneapolis, totaling over $2.7 million in unpaid wages. The industries that lead in stolen wages are also industries that see a high percentage of workers from marginalized communities, such as immigrants, and people of color. This type of practice further marginalizes vulnerable communities, which is why I feel strongly about this work.

The City of Minneapolis’ Department of Civil Rights has taken on the subject of wage theft within their Workplace Advisory Committee. This committee specifically looks into ensuring workplaces are equitable, fair, and safe. After waiting to observe how wage theft would play out at in our State Legislature, I am happy to state that the Minnesota Legislature passed a comprehensive set of new laws and enforcement that will equip the Department of Labor and Industry for enforcement of state wage and hour laws, as well as adding protections for workers and repercussions for employers that have been found to commit wage theft.

The wage theft laws passed in the State Legislature are a solid and powerful foundation to continue this work at a local level. Council Members Palmisano, Fletcher and I are hopeful that this work, lead by the Workplace Advisory Committee will complement state law with conformity and a few expansions that are unique to Minneapolis, such as Earned Sick and Safe Time, and the minimum wage ordinances. Additionally, we are optimistic about how we can strengthen wage theft enforcement, by creating opportunity for the Minneapolis Civil Rights Department, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry and the Attorney General to work together to ensure that everyone gets paid what they have earned!

I’m excited about the path ahead in this work, and I look forward to sharing more on this with all of you as this unfolds. As always, I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to work for the Northside!

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**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.**

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The school board report

Our education reporter brings you the latest news from MPS

By Cirien Saadeh Staff Reporter

Here’s what’s up with Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) this month:
MPS and partner organizations are linking up again to provide summer learning opportunities. Check out mpls.k12.mn.us/summer_resources for details.
MPS offers free lunches in the summer through its Summer Eats Program. To learn more you can: download the free app “Summer Eats Minnesota,” text “Summer Meals” to 97779 or text “Food” to 877877, or you can input your address at https://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks and locate nearby food sites.
MPS continues to discuss its Comprehensive District Design and had scheduled a vote on a proposed plan for Aug. 2019. That vote has since been moved to Dec. 2019, in an effort to increase and extend community engagement efforts.
MPS Education Support Specialists (ESPs) are continuing to rally for a wage increase. The Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59 Education Support Professionals contract with MPS expires on June 30.
The Minnesota Legislature’s E-12 budget bill provides $543 million in public school funding for public schools in Minnesota for the next two years. In 2022-2023, the budget stipulates a $720 million budget. The bill also includes a special education tax subsidy, which has been a major factor in MPS and other district deficits in recent years. How this additional funding will impact the proposed MPS budget for the 2019-2020 school years remains yet unknown.
On June 19, community members and MPS staff members, Board members, and administrators gathered at North High to break ground on a new athletics facilities, scheduled to be completed in 2020. You can learn more at http://facilities.mpls.k12.mn.us/north_high_athletic_field.
There are no Board meetings scheduled for July. August’s MPS Business Meeting is scheduled for Aug. 13 at 5:30pm. August’s MPS Committee of the Whole meeting is scheduled for Aug. 27 at 6pm. Both will be held at 1250 W Broadway Ave.

Full-service community schools are coming to North Minneapolis

By Cirien Saadeh Staff Reporter

Bethune and Cityview are soon to become North Minneapolis’ only full-service community schools. Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, the two Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) elementary schools will offer a multitude of services for its student body, dependent on student and community’s needs.
“Bethune Community School will be a partnership between Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) and Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB). MPRB had wanted to connect local students with additional resources and Bethune, which is located near a park, had the opportunity to participate,” said Bethune Principal Jasper Jonson.
Officials at Cityview School could not be reached for comment.
A full-service community school is a school that aims to serve both students, student families, and even the surrounding neighborhood including those without children. The services that each school provide differs and is ever-evolving based on community need.
“Over time the kids will see the difference more and more, things being added and things being worked on. What will kids see in particular, more community, more parents, more people involved in the school and the overarching school experience,” said Jonson.
According to Jonson, teachers with Education Minnesota and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers will be doorknocking throughout the summer as they seek to let parents and families know about Bethune’s upcoming transition.
“Just in terms of baseline data, families are interested in additional resources around before and after school care or after school activities. So, via our relationship with the parks, we are identifying how do we expand programming,” said Patrice Howard, Executive Director of Community Education for MPS. “You may see some increased levels of before or after school programs at Bethune, and you may see some increase in adult education programs there too. We do not fully know, as this is based on identification of needs, but these items listed are considered examples of how we respond and that too will be considered through partnership.”
One of Minnesota’s first full-service community schools, now known as Myers-Wilkin but originally named Grant Elementary School, launched in Duluth in the late 1990s. According to Bernie Burnham, Vice President-Elect with Education Minnesota and a Duluth teacher, Myers-Wilkin was struggling and set to be shut down, but the community rallied to save the school and a full-service community school was born.
“At one time Grant Elementary School was identified as a school that was not succeeding, and they were going to close the school down and the community said ‘no way, this can’t happen. We need this school in our neighborhood,’” said Jonson.

Continued on Page 7
Legislative session ends with opportunities for North

The Minnesota State Legislature met from Jan.-May 2019, with many votes happening during a one-day special session that followed the legal end-of-session.

By Cirien Saadeh Staff Reporter

The Minnesota State Legislature ended its 2019 legislative session on May 20th, though a day-long special session was needed a few days later to wrap up budget negotiations. Here’s an update on legislation; what passed, what progresses, what’s dead, and what’s next:

After several months of politicking, the MN Legislature has finally approved Secretary of State Steve Simon’s request to use over $6 million in federal funds, through the Help America Vote Act, to shore up the state’s election system and make security improvements. Those improvements are set to begin soon; some can be done more quickly, but shoring up the state’s voter registration system, for example, will take upwards of four years.

Representative Fue Lee (59A) has plans to request an additional $3 million dollars to support infrastructure support (this is often called bonding at the State Legislature) during next year’s legislative session for the Minneapolis RiverFirst Initiative. The money would go towards event space, seating, and other projects in the development of the 26th Ave Outlook. See page 4 for more details.

Legislators, including Rep. Raymond Dehn (59B) and Lee, attempted to pass a $1.5 billion capital investment bill that would have funded public infrastructure or works projects, including those at the University of Minnesota. The bill did not make it out of committee and will likely be taken back up during the next legislative session.

The MN State Legislature has passed a hands-free driving bill that will become law on Aug. 1. The law allows exceptions for emergencies, as well as GPS navigation.

Discussions on the legalization of marijuana died in Senate committee and were introduced in the House. Further discussion on marijuana legalization will likely be discussed more during the next legislative session.

Following five months of negotiation and a day-long special session, the Minnesota Legislature passed a $48.3 billion budget over the next two years. The budget does not include an increased gas tax, but does include a tax cut for middle-income earners, as well as a larger working family tax credit.

Senator Bobby Joe Champion (59) and Lee have introduced legislation in the Senate and House, respectively, meant to appropriate funding for the creation of Baldwin Square, a proposed Northside development. The legislation has been referred to committee, but has yet to have a hearing and will likely be taken up in the next legislative session. Champion (59) has introduced several bills aimed at appropriating funds for the proposed Upper Harbor Terminal redevelopment. All of those bills have been referred to a committee for a hearing, but have yet to have that hearing.

