Melanin in Motion shows communities of color how to embrace the great outdoors

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Jessie Ross adds “Developer” to his many titles  Page 15

4 year old Axl Lester takes his first dip on the hill and successfully makes it to the bottom.
Photo by Azhae’la Hanson
February 24, 2023

North Minneapolis at a glance

Showtime donates $300K to North High for scholarships

Showtime Television Network announced it will donate $300,000 to North High School in the 4-part documentary Boys in Blue that followed the varsity football team in their attempt to secure a championship during the 2021 season. The series explored the dynamics of a predominantly Black team with a majority coach staff during the time when the murder of George Floyd heated the city at odds over policing.

Right before the release of the series final episode, Showtime and Paramount Global announced that they will donate $300,000 to North Community High School through their Content for Change initiative, which aims to use storytelling as the medium to challenge stereotypes and create meaningful change.

The funds will be administered through non-profit Achievement Twin Cities and will establish a multi-year scholarship program to help students and football players continue their education.

Paramount's press release read: “Over the next six years, the scholarships will be awarded to 22 graduating North Community High School seniors, designated for students and football players. Four ($10,000) scholarships will be awarded beginning this year. Additionally, the school will receive $10,000 in an annual grant dedicated to providing additional resources such as school supplies, after-school activities and field trips.”

Cries of ‘Long live D-Hill’ ring out during balloon launch

Friends and family gathered at the corner of Golden Valley Road and Penn Avenue North on Feb. 9 for a balloon release to remember Deshaun Hill Jr., a 15-year-old North high student and police motorcycle officer who was killed one year ago and his killer was recently convicted on a charge of second-degree murder.

The words “Long live D-Hill” could be heard from children in school buses passing by. A symphony of car horns blared in support. Lisa Clemons, who leads the peace group A Mother’s Love, said “This is what community looks like.”

Sheppard, smiled and thanked the crowd that gathered in support. “I am not sad today,” she said. Photo by Azahe’sla Hanson.

Letter from the Editor

David Pierini

February 24, 2023

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Photo by Azahe’sla Hanson.
Northside Aldi, Walgreens closing is a 1-2 gut punch to residents

By David Patrin, Editor

Aldi Beyont stepped out of the cab in front of the Walgreens pharmacy on High Street after work on February 14 and saw the closing announcement its closing. After March 6, her cab rides get longer and more expensive. Shari Brandt felt a similar blow when the Aldi on Penn Avenue North closed for good on Feb. 12. It had been an affordable choice amid the soaring supermarket prices that have gone up 16.7% since Feb. 2021.

Pakistan’s capital parity is a gut punch to attract people to job openings at the pharmacy were behind the closing. By Shari Brandt

Patricia Bryant stepped out of the cab on Washington Avenue north. “I mean we have so many challenges already and to have one around food, another essential,” said. “I’m just so heartbreaking, I can’t even say how hard it is to lose.”

The closing of Walgreens Minneapolis with one pharmacy, inside Cub Foods, 701 West Broadway Ave. N., which is important to those who include North Market, 444 Humboldt Ave. N. Low and S Low Poverty Overlay, S111 Emerson Ave. N.

“F” is a huge blow” said. “Minneapolis City Councilwoman LisaElofvet, whose Ward 4 covers North Minneapolis north of Lowry Avenue. “I mean we have so many challenges already and to have one around food, another essential,” said. “I’m just so heartbreaking, I can’t even say how hard it is to lose.”

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Milwaukee County Council members LaTasha Veat (WV 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (WV 5) were inaugurated on February 24, 2023 and January 18, 2023, respectively. We have invited them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our paper.

WV 4 LaTasha Veat

Hello! WV 4! Spring is almost here. You know what that means? Construction season is approaching. Here are some updates about exciting infrastructure projects that will look forward to in the 4th ward.

In Webster-Camden, the Lyndale Ave North – 22nd Avenue North 40th Avenue North project will continue and eventually provide pedestrian safety improvements and ADA accessibility at intersections along Lyndale. Lyndale is a high crash corridor in Minneapolis and carries buses, heavy trucks, schools, parks, and commercial and residential areas. Safety and easier access is important for Ward 4 residents’ ability to access important destinations such as schools, parks, commercial, and residential areas.

In Powderhorn, the Lyndale and Lyndale, alley storm drain repairs will replace the current alley storm system to prevent failure and future drainage issues. Public works will also replace the alley surfaces affected by this work. If you have concerns about the condition of your alley drain, you can contact Will Shutte at William.shutte@minneapolismn.gov.

