



## Room at Roosevelt promotes self-care, emotional well-being for students

# RestART

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Room #215 doesn't look like any other classroom at Roosevelt High School. Instead of desks and chairs, there are a few tables piled high with drawing paper, magic markers, and coloring books. There are couches for relaxing on, overstuffed pillows, books about self care – and it's quiet.

The classroom been used in different ways over the years, but it had been left unstaffed and underutilized until recently.

Now called the RestART Room, this is a place where students can come when they need to take a break from class, from the stress of applying for college, or from the pressure of life at home.

Lindsay Walz, who jump-started the idea with a group of students last year, said, "We provide a safe space at school to access creative mindfulness practices and holistic healing supports – so students can get back to the business of learning."

The RestART Room is a natural extension of the non-profit healing and art studio Walz started in 2013, called Courageous heARTS." The non-profit is located nearby at 2235 E. 38th St. Its mission is to illuminate youth as leaders, while inspiring creativity, courage, and collaboration within the community.

Walz explained, "Last year, students and staff from the Health Careers Program at Roosevelt reached out to explore opportunities to volunteer at Courageous heARTS. We thought it was a natural fit to bring our efforts to Roosevelt with the help of their student leaders."

"The timing was right. In the 20 years I've been working with young people, it seems like life keeps getting harder for them. RESTART >> 12



Roosevelt High School students Samiyah Farah (left) and Rahma Abdi (right), and graduate Bisharo Abdi (center) in the RestART Room. The three friends agreed that, "It doesn't matter what you're going through, self-care matters." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

## Assume mothers get custody of kids in domestic abuse cases? Think again.

Violence Free Minnesota Executive Director points out abuser more likely to get custody in contested cases than mom

**VOICES**  
against  
**VIOLENCE**

This series seeks to put a face on domestic abuse and intimate partner violence.

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Over the past 40-year history, the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) has witnessed huge changes in how society thinks about domestic violence but there is still more work to be done, according to its executive director Liz Richards.

There are still plenty of myths to be dispelled.

"While we are proud of our history, the landscape of our work and the movement to end violence is more complex and challenging than ever. The movement to end relationship abuse must be highly iterative

### ALIENATION TRUMPS ABUSE

When mothers claim any type of abuse and fathers claim "alienation:"

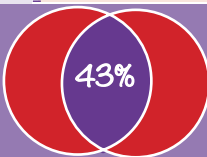
Mothers are **3X** more like to lose custody.

Courts believe only

**1 in 51**

of the cases when mothers report child sexual abuse and fathers claim "alienation."

Even when alienation credited and believed by court... and abuse credited and believed



Mothers lose custody 43%

Information courtesy of 2019 study by George Washington University Law School

and adaptive," said Richards. "As advocates and survivors, we

continuously search for new and innovative ways to end relationship violence in Minnesota and beyond. This is why we are excited to embrace our new identity as Violence Free Minnesota: The Coalition to End Relationship Abuse."

#### Fathers getting children more when mothers bring up domestic violence

Richards is proud of the progress her organization has made for women in Minnesota.

"In 1978, if you were experiencing domestic violence, you had few options," she pointed out. "If you fled, there was no place to go. If you called the police, there was no crime."

Today, there are shelters, organizations aimed at helping survivors, support groups, and laws that protect those in abusive situations.

Yet, there still remains a disconnect between that progress and family court. "What goes on in family court doesn't mirror

that," remarked Richards.

Instead, new research done by Professor Joan Meier at George Washington University Law School shows what is actually happening in family court.

"The general presumption is that moms get custody in divorce cases," observed Richards. While that may be true when you look at all of divorce cases, those where couples can agree on what to do about their kids, it isn't true when domestic violence is a factor.

In contested cases, a father is just as likely to get custody as a mother, Richards pointed out, citing Meier's research.

And what shocks people is what happens when there's domestic violence.

"If you look at the contested cases with domestic violence against the mother or child abuse by the father against the child, fathers are more likely to gain custody," said Richards.

THINK AGAIN >> 2



Find it in our annual Summer Camp Guide

PAGE 6-7



Hand in hand: Sustainability for men and ReUse

PAGE 8



Novelist writes so people won't forget lessons of the past

PAGE 11



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# Assume mothers get custody of kids in domestic abuse cases? Think again.

>> from 1

The study looked at more than 2,000 custody cases involving child abuse, domestic violence, and parental alienation nationwide. There is no study specific to Minnesota and no state agency that looks specifically at domestic violence, but Richards believes that Minnesota mirrors what has been found at a national level.

"When there are contested cases and domestic violence, fathers are receiving custody more frequently," stated Richards.

## Why is this happening?

That's not an easy question to answer, but Richards thinks that part of the answer lies in how the family court system has evolved.

She began her career as a family law attorney who worked in Hennepin, Ramsey and Chisago counties before taking a job with the MCBW 10 years ago.

Richards believe that part of the problem is that so many parties are unrepresented by legal council, and lack the knowledge and guidance of an attorney. Part of that is because of high fees for legal services that stretch over years. "You have parties showing up not understanding the system," observed Richards.

At the same time the caseload of judicial officers has grown tremendously. Ancillary court services have been cut – Hennepin County is the only one in the state that still offers custody evaluations. These were the people who used to be able to spend more time with cases and provide the court with more outside data to determine what was happening within a family.

"We've got this perfect storm," Richards remarked.

There's been a movement within family court to streamline the process. "They keep looking for the thing that will make it better," Richards said.

One Hennepin County judge began sitting down with both parties within a week or so after they filed for divorce to figure out what they could agree upon, and then set up a process for managing the finances and custody. It

## ALIENATION TRUMPS ABUSE

Mothers' reports of Fathers' abuse in custody litigation are credited less than **1/2** the time

When Fathers use the alienation defense, courts credit abuse - especially child abuse - far less

Child abuse allegations and alienation defenses put Mothers at highest risk of losing custody

Courts are far less likely to credit child abuse claims than partner violence (DV)

Information courtesy of 2019 study by George Washington University Law School

worked so well for that one judge that the county and then much of the state instituted it for everyone, giving it the name of Initial Case Management Conference (ICMC), which is followed by the FENE (Financial Early Neutral Evaluation) and the SENE (Social Early Neutral Evaluation). However, things are so backlogged now, it can take months for an ICMC to occur, and longer for the ENEs.

"Now instead of becoming a way to make things smooth, it's become a roadblock," observed Richards.

Then there's the issue with requiring mediation between an abuser and a victim, she pointed out. It doesn't account for the power imbalance found in abusive relationships.

Plus, it is set up in a way that further abuses the victim.

At an FENE or SENE, each person gets to tell their side of the story without comment from the other – even to correct blatant lies. And each side is paying for their attorney to be there but the attorneys aren't allowed to speak as there is an attitude that they augment conflict. "The process in and of itself can be very damaging," said Richards. It is only natural to want to respond when you hear mistruths, but participants have to ignore that.

"It's just insane as a process," said Richards.

**'We need a smorgasboard of**

## options'

She doesn't think there is one magic answer to the problems in family court. "We need a smorgasboard of options," Richards said.

In some cases, the domestic violence that occurred isn't relevant to a financial division or custody. It could have been an isolated incident that occurred at the end of the relationship when it was most stressful. But in other situations, the domestic violence played out for years through coercive control, financial manipulation, and psychological, sexual and physical abuse of one partner by the other. Sometimes there was direct physical and sexual abuse of the children, and other times emotional and psychological.

Richards believes the system needs to ask about domestic violence immediately, gather information on it, consider the context, and factor it in. "Who is doing what to whom, with what impact?"

That should be followed up with this question in custody cases: "What is the impact and effect on children?"

The Battered Women's Justice Project in Minneapolis has created a system focused on this, pointed out Richards. Termed the SaFER Approach, staff are working to educate family court professionals across the country.