On July 1, a bill promoting statewide broadband access aimed at helping communities with limited broadband access goes into effect. These communities will be able to receive grants aimed at increasing and improving broadband access.

The Minnesota Legislature was not able to pass legislation on the hiring and recruiting of teachers of color and Indigenous teachers.

The Urban agriculture Grant Program, which provides urban agriculture funding in Black and POC communities in Minnesota, will receive a $300,000/year investment for the next four years. The two-year legislative session reconvenes on Feb. 11, 2020. The focus of next year’s legislative session will be infrastructure and public works development.

Full-service community schools continued from Page 6

Burnham. “Parents and the principal worked together to say, ‘We’re gonna keep our school, but how do we do that?’ They went to the community and asked for support and they were able to find partners to help support some funding of things they needed for school programming, for example.”

According to Burnham, full-service community schools do not put an additional burden on teachers, without their consent, but rather brings in resources and programming that can support students, families, and neighbors. Support looks like everything from dentistry to dinner.

MPS, as well as Bethune and Cityview administrators and staff, are currently conducting a Community Needs Assessment. Jonson explains that a survey has been released to parents and a community meeting is planned for July 10 at Sumner Library. There is also a community meeting for the Cityview community on Aug. 8. Community members, including those without children at the school, are invited to attend. MPS board member KerryJo Felder has also been hosting community meetings on weekends in an effort to connect with Northside parents.

Additionally, there is a hope that because Bethune and Cityview are on the Department of Education’s failing schools list that, over the long haul, a full-service community school designation will allow students to experience more academic success.

“Strong schools. Strong communities. And making sure that we give these supports to the families, I believe this will help with the grades. That’s a huge piece and now we have to start looking at jobs, other forces of stability and knowledge, and that goes along with the educational rigor, but also health knowledge, making sure that they have access to dental care, vision care healthcare, if that’s what the community needs. I believe it will make a difference,” said Felder.

According to Howard, it can take 3-5 years for a full-service community school to impact a school’s overall grades.

Felder is also pushing local families to participate in the Community Needs Assessment.

“The sky is really the limit. This is about what we want for our schools: programming, curriculum, everything,” said Felder.

Both Bethune and Cityview will also be part of the Stable Homes, Stable Schools program, a partnership between MPS, the City of Minneapolis, and the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA), beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. Stable Homes, Stable Schools identifies families at fifteen MPS schools of which there are several in North Minneapolis. The program offers direct rental assistance and grant support to those at risk of losing their homes or being evicted, as well as access to “essential support services.” For more information, visit: www.mphaonline.org/stablehomes.
Community sounds alarm on reckless driving in Northside neighborhoods

By Cirien Saadeh Staff Reporter

North Minneapolis is no stranger to accidents, injuries, and fatalities caused by reckless driving. A slew of recent incidents has motivated community members to speak up and out about an issue they feel has not received the attention or enforcement needed to end what many see as an epidemic.

But the discussion of reckless driving in North Minneapolis has also been complicated by discussions of race and racism. Many community members want to separate the discussion of reckless driving from the Northside’s ever-present discussion of racism, but the discussion is still, in many ways, understood through a racial narrative and racially coded lens despite a desire to move away from it. And that discussion of race and racism, while important, may be a distraction from what Northsiders of all races and walks of life believe is a necessary conversation and necessary work to do: stop reckless driving.

“It is not always a race thing, we just make it a race thing. People continue to make it about race, because little white teenagers speed in their car too,” said Lisa Clemons, a former MPD officer and Northside community member.

Still, others believe that North Minneapolis’ black community as well as other people of color communities in North Minneapolis, are being targeted in the reckless driving discussion and by MPD. Roxanne O’Brien, a community activist and environmental justice organizer in North Minneapolis, is one such person.

“Black people have always been targeted, especially in poor communities. We have always been targeted and we have always been the ones that law enforcement wants to keep control of. Most of the crimes out here are crimes of poverty and it’s very easy for those who are oppressed to become oppressors, from stress and trauma,” said O’Brien. “Some people feel they need to be seen, so they drive fast, they try to have fun in a confined city of rules and oppression and people make impulsive decisions, that’s human.”

Webber-Camden neighborhood resident Laurie Schlosser wants to see “fair and equitable behavior-based enforcement”; she has begun organizing Northside neighbors in the hopes of getting the attention of City staff and elected officials, as well as MPD.

Schlosser is a therapist who owns NCE Wellness and the adjacent yoga studio, The Yoga Room, in the Victory Neighborhood.

“Over the last two years, it’s been this steady increase on the roads where it’s scary to get from my house to my job, which is only 1.2 miles away,” said Schlosser. “It’s big the problem really is. On Facebook she says she saw: ‘People coming out and their parked cars had been totaled overnight, people getting hit by uninsured drivers, people getting hit and the people are taking off at the scene. It was just this constant thing,'” Schlosser said.

Schlosser, alongside other community members, has been circulating a petition asking for a response to their stories of reckless driving which they have been collecting across Minneapolis in order to show the impact of reckless driving in North Minneapolis. She hopes to pass it on to city officials, and MPD personnel, soon.

Lynn Keillor, a Northside resident and freelance writer and editor, has also been asking for safer streets in her community. Keillor’s cars have been hit multiple times. The most recent accident was in North Minneapolis, another was in South Minneapolis, and one in Robbinsdale by a Minneapolis driver. All of her cars were totaled by uninsured drivers and two of the accidents occurred while her car was parked legally on the street. Keillor became active in the ongoing community discussions after seeing the discussion take place on social media and after the death of two children last summer and a man, Jose Angel Madrid Salcido, in the Folwell Neighborhood in May.

“The most recent, my car was parked on my street overnight, and an uninsured, unlicensed driver claimed to be swerving to
miss a raccoon. Their car was totaled and mine was totaled. That was five years ago,” said Kellor. “People are getting killed in these accidents, too, [by reckless drivers] and that’s not acceptable.”

According to O’Brien, MPD needs to examine their own pursuit policies. O’Brien’s car was totaled two years ago when police pursued a “suspected” drug dealer who hit her car.

“I was waiting for my daughters to get home from school and they were late. I was getting worried and was looking for my keys when I heard a loud crash. I went outside and it was my car. It was hit a tree, it had hit my neighbor’s car and their car had hit their neighbor’s car, and it was up on the sidewalk,” said O’Brien. “After I did the research police are only supposed to chase murderers, armed rapists, or kidnappers.”

DATA BREAKDOWN

A 2017 City of Minneapolis study, “Vision Zero,” noted that fatal car crashes in Minneapolis have decreased, but additional city data also shows that 2018 was the first year in several years in which speed-related traffic fatalities in Minnesota topped 100 people. An additional 284 people died from other traffic-related accidents in 2018.

An analysis of 311 and 911 call data conducted by North News shows that North Minneapolis and other low income communities in the city are more likely to experience a disproportionate number of car accidents.

