To help voters make informed choices this election season, Pillsbury United Communities, Pollen, and Sahan Journal asked Minneapolitans what they wanted to learn about the people on their ballots. The result is a voter guide created by the community, for the community.

There could be something new about this moment.
Letter from the Editor Harry Colbert, Jr.

CORRECTION: Last month’s (Aug. 27) HBCU band camp cover story confused the identities of the trombone and trumpet players. Dr. Anthony Jacobs is the trombone player and Amir Webster plays trumpet. North News already regrets the error.

Election

As you can see, we are dedicating much of this edition to the upcoming Nov. 2 general election. Yes, along with our parent organization, Pilotry United Communities, partnered with Pollen Midwest to provide a comprehensive guide to the candidates running for mayor, city council, wards 4 and 5 and Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board. We also provide explanations to the four ballot questions facing Minneapolis voters.

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EA

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LB

VALID 10/20 - 11/5

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• Supporting North Minneapolis farmers and local entrepreneurs;
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• Investing in your community.

Shop with us and follow us on Facebook for other special offers like 50% off produce every Wednesday.
Program helps Hennepin homeowners avoid foreclosure

Up to $35,000 available for individual homeowners

Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis recently announced a partnership with Minnesota Homeownership Center to create and administer the Hennepin Homeownership Preservation Program (HHPP). HHPP is promoting foreclosure prevention to Hennepin County homeowners, along with limited financial assistance under certain circumstances. Once eligibility is confirmed, applicants will be referred to a foreclosure prevention advisor with a Minnesota Homeownership Center network partner. These organizations include Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES), LSS Financial Counseling, Neighborhood Development Alliance, NeighborWorks Home Partners, PRG Inc. and Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity. HHPP is providing limited financial assistance if an individual is experiencing a housing emergency, defined as being unable to pay a bill that may affect their ability to live in the home, can self-certify they have experienced COVID-related financial loss such as loss of income, increased health care costs or additional costs associated with working from home, owns an owner-occupied property in Hennepin County, can self-certify they had a gross annual income of $150,000 or below at the time of a missed payment, must be able to demonstrate ability to pay housing expenses moving forward and must participate in foreclosure prevention advising via the Minnesota Homeownership Center and its partners.

Past due bills eligible for potential financial relief include the following, with due dates between Jan. 21, 2020 and fifteen days after initial HHPP intake. The maximum amount available to any household through HHPP is $35,000. Payments will be made directly to the entity owed the funds.

For more information on the program and how to apply, visit www.Hennepin-HPP.com or call (651) 236-8952.

VOTE SHEILA NEZHAD
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Safe & stable housing for all
Investing the most in our youth

sheilaforthepeople.com

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• Depression
• Anxiety
• Grief & loss
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• Fear and obsession
• Parenting and relationships

We provide a wide range of services for ages 6 & up including: individual and family therapy, support groups, teen therapy, chemical health support & psychiatric care

Call 612-543-2500 to get started...

Do you need help paying bills or rental assistance?

Call 612-234-1701 or 612-302-3505 for help applying.

If you are experiencing a financial hardship because of the pandemic, RentHelpMN may just be your answer.

COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance is available to all Minnesotans who qualify.

WE CARE ABOUT GETTING YOU THE HELP YOU NEED, WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST.

It is the policy of Minnesota Housing to affirmatively further fair housing in all its programs so that individuals of similar income levels have equal access to Minnesota Housing programs, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, familial status, gender identity or sexual orientation.
JXTA breaks ground on new headquarters

By David Marini, Staff Reporter

The wheels were starting to crumble at Juxtaposition Arts a few years back and as important as the art and design organization was to the young North Minneapolis art community, it employed and developed, the city inspectors led art and design organization in Minnesota. With a pitched in $5,000.

By David Marini, Staff Reporter

The sho vels went into the ground just $400,000 shy. JXTA on Sept. 17 led a joyous groundbreaking ceremony on a new, long-lasting building?

The decision to appeal to the public four years ago paid off. The Cummings on Sept. 17 led a joyous ground-breaking ceremony on a $14 million headquarters and campus upgrade.

The shevets went into the ground just $400,000 shy. JXTA leaders expressed confidence they would raise the rest and also announced the start of a legacy campaign to raise $5 million to expand programming. A week prior to the event, Bank of America gave JXTA $1 million. Before the two hour event ended, attendees had pitched in $5,000.

Juxtaposition Arts founder Roger and Deanna Cummings celebrate after breaking ground on a new headquarters. Photo by David Marini

A week prior to the event, Bank of America gave JXTA $1 million. Before the two hour event ended, attendees had pitched in $5,000.