In Folwell, Jordan, and McKinley, the City is continuing to install traffic circles to support safety as an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) project. Traffic circles will be installed in 21st Ave and Colfax, 31st and Queen, 33rd and Bryant, 33rd and Colfax, 33rd and James, 34th and Dupont, 34th and Olson, 35th and Grand, 35th and 4th Street, 38th and Albright, 30th and Colfax, 30th and Morgan, 37th and Bryant. Locations were selected based on traffic crash analysis and feasibility. In February 2023, construction begins with more details. Public works will also replace current alley storm infrastructure to move closer to a society where all children are affirmed.

WV 5 Jeremiah Ellison

Happy Black History Month, Northside! The Mayor and City Council passed a resolution honoring Black History Month. The resolution states that “the Mayor and City Council of the City of Minneapolis do hereby commend the achievements of our black history makers, history leaders and their role in the development of the region and the nation since its inception, and we join in recognizing the annual celebration of Black History Month and the anniversary of the Minneapolis Black Employee Network.”

In Webber-Camden, the Lyndale Street, 36th and Aldrich, 36th and Broadway, Jordan St and Northside! The Mayor and City Council have invited them to keep in touch with the community through the environmental review process. Black women and girls wearing their hair in a variety of styles, seemingly exhaled with joy and relief as Walz’s pen swept across the CROWN Act signing with so many people in the room. The joy and relief was palpable.

“With this law, we are saying that we will not allow hair discrimination as a proxy for race discrimination.”

Since fall 2022, the Minneapolis Metropolitan and Hennepin County have been working on prioritizing and accelerating the development of the Hennepin County’s 2030 Metropolitan Transit Chart. The Copenhagen Root Implementation Plan is expected to be a living document. People stood beneath large paintings depicting Civil War battles and Lt. Crump and his legal team, esteemed scholar and law professor Rachel Moran, and law student Sarah Murtada to present on the legal issues. Women and girls wearing their hair in a variety of styles inherent with Black history were comforted, supported, and given permission to be who they are.

One of the largest groups to ever witness a Minnesota bill signing ceremony after Gov. Tim Walz signed the CROWN Act on Feb. 3. Photo by Dave Peer.

Natural hair, Juneteenth bill signings celebrate freedom

By David Peer, Editor

All for a handful of words, witnessed the largest group to ever watch a Minnesota bill signing ceremony after Gov. Tim Walz signed the CROWN Act on Feb. 3.

“With this law, we are saying that we will not allow hair discrimination as a proxy for race discrimination. Yes, we’re also saying that it is perfectly fine to show up as our authentic selves,” Agbaje said. “With this law, we are saying that we will not allow hair discrimination as a proxy for race discrimination.”

“We’re so proud of that young man,” Vusumuzi Zulu said of Champion as he and his team went on to secure passage of the bill and the governor’s signature.

Anthony Taylor, co-founder of Melanin in Motion, teaches a student to turn and stop on a downward slope for her first time this winter. Photo by Azhae’la Hanson

Melanin in Motion gives Black and Brown people a taste of winter sports

By Atharia’s Hanson, Reporter

Anthony Taylor has spent years snowboarding on the slopes of Minnesota. trekking up and down the hills alongside a demographic of athletes who never looked like him. He remembered the strong urge to do something once his kids started to play sports, and they too began to notice the lack of diversity, and they too began to notice the lack of diversity isn’t just about financial, physical access, having a financial barrier for those wishing to learn snowboarding or skiing taught by an all-Black coaching staff.

Anthony Taylor, co-founder of Melanin in Motion, teaches a student to turn and stop on a downward slope for her first time this winter. Photo by Azhae’la Hanson

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North wrestling pins down first city title in 27 years

By Aslebi Petry-Towns, North High School

The North High Wrestling team was recently named city conference champions for the first time in 27 years.

“Alston resurrected the program in 2020 and we're turning it around to where we're winning at home, and not just losing. It's what we do,” said Alston.

North won last week's win totals, 16-9. "I didn’t even think we could do it. We’ve had a history of losing but we’re turning it around now," Alston said.

The Polars were hoping to continue their winning ways with a pin down the problem from its original glory, North steered so far when he saw that the wrestling program at North was 'on its knees.'

“I didn’t even think we could do it. We’ve had a history of losing but we’re turning it around now,” Alston said.