Minneapolis does not have an active traffic enforcement unit, and MPD has only one has patrol car assigned to each ward, but according to MPD Public Information Officer John Elder, those cars are the first to get sent to a scene if there’s an incident, so they are infrequently patrolling for traffic violations. Members of the City Council have proposed the re-creation of the traffic enforcement unit and discussions are occurring about adding funding for that unit back into the Mayor’s Budget.

“The nice thing about it is, the traffic enforcement unit will be legalized throughout the city. Traffic enforcement is where we are hearing the most complaints, the most concerns, and they were working on that to put into our next budget cycle,” said Elder.

North News reached out to MPD for additional comment and to answer questions about community-birthed solutions to the reckless driving issue as well as the history of this issue. MPD officials have yet to respond to these additional requests for comment.

Though data shows that North Minneapolis is not particularly unique in its incidence of reckless driving, many community members feel that it is. A spate of recent deaths and injuries along with social media outrage, and racial coding have helped to elevate the topic and brought it to the forefront of North Minneapolis’ collective mind.

“The reckless driving is city-wide. It just seems whenever you speak on anything in North Minneapolis, everybody spins it into a race issue. And that’s unfortunate, because Northside has some of the greatest people, living here, especially African-American. So I don’t know why people, both sides, make it about race,” said Clemons.

RECKLESS DRIVING ON THE NORTHSIDE

Carolyn Bastick moved to North Minneapolis in 2017; she lives at an intersection in Folwell. Bastick worked to have stop signs put in at the intersection by the City of Minneapolis, but believes the fact that she is a retired, British, well-educated, white woman is the only reason she was able to successfully advocate for those stop signs. She’s also advocated for speed bumps on the street and the alleys, but the City charges community members around $7,500 for speed bumps on the street and $1,500 for speed bumps on the alley.

“It’s like the wild, fu**** west out here. It’s lawlessness. People don’t care about themselves and they don’t care about the repercussions,” said Bastick. “It’s a complicated issue. It’s everything from what MPD can do, the city can do, the parks can do. You just have too few people who have the ability to speak up and out, because the people that can be affected, the kids playing in the street and the highly stressed out single mothers are most affected, but just don’t have the time. And that’s the majority of the people here.”

Bastick, like other community members, believes the City of Minneapolis should step up, but she also wants to see more enforcement by MPD and a cultural change in North Minneapolis.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Community members, like Bastick, want to see community members continue to step up and continue to report accidents. They also want to see greater enforcement of existing street laws by MPD.

“When you have a lawless attitude, nothing is going to work. Police need to be given the resources to enforce the law,” said Bastick. “The lackadaisical enforcement is a problem. I know people are getting killed, but they are getting killed by this too. They are turning a blind eye, because they feel there are other priorities, and this needs to be a priority.” Bastick believes that the current community organizing effort will help MPD and city officials prioritize traffic enforcement.

According to Schlosser, MPD has said towing cars may be a meaningful consequence that ensures that people have a valid license and insurance before they can get back on the road.

Clemons wants to see the City of Minneapolis take up the work.

“I think they need a safe driving initiative, starting with radio announcements, ads in all the local papers in the community. The city needs to invest funds. And the City needs to document the number of traffic accidents and the number of people injured or killed, because it’s not just North-specific,” she said. “We need to tell people not just to slow down, but why they should slow down.”

According to Council Member Philiipe Cunningham, his primary concern stems from community conversation.

“I am working to address two issues within driving safety as a start. First, our community needs better access to driver’s education. Additionally, there is a need for the reinstatement of traffic law enforcement to help keep our streets safe. Overall, we have seen safety on our roads has deteriorated for motorists, pedestrians and bikers alike,” Cunningham told North News in an email, “Drivers both young and older do not have access to driver training resources and materials. With drivers’ education classes often costing upwards of $400 per student, it is important to provide affordable access to road safety and driving resources.”

Cunningham noted that this “Northside Drivers’ Education Center” could be a multi-agency space that would provide driver’s education and driver’s safety courses.

“The Center would focus on new drivers, as well as serve as a diversion program for older drivers who have historically got caught in the criminal justice system for traffic violations like driving without a license/insurance or moving violations,” said Cunningham. “This latter component is particularly necessary when supporting the MPD traffic enforcement division being reestablished.”

According to Schlosser and others, they have sat down with Jen White, Mayor Jacob Frey’s Public Safety Policy Aide, and are waiting to see what the Mayor includes when his proposed budget is released in August.

“North News attempted to reach city officials and staff for this story, but received no response.”

Community members have shared their petition with elected officials and MPD. To learn more about the petition or the community advocacy, you can follow “Safe Streets Minneapolis” on Facebook.

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Program cost is $5/month after promotion period.
In mid-June, members of the Northside community gathered at a vacant lot near the intersection of 3rd Street N and 26th Ave. N for a Juneteenth cookout organized by Village Financial Cooperative (VFC), the black-led credit union being formed in the community. Attendees were surprised to learn that the lot they stood on had been newly purchased by the cooperative as part of a new program that will develop community spaces on empty lots in the Northside.

Although the site is not the home of their future credit union, the organization, whose aim is to give Northside residents financial independence, announced their plans for an initiative to buy back empty lots all around North Minneapolis and ask residents what they would like to do with those spaces. According to Shiranthi Goonathilaka, VFC’s Engagement and Member Experience Lead, VFC has received ownership of part of the available space on 3rd street and shared that they are in the process of purchasing a neighboring property as well.

The group is set to announce the location of their much anticipated credit union in the coming weeks. Their certification process with the National Credit Union Administration and other federal regulators has slowed some of their plans, but they have already received a green light by the state’s regulators at the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

Me’Lea Connelly, VFC’s leader, urges supporters of the credit union to be patient during the accreditation process. “The reason why it’s taking a while is that everyone involved in this process has to go through two very rigorous background checks and that’s for our members’ protection. So, it’s important to be patient and not gawk at that,” she said. “Each background check takes about 90 days which is standard.”

According to Connelly, the cooperative put in an application for accreditation last December with the National Credit Union Administration and have finally heard back six months later. The cooperative is also going through the process of certifying their credit union through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in order to insure deposits made by future members of the credit union.

The idea of a black owned financial cooperative was born out of Blexit, an economic divestment movement that formed in the aftermath of the officer involved killing of Philando Castile in 2016. Following this tragedy members of the Northside black community met and identified financial independence rose to the top as a priority. Soon afterwards Village Financial Cooperative was launched, and today the organization has received nearly $5 million in pledges from potential members, half a million dollars from the City of Minneapolis and another $430,000 from the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation all intended to help establish a credit union in North Minneapolis.

Pledged members like Tony Williams share an enthusiasm for the launch of the credit union. As part of a spotlight campaign by VFC, Williams stated that reforming systems in place are not the way out of oppression. “Megabanks and other institutions grounded in a profit motive will never value our humanity more than our dollar,” he said. “If we want to ‘vote with our dollar’ as the saying goes, we need to develop and invest in infrastructure built from the ground up that prioritize[s] our lived experiences ahead of our account balance.”

Buying back the block, one lot at a time

Village Financial Cooperative has announced a new initiative to purchase empty lots in North Minneapolis. Soon, they say they will release the location of their credit union.