THINK AGAIN >> 3

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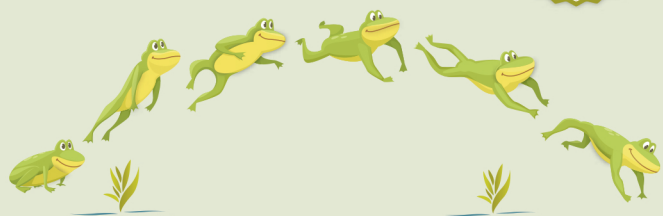
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**DEFINE IT**

**"HIGH CONFLICT"** – To the court, "high conflict" can refer to cases that just won't settle. To many mediators, it can mean that parties are unable to communicate effectively. To custody evaluators, it can refer to anything from frequent disagreements to severe, long-term domestic violence. Labeling a case as "high conflict" can often distract from what is actually going on, according to the Battered Women's Justice Project. It can also disguise things as "high conflict" that are not conflict at all, like intimate partner abuse, child abuse, and child sexual abuse.

**"ALIENATION"** – Sometimes called "parental alienation syndrome," this theory has been rejected by the psychological definition book, the DSM-V, as it lacks any scientific basis. However, it is still being used in the family court system. Often used to limit protective mothers to supervised or no visitation, it assumes that problems in a relationship between an allegedly abusive father and the children must be caused by alienation. The most common context of alienation claims is that fathers accused of abuse counter with claims of alienation.

**ICMC** – The ICMC is the first appearance in Family Court. It is supposed to happen about 3 to 4 weeks after a filing for divorce.

**FENE** – A Financial Early Neutral Evaluation (FENE) is part of the Alternative Dispute Resolution process in Minnesota divorce cases. An FENE involves a half-day session (or more) with a court-appointed neutral. This neutral is typically an experienced family law attorney, or a CPA familiar with the financial issues involved in a divorce. The parties, and their lawyers, sit down with the evaluator very early in the case – in an effort to catch people before they become too embroiled in conflict, or stuck in their position.

**SENE** – A Social Early Neutral Evaluation is a voluntary process parents may choose to participate in when they disagree about custody or parenting issues. Typically the SENE will involve both parties, both attorneys, and two court-appointed custody evaluators (one male and one female). During the session, each party (and his or her attorney) is given the opportunity to explain what they would like for a custody and parenting time arrangement, and why.

**Think again.**

>> from 2

**Kids affected when moms are abused**

"We know there is a high correlation between those that engage in domestic violence and child abuse," observed Richards.

Plus, research has shown that domestic violence in a home affects the children who live there, whether or not they are physically hurt.

"What we know about resiliency of children is definitely linked to support of the non-abusive parent," said Richards.

Unfortunately, she doesn't think the system in place is set up to adequately account for that.

**'It takes two' is a myth**

There is the idea in family court that there are two equal parties in a divorce. "The mantra is that it takes two," observed Richards, and that both parties are engaged in conflict. These are then termed "high conflict" cases.

That doesn't factor in the reality of domestic violence. Where there's intimate partner violence, one person is exerting power and control over the other and is engaged in manipulating the system. "If you have a father who has been engaged in coercive control, they're highly skilled in using these same tactics in the family court system," said Richards.

For example, the abusive party may set things up to make the other parent look inflexible when they're trying to keep things consistent for the kids. The abusive parent works to create chaos by trying to change the schedule, not show up, or move the pick-up location.

"What is the other party supposed to do?" asked Richards. "It is assumed that both parties have the best interests of the children at heart. In a situation with domestic violence, one is trying to use the children as a tool for the manipulation. It's just a set up."

Richards said, "If you have one parent who is working to abuse and manipulate, what does it mean for the other parent to go along?"

She pointed out that some judicial officers do a better job than others at recognizing this dynamic. There aren't any standards for training in domestic violence dynamics for judicial officers, and the system overall isn't set up to adequately understand and recognize domestic violence.

The domestic violence organizations in the state are primarily shelter-based, and they're dealing with the emergency shel-

**Current Law on Custody & Parenting Time**



**START**

**Parents are seen as equals.**

There are **no presumptions** about what physical custody should be or what amount of parenting time a parent should get. (Minn. Stat. 518.17(b)(7))

**The Court considers 12 Best Interest of Children (BloC) factors as established by the state legislature in 2015:**

Child's needs & effect of Parenting Time arrangements on child.

Any special needs of the child (health, medical, educational).

History of caretaking.

Benefit of maximizing time with each parent and determinant of limiting time.

Physical, mental, chemical dependency issues of parent that impact the child.

Child's preference (if appropriate).

Willingness and ability to care for child.

Effect on child of changes in home/school/community.

Relationships of extended family, including siblings.

Whether domestic abuse occurred & implications for child.

Parent's ability to support child's relationship with other parent.

Ability of parents to co-parent.

**Decide physical custody; how time is structured between parents; parenting time schedule**

**Endangerment** of child: restrict parenting time (e.g. supervised). (Minn. Stat. 518.175 subd 1(b))



At a **minimum**, parents should receive 25% parenting time as established in 2006. (Minn. Stat. 518.175 subd 1(g))



ter needs of their clients. There aren't any that have the resources to also manage what happens after the emergency when the victim is in family court fighting an abuser.

"Some of these cases stretch on for years," observed Richards. "This is a problem across the country."

She believes that Minnesota's 12 best interest factors in statute 518.17 used in determining custody arrangements are supposed to place the focus upon kids. But Richards acknowledges, "There is a breakdown in what the law says and how it gets implemented in court."

**Does a child need a parent who is not safe?**

Part of the problem is the insistence that every child needs to

have two parents, a belief Richards says is deeply ingrained in society. To that, Richards asked, "Do you think it matters if one of the parents is sexually abusing a child? Do you think it matters if one of the parents is physically abusive towards a child?"

What is best for children is to have two safe parents, stressed Richards. "But if it's not safe parenting that's happening, it's not in the child's best interest."

She doesn't believe that the standard should be equal access to both parents, and doesn't support any change in state law that would make 50/50 parenting the base assumption.

"I think safe parenting has to be the standard," Richards said.

Some argue that women make false claims of abuse to get their way in divorce cases. "I have

yet to see one person claim domestic violence and it made their life better," said Richards. "Most people who talk about domestic violence do because it's happening in their lives."

The incidences of false allegations are extremely rare, she said. "The parent most likely to make false allegations are fathers and not mothers."

But this idea, like many others that show up in family court, are not driven by evidence. They're driven by emotion, according to Richards. They're myths that society has adopted as true.

"It plays out in people's lives and it's devastating," she said.

Contact editor at [tesha@longfellownokomisemessenger.com](mailto:tesha@longfellownokomisemessenger.com).

**1 in 3 women experience domestic violence by their partners**



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# The Motley Conversation

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## Letters to the Editor

### Courage of two women amazing, shouldn't be ignored anymore

Dear Editor:

Thank you so much for publishing the devastating account of being a battered wife and mother (and daughter) in your December 2019 "Voices Against Violence" section.

The courage of these two women is amazing, as is the fact that they survived so much trauma. It is shocking that the mother still feels supported by the church when "many priests" told her to "pray harder" and "be a better wife" during 40 plus years of abuse!

Please do more columns like this, both to educate readers (and you could also include racist violence) and to honor all those whose pain we have so long ignored.

Trina Porte  
Minneapolis

### Impactful series in wake of triple murder by father

Dear Editor:

Just finished reading your two stories about domestic abuse in the most recent edition of the *Messenger*. Very impactful writing, especially with the tragedy today in south Minneapolis, demonstrating the worst outcome of an abusive relationship.

May I offer a correction of the name for one of the resources for those in an abusive relationship? You referred to the "Alexander House"; I believe you meant the Alexandra House in Blaine.

Sincerely,  
Joel Carter

### What about men who are abused by women?

Dear Editor:

I received the *Longfellow Nokomis Messenger* today, and read the article about Leigh Ann Block and her late daughter Mikayla. The story is at once heart-breaking and frustrating, and I thank you for writing it. I admire Ms. Block's activism, and I wish she could find more peace of mind, though given what happened, that may not be possible.

I wanted to bring up one sentence from the article, that I'm kind of stuck on. It's on page 2, column 3, 4th full paragraph: "Like many men, he didn't real-

ly start showing his abusive side until...."

I feel like doing a slight rewrite on the first phrase of that sentence. Maybe something like "Like many eventual abusers...." This phrase takes gender out of it (since women are abusers, too, though not nearly as often as men) and it also shrinks the pool from all males to just abusive people. As written, that sentence struck me as a little unfair to my gender.

But I'm nitpicking, and I'll stop now. Thanks again for the article - it was an engrossing account of a very sad situation.