“Obviously a lot more kids join the program, and there's a lot of teams doubt us," Hamilton-Grunau said.

“Whatever we've done last season's win totals, we're not going to the state championships without winning the league tournament. It takes a team to get there,” said Hamilton-Grunau. "It’s what we do."

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These Lucy Laney boxers are dominating the ring and making history

By Ashara’s Hanson, Reporter

In a sport long dominated by boys and men, two girls are hitting hard and fast, championsing a legacy that’s proven hard to beat.

Lavendar Nelson, 11, Madison McDonald, 9, both of Lucy C. Laney School, are punching their way through the ranks of USA Boxing and its founding academy boxers have won 24 national championships, including Lavendar and Madison.

“Boxing is the vehicle for intervention, to get kids off the street and off the couch,” Principal Lisa Pawelak said. “But with a program like this, it’s like a snowball effect. It’s hard to convince kids to work hard in school, but once they get into the ring, they quickly get on board.”

Lavendar and Madison are happy to dominate the competition alongside each other.

“She’s a great fighter,” said Lavendar. “She’s fast. I want her to beat the boxers she already does it in practice.”

“I want to fight like Lavendar,” said Madison.

Lavendar is older, she hopes to surpass the number of championships won by two time Olympic gold medalist Clarissa Shields, a boxer from Flint, Michigan who won gold in 1984 and 2014. It’s been a goal of Lavendar since she first got in the ring.

“One day she told me she wanted to be like a lady named Clarissa Shields,” said her mother, Laqresha Nelson, “I was shocked when I learned that she [Shields] was a boxer.”

Her mother was unsure about her daughter’s interest in boxing at first, but recognized the dedication that she [Shields] was a boxer.”

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Lavendar shows off the medals she’s accumulated in the past few years.

Photo by Ashara’s Hanson

By Morgan McDonald, Coach

Boxing Academy head coach Morgan McDonald said the girls in his program often get tired of sitting and watching the boys being able to box, while they sit on the sideline.

“The girls work just as hard as the boys do, do the same workouts, the same everything,” said McDonald, who is also Madison’s dad. “But they weren’t getting experience like the young males were getting when we left the school and it wasn’t fair.”

Both Madison and Lavendar qualified, and in January of 2023, Madison made Minnesota history as the first girl in the state to box in the Olympics.

Madison swung, and she won. But it wasn’t the first time she put the gloves up to the test.

“I fight with my brothers a lot,” Madison said. “So it doesn’t scare me to fight a boy.”

Madison’s win secured her belief that she is not just a good boxer “for a girl” but a good athlete—period.

By day, McDonald is a student support specialist at Lucy Laney School and started the boxing academy out of his garage in 2019. The school provided a home in a Lucy Laney classroom to merge his passions and target kids who struggle with their performance in school.

“I target the tough ones, the ones who don’t really get school or life or school,” McDonald said. “I target them and try to give them something to come to school for, or a place to release their energy, good or bad.

More than one of McDonald’s students has helped make a name out of the classroom boxing academy. Since its founding, academy boxers have won 24 national championships, including Lavendar and Madison.

“Girls have steadily grown since it first appeared in 1960,” said Program Director Morgan McDonald. “But when we started, it wasn’t fair.”

In February, Minneapolis Public Schools celebrated Lavendar’s naming to the Girls’ World Boxing Association’s 2012 Olympic Games. About 31 percent of the boxers officially appeared in the Olympic Games are girls, but clubs still have problems finding girls interested in boxing.

“Girls have steadily grown since it first appeared in 1960,” said Program Director Morgan McDonald. “But when we started, it wasn’t fair.”

The rising interest in boxing amongst girls has steadily grown since it first appeared in the Olympic Games in 2012. About 31 percent of the boxers registered in the United States are girls, but clubs still have problems finding girls interested in boxing.

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Lavendar is so talented, I’m so proud of my baby,” she said. Madison also hopes to compete far into the future.

“I want to box forever,” said Madison. “To prepare for their matches, Madison and Lavendar load the workouts in practice, consisting of 50 pushups, 100 crunches, and 100 squats, combined with sprinting races, and shadow boxing.

On match day, however, the two can be found listening to their favorite songs, stretching and chugging a Mountain Dew.

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Young imaginations will get ‘Spark’d’ by New Harrison Park tech studio

By David Pierini, Editor

Any kid who describes himself bored while hanging out at Harrison Recreation Center clearly has not been in the great outdoors. Not only do they have access to aluminum computers, recording studio and large-screen TV for gaming.