By Abdi Mohamed Staff Reporter
Photos by David Pierini Contributor
There are about 20 other black credit unions in the country. VFC would be the only one operating in Minnesota currently.

VFC has 1,900 pledges so far, totalling $5 million. It has also received $430,000 in funding from the Phillips Family Foundation and $500,000 from the City of Minneapolis.

VFC has given 20 loans to community members so far.

Shauen Pearce, Mayor Jacob Frey’s Economic Development and Inclusion Policy Director, attended the cooperative’s Juneteenth event and says the city is committed to supporting VFC’s vision. “We’re continuing to talk to other potential investors because we know that the long game is solvency. We don’t want village to be a flash in the pan but a long-term anchor for the community,” she said.

The City of Minneapolis is also engaged with VFC’s partnership with Square Inc, the mobile payment app company, who have pledged to donate point-of-sale hardware for business owners to handle electronic payments and financial educational programs to assist members in the Northside community. Although these resources are crucial, Pearce made sure to emphasize the importance of being attentive to what the community expresses as their needs. “At the city we have to be able to listen and allow communities to be at the forefront. We need to make sure we’re not trying to create solutions for people who have already told us what they want,” she stated.

The cooperative has also partnered with the nonprofit Building Relationships In Communities, more commonly known as B.R.I.C., to canvas neighborhoods near the purchased lots and gain input as to their vision for the spaces. VFC and B.R.I.C. have already been engaging those that live near their newly purchased lot.

There are about 20 black owned credit unions in the country, and although what the cooperative has done so far is unprecedented (they have nearly $5 million from pledged members), they took the time to learn from these existing institutions while also innovating their own approach.

For example, on one visit to a black credit union in Eutaw, Alabama, Connelly was inspired by the community engagement and connection she witnessed. "The woman that runs that credit union talked about how she keeps a really low default rate. They’ve got about 1000 members, mostly black folks, and they have like 0.01% default rate meaning most of her members are good with their loans," she said. "What she told us is that they’re one community, so when she goes to the church picnic, she’s like ‘Hey! When are you gonna come see us at the credit union?’ We got a situation! and that had everything to do with what we’re doing here today. Engaging with our community, having genuine relationships with our members and treating this relationship humanly and it’s not transactional.”

Another way VFC gathered information on how to run their credit union was to launch a few programs in the last year, such as the New Day Loan. The program helped participants receive loans up to $500 with little to no interest in order to deal with rent payments, settling debt or purchasing school supplies or children. The pilot proved successful as results showed a strong return rate, but as time went on it began to slip. "Up till November they were 100% paid back. We continued into December and in January we started to see our rates go down,” Connelly said.

The reason for this drop was due to recipients without existing bank accounts being unable to make timely payments on their loans. With this information the cooperative was able to verify that the existence of a bank account could help those in the community participate in a loan program like the one beta tested with the New Day Loan.

One reservation Connelly shared about her work is the conversation surrounding financial literacy in the black community. There is a pervasive stereotype in America that black Americans are not financially literate. "I talk a lot about this in white spaces," she said. Although the cooperative has been providing financial education classes through their partnership with Square Inc, Connelly wants to make sure to “properly frame” the conversation around financial planning. "We’re talking about financial literacy to people who don’t have finances and that’s a problem. So, if we’re not going to talk about how to get people’s incomes up and if we’re not going to validate the ability that people have had to use the income they have to keep food on the table, then it’s a problem,” Connelly said.

When pressed about a specific location as to where the credit union would be located, Connelly was reluctant to share. But she assured the Juneteenth celebration attendees that they would find out very soon. "We’ve been very particular about where our home is going to be. We want our community to have the best, and and that we’ll be able to make an announcement in the next couple of weeks," she said.

I think we’re narrowing in. We’ve had a lot of starts and stops because the Northside has been full of speculation, and it can be a very difficult environment to navigate as a black organization. But I am very excited about what’s on the horizon
North Minneapolis celebrates Freedom Day

Music and dance filled the streets of Galveston on June 19, 1865, when former slaves in the hold-out state of Texas finally learned of their freedom. Fittingly, music and dance were key ingredients in Bethune Park on Saturday, June 15, 2019, as North Minneapolis celebrated that historic moment, a holiday known as Juneteenth.

Attendees swayed to gospel, hip hop and old-school R&B. Longtime friends greeted each other with hugs, and actors portraying Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln continued a dialogue the historic figures shared as they created a framework for freedom.

There was food; organizations offered support services, and citations of appreciation were awarded to the otherwise unsung heroes of North Minneapolis.

Photos and reporting by David Pierini

Above: The dance troupe Da Celebrities performs in the park.

Above right: Shvonne L. Johnson was perfectly happy dancing by herself to classic R&B covers by the group, 4 Play.

Right: Genevieve Murph was among the Voices of Inspiration, the choir from Greater Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church, bringing praise and joy to the Juneteenth stage.
Top left: Hugs broke out in Bethune Park all afternoon as family and friends gathered for Freedom Day festivities.

Middle: SoloStar was among the musical performances on the Juneteenth stage.

Bottom: Cephaniah Martin, 7, gets a lesson in 19th-century military drumming while visiting an encampment of actors portraying Union soldiers.
New spaces for NEW RULES

By Abdi Mohamed  Staff Reporter

Nearly three years after its launch, NEW RULES (NR) is gearing up for change. Founder Chris Webley has been operating the communal marketplace on Lowry Ave. with a community-driven approach and now plans to expand to a second location on 927 West Broadway after acquiring the building in a partnership. The new space will potentially be co-owned by Webley with TRI-Construction and the Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation. NR will occupy the first and basement floors.

Historically, commercial real estate development has not come easily to North Minneapolis. Webley, and his 927 W Broadway Ave. partners hope to change that, but they know they face big challenges. Their building will require $5 million in renovations with a new addition, public plaza and rooftop amenities. Having been previously appraised for $40,000 and receiving an estimated appraisal of two million dollars after the renovations are completed, the new property will likely leave its owners a few million dollars in the red when it is all said and done. This is the reality Webley wants to share for those who might think he had the property handed to him.

“Everybody and their mama’s like, ‘I should have got that,’” Webley said in mid-June, reflecting on the reactions he’s received after news of the partnership had become public. “Let me show you these finances.” Webley says the city is looking to have the 927 property back on its tax roll.

Webley is no stranger to navigating the finances of owning an old building. NR is currently located at the Lowry Commons and was purchased and renovated using Webley’s personal finances. Although it’s a bit underwater, relative to the new space the costs are more manageable. “I did all the work myself, so I didn’t have to pay a contractor,” he said.

Although the partners at 927 W Broadway have gotten past the initial gaining exclusive development rights on the property, finding a way to maintain it will prove to be another hurdle. Although Webley is hoping to change the perception around development in North Minneapolis, he understands the challenge brought on by the large costs. “You would be a fool to invest or do anything in North right now cause the rent that you can get off the building is never going to be enough to cover your costs,” Webley said expressing his frustration at the current state of commercial real estate in the area. “Our cash flow requirement for the new space is $1.6 million, as a business, just to have one floor in the building... [The] only businesses that are doing business at that volume [in this community] are liquor stores,” he said.