Juxtaposition Arts founder Roger and Deanna Cummings celebrate after breaking ground on a new headquarters. Photo by David Marini

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The decision to appeal to the public four years ago paid off. The Cummings on Sept. 17 led a joyous groundbreaking ceremony on a new, long-lasting building?
Shall the Minneapolis City Charter be amended to remove the Police Department and replace it with a Department of Public Safety that em- ploys an independent public health approach to the delivery of func- tions by the Department of Public Safety, with those specific functions as determined by the Mayor and City Council by ordinance; which will not be subject to exclusive mayoral power over its establishment, administration, and management, and could include licensed peace officers (police officers); if necessary, to fulfill its responsibilities for public health and safety, with the amendments being briefly described in the explanatory note below, which is made a part of this ballot?

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This ballot question will determine key structural elements of the city's public safety and policing system. It is on the ballot due to a citizen-led petition. Currently, the city charter:

- Gives the mayor complete control over the police department.
- Says a “police chief” must lead a department of licensed “peace officers.”
- Requires the city to fund a police force of at least 10,000 employees per resident. The city council may impose an additional 3% property tax to fund this requirement.
- Allows the “police” to be housed within either the fire department or the newly established department of public safety.

If a majority of voters vote “yes” on this question:

- The “police department” will be replaced by a “department of public safety” that employs licensed peace officers (police officers).
- The “police department” will be replaced by a “department of public safety.”
- The mayor can appoint a police chief.

If a majority of voters vote “no” on this question:

- The police department will remain.
- The police department will be replaced by a department of public safety.
- The mayor cannot appoint a police chief.

EXPLANATION

This amendment would:

- Authorize the City Council to enact rent control Ordinance.
- Sets a term start date for police chiefs.
- Authorize the City Council to enact rent control Ordinance.
- Allows “fire police” to be housed within either the fire department or the newly established department of public safety.
- The police chief would no longer be a city department head.
- The “police department” will be replaced by a “department of public safety” unless ballot question 1 passes.
- The department of public safety would operate like any other department and it will likely inform a local Rent Stabilization Study in 2020 and it will likely inform a local Rent Stabilization Study in 2020 and it will likely inform a local Rent Stabilization Study in 2020.
This may well be a turning point, but what comes next isn’t just about policy. It’s about imagination, vision, and courage. Can we imagine a Minneapolis where we all feel safe? A city where everyone is housed, and everyone has enough to not just survive, but thrive? Can we imagine a Minneapolis that offers help to those who need it, and where justice is the foundation, not just an aspiration? Minneapolis is us. We have the tools to make that imagination a reality in our city. Elections are one of them.

We’ve got big choices ahead of us in Minneapolis. Our city is at the center of a national conversation on public safety after the murder of George Floyd, putting that issue — alongside housing, the economy, racial disparity, and climate change — at the forefront of our minds.

To help voters make informed choices this election season, Pollen worked with Sahan Journal and Pillsbury United Communities to ask Minneapolitans what they wanted to learn about the people on their ballots. We used their responses to create the questions we sent to each candidate.

The result is a voter guide created by the community, for the community. It goes deep on the issues from a perspective that centers voices too often ignored in political spaces: Black, immigrant, working class, Indigenous, members of the broader African and Asian diasporas, and others.

There could be something new about this moment. A desire for change is reaching further than before. New faces are joining our city’s colorful palette of folks who have been working for generations to change a broken status quo.

Vote on Tuesday, November 2, 2021
Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Find your polling place at pollfinder.co/usa. You can also vote by mail, or vote early in-person starting September 17. More information at vote.mn.gov.

Pillsbury United Communities
Pillsbury United Communities creates enduring change toward a just society. Built with and for the people we serve, our united system of programs, neighborhood centers, and social enterprises empowers individuals and families across the region to own their future on their own terms.

Sahan Journal
Sahan Journal is the only independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit digital newsroom fully dedicated to providing authentic news reporting for and about immigrants and communities of color in Minnesota. We aim to chronicle the struggles, successes, and transformations of Minnesota’s immigrants and communities of color, whose stories are often overlooked by traditional news organizations.

Contributors
Pillsbury United Communities
Sahan Journal
Pollen Midwest

Get to know the candidates.

Pollen Midwest
Pollen is a media arts organization that fosters empathy, encourages connection across difference, and inspires meaningful action by sharing stories of individuals who want to change our collective story for the better. Through storytelling, art, and connection, Pollen works to advance social change movements by challenging and changing harmful and dominant narratives—demonstrating the power of narrative change through all of the media we create, events we host, and connections we grow.

Design by Pollen Midwest; Art and Illustration by Allegra Lockstadt, Emma Eubanks, Leslie Bablow, Luis Fitch, Ricardo Lvora Morales, Terresa Moses; Photography by Ben Hovland, Ryan Stopera and Jaida Grey Eagle
Phillipe Cunningham

Public Safety

How will you keep young Black and brown kids safe — those who are simultaneously the most at risk from gun violence but also most at risk during interactions with the police? What do you believe are best practices for solving these issues in tandem, and how will you involve the communities most affected in problem solving and determining next steps?