The named Spark’d Studio was created for that kid.

By New Harrison Park tech studio programming. career interests and readiness with access to technology and free multimedia arts programming.

The technology and other tools of enrichment include four desktop Mac computers, two sound-proof booths with engineer work stations, 10 mini keyboards with headphones, an eventual recording vocal booth for music and other projects.

The Spark’d Studio includes a sound-proof booth for recording vocals for music and live projects. The spark of creativity in digital arts and cultivate

NEIGHBORS

Jessie Ross gets ready for economic shift approaching North Minneapolis

By Ashleia Hansen, Reporter

Jessie Ross had his hands on many hats in his lifetime as a matter. Recently, newly and leadership consultant, and now in the final stages of becoming a common property owner.

In mid-March. Ross will be closing on the 68,000-square-foot building located at 2358 Second St. in North Minneapolis to rent out to community entrepreneurs.

He gave up his boxs away from the 2518 property and watched his Northside community change around him. Most kids notice small things like the prices of snacks going up 25 cents, but Ross noticed something else: The buildings and the businesses he knew started to change, and they weren’t being changed by northsiders.

“Typically those who have resources, monetize their capital, and lending capital to the community, people who do not have those things,” Ross said.

“And they take advantage of people and drive the price up,” Ross said.

Ross was a quiet respectful kid who stayed out of the way but carried a fear that kept himself in his consciousness: the fear of death. After losing his mother at age 11, combined with the random acts of violence occurring in the community, Ross didn’t think much about his future because he didn’t believe he would live past the age of 18.

“I just always felt like something random would happen to me. You know, I didn’t really have a good reason why,” he said.

But he didn’t think that had the capacity to communicate what my grief felt like or say anything. Ross said. “I just wanted to keep going. I just wanted to be a hustler”, and “integrity” are the words Ross’s mentor Chris Brooks uses to describe Ross.

“Ross is one of the most steadfast community members that I’ve ever met,” Brooks said.

Ross lent his hand to school clothing drives, and various community efforts and started his DEI consulting company. He has led over 400 speaking engagements on diversity and strategy development for colleges, universities, and Fortune 500 companies, one including the NBA. He met someone who encouraged him to take up the occupation.

Brooks is the managing partner with the Brown Venture Group, a venture capital firm that invests with Black and Brown entrepreneurs. Over 20 years, Brooks has watched Ross grow from a teenager that would come to his house to play video games to an upstanding community member that is now investing in the same thing that he has dedicated his career to.

“I am elated that Jessie is buying a commercial property in North Minneapolis,” Brooks said. “It’s a terrible thing when we lose that unity that is now investing in the same thing that he has dedicated his career to.

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“The building will be his first project as a developer and he is still learning the ropes. His clients do not need a certificate in development or real estate to understand the trends with development and black and marginalized communities. He started watching the trends of how development work [developers] don’t always meet their goals. They do not always meet their goals.

“I just wanted to dispel this myth that you don’t always have to know everything that’s happening in order to do it.”

Ross had the determination, and a multi-million dollar project in reach, he just needed the money. He received a loan that covers all but 5% of the building purchased. The building was created December to raise the remaining $300,000 through a GoFundMe and the fundraising reached $73,000. Ross is certain he will fill the gap in mid-March.

Jessie Ross joins Houston White, Jaremi, Stapes, Ariana Kaye, Floyd Olayiwala, Sammy McDowell and others who are among the growing ranks of Northsiders-turned property owners. Ross is buying a commercial property in North Minneapolis, which is North Minneapolis. It’s only a matter of time.”

“Essentially, the trend with development and black and marginalized communities is a recipe for success, Ross said. “If we don’t, and we as Northside residents, black and brown folks, people who do not have those things, have over 50% occupancy by women and people of color, if we don’t create opportunities for ownership for ourselves, then we can’t count on other people to make it happen for us,” he said. “And so my goal is to step in and do that, knowing that you know, the economics will shift in the next five to 10 years.

The building is currently occupied by 11 tenants, Ross hopes to make room for up to 16-20 vendors on a case by case basis for businesses based on the needs of the community. He is prioritizing businesses owned by women and people of color.

“My goal would be the next in the would say five years to get to a place where we have over 50% occupancy by women and people of color.”