The City of Minneapolis has been working closely with Webley and the other partners on the 927 property through their Community Planning and Economic Department. James Terrell, the principal project coordinator at CPED, said that the extensive development experience shared amongst the partners led the city to select their proposal. “Between what Chris has done with his NR building on Lowry and TRI-Construction having been involved in many construction projects, we felt out of the four or five responses that we got, this group was by far the best by far,” he said.

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Terrell says CPED is continuing to work closely with the developers on the 927 building by providing technical assistance and has provided financing options like the Great Street Program to give gap financing but continues to innovate new ideas on helping finance the project. Issues like the maintenance requirements and perceptions of the North Minneapolis area provide a challenge to all those involved.

To assist in that financing, Terrell has called on community members to share any photos they may have of the interior before this development project started. If the building were to gain historical recognition, that could lessen the tax burden the building would have and make it eligible for other financing options. Both the developers and CPED are available to take submissions of those images.

As Webley, a former Target engineer turned entrepreneur, prepares to begin the development of his second project, he shared some hesitancy in delegating work that he’s felt after purchasing the new location. “I’ve managed this and have been very particular about its handling and this is my baby. It’s like a dad handing over his newborn over to somebody to take care of. It requires hand holding,” he said. Webley hopes to continue building a base for his employees at the new building so that they can hit the ground running once the location opens.

The Lowry Ave. NR is currently home to a creative coworking space and events venue. It is also home to NR Café & Spirits which is an invitation into the space for people to learn about what takes place at NR. The 927 property may eventually be home to PESCA, a restaurant NR has been incubating that it would operate as well.

Some of the staff have been excited to expand for some time now and have shared their ideas with Webley for the new space. Although he wants to encourage that passion, Webley wants to get to a place of preparedness before taking NR to the next level. “Can you tell me how to make that smoothie with your eyes closed? Can you spot out the ingredients for the new Hennessey margarita that we just put on the menu? If you can’t do that then we aren’t ready,” he said.

The Lowry location will serve as the NR flagship site and continue to operate once the Broadway location is open. The projected date is late 2020 or early 2021 for when the second property will be fully functional. Next month a gallery show called “DIALOGUES” will be debuting in the Lowry space and will explore the intersection of immigration, citizenship and identity. It will contain work from 23 artists of diverse backgrounds and is curated by SuYao Tian.

In August, the Lowry Business Association will host in partnership with NR and First Avenue the 5th annual “Intro To Success Festival” (ITS Fest), an event geared towards highlighting community artists and their work. Philli Irvin is a social artist who works out of NEW RULES and has been organizing the arts festival in the past. He described this year’s event to be focused on “reimagining the world” with a focus on seeing that change in North Minneapolis. When speaking about the coworking environment at NR, he stressed the collaborative nature of the location being important to him. “There’s an outstanding level of reciprocity here at NR. When I’m in that space I feel like I’m more than just my field. I feel like a team or a family member,” Irvin said.

Webley is looking to change the landscape of real estate development in North Minneapolis and does not see the current system in place being sustainable for much longer. “It’s been a sharecropping business where those who have it use it as a means to extract, and I just don’t think that those value systems will be the same in the future,” he said. “I don’t think that organizations that don’t value collaboration will exist in ten years.”
OUTSIDE NORTHSIDE

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Business owners on West Broadway break bread with local officials

By Abdi Mohamed Staff Reporter

Creating lines of communication between politicians and business owners can be difficult, but the West Broadway Business & Area Coalition (WBC) has found a simple and creative solution: lunch.

Community stakeholders, business owners and elected officials shuffled themselves into the Gathering Space at the Episcopal Church in Minnesota on June 20 to break bread and talk business on the Northside. Each third Thursday of the month, the WBC provides lunch for people with invested interest in the corridor to network and take part in the ongoing conversation as to how to improve business on W Broadway Ave.

On June 20, elected officials like Hennepin County Commissioner Irene Fernando and Council Member Jeremiah Ellison were in attendance along with Shauen Pearce and Zoe Thiel from the City of Minneapolis. The focus of the June lunch was “building business with local government” in order to inform business owners about the resources available to them from government bodies on various levels.

Business owners seem to have taken notice of this open dialogue with their civil leaders and have begun to take advantage of it. Thiel serves as the manager of the City of Minneapolis’ Small Business Team and shared that the city received 400 requests in for business support in the last year. They were evenly split between existing business and those just getting off the ground. One of the insights Thiel shared is the creative ways the city officials have to solve business issues for developing industries. “One of the things we’re seeing a lot of is a sort of pop-up model or some other unique business model that our systems of regulation weren’t really built for,” she said. “I think those are the most fun where we get to work with both the entrepreneur and our colleagues at the city to make something work.”

DeVon Nolen serves as the Interim Executive Director of the WBC and highlighted the work that local leaders have done to make themselves accessible to the communities they represent and assist the business owners in those areas. “Current city staff have done a wonderful job of really being intentional, getting out of their cubbies and out into the community,” Nolen said. “I don’t know what level of leadership that’s being driven but I can see the difference.”

The biggest cost to putting the event together, according to Nolen, is the lunch itself. Usually each month’s lunch is sponsored, yet the coalition is hopeful to receive more of that assistance. The WBC are also currently still in the search of finding a permanent executive director and have set their decision to be made sometime in the next month, however applications are still open.

Next month’s lunch is taking place on July 18 and is geared towards the topic of procurement for businesses in the Northside. The coalition has surveyed participants in the past and is constantly requesting feedback as to what they would like to be better informed on.

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NEON and SCORE team up to provide food business workshops

The trainings aim to give prospective and current business owners the tools they need to be successful.

By Abdi Mohamed Staff Reporter

Northside residents hoping to bring their food business ideas to life have an opportunity to get them rolling. The Northside Economic Opportunity Network (NEON) is hosting a monthly workshop focused on introducing entrepreneurs to the basics of starting a food truck business. NEON has run this workshop for three years out of the downtown library but in recent months changed their location in house for more accessibility to the Northside community.

Ann Fix works as the Program Manager of the Northside Food Business Incubator for NEON and after noticing a lack of Northside residents taking part in these workshops she decided to relocate them back to NEON’s offices on W Broadway Ave. in order to have a “micro focus” on North Minneapolis. While leading this class, Fix has learned that there has been an emphasis from participants on building trust within the Northside community among business owners and the communities that they’re a part of. “We are spending money outside of our community on food,” Fix said. “We want to show that Northsiders have what it takes to start a business.”

NEON has collaborated with a local SCORE chapter to help provide additional resources for entrepreneurs who are interested in learning the essentials of running a business once they’ve taken part in the food business workshop. SCORE is a resource partner of the Small Business Administration and is funded by a Congressional grant. While the workshop led by NEON focuses on answering questions about food businesses in particular and the regulations surrounding them as a business entity, SCORE’s aim is to assist participants on the business basics that they’ll need to operate any kind of business. When it comes to doing taxes, state licensing or having a business plan, NEON will help provide the material needed.

The workshop, titled Food Business 101, gives a brief overview of food businesses and the variety of ways to run and market a business which includes farmers markets, food trucks and traditional brick and mortar locations. One insight participants learned during the workshop was the fact that some foods might lend themselves to more or less regulation. Cottage foods have more flexibility for licensing as opposed to meat or dairy products.