Our public safety challenges today that are largely carried on the shoulders of our kids are the result of the racial disparities showing that Black folks, in particular, in our city have been left behind across nearly every aspect of our lives. It is no coincidence that over 80% of gun violence victims in our city are Black. Police violence has similar numbers. Yes, we need short-term solutions and to hold people accountable who cause harm in our community, but we cannot lose sight of the entire context. If we truly put the racial disparities behind us that have plagued our community for generations, then we will achieve sustainable peace. We are being forced by the status quo into a false choice – either we accept police violence if we want to stop community violence or we accept community violence if we want to stop police violence. I speak to this issue further in the next question.

For us to keep young Black and brown kids safe, we need to look to positive youth development as a framework for decision-making in both policies and investments. An example of this in practice is a pilot out of school time programming that focuses on social-emotional learning, building positive relationships among peers and with adults, and increasing kids’ sense of competence and mastery of skills. This is work I have led like investing $1M in youth development programming from the American Rescue Plan federal funding. Ideally, those funds will be allocated through some sort of participatory budgeting process led by young people with the Minneapolis Youth Congress.

People of color in Minneapolis are killed or otherwise harmed by law enforcement at disproportionately high rates, despite many attempts at reform over several election cycles. How do you intend to reshape a policing system that has been resistant to change, and slow to show meaningful strides toward equitable community outcomes?

It is important to first clearly state that Councilmembers cannot truly shape our policing system as it currently exists in the City Charter, which is why I support the Yes4Mpls Public Safety Charter Amendment to create a Department of Public Safety. Currently, only the Mayor can make substantive changes to police policies and operations. That being said, when I ran for the first time in 2017, I ran on a platform of building out a comprehensive system of public safety built on the public health approach. This is the work I have been relentlessly focused on this entire term. Below is my framework for reshaping our public safety system to keep ALL of us safe.

1. Build out alternative responses to certain types of 911 calls (e.g. mental health crises, drug overdoses, homelessness response, etc.)
3. Transform rather than just “reform” the police. This specifically looks like allocating our police resources to more effective, collaborative strategies like problem-oriented policing and focused deterrence, in partnership with the Office of Violence Prevention.
4. Create a reentry support network to help our neighbors coming home from incarceration be set up to succeed in the face of legal, permanent disenfranchisement due to their records.
5. Develop common sense public safety governance structures that increase transparency and accountability while also improving overall services provided.

What are your stances on memorialising public spaces when our community is grieving, and/or demanding action through constitutionally-protected protests? What policies would you put in place or what organizations would you engage to ensure residents can do these things safely?
Thinking about this specifically in terms of North Minneapolis, a part of taking up public space to demand action is to disrupt public corridors. This young man almost died as a result of systemic and community violence. And the police are storming the house we are gathering in North Minneapolis when I was a young girl. There were a bunch of kids and a few adults. One minute, the kids were just playing. The next minute, the police were there. The police and the police are storming the house we were in. They opted all of our hands behind our backs – including my three-year-old twin cousins. They made us down on the floor, then they threw us into the back of a school bus. As I’m lying there, already scared out of my mind, one of the officers says: “We will kill them all and no one would care.”

I believe memorializing public spaces is a crucial constitutionally-protected protest. When I am elected, I will support expanding the funding of the Office of Violence Prevention in the Minneapolis US Strategic Outreach initiative, where trusted community members work together on neighborhood teams to serve as outreach workers. They use non-physical conflict resolution, mediation, interruption techniques to de-escalate conflict, and then connect community members with services that can assist with housing, medical and mental health support, and employment. I will also support expanding the use of the Mental Health Co-Responder Unit which deploys mental health professionals to respond to police calls involving individuals who are or may be experiencing a mental health crisis. But policy change and training alone will not accomplish a culture change which is so essential in seeing justice for LGBTQ, Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. We need the ability to get the wrong officers out, which means anything from changing the police union contract to enhancing our disciplinary process and reforming the problematic arbitration system. I will work directly with leaders in community and the city enterprise as well as the Minneapolis Police Department and the Mayor. Leaders include representatives from the Lake Street Coalition, West Broadway Business and Area Coalition, Latino Economic Development Center, African American Leadership Forum, Black Women’s Wealth Alliance, Hiring American Partnership, Minnesota Trans Health Coalition, Native American Community Development Institute, and many other groups.

What are your stances on memorializing public spaces when our community is grieving, and/or demanding action through constitutionally-protected protests? What policies would you support in place or what organizations would you engage to ensure residents can do these things safely?
Housing

Rent assistance from the federal government has helped keep people in their homes through the pandemic. This funding is not permanent, however, and inability to pay is the leading cause of evictions. What is your stance on more permanent rental assistance, rent stabilization, and/or rent control measures in Minneapolis?

In terms of rent control measures, I will use a data-driven approach to evaluate any policies that are brought forward. Gentrification results in cultural loss for communities and major economic impacts for those priced out of their longtime neighborhoods. As our city grows, what plans do you have to combat gentrification and increase the amount of affordable housing available in Minneapolis?