Have a Happy New Year,  
Mark Brandt

**Editor's note:** *While it is definitely true both males and females can be abusive, the majority of abusers are men. Many do argue that while both genders employ power and control dynamics, it is significantly worse for women. This isn't something everyone agrees on, though, and is currently a hot discussion topic with the recent re-naming of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women to Violence Free Minnesota.*

*I hope that the graphic that accompanied the article you're referring to helped put things in perspective by showing the exact breakdown of murders by father/mother/etc. according to the Center for Judicial Excellence.*

### We are not believed about our own lives

Dear Editor:

Thank you for interviewing Leigh Ann Block and, presumably, believing her story. Unlike the lawyers, judges and social workers who cared more about giving the violent man who would murder her daughter "a chance to demonstrate good behavior."

I could have lost either or both of my children to their abusive father many years ago. But they and I - were luckier than Mikayla and Leigh.

I had decent lawyers for my divorce, unlike Martha Eaves of SMRLS. But I knew that most people, and most professionals involved in divorce and custody cases, think women trying to

protect our children from violent men in their lives are making up stories to get revenge. That's the baseline wrong done to Leigh, Mikayla and so many other victims of abuse, most of which is perpetrated by men.

We are not believed about our own lives and our children's lives, and the violent men in our lives. My children's father was a - now retired - Presbyterian minister. You think most people believed me about his violence, his refusal to recognize other people's rights or boundaries, his resentment at "having to be a good boy"?

My children are grown, and caring, nonviolent, great people. We've survived. But part of me will feel safer when that man is dead.

Thank you, Leigh Ann, for your love and courage to keep going after being abused by that monster, suffering your little daughter's murder, and having your warnings ignored by people who should have paid attention.

It's a disease of "professionals," of "experts," to think they know better than the people who come to them for help. Doctors, lawyers, cops, judges, social workers, even some teachers and mental health workers have this disease. People die every day because of this disease of arrogance, distrust of women, racism.

Thank you again for writing this. I'm sure you'll receive a lot of letters like mine.

Helen Hunter  
St Paul

### What happened to Parkway Motor totem pole?

Dear Editor:

There is a post on NextDoor that is asking what happened to the totem pole that was originally part of the Parkway Motor Hotel at Hiawatha Ave. and Nawadaha Blvd. It was removed from its original place during the Hiawatha Ave. reconstruction, then sat on its side by the old Bridgeman's/SomTaste building for awhile. Do you have any knowledge of where it went to? Neighbors are dying to know!

Thanks for any info you can share!

Wade Johnson  
Hiawatha neighborhood

Send in letters to the editor, press releases and more!  
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## DIVING DEEPER

### What we've learned: Highlights from Intimate Partner Homicide Report

Now in its 30th edition, the Femicide Report has a new name: the Intimate Partner Homicide Report coinciding with the renaming of the Minnesota Battered Women's Coalition to Violence Free Minnesota.

Over three decades, at least 685 people were killed due to relationship abuse. The youngest victim was just 22 weeks old; the oldest was 88. Homicide victims include not only the victim of abuse, but people who tried to intervene to stop the violence: bystanders, first-responders, neighbors, friends, family, and children. Such victims represent the ripple effect of domestic violence and how it permeates communities. In sharing their stories, we chip away at the discredited notion that domestic violence is a private, family affair to invite public discourse and action towards a violence free future.

#### Power and control

While public perception of relationship abuse often emphasizes long histories of physical violence and noticeable injuries, relationship abuse is about a larger pattern of power and control.

People who abuse feel entitled to use physical, sexual, financial, and emotional tactics to control, isolate, and trap their partners. Relationships that have not previously involved physical abuse may involve long histories of humiliation, intimidation, and gaslighting that can culminate in an act of homicide. These tactics are used to instill fear in victims, increase compliance, and cause psychological injury. Victims who experience such abuse may gradually lose access to support services, become isolated from social networks, start to blame themselves, and believe they do not deserve better.

Abuse can look different in every relationship but always ties back to the same motivation: to gain and maintain power and control. Abusive partners may become horrifyingly creative in their tactics, including knowingly transmitting infections to victims and endangering their health; threatening or injuring their children and loved ones; responding with severe violence to rejection; monitoring their location and

movements; controlling their access to healthy relationships; and undermining their mental and chemical health by sabotaging their recovery efforts. Many victims who have experienced pervasive levels of abuse report feeling helpless, confused, "crazy," and defeated due to a gradual breakdown of their sense of self.

#### Children affected

Intimate partner homicides have a devastating impact on children, as well. CDC-Kaiser Permanente's Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations of the impact of childhood experiences on life-long health and well-being. The ACE research demonstrates that exposure to domestic violence can increase risk for physical, mental health, and substance abuse conditions. The impact of chronic domestic violence exposure in childhood was found to have long-term effects throughout the life span.

Impacts on minor children are seen throughout our 30 years of data: children who witnessed the homicide of a parent (22% of cases); children who were killed alongside their parent (16 children); and children killed as a method of coercion by an abusive partner (17 children). This data does not include the number of adult children who may have witnessed or were murdered alongside their parent. In many of the cases involving minor children, the need for protection was raised in a court proceeding or made known to another professional.

While some children are injured or killed as part of the relationship abuse against their parent, many more children are harmed by witnessing the violence. Over three decades, 151 cases of domestic violence homicide occurred with a child witnessing the murder. While experiencing and witnessing relationship violence negatively impacts children, research shows that children are most resilient and have the best emotional recovery when there is a strong relationship with the non-abusive parent. Safety of children is directly linked to the safety and support of victim-parents.

Selection of report above. Read the full report at <https://www.vfmmn.org/reports>.

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#### Printing by: ECM/Adams Publishing Group

This issue of the *Messenger* is printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink. Approximately 95-97% of material that enters the print facility is recycled.



#### Delivery provided by: Fresh Heir

If you have a problem with delivery, call 612-345-9998 or email the editor. Mail subscriptions are available at \$40 a year.

#### Design & Layout:

Tesha M. Christensen

#### Contributing Writers & Photographers:

Jane McClure, Jan Willms, Jill Boogren, Margie O'Loughlin, Matthew Davis, Stephanie Fox, Terry Faust, Iric Nathanson

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Help us reach our \$15,000 goal by 2/29/20.

Please consider contributing any amount and/or contribute in other ways, like joining a committee or the Board of Directors, or participating in our events. You can also buy LCC merchandise, set LCC as your non-profit on AmazonSmile or simply like/share our posts on social media!

## Please Help Longfellow Community Council

Longfellow Community Council (LCC) is your neighborhood organization, providing resources for programs, projects, activities, & events directly benefiting our community. LCC facilitates the work of three committees that review proposed development in the community and plan/implement resident-led projects, like the Longfellow 365 photo book, Minnehaha Mosaic refuse bins, rain gardens, Chard Your Yard, trash clean-ups, ecological restorations & lots more! We're your primary resource for funding needs, opportunities & information, as well as helping connect residents to local government. Many of your neighbors have already benefited from LCC funding, including hundreds of home restorations, through low-interest rehabilitation loans.

Luckily, for the past 30 years we've been allocated funding from the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP). However, as the City of Minneapolis updates its priorities and budget, funding for our grassroots neighborhood work is shrinking. Because of this, we need to increase our fundraising efforts to continue, sustain, and grow our community work.

Like you, we love this community and want to continue our mission: "To improve the well-being of our diverse community through engagement, involvement and empowerment."

To donate online visit: [www.longfellow.org/page/donate/](http://www.longfellow.org/page/donate/)  
Any donation amount is appreciated!

Learn more about LCC @ [www.longfellow.org](http://www.longfellow.org) or call 612-722-4529

# Home Improvement

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DEADLINES  
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neighborhood

# CHURCHES

welcome you!