Most of the SCORE facilitators, like John Bergert, work as volunteers to provide these lessons to entrepreneurs. Bergert says people leave the program with new confidence. “They’re more excited than they were before they even started,” he said.

“They feel confident because they can see that there’s a road ahead of them and they're not alone.”

John Bergert, SCORE facilitator

In 2019 SCORE has 109 workshops scheduled and is likely to add on more later this year. Next month the workshop will continue out of NEON’s offices with a fresh batch of entrepreneurs. For those interested in starting their own food truck and curious about this workshop, more information can be found on how to register right on NEON’s website.
**GRADUATION**

Gustavus Adolphus
Yee Lor
Mailai Xiong
Northland College
Hal Welch
North Dakota State University
Edith Biyaki Chakua

**DEAN’S LIST**

Iowa State University
Madeline Ross Hogg
Nathan Cunningham Donohue
Mark Gerdes
Ryan M. Heisler
Riley Russell Knudson
Joseph Alexander Louiselle
Riley Russell Knudson
Michelle Jean Stepan

**University of Minnesota - Duluth**

Lauren E. Newman
Paige C. Meskan
Rozlynn M. Lund
Miguel A. Jara Llapa
Jenna L. Jackson
Sawyer B. Heller
Kristie Garcia
Alison V. Fleming
Emma G. DuPont
Maxwell J. Borman
North Dakota State University
Michelle Jean Stepan

**NOTICES**

Northside Boxing Club (1704 33rd Ave N)
neighborhoodhealthsource.org for more info. Northside clinics. Call 612-287-2433 or visit women every month at one of their three and reduced cost mammograms while getting paid to do it. Learn more here: Census team, you can support your community and create. For more information call 612-335-5924 or email contactus@nrrc.org. Funds are Residents Redevelopment Council. 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@nrrc.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.ohes-mlps to schedule. If you live in Hennepin County and have a desire to improve the child protection system, consider volunteering for the Citizen Review Panel. The panel meets the second Monday of each month at the Health Services Building (525 Portland Ave). Panel members serve for a two-year term. Email Mary.Doyle@state.mn.us for an application packet and more information. **EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT**

Wednesdays – Kid’s Bookclub: 2:30pm-4pm. Webber Park Library. No pre-reading required, we will share a book, discuss, and do a fun activity! Sponsoring by Friends of the Webber Park Library. No registration required. Kids entering grades 1-6.

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.

Saturdays – Read Together. 10am. - 1pm. Webber Park Library. Sign up for a weekly 10-minute session to practice reading with a teen mentor. Come by or call the Webber Park Library to register. 612-543-6751. Kids entering K-3.

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 target 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.

Mondays – Sign up for a weekly 10-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.

7/11 – Intro to Break Dancing. 1:30pm-3pm. Webber Park Library. Learn the history of breaking and the five basic elements of the dance: toprock, go-downs, footwork, power moves and freezes. Add your unique flair and create your own combinations of moves. Sponsor: MELSA (Metropolitan Library Service Agency). Collaborator: COMPAS. Teens.

7/13 – Explore Nature! 1pm-3pm, 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.

7/20 – Teen Geekery Club. 1pm-2:30pm, 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.

7/25 – North United Methodist Church will have its Annual Ice Cream Social, 5pm - 7:30pm. We will have ice cream treats (sundaes, floats and homemade ice cream sandwiches) as well as hot dogs available for a small fee. It will be held in the church yard.
If it rains, plan to come anyways as the social will be moved into the church basement.


Register now for Summer Camp Capri. Summer Camp Capri is the perfect place for middle school students to explore the wonderful world of the arts. Students’ days are filled with a rich variety of creative activities from 9am – 4pm, Monday through Friday, July 8-Aug. 9 at PCY (2210 Oliver Ave N). This is a free program offered to scholars who’ve just completed grades 5 – 8. Participation is limited to 25 students – so register now at www.thecapritheater.org or contact Summer Camp Capri Company manager Asha Belk, abelk@pcyc-mlps.org or 612-643-2052. A waiting list will be formed after we’ve reached capacity.

The Capri Theater has temporarily closed. The old theater seats are being removed, and every nook and cranny of the building is being emptied in anticipation of a June construction start on the theater’s renovation and expansion. While the theater is closed, Capri programming will continue at alternate Northside locations. See website for details.

The Minnesota Historical Society is pleased to announce that for the summer, all of its historic sites and museums will participate in Blue Star Museums, a national program that provides free admission to active-duty military personnel and their families. Active military ID holders and up to five accompanying family members will receive free admission at all MNHS historic sites and museums—from Split Rock Lighthouse and Historic Fort Snelling to the Minnesota History Center and Mill City Museum—during summer 2019.

EDUCATION

8/13 – The next Minneapolis Public School Board Business Meeting will be held on Aug. 13, beginning at 5:30pm at the Davis Center, 1250 W Broadway Ave.

8/27 – The next Minneapolis Public School Board Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on Aug. 27, 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

North Minneapolis Schools need 38 literacy math tutors for the 2019-2020 school year according to Minnesota Reading Corps and Minnesota Math Corps. Anyone interested is encouraged to apply now at readingandmath.org or by calling 866-859-2825. Tutors will begin in Aug. 2019.

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 or contact Volunteer Coordinator Caitlin Dougherty at 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 Minneapolis so parents can find schools that are the best fit for their kids.

HOUSING

The City Council approved a Renter-First Housing Policy — a framework that affirms the City’s commitment to advancing renter protections and developing new tools to support affordability and stability in rental housing. The implementation of the Renter-First Housing Policy will include both early intervention and safety-net strategies. Highlights include strengthening enforcement measures to ensure repair issues are addressed quickly while minimizing negative impacts on the renter; targeting inspections efforts toward properties in disrepair or with a high volume of renter complaints; and creating financial opportunities for property owners to maintain housing conditions and affordable housing without increasing rents.

Starting over the next few years, homeowners and renters will be able to learn energy information about a Minneapolis home or apartment before they sign on the dotted line. 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.

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.

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BE AWARE

For planting season, the City urges all Minneapolis gardeners, landscapers and farmers to protect pollinators. That means avoiding pesticides that poison bees, butterflies and other pollinators both by avoiding applying pesticides and avoiding buying plants that were already treated. Protecting pollinators also means landscaping or gardening with the kinds of plants that nourish pollinators. Pollinator populations are in sharp decline because of an ongoing loss of plants that feed and shelter them combined with a large-scale expansion of pesticide use by homeowners, landscapers, property managers and farmers. Neonicotinoids and other systemic pesticides have been shown to kill and weaken bees and other pollinators. One-third of the food and drink produced in the U.S. depends on bees, butterflies and other pollinators. We need healthy pollinators for healthy communities in Minneapolis, a healthy ecosystem and a healthy food supply. Find more resources and information about how to protect pollinators here: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/environment/bees.