I believe that our obligation is to retain residents of all backgrounds, and especially BIPOC and new American neighbors. I support policies that retain affordable housing and funding towards homeownership among BIPOC communities. Homeownership prevents displacement and builds intergenerational wealth. That’s why I support policies like down payment assistance that allow longtime community members to purchase homes, remain in their neighborhoods, and build wealth. I will also support the 2040 Comprehensive Plan which brings forward a diversity of housing options and therefore a socioeconomic diversity of people in every neighborhood.

We also must acknowledge that rent control has failed in every city it’s been tried in. In fact, more often than not, it causes average rent prices to rise by disincentivizing construction of new units. Why members of our City Council would advocate a policy that housing experts categorically denounce is beyond me. As legislative leader, we must listen to data. That’s what I’ll do when I’m elected.

In the last few years, Minneapolis has experienced a spike in encampments of unhoused people on public land—a high percentage of whom are Black and/or Indigenous. Many of our unhoused neighbors see this as their best housing option over shelters (for reasons of personal safety, pet ownership, or having to abandon property). What will you do to protect these neighbors and connect them with safe and stable housing?

Our unhoused and unsheltered neighbors must be treated with dignity and respect. Presently, a gap exists between people experiencing homelessness and the deeply affordable housing in our city. Those who Minneapolis is not meeting the needs of are forced to move from place to place searching for housing. This is disruptive to their lives, their children’s education, their community relationships, and their ability to retain employment. As a city council member, I will support increasing the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to provide gap financing for the production and preservation of affordable housing for families earning less than 50% of AMI. I will also continue to support policy initiatives like Stable Schools Stable Homes and the 4D Program. Furthermore, our city needs more homeless shelters, including culturally-sensitive and specific shelters for our BIPOC communities. This along with collaboration with community organizations will help decrease Minneapolis’ unhoused individuals.

Leslie Davis

DID NOT RESPOND
Jeremiah Ellison

Public Safety

How will you keep young Black and brown kids safe — those who are simultaneously the most at risk from gun violence but also most at risk during interactions with the police? What do you believe are best practices for solving these issues in tandem, and how will you involve the communities most affected in problem solving and determining next steps?

My top priority as a public servant and neighbor is to see that my community make it home safe at the end of the day. This starts with focusing on peoples’ needs—like housing and employment stability—but there are also the day-to-day emergencies that must be addressed, and we have an obligation to ensure that that system works for everyone.

We need a system of emergency response that understands what kinds of emergencies the police are the best response to, and what emergencies need a new type of response—one that goes beyond the police-only model that produced George Floyd, Jamar Clark, Terence Franklin, and the list goes on.

We need to define the scope of the police, a scope that has broadened by the decade, to the point that nearly every 911 call that isn’t a fire or physical medical emergency gets a police response whether the situation truly calls for it or not.

The public health approach of the Office of Violence Prevention needs more investment—the aim is to target and treat cycles of violence before they get fully started.

Delegating traffic enforcement, homelessness response, and mental health emergencies to services more equipped to de-escalate, mitigate harm and create safety is a simple, easy, and necessary start to keeping people safe in our communities.

Those most affected by violence deserve to be at the helm of those conversations. There won’t always be agreement, but people should be given access to the truth and not fear-mongered into not asking hard questions or imagining a more just world.

People of color in Minneapolis are killed or otherwise harmed by law enforcement at disproportionately high rates, despite many attempts at reform over several election cycles. How do you intend to reshape a policing system that has been resistant to change, and slow to show meaningful strides toward equitable community outcomes?

I believe we need a complete rethinking of how we keep each other safe in Minneapolis—this means replacing MPD with a new Department of Public Safety, one that decenters police as the sole means of creating a safe community, and incorporates other forms of emergency response into its model of public safety. Our modern reform discussion has its roots in the 1919 race massacres in Chicago—known as Red Summer—and hasn’t really advanced in the subsequent 100+ years.

Often, going beyond the police-only model has been done in small bursts. We’ve seen Violence Prevention style programs be as or more effective in reducing violence in communities, only for them to disappear once violence goes down. These initiatives should grow, and they should become a regular part of how we keep people safe.

We should be reducing the role that police play in punitively regulating behavior that is generally not violent (such as chemical dependency, to give one example) and requires a different approach to actually solve the problem being faced.

What are your stances on memorializing public spaces when our community is grieving, and/or demanding action through constitutionally-protected protests? What policies would you put in place or what organizations would you engage to ensure residents can do these things safely?

I believe communities should be allowed to lead when it comes to memorializing spaces. Protocols for conversation/negotiation with communities seem long overdue. When a tragedy strikes an entire neighborhood (or the entire city), residents deserve to be engaged in good faith, not just when there is fearful of backlash or outrage. Residents that do show outrage should have a platform, and not be treated with hostility or annoyance from the City.

Ward 5 candidates for City Council.

pollenmidwest.org/mplsisus

Jeremiahforward5.com

JeremiahForward5.com
Housing

Rental assistance from the federal government has helped keep people in their homes through the pandemic. This funding is not permanent, however, and inability to pay is the leading cause of eviction. What is your stance on more permanent rental assistance, rent stabilization, and/or rent control measures in Minneapolis?

Tenant rights have been the defining pillar of my first term in office, and I will continue to advocate for and fight for the dignity and stability of renters.

I am proud to have co-authored the two Rent Stabilization charter amendments. I’m very happy to see them arise from the voters this November—I urge everyone to vote “yes” on Rent Stabilization. In my first year in office, I was told this policy was an impossibility by the state’s bar, and with the passage of this charter amendment, we will finally be able to draft and pass a substantive Rent Stabilization ordinance.

I researched and championed the City’s “right to return” preference policy, which will give preference for homeownership and rental properties to people displaced from the neighborhood for a list of defined circumstances.

I co-authored the City’s Renter Protection ordinance, which upped access to tenants through the regulation of screening criteria and by capping security deposits.

I created the Emergency Stabilization pilot program as a way to test the best ways for the City to ensure housing stability and potentially expand and promote access to homeownership.

Most recently, in addition to co-authoring the Rent Stabilization charter amendments, I’m co-authoring the city’s Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance, which will give tenants the first right to buy the property they live in when their landlord goes to sale it.

In the last few years, Minneapolis has experienced a spike in encampments and unhoused people on public land — a high percentage of whom are Black and/or Indigenous. Many of our unhoused neighbors see this as their best housing option over shelters (for reasons of personal safety, pet ownership, or having to abandon property). What will you do to protect these neighbors and connect them with safe and stable housing?

I am seeking to center the agency and safety of encampment residents in my approach. Encampments can be incredibly difficult spaces, and high satisfaction rates are often too often focused on by local governments; determined encampment populations are essentially punished by a lack of engagement from local governments; lack of engagement often leads to abuse within the encampment. It’s a predictable cycle that we can prevent by building more lower barrier shelters and increasing rental assistance and employment accessibility. Other things, like the creation of safe injection sites and cluster developments, will also be important steps for us to take in addressing this crisis.

Public Safety

How will you keep young Black and brown kids safe — those who are disproportionately the most at risk from gun violence but also at most risk during interactions with the police? What do you believe are best practices for solving these issues in tandem, and how will you involve the communities most affected in problem solving and determining the next steps?

In order to make sure that children are safe we have to first make sure they have the basic needs met: shelter, food, love, etc. So first, I would advocate for tactical MPD, MPS, and all organizations that provide programming, meals and activities to children to be expected to work together. No more silos. MPD & MPS should be working hand in hand. When schools are out (whether it be evenings, weekends, holidays or summer), the parks are open. MPS staff should be allowed to call on jobs available on our parks and offer stipends for coaching. Not every park has a Recreational Facility, but every park has children. We need to staff these parks so that children can have mentors that they recognize from their schools and can grab a lunch provided by the MPS food truck. Creating partnerships gives community members a stop shop to find out where and when there is programming for their children so that they don’t have to call around for hours. It also helps organizations get the word out when their programming budgets are already stretched.

The real way to address gun violence is something that is outside the authority of the city council and would take for our state and federal legislatures to regulate gun ownership and purchase.

However, as a city council representative and the relationships I have developed with state legislators, I will work to advocate for that since Ward 5 residents have a higher than average rate of gun violence. When purchasing ammunition online, you have to show up to a local store to pick it up. However, many guns that are in the hands of those who are committing violent acts, have purchased their guns legally or were able to access those guns legally by theft. When they want to buy ammunition online, they can order a box and have them sent directly to their home. No need to provide identification, no need for a permit, just the money needed to purchase.

[https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/crime/reports/2019/10/07/475538/bullet-control/]

People of color in Minneapolis are killed or otherwise harmed by law enforcement at disproportionately high rates, despite many attempts at reform over several election cycles. How do you intend to reshape a policing system that has been resistant to change, and slow to meaningfully strides toward equitable community outcomes?

I am someone who has always and continues to be employed by the Minneapolis Police Department was in deep reset need of reform. The Federation that represents Minneapolis Police Officers has represented and supported officers who have broken the law—representing and saving officers jobs, who have been repeatedly abusing their authority for years through a process called “arbitration” which has been operating off of precedent since 1972 when the Police Officers Federation earned collective bargaining rights and became a fully recognized union. Fifty percent of officers that are fired through arbitration get their job back because of precedent (letting one person get away with something because someone else did before). So I would support that the Minneapolis Police Department have written in their contract that any officer that is fired because of using force or found to be dishonest on a police report, is not allowed to appeal. They will not be allowed to serve as an officer in our city. Also, a common sense approach to making this possible would be to require officers to carry liability insurance (Cost must high risk professionals do). This way if they are unemployable, they cannot serve as an officer in our city. I also oppose the fact our lieutenants and inspectors, (ie supervisors) are represented by, and share the same union as their subordinates (those who are supervised). It is a major conflict of interest and only allows corruption at the top since all members do not want their bargaining powers to be compromised by disciplining another member (emb). I would also like to highlight the fact that officers do not able by the requirement that they have to take 12 hours off of it between shifts in order to rest and manage their mental health. “Off Duty Work,” which pays them a lot more than “On Duty” is not counted as work within those 12 hours (hhmm).