Rents are expected to take six months after the closing date. Once the building is purchased, Ross plans to use an incubator space for startups and established businesses alike.

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Northsiders hit with tree removal orders invited to ‘visioning’ sessions

By David Pierini, Editor

Ameka Kubot looked out the window of her home in 2021 to see a man standing for her backyard shade tree. She thought he was there for a bathroom break; instead he picked the tree to be removed. And she would learn she was not the only property owner in North Minneapolis to face a tree removal order.

Kubot, a well-known author and artist, has organized two “Listening and Visioning” sessions for Northside residents impacted by tree removal orders at the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board offices in the Dinkytown neighborhood. The sessions are scheduled for March 8 at 5 to 7 p.m. and March 11 from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

Kubot, who paid $7,000 to have two trees removed, “I want people to brainstorm over what reparations looks like or how to make this right for them,” said Kubot, who paid $7,000 to have two trees removed. “How do we come together as a community and say, ‘Hi, no, this practice stops.’”

More than 900 trees in the Northside zip codes of 55411 and 55412 have either been removed or tagged for removal as the Parks Board Forestry Department tries to halt or lessen the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer, a beetle that burrows under a tree’s bark and eats the inner skin that transplants water and nutrients to its branches.

Native to northwest Asia, emerald ash borer was first detected in Minneapolis in 2010 and its slow spread through the city’s tree canopy has recently reached North Minneapolis. By state law, property owners are financially responsible for the removal of diseased trees and the Park Board has the authority to issue orders.

But many in Minneapolis living on fixed or low incomes say the removals have wrought unexpected financial burdens. Depending on the service and when the tree is located, a large ash tree could cost $2,000 to $6,000 to have removed. Some have even considered selling or mortgaging property options to defray costs or to have the bill paid in-part by property taxes over a five or 10-year period.

Last fall, North News profiled Hamline residents struggling with the financial impact. One resident paid the Park Board the bill for removing trees in her yard.

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Proud to be your neighbor in Minneapolis
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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Help with homework: St. Olaf Lutheran Church offers after-school tutoring with an "expert mathmatically" on hand. Sessions run 3 to 5 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays and 3 to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The church also offers a Youth Club for grades 6 through 12 in Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Transportation available. Call 612-529-7726 to enroll in tutoring or the Youth Club.

State through the winter: North Commons Park is offering figure skating lessons and a youth figure program beginning Nov. 1 at a low cost. Sign up on Wednesday from 6-8 p.m. Commons Park is offering figure skating Skate through the winter:

Youth Club for grades 6 through 12 on Mondays and Wednesdays. Sessions run 3 to 5 pm, Mondays and Thursdays. There are no pre-

To reach Hennepin County Commissioner Minneapolis Public Schools, District 2: Irene Fernando, call 612-348-7882 or email her at irene.fernando@hennepin.

Do you have an ongoing program, meeting or event you would like to see published in North News? Please email to DavidP@pillsburyunited.org

Spark’d Continued from page 14

The Harrison studio is open on weekdays plus learning programs in the evenings after 5 p.m. The studio is located at 4630 S. 10th St. in the Powderhorn Recreation Center with parking near the park's annual fair.

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school, enhance bicycle and pedestrian

Tree Removal Continued from page 16

school, enhance bicycle and pedestrian

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3rd grade students to learn about healthy

Tree Removal Continued from page 16

school, enhance bicycle and pedestrian

Continued from page 14

school, enhance bicycle and pedestrian

continuing catch up with our Council Members

Free legal advice: Legal Aid takes on civil cases, such as housing, family, consumer, immigration and public benefits. The non-profit organization may be able to provide representation to those in need. Call 612-322-1145.

The Healing Place is offering healing trauma in the Black community from 10 a.m.-noon. There are no pre-

Don’t let it be social media. Don’t let it be technology. Don’t let it be software they don’t have access to.” She said the Harrison studio will continue to grow and expand programs to build and fly drones. She said the goal for now is to help kids have fun and let the skills and interests naturally develop in the kids who visit the studio.

The Harrison studio is 1,000 square feet and will have a School-Age Childcare room and added space for young people. There are bright colors, comfortable future

The Healing Place is a faith-based community that is committed to healing trauma in the Black community through support and community healing teas. The organization is open for curbside pickup on weekdays plus learning programs in the evenings after 5 p.m. The studio is located at 4630 S. 10th St. in the Powderhorn Recreation Center with parking near the park's annual fair.

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