Homegrown Minneapolis invites community members to participate in any or all upcoming meetings or weigh in online to help develop a food policy action plan. City staff intend for the plan to guide the City toward a more equitable, climate resilient, just and sustainable local food system and local food economy. Access to healthy and local food is important for the health of people who eat it, for the local communities it helps support and for protecting the climate. For more information on upcoming topics,
Minneapolis neighborhoods safe and livable. Outdoor recreational fires are permitted between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. Keep fire small: less than three feet in diameter and two feet high. Postpone a fire when Minneapolis is under an air pollution advisory. Fires release fine particles that contribute to air pollution and are implicated in health problems including strokes, heart attacks and asthma. Sign up for air quality alerts at [http://mn.enviroflash.info](http://mn.enviroflash.info). Burn only untreated, unpainted, dry wood. Never burn cardboard boxes, trash or debris, because the smoke can be toxic. [www.minneapolismn.gov/environment/air/airquality](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/environment/air/airquality). Fire must be at least 25 feet away from a structure or combustible material and in a fire ring or pit with edges more than six inches high. Have a hose or fire extinguisher present. Postpone the fire when the wind exceeds 10 mph. Fire must be constantly attended by someone 18 years or older and completely out before being abandoned. Illegal open burning or recreational fires could result in fines that start at $200.

The Upper Harbor Terminal Concept Plan (approved March 1, 2019) will serve as the starting point for the next phase of planning; creating the more detailed Coordinated Plan. The City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) staff and the master development team are now preparing to launch this next phase of planning. To ensure an inclusive planning process that includes input from a diverse set of community stakeholders, the City and MPRB are establishing community committees. The City and provides a roadmap to improve transparency, accountability and accessibility. The report is a point-in-time summary of where the City of Minneapolis stands with respect to data governance and management, including the way data now informs policy decisions by City leaders and how accessible and understandable that data is. The report also presents a roadmap to making the City more data-driven in operations and services, and looks at how data use is evolving into the future. The 2018 State of Data Report is available on the City’s website.

The City Council has approved the City’s vision, mission and values as part of the Strategic and Racial Equity Action planning process — a framework that will set the direction for the future of the City and ensure the implementation of racial equity goals. The Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan is a four-year plan that will embed racial equity principles into all aspects of the City’s work, aligning work from City leadership to departments and defining goals at all planning levels that can be objectively measured and inform resource decisions. The Council is expected to vote on a final version of the plan in June. The City’s vision adopted by the Council reads as follows: “Minneapolis is an intentionally compassionate city where each of us can reach our full potential while caring for one another, eliminating racial disparities, improving our environment and promoting social well-being. We lead in innovative and creative ways, focused not only on our present needs, but also the success of future generations.” The adoption of the vision, mission and values follows the approval of eight City goals earlier this year. These goals were developed during sessions last year st owed by Mayor Jacob Frey, Council President Lisa Bender, and Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins with City leaders and the Racial Equity Community Advisory Committee. The goals were also informed by community engagement from the Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Minneapolis 2040’s first goal is to eliminate disparities and a targeted number of policy areas from the plan have been identified as policy priorities for the Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan.

The City Council received the City’s first-ever State of Data report: a document that outlines the current way data is managed by the City and provides a roadmap to improve transparency, accountability and accessibility. The report is a point-in-time summary of where the City of Minneapolis stands with respect to data governance and management, including the way data now informs policy decisions by City leaders and how accessible and understandable that data is. The report also presents a roadmap to making the City more data-driven in operations and services, and looks at how data use is evolving into the future. The 2018 State of Data Report is available on the City’s website.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is excited to announce “Parks for All,” a new comprehensive planning process that will set its priorities and policy direction for the next decade. Parks for All will engage Minneapolis residents and park users, along with MPRB staff and commissioners, over the next two years to shape the future direction of Minneapolis’ park and recreation system. Visit [http://www.minneapolisparks.org/parksforall](http://www.minneapolisparks.org/parksforall) for more information.

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. For more information about natural gas safety, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/BeSafe](http://www.CenterPointEnergy.com/BeSafe) or call 612-372-4727 or 1-800-245-3737.

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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. Find more information at [www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/sewers/fats-oils-grease](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/sewers/fats-oils-grease).

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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.
A Mother’s Love restores safety from the ground up

By Kenzie O'Keefe Editor | David Pierini Photographer

Since the weather has warmed and violence has heated up, a small group of mothers, brothers, and people who care have been hitting the streets trying to keep the peace. Outside North High, on W Broadway Ave., and on Hennepin Ave. downtown, they connect, they deescalate, and they offer real help—food, toiletries, prayers, and occasionally even rent money.

The members of the "A Mother’s Love Initiative," as the group calls themselves, are committed to handling and healing of some of the city’s most vulnerable people, in its most violent places. Often, they’re more effective than the police at managing crisis and restoring order.

They relate to the most terrible and transformative traumas people experience in Minneapolis—and they are uniquely positioned to help because of it. "We have that walk to talk," said Cynthia Johnson, one member of the group.

They have kids with Master’s degrees, and kids who have been locked up. They have co-parented from prison. They have been raped, committed crimes, and been addicted. They’ve lost their loved ones to gun violence. They’ve been resilient, they’ve been homeless, and they’ve felt hopeless.

This month, the group’s founder Lisa Clemons and a few of her team members—Alfred Flowers Jr. (AJ), Nona Champion, Jamar Nelson, Cynthia Johnson, and Anthoni McMorris spoke to North News about meeting people where they’re at, partnering with the police, and how to actually end gun violence.
Tell us about your group. How do you explain it to people who meet you for the first time? Lisa Clemons: A Mother’s Love was started by a diverse group of African American women to address issues that surrounded the single mother. You hear about the kids who are in trouble coming from single parent homes, predominately mothers. We felt like the mother, the black mother especially, was being ignored in the equation. We work to make sure we are reaching African American mothers and fathers, and that we were reaching our African American boys and daughters too.

The people you have to reach are the ones who are not coming to you.

Lisa Clemons

What do your efforts look like, week to week?
Lisa: We do outreach. We bring resources to people who are not coming to [nonprofits]. We respond to crime scenes to assist in helping those who are traumatized. We follow up with crime victims. Once the shooting is over that doesn’t mean the trauma is over. We make sure families’ needs are met.
Nona Champion: We go to the hot spots to make sure the kids are safe, and that they don’t be fighting. If they’re fighting, we try to break it up before the cops come. We go out there, introduce ourselves, and build relationships. We go downtown and work with people who are homeless. If they need food, we give them food. If they need things for hygiene, we give them that. If they need prayer, we pray with them. Whatever they need, we try to meet their needs. We try to get kids home at a certain time. We see a lot of mothers downtown with their kids, and we try to let them know: this is not the right place to be with your kids at midnight. Some of them have nowhere to go, so they hang out downtown or ride the bus all night.

Cynthia Johnson: We also try to do events. Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas. Giving baskets. Going to the neighborhoods, just meeting the neighborhood people. Explaining who we are, what we represent, trying to show them that people care. A lot of people don’t think people care anymore. We are bringing caring and compassion back to the streets.

Jamar Nelson: We decided to get serious about addressing the violence because no one else is talking about it. We do a disservice in this community by not talking about this as black people. Without addressing the violence, how can you address anything else? The summertime is finna get hot. We had nine shootings in a 48-hour-span two weeks ago.