[Editorial Note: The original response exceeded our word count limit. Only the first 300 words are published here.]

Kristel Porter

NorthsideforKristel.org

September 24, 2021

NORTH NEWS

NORTH NEWS
What are your stances on memorializing public spaces when our community is grieving, and/or demanding action through constitutionally-protected protests? What policies would you put in place or what organizations would you engage to ensure residents can do these things safely?

Allowing people the right to protest and memorialize when they have lost a loved one is essential to the process of healing, and should be a right for everyone. Anything less would be undemocratic.

The only time that government should step in is when public health or safety risk to the community and allow them to lead their elected representatives to sit down with the community and address that one right away. Once again, I will not work without TOPA. We have to figure out a way to help the renters and not make it harder for the tenants.

Housing
Rental assistance from the federal government has helped keep people in their homes through the pandemic. This funding is not permanent, however, and disability to pay is the leading cause of evictions. What is your stance on more permanent rental assistance, rent stabilization, and/or rent control measures in Minneapolis?

This is a very complex question with layers so I will answer each one separately. The moratorium has been great for the renters who are able to get access to it or are civically engaged enough to know it exists. The most recent one (Zero Balance Project) has been even more beneficial because the landlords can take matters into their own hands and apply yet must wait on the renter to approve the online application. I know of landlords that have been waiting months for their tenants to go into their emails and approve for the funding to be released so their landlords mortgage and water bills can be paid. This is a major problem. I support the moratorium, and we need to figure out a way to help the renters get the funding needed to the landlord so that the landlord does not risk defaulting and losing the home that they are providing for rent.

If we want to make rental assistance permanent, this will need to come from federal funds which will be allocated by our state legislature, and decided on by our County Commissioners. Unless we are willing to create a TIF district to provide funding for rent assistance programs, energy efficiency and renewable energy updates and upgrades for blighted communities through our State legislature, which I would be in full support of. When it comes to the issue of Rent Control we will not work without TOPA. We have to address that one right away. Once again, I represent North Minneapolis where the rent only increases between 1-1.5% annually and where we have the lowest rents in the city. I have three friends in North Minneapolis who are Black and who own single family homes that they rent out. 2 out of 3 have put their homes up for sale because of the proposed Rent Control and 1 of them turned their home into a Air BNB.

Victor Martinez
DID NOT RESPOND

[Editorial Note: The original response exceeded our word count limit. Only the first 300 words are published here.]

Gentrification results in cultural loss for communities and major economic impacts for those priced out of their longtime neighborhoods. As our city grows, what plans do you have to combat gentrification and increase the amount of affordable housing available in Minneapolis?

The city needs to start getting a little more creative on this one. We could start by allowing the construction of tiny homes and allowing more creative ways to ease the financial burden of those who want to build wealth through land ownership. The housing market is ridiculous right now. Just a decade ago, I could purchase a home in my community for $50k, now you can’t find anything under $200k. The quickest way to creating generational wealth is through land ownership, so we cannot afford to continue placing affordable rentals as a higher priority than affordable ownership models. As I stated in the previous question, the city needs to start identifying vacant, boarded and abandoned properties. Then develop a partnership with a mix of neighborhood led Community Development Corporations, local developers, and renters to creatively place-make and develop high quality residential spaces that are desired and needed for that particular neighborhood.

Yet the only way we will be able to accomplish this, is for our representatives, local developers, community-driven renters, and lenders, to get more creative on financing affordable housing. Three years, it is way too long and way to complicated to organze all the hoops and hurdles needed to fund affordable housing projects. It makes many not want to do it, and leaves us with very few developers with big enough hearts to weather the storm.

We need to be serious about prioritizing Tax Increment Financing to develop affordable ownership and rentals on residentially zoned properties. We also need to be mindful about not building 100% residential and instead building mix-use residential on our commercially zoned corridors. 100% residential on commercially zoned properties, robs us of a major tax base which holds back the future funding needed to ensure the sustainability of our schools, parks, roads, and other public spaces. Also, we need to be mindful of how our community is changing along with its needs.

Our government massively pulled funding out of Mental Health in 1981 when President Reagan repealed Carter’s legislation with the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. This pushed the responsibility of patients dealing with mental health issues back to the states. That legislation created block grants for the states, but federal spending on mental illness declined drastically, now fast forward to today the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 10 percent of state prisoners have symptoms that meet criteria for a psychiatric disorder and 55 percent of people experiencing chronic...
homelessness report they have emotional or psychiatric conditions. Why are the most vulnerable populations not receiving preventative care, therapy, medication and housing immediately while they are transitioning out of the public school system? They needed housing, three square meals daily, therapy, medication, and public workers to spend time with them and love on them, immediately. Why are we waiting to react when these vulnerable and precious neighbors reach adulthood and have already spent years in and out of jail, self-medicating, committing crimes and becoming victims of crime?

In order to move forward and to address adults currently living in encampments today; I support building tiny home villages that are maintained and managed by social workers, case workers, nurses, and contracted by locally owned property maintenance companies. In order to address our youth and very young adults living with mental illness and physical and mental disabilities, we need to create a robust strategy to properly and immediately meet their basic needs while exiting our public school system.

This will take time, yet in one short decade, we will begin to enjoy a sustainable model that will have a positive impact on our cities livability for generations to come.

For the full questionnaire and to read responses from other candidates, view our online voter guide at:

pollenmidwest.org/mplsisus

Design by Pollen Midwest; Art and Illustration by Allegra Lockstadt, Emma Eubanks, Leslie Barlow, Luis Fitch, Ricardo Levins Morales, Terresa Moses; Photography by Ben Hovland, Ryan Stopera and Jaida Grey Eagle
Project DIVA founder helps Black girls discover what is possible

By David Pierini, Staff Reporter

Neda Kellogg had plenty of love growing up. What she didn’t have was someone to help navigate the emotions unique to a Black girl in America.

She needed a mentor with a roadmap and instead wound up walking—sometimes stumbling—on a meandering path that would lead Kellogg to create Project DIVA International, where coaches deliver guidance for personal and professional development. It is a judgement-free space for Black and Brown girls to dream.

“I found this calling and it was like I needed to go through every last experience so that I can be the example to all the girls who come to me,” said Kellogg, 49. “That’s the special thing about all the leaders on my team. We have Northside experience, suburban experience, corporate experience, mothers-taking-care-of-kids experience. There’s a gamut of wisdom that comes from our life experiences and past mistakes.”

Kellogg started Project DIVA for the girls attending Dunwoody Academy in 2007. She has since grown it to serve girls in grades six through 12 throughout the Twin Cities, including North Minneapolis, in person, with virtual drop-in sessions, a 24/7 crisis hotline and private mentoring.

It provides culturally-appropriate coaching to about 200 girls.

Since COVID-19, mentors and the group’s youngest members meet mostly over video conferences. During safer periods of the pandemic, they have gathered in-person.

This year, when International was added to the name, the organization began recruiting mentors and girls beyond the Twin Cities.

Project DIVA (Dignity, Integrity, Virtue and Availability) seeks to pave a smoother road for Black girls.

Kellogg saw a need for a program where Black girls could explore identity, ask questions about their bodies, learn what makes healthy relationships and develop tools for building professional success and resiliency. It recently added a program for financial and investment literacy.

“We start off with a blueprint of self-discovery and then we go into vision boarding,” Kellogg said. “We don’t tell them what they’re good at, we let them tell us. It’s not about finding a super power it is about having conversations that matter according to where you want to go in life.”

A DIVA will rise

A Google search for “Neda Kellogg, Minneapolis” greets the viewer with a picture of a smiling woman wearing a sunny-yellow top with arms extended. She appears to dance joyfully and ready to hug like she is happy you found her.

In person, she sparkles and radiates the energy ready to support a young girl adrift in angst. There is also a velvety calm.

Neda Kellogg found a calling in what she was missing growing up.

Continued on page 34
Open Streets West Broadway Avenue, canceled last summer, made a welcome return Saturday. Northsiders strolled the thoroughfare with their children and stopped to greet friends, skip rope, complete art projects and sway to the music of bands and DJs. It also gave healthcare workers a chance to promote Covid-19 vaccines and local candidates for public office time to shake hands and remind voters of the upcoming city election.

Photos by David Pierini, Staff Reporter

Molly Kriger, 10, blew bubbles and then tried to catch them on her bubble wand without popping them.

Valerie Lunderville didn’t let her winged daughter Chloe, 5, flit too far down West Broadway Avenue without her.

Nadine Graves shows her two sons, Noah, left, and Nicholas, she still has the ups and the timing for jump roping.

LaShawn Williams assists his son A’Qelle, 3, paint a mask at a station led by artist Geno Okoli.

Welcome to the neighborhood
Big Brothers Big Sisters relocates to North Minneapolis

By Harry Colbert, Jr., Editor-in-Chief

Meet the people where they are. The adage typically applies in the metaphorical sense, but for Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities (BBBS) and its new CEO, they took the adage literally. Thus, the mentoring organization set out to firmly establish roots in North Minneapolis, recently relocating its headquarters from an office unit it was renting in Roseville to a BBBS-owned building at 3110 Washington Ave. N. The thought is closer proximity means more authentic connections.

"To be honest, we were disconnected (physically) from our youth," said BBBS CEO Patrick Sukhum. "We wanted to own our own building and be closer to the community we serve, so North Minneapolis went to the top of our list."