**Bethlehem Covenant Church**  
3141 43rd Ave. S. • 612-721-5768  
[www.bethlehemcov.org](http://www.bethlehemcov.org)

Pastor Rick Mylander  
(Handicapped Accessible)  
Contemporary Worship – 8:45am  
Sunday School for all – 10:00am  
Traditional Worship – 11:00am  
Espanol – 1:30pm  
Feb. 5 - All Church Potluck at 6pm  
Feb. 9 – One service at 9:30am  
Feb. 26 – Ash Wednesday service at 7pm

**Epworth United Methodist**  
3207 37th Ave. • 612-722-0232  
[www.epworthmpls.org](http://www.epworthmpls.org)

Pastor Steven Reiser  
Adult Study 9:30 am  
Sunday Worship: 10:30 am  
Children's Class 10:45 am  
(Childcare Provided ages 0-4)  
(Wheelchair Accessible)  
Upcoming Events:  
Cabin Fever every Wednesday @9:30-11:30 am  
Feb. 12- Beer & Bible @ Merlin's Rest 6:30 pm  
Feb. 16- Bagel & Bible @9:30

**Minnehaha Communion Lutheran**  
4101 37th Ave. S. • 612-722-9527  
[www.minnehahacomunion.org](http://www.minnehahacomunion.org)  
Pastors Dan and Sally Ankerfelt

9:45 am-Sunday Worship & Sunday School  
Feb 8 at 4 pm-Lumberjack Dinner  
Feb 12 at 6 pm-Meal & Songs of My Life Service  
12 Step Program-Mon thru Thurs  
Everyone Welcome/Wheelchair accessible

**Spirit Garage** - The church with the really big door  
3010 Minnehaha Ave.

[www.spiritgarage.org](http://www.spiritgarage.org) • 612-827-1074  
**The Hook & Ladder Theater & Lounge**  
Pastor: Holly Johnson  
Music: John Kerns and bands  
Worship: 10:30 AM Sundays  
Next enneagram workshop: Feb. 11, 6-9 pm. See website to register.  
Ash Wednesday service at Squirrel Haus Arts, February 26 at 7 PM  
We're a casual quirky faith community with pretty good band-led music, progressive theology, strong coffee and a come-as-you-are vibe.

**St. Albert the Great Catholic**  
E. 29th St. at 32nd Ave. S. • 612-724-3643  
[www.saintalbertthegreat.org](http://www.saintalbertthegreat.org)

Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.  
Sunday Mass: 9:30 am (Childcare available)  
Saturday Mass: 5 pm  
M, T, Th, F: Rosary at 8 am, Daily Mass 8:15 am

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, First Fridays from 9 am to noon (Handicapped accessible)

**St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran**  
4600 E. 42nd St. • 612-722-8000  
[www.stpeders.org](http://www.stpeders.org)

Julie A. Ebbesen, Pastor  
9 am Worship  
9 am Youth Faith Formation  
10 am Coffee and Fellowship  
10:30 am Adult Faith Formation  
1st and 3rd Saturday, 2 pm: Fiber Arts, bring a project to work on!  
1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 9:00 am: Quilters, no sewing experienced required!  
Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. (Handicap acc., Braille, Large Print)

**Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls**  
5212 41st Ave. S. • 612-724-3691  
[www.trinityfalls.org](http://www.trinityfalls.org)

Pastor Matt Oxendale  
8:30 & 10:30 am Worship  
(1st Sunday 10:30 am only)  
Ash Wed. Service Feb. 26 - 6:30 p.m.  
AA Sun & Tues 7:00 pm

PROJECT OF NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCHES

Minnehaha Food Shelf, serving people Tuesday, 10:30 am - 3 pm

Call us at 612-721-6231 • Minnehaha United Methodist • 3701 E. 50th St.

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Jenna Swenson, D.D.S.

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# Summer Camp Guide

Create a cardboard castle, a cigar box guitar, or a Lego robot. Connect with long-time friends and make new ones while learning how to kayak, juggle or sew. Make a puppet, animated cartoon, stationary, or your own song.

**THERE ARE SO MANY SUMMER CAMP OPTIONS IN THE TWIN CITIES AREA, YOUR KIDS WILL HAVE TROUBLE PICKING JUST ONE!**

Browse below for more information on some of the camps offered locally.

By TESHAM. CHRISTENSEN

to August for ages 5-15.  
612-261-2301  
<http://www.explorebasecamp.org/>

## IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

### ADVENTURES IN CARDBOARD

Be initiated into an ancient and esteemed House of The Realm, jump into live-action adventure gaming, build your own arms and armor, and more during these five-day, full-day sessions for ages 8-17. Buses available from Powderhorn Park and some camps held at Minnehaha Park. [adventuresincardboard.com](http://adventuresincardboard.com)  
612-532-6764

### ARTICULTURE

A variety of art disciplines and mediums with themes like puppetry, world cultures, If I had a Hammer, animation, art car, public art and activism, printmaking and more offered for ages 4-18. Five-day, half- and full-day sessions available.  
612-729-5151  
<http://www.articulture.org>

### BASE CAMP

Climb high, climb far during the Discovery Day Camp's high energy activities offered near Fort Snelling Mondays to Fridays June

### BLACKBIRD'S MUSIC STORE

Write your own songs, start your own band, build cigar guitars from the ground up, and learn electric guitar.  
612-326-5745  
<http://blackbirdsmusicstore.com>

### CIRCUS JUVENTAS

Explore international circus arts at Circus Juventas. Five-day, full-day sessions and one-day sampler camps offered for ages 6-18.  
651-699-8229  
<http://www.circusjuventas.org>

### CENTER FOR BLADE ARTS

Modern Olympic fencing camps for all ages run from 10 a.m.-2 p.m, Monday-Friday in June and July.  
612-501-0640  
[www.centerforbladearts.com](http://www.centerforbladearts.com)

### COURAGEOUS hearts

Four-day camps running June-August for ages 10-18. Discounts offered for multiple weeks.  
612-729-2483  
[www.courageous-hearts.org](http://www.courageous-hearts.org)



From fencing to Lego robotics, there's something for everyone at Minnehaha Academy in the summer. (Photo courtesy of Minnehaha Academy)

### FOREST SCHOOL

Free Forest School of the Twin Cities is a free group, open to young children and their parents or caregivers. This is a welcoming and non-judgmental group where parents and caregivers can practice giving children space and autonomy to explore and create in nature. Free Forest School meets every day of the week throughout the year at wilderness areas around the metro. Share a snack, take a hike, play in the woods, and have circle time. Parents get a chance to unplug and step back... Kids and their imaginations take the lead.  
Cost: Free  
[www.freeforestschool.org/free-forest-school-twin-cities-minnesota/](http://www.freeforestschool.org/free-forest-school-twin-cities-minnesota/)

### KID YOGA

Yoga infused throughout the day via story, dance and games for campers age 5-12. Located on the Greenway = daily field adventures.  
612-202-5164  
[kidyogamn.com](http://kidyogamn.com)

### MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

Pick from an amazing variety of camps for children grades K-12. From fencing to Lego robotics, baseball to history field trips, there is a camp to jump start a child's summer adventure.  
612-728-7745, ext. 1  
<http://www.minnehahaacademy.net>

### SE MINNEAPOLIS SOCCER

Southeast Soccer fields a variety

of girls and boys teams for ages U9-U18 at beginner, intermediate and advanced competitive levels. Consider the Lil' Dribblers soccer program for ages 4-8, or summer traveling teams.  
<http://www.sesoccer.org/>  
612-396-9511

### YMCA

Explore the variety of Y Summer Programs at over 60 metro-area locations. Programs include flexible three-, four-, and five-day options for preschool and up, as well as day camps, overnight camps, Teen Wilderness, family camps and more.  
[http://www.ymcatwincities.org/child\\_care\\_preschool/summer\\_programs/](http://www.ymcatwincities.org/child_care_preschool/summer_programs/)

**Friends School OF MINNESOTA**

**Summer Camps at Friends School of Minnesota**

Ages 4-14 • June 15th-July 10th  
Financial aid & extended day available

**Spend your summer with Friends!**

- Harry Potter Camp
- Bike Camp
- Film Camp
- Pre-K Camps
- And More!

Register online at [www.fsmn.org](http://www.fsmn.org)  
1365 Englewood Avenue, St. Paul 55104  
651-917-0636

**SUMMER DAY CAMP  
HALF-DAY & FULL-DAY CAMP OPTIONS**

Unique day camp experiences in a caring & safe environment.

**MINNEHAHA ACADEMY**

Register Now! 612-728-7745  
[www.MinnehahaAcademy.net/Schools/SummerPrograms/](http://www.MinnehahaAcademy.net/Schools/SummerPrograms/)



## IN THE TWIN CITIES

### ANIMAL HUMANE SOCIETY

kids entering grades 3-10 spend a full week immersed in animal learning and fun at one of four AHS locations.  
[animalhumanesociety.org/summer-camp](http://animalhumanesociety.org/summer-camp)  
 763-489-2220

### ALEXANDER RAMSEY HOUSE

Solve mysteries of the past in this three-day History Detective Camp for ages 10-13. Or, young ladies ages 9-12 can step back in time in a unique Finishing School for Young Ladies day camp.  
 612-341-7555  
<http://www.mnhs.org/summer-camps>

### AMERICAN SWEDISH INSTITUTE

Day camps for ages 6-10 and multi-day camps for a variety of ages with topics such as vikings, Pippi Longstocking and Swedish cooking.  
 612-871-4907  
[asimn.org](http://asimn.org)

### ARTSTART

Creative cultural camps exploring Peru and Ecuador through art that reuses discarded materials. Sessions for ages 4-teen run late June - July.  
 651-698-2787  
[www.artstart.org](http://www.artstart.org)

### CAMP COMO

Spend some time "Monkeying Around" with your primate pals, go for the gold in "Animal Olympics", take an "African Adventure" without leaving Como, or try on the hat of a zookeeper or gardener in "Behind-the-Scenes!". Como's camps focus on developing children's appreciation for the natural world through play and exploration, behind-the-scenes experiences, interactions with zookeepers and gardeners, and up-close encounters with plant



Aspiring young musicians explore through classes and creative play at St. Paul Conservancy. (Photo courtesy of St. Paul Conservancy of Music)

and animal ambassadors Five-day, half-day or full-day sessions for preschool to grade eight. Extended care available.  
 651-487-8272  
<https://comozooconservatory.org/como/camp-como/>

### DODGE NATURE CENTER

Campers have fun while gaining appreciation for nature by meeting live animals, building forts, and getting their hands dirty during full- and half-day, four-day camps offered for students entering 1-8 grades. Shorter sessions available for ages 3-6.  
 651-455-4531  
<http://www.dodgenaturecenter.org/>

### FRIENDS SCHOOL

Want to make a film just like the professionals do? Feel like biking 10 (or 20!) miles a day? Have a secret stash of poems you want to share? Feel a need to express yourself through paint and paper-folding? Maybe you'd rather argue for the defense in a real courtroom? Friends School will be the place to do that--and more--from June to August for ages 4-14. Week-days, half- and full-day. Extended day care in the mornings and afternoons and need-based financial aid available.

651-621-8941  
<http://www.fsmn.org>

### HAMLIN YOUNG WRITERS

High school students ages 15-18 can explore the craft, prepare for college, and connect with other young writers in the Twin Cities, while working closely with Hamline Creative Writing faculty and published authors.  
 651-523-2476  
<http://www.hamline.edu/gls/youngwriters/>

### HEARTFELT

Summer camps allow time for more in-depth projects, such as Wild & Wooly, Fairies, Critters, and Sea Creature, for kindergarten and up.  
<http://heartfeltonline.com>

### INNER CITY TENNIS

Enjoy Summer Tennis in Minneapolis parks for ages 6-17. Free and reduced programs available.  
 612-825-6844  
<http://www.innercitytennis.org>

### LEONARDO'S BASEMENT

Girls and boys ages 6 to 17 can design and build their creative ideas, mixing art, science and technology during partial-day, weekday camps. There are more

than 120 classes available over 10 weeks.  
 612-824-4394  
[www.leonardosbasement.org](http://www.leonardosbasement.org)

### LOFT LITERARY CENTER

There's something for everyone—from the youngster just learning to put pen to paper to the seasoned high school senior with a novel already under her belt. Sessions run in week-long blocks July and August, full and half-day options available for ages 6-17.  
 612-215-2575  
[www.loft.org/youth](http://www.loft.org/youth)

### LOPET ADVENTURE CAMPS

Rollerblade, mountain bike, canoe and more during adventure camps for ages 9-13 at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis. Equipment provided during the full-day, five-day sessions.  
 612-604-5330  
[www.loppet.org/programs/camps/](http://www.loppet.org/programs/camps/)

### MINNEAPOLIS SAILING CENTER

One-week youth camps and sailing classes offered on beautiful Bde Maka Ska.  
<https://sailmpls.org/>  
 612-470-SAIL

### NORTHERN CLAY CENTER

Explore clay through sculpture or wheel-thrown pottery in half or full-day sessions for ages 6 and up.  
 612-339-8007  
[www.northernclaycenter.org](http://www.northernclaycenter.org)

### RAPTOR CENTER

Summer sessions for ages 6-14 are run by the University of Minnesota's Rec & Wellness Camps. Camps also offered in partnership with MIA and Richardson Nature Center.  
[www.raptor.umn.edu](http://www.raptor.umn.edu)

### SNAPOLOGY

With camps happening at the new Discovery Center in Uptown

every week of the summer, as well as at various schools and educational partners around the Twin Cities, Snapology has got you covered for kiddos as young as 3 and as old as 14 - Robotics, Coding, Science, Technology, Drones, Pre-K, Engineering, Architecture and more.  
<https://www.snapology.com/locations/minneapolis>

### ST. PAUL CONSERVANCY OF MUSIC

Music day camp for aspiring young musicians - offering a setting where children can explore their musical knowledge and ability through classes, creative play, and presentations by renowned professionals. No prior musical experience required! July 6-17, 9 am. - 4p.m. Extended care available until 5:30 p.m.  
[www.thespcm.org/summercamp](http://www.thespcm.org/summercamp)  
 651-224-2205

### ST. PAUL BALLET

Summer is a great time to try dance. Programs include workshops and camps for ages 3 and up, weekly drop-in classes for teens and adults, and a "mommy and me" baby class.  
 651-690-1588  
[www.spballet.org](http://www.spballet.org)

### TEXTILE CENTER CAMPS

Sew, knit, felt, dye, and more. Take home hand-made creations from half-day, weeklong classes, for students ages 6-16.  
 4612-436-0464  
<http://textilecentermn.org/sc>

### VERTICAL ENDEAVORS

Climbing camp in single day, half and full day sessions run early June to late August for ages 6-13.  
[www.verticalendeavors.com](http://www.verticalendeavors.com)

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list of every camp in the Twin Cities. If you would like to be included in next year's guide, please send us detailed information on the camp.*

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## SUMMER DANCE!

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SPBALLET.ORG  
 651-690-1588

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 BALLET

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## SPCM Summer Music Camp

JULY 6-17, 2020

Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm (10 days)  
 Ages: completed K up to 6th grade  
 Location: 1524 Summit Ave, St. Paul

Our music day camp offers a setting where children can explore their musical knowledge and ability through classes, creative play, and presentations by renowned professionals.  
**No prior musical experience required!**  
 The camp culminates in performances on the last two days of camp.

[www.thespcm.org/summercamp](http://www.thespcm.org/summercamp)





# Rebuild Repair Recycle

## Better Futures Minnesota helps men rebuild their lives with dignity, while supporting green enterprise

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

The Reuse Warehouse is keeping more than 650 tons of construction material out of landfills and incinerators annually, through their deconstruction services and sale of salvaged building materials. While providing this environmental benefit, they are also helping their employees repair and rebuild their lives from the ground up. Proceeds from sales at the Reuse Warehouse go to support Better Futures Minnesota, in which all of their employees are enrolled.

Better Futures Minnesota (BFM) President and CEO Dr. Thomas Adams explained, "Reuse Warehouse employees are African American men between the ages of 18-65. All of them have multiple felonies on their records, and would find it almost impossible to get jobs elsewhere. In terms of education, they have not received enough to be self-sufficient. All of this combines to create a dependency on jail, treatment facilities, homeless shelters, and government assistance."

The men who come to BFM likely have a long history of unemployment, homelessness, and a disconnection from healthy support systems. Rebuilding lives can be a long, complicated process.

Adams said, "From experience, we know it takes a coordinated team working together to help our men start walking the path to a better life. BFM is not a job re-entry program. We are a response to a public health crisis."

### Integrated model works best

Better Futures Minnesota, which was founded in 2007, stands on these four fundamen-

tal principles:

**Housing Stability:** participants live at Great River Landing, a permanent, supportive housing model in the North Loop for 6-8 months. The men live in a dorm-style setting, and are able to establish rental history. They can eventually move into efficiency apartments at Great River Landing, or move on to other permanent living options in the community.

**Health and Wellness:** mental and physical health needs are addressed through partnerships with trauma-informed, culturally-specific care providers. Many of the men have previously undiagnosed and untreated health problems such as prostate cancer and diabetes.

**Workforce Development:** participants receive training in one of BFM's six business lines. These are Deconstruction Services, Warehouse Sales, Appliance Recycling, Janitorial Services, Lawn/Snow Care, and Crew-Based Labor. Men receive up to 12 professional certifications before matriculating, giving them, in all likelihood, their first chance at being self-supporting.

**Life Coaching and Compassionate Care:** this is at the heart of BFM's integrated care model that helps men start to rebuild their lives. Case management services are also available.

Adams explained, "The integrated care model we're founded on is both a blessing and a curse. The blessing is that we're able to see whole person transformation, and we frequently do."

"The curse is that most of the world doesn't operate this way. The Minnesota State Departments of Corrections, Human Services, Employment and Eco-



CEO and President Dr. Thomas Adams said, "Better Futures Minnesota is helping men repair and rebuild their lives. When you buy our reused materials or use our business services, you support the men we serve, the community, and Minnesota's environment." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

nomics Development tell us we should be focusing on one thing for the sake of funding, but we know that focusing on one thing brings abysmal results."

### How is it that BFM landed in the green sector?

Adams said, "Our goal is to enter industries that are forgiving toward our men's backgrounds. Jobs in deconstruction (which means taking structures apart, not just knocking them down) and recycling are forgiving, they

pay a living wage, and they are right smack in the middle of the green sector."

He continued, "Half of our business is on the green side. We go to environmental stewardship conferences all around the country, and we're always the only organization of color. Climate change and renewable energy are not at the top of the list for most people of color - but job creation and health care are. We came to the environmental movement through these channels."

### SUCCESS STORY

John is a 49 year old man who's been in and out of jail for the past 15 years due to poor decisions, alcohol abuse, and homelessness. He missed 12 of his daughter's 17 birthdays while he was behind bars. John chose to enroll in Better Futures Minnesota because, in his words, "the name said it all." In the last 14 months, John has remained sober, received all of the certifications BFM has to offer, obtained permanent housing, and had his daughter stay with him every other weekend. Last winter, he took a trip to the Florida beach for the first time in his life. John has a new lease on life and has recently started his own cleaning company, thanks in part to the certifications and skills he obtained from BFM.

~ Courtesy of BFM

Community members can support the work of Better Futures Minnesota by buying used building materials from their Reuse Warehouse, or hiring a service team from one of their six business lines. BFM currently has property maintenance contracts with more than 300 residential and commercial properties around the Twin Cities.

The Reuse Warehouse is located near the "Minnehaha Mile," a shopping corridor dedicated to recycled, reused, and reclaimed products. Their address is 2620 Minnehaha Ave. Donations of building materials and household goods are also welcome.

Visit [www.betterfuturesminnesota.com](http://www.betterfuturesminnesota.com) to learn more.

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**NENA Crock-Pot Cook-Off**

Bring your family and friends to the 3rd Annual Great Nokomis East Crock-Pot Cook-Off, now with a meat raffle, on Saturday, Saturday, Feb. 29, 6-7:30 p.m., at the Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church (5011 S 31st Ave.)! Revel in these two Minnesota traditions in one night. All proceeds raised from this event will go towards NENA's programs and initiatives in Nokomis East. It's a truly stew-ependous event!

Minnesotans know how to whip up a dish in a pot. Have a soup-erb recipe you would like to show off? Is your specialty a traditional cream of mushroom delight or do you have something a little bit more exotic? Let the community be the judge of who will be the 20120 Cook-Off Champ. Did we mention there will be a trophy?

This is a family-friendly event. Ingredients will be listed for each entry to avoid allergies or food sensitivities. More information, including the registration form, is available on the NENA website: <http://nokomiseast.org/nenas-crock-pot-cook-off-is-back/>.

**Meatless movie night**

There has been plenty of discussion recently about the positive impacts of a plant-rich diet or a locally sourced diet on climate change. But what does that look like exactly? Join NENA's Green Initiatives Com-

**NENA** (Nokomis East Neighborhood Association)

4313 E. 54th St., [www.nokomiseast.org](http://www.nokomiseast.org), 612-724-5652

mittee for a "Meatless Movie Night" on Friday, Feb. 21, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Morris Park Recreation Center (5531 39th Ave. S.). Sample meat alternatives like the Impossible Burger and watch a documentary about food sustainability. This event is casual, so bring a blanket to stretch out on or even wear your PJ's. We won't judge.

**NENA Home Loan Program**

NENA is now offering two home improvement loan programs. Homes in the Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park and Wenonah neighborhoods are eligible. Loan appli-

cations are processed on a first-come first served basis.

For more information or to request an application, call the Center for Energy and Environment at (612) 335-5884, or visit the CEE website.

**Meetings and events:**

2/5/20: NENA Housing, Commercial, and Streetscape Committee, NENA Office, 6:30 p.m.

2/12/20: NENA Green Initiatives Committee, NENA Office, 6:30 p.m.

2/24/18: NENA Board Meeting, NENA Office, 7:00 p.m.

**Longfellow Business Association**

**Longfellow Businesses: LBA wants to hear from you**

This March, the Longfellow Business Association (LBA) is hosting focus group to learn how to better support the business community in the Greater Longfellow Area. "We're interested in hearing from business owners about the tools, resources, connections we can offer to help your business thrive," explained Kim Jakus. "If your business falls into one of the following cate-

gories, consider joining us: Industrial Business, Minority or Immigrant owned Business, Next Generation / Millennial owned Business, or Arts & Entertainment

Lunch will be provided and all participants will receive a \$20 gift card to a local Longfellow business. For more information, as well as dates and times, please contact Kim at [kim@longfellow-businessassociation.org](mailto:kim@longfellow-businessassociation.org) or 612-298-4699.

**El Colegio hires new executive director**

El Colegio High School is excited to announce Katie Groh de Aviña as the new executive director. She began after winter break.

El Colegio (4147 Bloomington Ave.) is a small public high school in Minneapolis that has been serving students in English and Spanish since 2000.

Ms. Katie comes to El Colegio after having most recently served as one of the directors at Academia Cesar Chavez in Saint Paul. She has many years of leadership, experience, and knowledge in charter school management and cultural competency in education.

Ms. Katie has worked with

the Latinx community for 20 years in multiple capacities, and has always believed in the potential of all her students. "El Colegio has a created environment and space safe for all learners to be successful! I want to build on that and make sure more youth know about El Colegio when they are selecting their high school!" said Ms. Katie.

Her predecessor, Ms Norma C Garcés, will be concluding her nine years as El Colegio's executive director. She will support the transition during the month of January, then go on to pursue her Bush Fellowship.

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Messenger Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to *Messenger Classifieds*, 5139 34th Ave. S. #17097, Minneapolis, MN 55417; e-mail [denis@longfellownokomisemessenger.com](mailto:denis@longfellownokomisemessenger.com); or call 651-917-4183.

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# In Our Community

**Messenger**

Send us your news! When you submit your press release it will be considered for both the newspaper as well as the Messenger Facebook page (Facebook.com/LongfellowNokomisMessenger).

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refuse: rethinking waste at Feb. 3 event

Curious to know where your recycling goes once the city hauls it away? Interested in learning more about zero-waste strategies? Not sure where to take your gear when it needs to be fixed? Join us at Matthews Park Recreation Center on Monday, Feb. 3 from 6-8 p.m. for an interactive, informational event to find out the answers to these questions and more. Fea-

turing guest speakers:

- Kellie Kish, Recycling Coordinator with the City of Minneapolis
  - Kate Marnach, Tare Market
  - Nancy Ford, Repair Lair
- This event is co-sponsored by the Longfellow Community Council's Environment and River Gorge Committee and the Seward Neighborhood Group's Environment Committee.

## State sets Ford Area C dumpsite public meeting for Feb. 20

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has set the date for a public meeting on the Ford Area C riverfront dumpsite: Thursday, Feb. 20, 6-8 p.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 Snelling Ave. S., St. Paul.

As reported in the November 2019 *Messenger*, the dumpsite is buried in the bluff across from Minnehaha Falls Park trails and dog park, and visible from the Veterans Hospital in Minneapolis.