Alfred Flowers Jr. (AJ): It also means meeting individuals before they’re in a negative encounter. We all have an ability to speak to the kids, so we can come to them no matter what situation they’re in. If they are in their positive mode, that’s the way I want to catch them. We try to build a relationship with kids not just when they’re doing something wrong. I think that’s one of the big differences with us. A lot of groups only encounter these kids when they’re in a negative situation. We try to be a different type of mentor to these kids. We try to show them love.

Jamar: We are total de-escalation. We know a lot of these kids, and even if we don’t, they’re a part of our community, so we’re not afraid to address them. Sometimes you gotta be like mama and wag your finger in their face. If we’re killing each other, how do we be proud of each other as a community if we’re ending the lives of each other? We’ve got to seriously address gun violence. We may not eradicate it, but we have to address it.

What do you believe needs to be done to truly address it?
Lisa: One of the greatest initiatives that we have done was going door to door in the Folwell community, listening to those voices that otherwise aren’t heard. It gave an opportunity to talk to the people who you don’t see down in the City Hall chambers or aren’t on Facebook all the time but they do have concerns about what’s happening in their communities. I think door knocking in a community is one of the biggest gifts you can give a community. You give them a voice.

What did you hear when you talked to people in Folwell? Cynthia: One man said he had been staying in the community for 22 years and the worst encounters he’s had were in the last several years. He said [people] stop, park, throw trash in front of his house, and play loud music. When you come out to address people and simply speak to them, they turn the conversation into something totally different. It escalates into conflict, so they get scared to speak or say something. They don’t want to call the police because then when the police come, that makes them a target. Another woman I spoke with, she said the bullets have come through her window. She thought one of her babies was going to get hit. She said that she’s scared,
We're trying to give kids back their self esteem, to teach them how to respect and treat people.

Nona Champion

you have great people, great community. There are a lot of things over here to come out and see. But it's the part of being scared in your own neighborhood. The mothers and fathers are scared to come out and speak to their children. Grandparents aren't being respected anymore. Children are doing what they want to do. People are working two jobs to keep their house maintained. They can't see what their children are doing because they're gone all day. The children are the most important element in life right now, and they've lost their way. No discipline, no structure, no respect, no loyalty, no honesty. They're living with lies. They're screaming and they're out here in the streets and they're destroying the neighborhoods.

Lisa: The community members I'm talking about are diverse. This is not just white people. This is a diverse, beautiful community, and a lot of people have some things to say and they have not been afforded the arena, or the safe space, to say them.

Nona: Back when we were raised up, it took a village to raise a child. Back in the day, if our neighbors saw us doing something disrespectful, they would whoop our butt and take us home and tell our mama. We're trying to give kids back their self-esteem—to teach them how to respect and treat people. You can't love nobody else if you don't love yourself.

How do you do that?

Nona: If we see kids, I might go up to them and say how are you doing? You look beautiful. How was your day today? Their mama might not ask because she's at work. What do you want to do in life? Can we help you get a job this summer? We build a relationship.

Lisa: For about three weeks, we gave out flyers for the job fair downtown. We gave out flyers for warrant forgiveness day. We'll go over to NorthPoint and take their supplies and resources and bring them out to the community.

Jamar: We try to partner with everybody. You can't do it all by yourself.

Aj: When you build positive relationships with the kids, you can almost do more than a police officer. If I see my little cousin downtown I say “it's time for you to go home,” they are going to go home. It's real big to have these relationships. We look at kids and because of our own background we say “there's something more to you.” We don't judge you for where you're at, because we've all had problems before.

Lisa: I'm going to thank the police. When we are downtown, if we got it, they do not interfere in any way. Our goal is to deescalate it and keep them out the back of a squad car if we can. 9 times out of 10, we've been very successful. Inspector Frizell makes sure his team knows that if a Mother's Love got it, stand down, they got it. They have been supportive of us doing the work.

What motivates you all to do this work day in and day out?

Aj: The group coming up behind me. I gotta do my part to make sure they have that light. When I had kids, that's what changed my life.

Cynthia: I believe we should pay it back no matter what. It doesn't matter if you got money in your pocket, give. God gave to all of us. He gave everybody life. He didn't take nothing from no one. That's the most important blessing we can have in our life.

Lisa: I think it's time for the city and everyone else to acknowledge African American single mothers and to understand that we are doing the very best with very little. They cannot fix our children for us. If you save the mother, you save the child. If you save the father you save the family. If you save the family you save the community. That's what we believe in. A lot of the toughest kids downtown, when you talk to them, they will break down and cry. They are being tough because they don't want people messing with them.

What do you want people to know about you?

Lisa: The people you have to reach are the ones who are not coming to you. As black women, to let you in, to tell you we're struggling, that's just not who we are. If you bring it to me, I'll take the help. I'll tell you what I need. Bring it to me without letting everyone know my business. There's a stigma on us that attaches like stench: “you're having all them babies just to get on welfare, you're a bad parent, your kids are failing, your son is laying in the street dead because you're a bad parent.” That's not the truth.

Jamar: We know that poverty and crime sometimes go hand in hand, but as a community, we gotta stop using it as a built-in excuse as to why we're rapidly running around killing each other. We can't accept that.

Th bomb evacuees can't return because they're not ready, they're not trained. The bombs are live now. You have to work with the police department. You can't do it all by yourself.

The community is important. The community is what we're built on. The police are the last line of defense.

Anthony's story

Anthony McMorris is one of the newest members of A Mother's Love and an aspiring writer. We invited him to reflect on his experience with the organization here. He plans to continue writing for North News in the coming months.

Growing up on Chicago's Eastside, I was exposed to a lot. As a child, I witnessed drug abuse, crime and violence, prostitution and gang activity. I grew up in a broken home. My father and mother were separated for as long as I could remember. With five siblings living under one roof, it was very difficult for my mother to support all of us. She depended on the state for support. And as tough as it was for my mother, she always remained strong, and so did we. Unfortunately, she passed away in 2006 from drug and health-related issues.

After that tragic situation, I began to turn to the streets where I felt loved. At that point in my life, I was a part of the many problems in the Black community. I started committing crimes at the age of 15: theft of property and motor vehicles, underage consumption, and drug possession. This type of behavior went on for years because I didn't know how to handle the amount of trauma, depression, pain, hurt and neglect I experienced. I was dealing with my personal issues in the wrong way.

It was only when I was ready to make a change, and opened my heart to outside support that Lisa Clemons, president of A Mother's Love, presented me with an opportunity that could change my life: doing outreach work on the Northside with A Mother's Love. That's where I am today—engaging with the people in the North Minneapolis community has shown me how little love the people receive. I know with love, care, concern, and outside support, they would be able to see the same potential within themselves that I now see in me. I plan on continuing my journey as a community activist and outreach worker for as long as my time on earth is allotted.
FLOW Northside Arts Crawl

FLOW is a celebration of the arts in North Minneapolis. Since 2006, FLOW has become both a community celebration and the premier art event in North Minneapolis.

This year we celebrate the beauty and brilliance of our community with artistic expressions of COLLECTIVE JOY.

July 25, 26, & 27, 2019    Thursday-Saturday    flownorthside.org

Artwork by Melodee Strong

Brought to you by: