



Parks
for All
murals
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From their Standpoint

Survivors connect with
attorneys through free line



By TALIA MCWRIGHT

Thi Synavone came to the U.S. in 1979 as a Laotian refugee. After living in many states, her family settled in Minnesota in 1988. Synavone said that growing up, domestic and sexual violence was never addressed, and in Lao culture there is no word for domestic abuse. Even now in her adult years, she explained, not a lot of people like to engage in conversations about domestic violence.

"The statistics are high, yet we don't have conversations around it," Synavone said.

Synavone has worked at Standpoint (2324 University Ave. W. Suite 103, St. Paul) for six years. When she first started working with Standpoint, she focused on doing outreach within the Laotian community, creating spaces for women to talk openly about experiences of domestic and sexual violence. Synavone centered the gatherings around things like cooking, and would ease into bringing up conversations that would engage her community. Synavone wanted to offer women support by communicating a perspective that championed their safety and comfort.



Thi Synavone works as the executive director at Standpoint. (Photo submitted)

"The message was, if this is happening to you and you feel unsafe, there are people to talk to about it for you to feel safe," Synavone said.

She started at Standpoint as an advocate support program manager, then transitioned to the director of organization and staff development. She is now the executive director of Standpoint. Since the late 90s, she has worked to curb domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking. Her work began in rural southwest Minnesota until 2016, when she moved to the Twin Cities. She has a masters from Metropolitan State University in nonprofit and public administration. A large focus of the work she does alongside the domestic and sexual violence advocacy is finding ways to provide access to resources and services for marginalized communities.

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Ethiopian immigrants offer dine in or take out at Salem Restaurant on Minnehaha Ave.

GRIT, RESOLVE AND A RESTAURANT



Some 40 years after Belai Mergia (left) escaped from war-torn Ethiopia, he, the dreamer, and Rahel, the culinary artist who dreamt with him, offer sumptuous meals in a restaurant where patrons are invited to dine in or take out. And enjoy. (Photo by Jane St. Anthony)

By JANE ST. ANTHONY

When 18-year-old Belai Mergia walked through the jungle from Ethiopia to Sudan in 1984, he didn't picture a restaurant named Selam in his future.

Belai had hired two guides yet feared that they might either abandon him or do him harm. Using cobbled sign language, they assured him: "If you die, we'll die, too."

In the midst of his dread, Belai saw a man – likely an English hiker, he thought – who wore binoculars around his neck and carried a large backpack. Another apparent hiker appeared soon after.

"They came out of nowhere," Belai said, of the men headed for Ethiopia, the country he was fleeing.

The Ethiopia monarchy had been overthrown by Mengistu Haile Mariam, who attempted to create a communist state run by the military.

"He was ruthless," said Belai.

Mariam's Red Terror carried out hundreds of thousands of massacres across the country, including those in Wollo, the city in which Belai had been born and raised. Sometimes the military demanded money from grieving families to pay for the bullets that had killed their loved ones.

GRIT, RESOLVE, AND A RESTAURANT >> 2

GET TO KNOW WARD 12 CANDIDATES

Three running for Andrew Johnson's council seat

By CAM GORDON

Ward 12 city council candidates shared viewpoints with over 200 people at a forum held Sept. 12, 2023. Candidates there included Aurin Chowdhury, Nancy Ford, and Luther Ranheim who are campaigning to fill the seat currently held by Andrew Johnson who is not seeking reelection.

The forum was sponsored by the League of Woman Voters, and held at Longfellow Recreation Center.

Ford, 64, is an 18-year Ward 12 resident. She owns a small business in the ward, The Repair Lair, that recently moved from East Lake St. to Minnehaha Ave. She lives in the Ericsson neighborhood, has run for city council in the past, and served on the board of the East Lake Special Services District.