On the St. Paul side, the dumpsite bluff section is just north of and adjacent to Hidden Falls Park, and south of the Ford bridge and long-closed steam plant.

While appearing normal from a distance, concrete chunks, rebar and other construction debris are visible in this off-limits but frequently trespassed area.

Such "filler" and rubble – dumped over the bluff from the mid-'60s to the early '80s – covers barrels of industrial waste and liquid solvents.

Ford dumped industrial waste and solvents over the bluff from roughly 1945 to 1966. According to the MPCA, the company disposed of paint sludge and solvents. But precisely what was dumped or in what quantities remains unknown.

With the cleanup of Ford's larger blufftop parcels complete, and their redevelopment into 3,800 housing units plus office and retail spaces given the green light, attention is now turning to the river or dumpsite parcel. (While the blufftop sections were originally Areas A and B, Ford's riverfront property was known as Area C.)

Capitol Region Watershed District and Friends of the Mississippi River have been advocating for additional monitoring of the ground and surface water. The state has agreed to install additional wells and is exploring the feasibility of various cleanup options. The public is invited to learn more at the Feb. 20 meeting.

## Art inspired by music

Welcome writers! Bring your written draft material to a weekly writers meeting. "We are a group of experienced writers who provide constructive feedback and support to fellow community wordsmiths," explain organizer Jim Collette. "Whatever you write -- fiction, poetry, memoir, history, essays -- join us to sharpen your skills and fine-tune your work." The writers group meets at Merriam Park Library, Marshall and Fairview avenues in St. Paul, every Thursday, 10:30-noon. Call 651-442-3544 for more information.

## Elder Voices meets

Elder Voices (Telling Our Stories) will meet the fourth Friday of February (2/28). Elder Voices meets at Turtle Bread Company, 4205-34th St. at the corner of 42nd Ave. and 34th Street from 10-11:30 a.m. There will be time for people to tell or update their elder stories, the challenges and joys of elderhood. There will be a review of last month's stories. There will be a discussion about participation in the 2020 Census.

## Restorative Justice Fundraiser Feb. 15

The 10th annual Restorative Justice Fundraiser is set for Saturday, Feb. 15, 5-7:30 p.m. at The Hook and Ladder (3010 Minnehaha Ave.). It's a night of wine, beer, and spirits tasting in support of Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice. Tickets now on sale at Zipps and Eventbrite for \$25 or \$30 at door. Enjoy jazz by Joel Shapira, delicious food from local restaurants, a silent auction, and dozens of samples of beer, wine, and spirits.

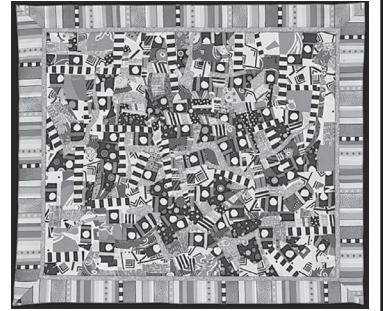
## LoLa's Winter Fine Art Exhibition offers tasting menu of works

The League of Longfellow Artists (LoLa) welcomes everyone to the third annual Winter Fine Art Exhibition at Squirrel Haus Arts, 3450 Snelling Ave. in Longfellow, Feb. 22-23 and Feb. 29-Mar. 1.

Meet the artists and enjoy refreshments and music at the opening, Feb. 22, 5-7 p.m., during which a DJ from Solsta Records will spin vintage vinyl. Libations at the reception include wine, beer, and nonalcoholic beverages, and the table will be spread with an array of sweet and savory snacks. Gallery hours are noon to 5 each day. All events are free, family friendly, and open to the public.

It's a local art tasting menu because artists select just one or two pieces to showcase at this event, ensuring room for all the LoLa artists who want to exhibit their work together in one spot. See what these Longfellow artists have been up to and make note of those you may want to visit during this year's LoLa Art Crawl, Sept. 19-20.

Artwork will be for sale at the discretion of the artists, who



ABOVE "Pi Kappa," art quilt by Bob Payton.

BELOW "Ratty in a Boat," line and wash watercolor on paper, by Sharon Parker.



set their prices and receive all proceeds from any sales. Exhibited works span a wide variety of media and styles, including paintings (oil, acrylic, watercolor) on canvas, board, and paper, photographs on paper and metal, printmaking, mixed media, mosaics, and sculpture.

## Intergenerational story time at Vet's Home

February Baby/Toddler Intergenerational Story Hour & Play Time at the Minnesota Veterans Home is Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Veterans read books and sing songs (with a ukulele player) for 1/2 an hour followed by 1/2 hour play/craft time, all led by a recreation therapist. This

is free and open to the public, and held monthly. Children of all ages are welcome, just know the songs and books are geared to little ones. The Minnesota Veterans Home is at 5101 Minnehaha Ave S. and the program is in the Building 19 Community Room. The facility is a nursing home within Minnehaha Falls Park. Contact Erin, erin.betlock@state.mn.us / 612 548 5751, to RSVP or with any questions.

## Auditions planned

Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater Company, a community theater in south Minneapolis, has announced auditions for its spring 2020 production of William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night." Auditions will be held at Faith Mennonite Church (2720 E 22nd St.) on Monday, March 2 at 7 p.m. and Wednesday, March 4 at 7 p.m. The cast will need seven men and seven women, ranging in age from 15-70, with 4 of them in the 20-40 age range, and technical staff. This is a non-union, non-paying production. For more information, contact Noreen Brandt at 612-724-4539 or email classicslostandfound@gmail.com.

## Veggies classes set

The Veggie Basics class offered by Transition Longfellow runs for 4 Saturdays in April: April 4, April 11, April 18 and April 25 from 10:30 a.m., in the community room at Gandhi Mahal (3009 27th Ave So.). It is taught by various Hennepin County master gardeners. Cost for the entire series is \$10. Beverages will be served. For questions about class content, email reierson.deb@gmail.com. For questions about registration or payment, email boyleaj3@gmail.com.



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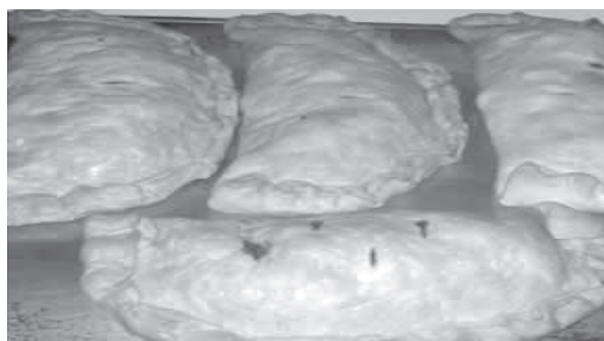
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# So people won't forget...

## Novel focuses on mining strike of 1916

By JAN WILLMS

Megan Marsnik wrote her novel "Under Ground," based on the mining strike of 1916 in northern Minnesota so that people would not forget.

Marsnik teaches creative writing and philosophy in Minnesota and has written poetry, short stories and two unpublished novels. But when she returned to her home town of Bilabik on the Iron Range about 10 years ago for a class reunion, she sensed a story waiting to be told.

"I ran into a bunch of old friends, and I noted a lot of anti-union sentiment," Marsnik recalled. "Up until then, the area had always been strongly pro-union and voted Democratic. We're the reason we got Wellstone elected." She said the Iron Range voters were strong supporters of candidates who stood for labor and human rights in general.

"Things were starting to shift," Marsnik said. "Union membership was declining, dropping to between 6 and 11 percent. And a strange anti-immigrant sentiment was starting to crop up. I could see it sprouting and could not understand it."

Marsnik said she, like most of her friends, is two generations removed from the immigrants who first settled in the Iron Range. She described herself as being very curious about why this anti-immigrant feeling was emerging.

"My theory is that people forget," she claimed. "Once you are no longer hungry and have a job or insurance or a little money set aside in case your car breaks down, you start to forget the feelings of poverty."

### Suspenseful and traumatic

She started doing research into the mining strike of 1916, which had been a huge turning point on the Iron Range. Marsnik took a sabbatical from her teaching and researched for two years. "There was a strike in 1907 that failed, but in 1916 it was more a point of no return," she said. "Almost everyone living on the Range was hugely impacted."

As she started researching her book, Marsnik said she went on the ideological premise that stories can turn people's minds. "This was a story that had not been told, and I know why," she reflected. "It is rooted in trauma. It may seem suspenseful with twists and turns, but to the people who lived it, it was traumatizing. They did not want to talk about it."