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a one-on-one mentoring organization that seeks to connect adults (Bigs) to youth ages 8-13 years (Littles). While there are no set parameters for youth, often they face a variety of obstacles, be they financial or societal. Today, BBBS serves close to 3,200 area youth. Of those, 14 percent reside in the North Minneapolis zip codes of 55411, 55412 and 55430.

In relocating the headquarters to North Minneapolis, Sukhum said he hopes to shape a more positive narrative of the Northside.

"When I was a 'Big' my 'Little' lived in North Minneapolis and before that I had never really been to the area. So, I had preconceived notions, but the ideas I had dissolved and I realized we were bored out of our minds," said Sukhum. "We're here wanting to be a community partner."

Sukhum is only four months into his role as CEO of BBBS, but he is hardly new to the organization. The former health industries corporate executive began mentoring his "Littles" in 1998. Twenty-three years later he and his former mentee remain close.

"He's my mentee. He was the best man at my wedding," said Sukhum. "I lean from him the same way he learns from me. Becoming a 'Big' was life changing. It was the best thing that happened to me."

Prior to being named CEO, Sukhum served on the BBBS board of directors for 10 years. And through a national search process to replace outgoing CEO Michael Geor, who left to take over as CEO of Catholic Charities of St. Paul & Minneapolis, the final choice ended up being someone closest to the organization.

"Like most, BBBS has been operating while navigating the challenges of COVID," Sukhum said the current pandemic has caused some "Littles" to withdraw, but conversely, 350 new mentoring relationships were formed. According to the new CEO, 250 of those relationships began virtually. BBBS is seeking to form more relationships.

"We have openings for 'Littles' to join our program and we're always looking for more volunteers, especially men of color," said BBBS director of Marketing and Communications, Lori Dossett.

To become an adult volunteer or to enroll a youth visit www.bigstwincities.org.

The new digs for Big Brothers Big Sisters at 3110 Washington Ave. N. Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters

ABOUT US
Shilo Community Food Shelf is a community outreach program that collects and distributes food in Minneapolis. Supported by church members and community at-large.

HOURS OF OPERATION
Weekly Monday through Saturday, 10am to 2pm
Please arrive 30 minutes prior to be served (same day)
Closed on all Holidays and Training Days.
If you become a member of the food shelf, please call us at 612-302-1463.

Shilo Community Food Shelf
1010 West Broadway Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55411
612-302-1463
Comcast RISE to Give $10,000 Grants to 100 Twin Cities Small Businesses Owned by People of Color; Totaling $1 Million

Beginning on October 1 through October 14, eligible businesses in the Twin Cities can apply for a $10,000 grant at www.ComcastRISE.com. A total of 100 grants in the Twin Cities will be awarded in late November 2021.

“While we know that no single organization can solve historic and systemic inequities overnight, we are committed to taking tangible actions that can drive long-term impact and change,” said Kalyn Hove, Regional Senior Vice President, Comcast Twin Cities.

“Comcast RISE and the Comcast RISE Investment Fund offer the opportunity for small businesses owned by people of color to help grow their businesses, create jobs and play a vital role in supporting our communities. This new round of Comcast RISE grants will provide more entrepreneurs of color with the resources and tools they need to scale their businesses and thrive for years to come.”

Comcast RISE is part of Comcast’s ongoing efforts to advancing digital equity and helping to provide underrepresented small business owners with access to the digital tools and funding they need to thrive.

Studies* show that small businesses owned by people of color, including those owned by Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Asian American individuals, among others, have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

To help, Comcast announced that through the Comcast RISE Investment Fund the Twin Cities is receiving $1 million in grants to give 100 small businesses owned by people of color each $10,000.

Comcast RISE champions Representation, Investment, Strength, and Empowerment for small businesses owned by people of color by providing marketing, technology and capital resources to sustain, support and rebuild communities.

The Comcast RISE Investment Fund is focused on small businesses that have been operating for three or more years with 1-25 employees. Businesses eligible include those in the seven-county Twin Cities metro (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties).

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During high school, she closed with her family and left home two days after graduation. There were challenges with her father and she didn’t know how to develop a business plan. She opened a store to sell college clothing eventu-
ally opened a salon. This gave her voice and enabled her to stand in a confident voice. From the choir, clients discussed struggles she had with her father and community issues. 

“Some of the same stuff I’ve been through,” she said. “I’m now in my late 20s in life and kinfolk.”

A blueprint to go by

The talk sent vocabulary to her own ears. She began an after-school work- shop where she and her sisters would help girls two years before moving to Minneapolis in 2001. “I went to Omah H., Nebraska, to give her the free to me.”

Keeling was hired as an executive assistant business assistant at Dunwoody College of Art, which was her need for girls to get specialized attention. The nonprofit Project DIVA was born out of the “village of women” cousins and aunts who at times sheltered her and gave her steady, loving affirmation. 

DAVA is a nod to these women who were dug deep, dressed and dressed to the nines. “They helped us to navigate,” Keeling said. They had a role in the foundation of Project DIVA.

Elena Munger

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