She said that even though she grew up on the Range, she and a lot of others did not know the stories. "I knew them better than most, because I worked at the Range Research Center. But many people had never told their own families these stories of violence and intimidation," Marsnik said. "They were things people wanted to forget, but they should not be forgotten."

### Love poem to the Iron Range

Marsnik tells the story of "Under Ground" from the perspective of Katka, a young immigrant from Slovenia who journeys to Bilabik to live with her uncle and his family after her parents have died from typhoid. Although Marsnik is the granddaughter of immigrants, she said she had

never envisioned herself as Katka. "I needed someone coming into the Range for the first time. If I had written from the perspective of someone like me, who had already been there, it would have been from a very different viewpoint," she noted.

"Katka is one of the very few characters who is not based on someone real. She embodies things I admire, but I have been surprised by how much people like her. I did not work on her character very much; she was the storyteller."

As the story progresses, however, Katka does become an Iron Ranger. "There is something that happens at the end of the book, and it had to happen that way," Marsnik said. "It really is a love poem to the Iron Range."

"Under Ground" first appeared in serialized form in the *Star Tribune* in 2015. "I finished the novel in 2014, and went back to work teaching and put it aside. But I saw an ad that the paper was looking for manuscripts that had an Iron Range connection," Marsnik said. "I did not even think; I just sent it off and got a response in 24 hours, asking me to send the rest of the book. I was incredibly surprised, but it was a good choice. Thousands of people were able to read this story."

The *Star Tribune* had the rights to the book for four years, but Marsnik was able to negotiate to get them back in three years. "Bill Burleson said he would publish, so I never even shopped it around," she said. "I love his work, and we are friends. I just respect him. I know how hard it is to make it in the publishing world."

The book came out this past July, and Marsnik immediately started touring with 11 readings. She said she very deliberately wrote the book for the people of northern Minnesota. "I launched it in my home town and then went to Ely and Madeline Island, among other locations," she observed.

### Book belongs to readers

Marsnik said she was telling her students a week or two ago about how to show and not tell. "I was telling them how to express emotion without saying it. You can be the best writer in the world and still not convey the emotion you want," she said.

"Once you have written a book, it is no longer yours," Marsnik explained. "It becomes the emotion of your reader. That book is theirs. The story is very different depending on who is reading it."

According to Marsnik, the people of northern Minnesota were so happy to have a book with characters with names that sounded like theirs.

Most of the local characters in "Under Ground" are fictional, but the union organizers who appear in the book are real. "It was a decision I had to make," Marsnik said. "I wanted to make it clear that during the strike of 1916, everyone was watching. I think it's important that Eugene Debs gets more attention than in history books." She also wrote about union organizer Elizabeth Gurly Flynn. "I did a lot of research, and determined where she was at this month and time."

Marsnik said the important thing for her is to just write, whether a book is published or



Longfellow author Megan Marsnik said she agreed with the statement made by author Toni Morrison: "If there is a book you want to read and you can't find it, you must write it." (Photo by Jan Willms)

not. "A lot of people say they are writers, but they never write. A writer is one who writes. It has nothing to do with publishing. It is about the discipline," she noted.

Even her students would laugh at her if they saw her process of research, Marsnik said. "I use different colors for characters, and I like to have my yellow notebook and put post-it notes on the wall. I like to be able to organize it myself," she commented.

### FLEXIBLE PRESS: A NEIGHBORHOOD-HOUSED BUSINESS

"Flexible Press is housed in the Longfellow neighborhood – literally housed, since it's a home-based business. Or even more precisely, a neighborhood restaurant-based business, since that's where we meet and I do most of my work," said William Burleson. "In 2020, technology means we can farm out all the printing and distribution, so all that we need to do is focus on the writing."

"I and a group of fellow writers started Flexible Press to give voice to authors and at the same time support the community and support mission-driven causes. We now have four books out, two of which we have devoted all the profit to local non-profits."

"Under Ground" is the publishing company's first novel. Burleson said

he is excited to be able to help Megan put this important historical fiction out there at a time he thinks we really need to learn from history – namely histories of the labor movement, of immigration, and of women.

Next will be a poetry anthology called "Rewilding" from Split Rock Review and edited by Crystal Gibbons, who is a rising star in the world of poets. All the profits from that will go to Friends of the Boundary Waters.

"We hope that this is just a start. We want to grow while not drifting off our mission. There are just so many great authors who need to be heard, and so much opportunity to help along the way," Burleson said.

More at [www.flexiblepub.com](http://www.flexiblepub.com).

Marsnik said there is never a time she is not writing, and her next book of historical fiction is about Nina Clifford. "She was a really important woman in St. Paul who owned a brothel," Marsnik said. "She was a mover and a shaker who started the first African American orphanage in the Twin Cities."

### History rhymes

Reflecting back on "Under Ground," Marsnik said that

if you look at reports from the time, stories were whitewashed to make the conditions sound less brutal than they were.

"I felt if people remembered these stories that have been forgotten, we may not repeat the mistakes. Someone said that history does not repeat itself, it just rhymes," she remarked.

"I was thinking how is it possible people my age have anti-immigrant feelings, when their own parents and grandparents were immigrants."

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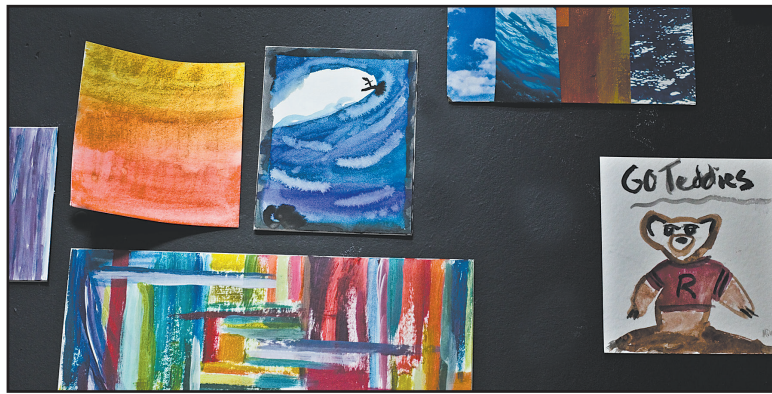
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They tell me they're bombarded with typical questions about their future, but expectations for getting into college – and the possibility of incurring life-long debt – have made the stress worse."

"There's all of that, and then there's the stuff of the world: the climate crisis, immigration, racism, homophobia. The list is long and it's on a constant loop in their newsfeeds. That's where the RestART Room comes in."

Last year, a Roosevelt senior, Bisharo Abdi, and a group of friends worked closely with Walz to bring the RestART Room to life. Abdi said, "I was glad to have the RestART Room because managing my coursework and all the work of applying to colleges became overwhelming. I learned some techniques for de-stressing. I learned it was okay to relax, and to show my feelings, even if they weren't positive."

Abdi has taken those skills with her to Augsburg College, where she is a freshman majoring in biology and youth studies. In addition to going to college, Abdi is also working as an apprentice at Courageous heARTS.



*"We're all in this thing called life together." - Lindsay Walz*

She said, "There have been many benefits for me in learning to live more mindfully. One of the biggest benefits is that I've finally overcome my shyness. When I was in high school, it was very hard for me to speak up in class. Now at Courageous heARTS, I regularly give tours to the public – and I enjoy it."

#### Want to get involved?

Walz surveyed the RestART Room, which has no shortage of art supplies. She said, "We could use more materials geared toward mindfulness and healing. If anyone has a SAD light box they're not using, or an essential oil diffuser, these are things we'd like to try. Also books about mindfulness or meditation, or

#### TIP: PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Senior Samiya Farah said, "One of the things I've learned by coming here is to practice gratitude. I focus on at least one thing every day that I'm grateful for. I'm thinking about making a gratitude jar. Just writing something simple on a piece of paper every day, and enjoying watching the jar fill up."

monetary donations to be used toward increasing staff. We're lucky to be in a community that supports our mission that art is transformative, and has the power to support individual and collective healing."

Learn more about volunteer and donation opportunities at [www.courageous-hearts.org](http://www.courageous-hearts.org).



Lindsay Walz, Courageous heARTS founder and executive director, works in creative partnership to support the RestART Room. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

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