Ranheim, 49, grew up in the Nokomis neighborhood, and graduated from South High School. He currently lives in Howe and has worked fundraising for MacPhail Center for Music, Greater Twin Cities United Way, the Minnesota

Orchestra, the Alzheimer's Association and, most recently, as a "Gift Planner" with the St. Paul and Minneapolis Foundation.

Chowdhury, 26, is a first-generation Bengali-American, organizer, and renter. She grew up on the Southside and went to Minneapolis Public Schools. She has worked on public policy at the office of Senator Kari Dziedzic, and now as a Ward 9 city council policy aide.

Chowdhury, Ford and Ranheim all sought the DFL endorsement which went to Chowdhury earlier this year.

VIEWS ON HOUSING AND ENCAMPMENTS

Whitney Larson moderated the forum, which included several questions related to housing.

"One of the biggest issues I hear residents talk about is housing," said Ford. "We need to build more purchasable property, and we need to look at the obstacles that are keeping people from being able to purchase their own property."

"We need to make sure that we're providing the housing to meet the needs of everyone," said Ranheim, calling for investments in naturally occurring affordable housing, like "mom and pop" landlords. "We need to invest significantly in

WARD 12 CANDIDATES >> 3



Soudavone Khamvongsa (left) and Michelle de Joya (right) perform in the "Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals" at the Luminary Arts Center. (Photo by Rich Ryan)

Theater Mu reclaims genres for Asian artists

By TALIA MCWRIGHT

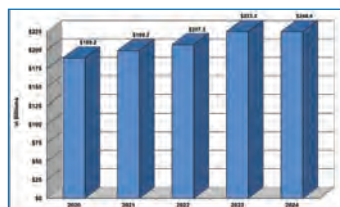
As a child, Saymoukda Vongsay wrote herself into stories of "Little House on the Prairie," "Sweet Valley High" and "The Babysitters Club," as a side character. In middle and high school, she was a known writer who always carried a notebook in hand filled with poetry. Now she writes

THEATER MU >> 6



Columnist ponders:
What does it mean
to be White?

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Hennepin County tax
levy and budget
going up

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HOME IMPROVEMENT
Tips on how to add art
from local artists

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GRIT, RESOLVE AND A RESTAURANT >> from 1

Now at what appeared to be a border between two countries, no military guards stood watch.

"Are we in Sudan or Ethiopia?" Belai asked the first person he saw. The answer: "Sudan." Belai and the guides followed a dirt road for two miles, trailed by boys who offered water – hot water. And Belai didn't care. It was water. The first sign of civilization was a bar where tourists from England and Canada gathered.

But life wouldn't be a series of friendly bars. Rather, Belai spent time at sites for displaced persons, including an unauthorized encampment where some refugees had lived up to 10 years.

"That was the time I worried," he said. He didn't plan to stay indefinitely.

Ultimately he worked his way to Sudan's capitol city, Khartoum, where UNHCR (United Nations Refugee Agency) was quartered.

"I followed the news, made friends and was interviewed at UNHCR. It was a big relief," said Belai, noting that the refugee card he received eight months later paved his way to the U.S.

After flying to New York, he connected with a friend, a machinist, in Patterson, N. J. For seven years Belai worked there as a machinist and took accounting and English classes.

He moved to Minneapolis during the summer of 1991 and was hired as a quality control inspector.

After back-to-back shifts on Halloween, Oct. 31, 1991, he opened the building's door to exit and stepped into the snowfall that was on its way to 28.4 inches.

"I don't belong here," he said to himself as he searched for his car. But he stayed.



Belai Mergia (left) was walking in 2002 when he saw that the building at 3860 Minnehaha was available. He thought: "This is what I'm looking for." After he wed Rahel, she joined him in running the restaurant. Both work additional jobs to make ends meet. (Photo by Jane St. Anthony)

"I'd always wanted to have a business someday, as my father did. Because of 9/11, I wanted a business that brought people together.

"So, in 2002, I started looking for that business. Walking on Minnehaha Avenue, I saw a sign for a storefront that was on

the market. I thought: 'This is what I'm looking for.' "

On that first encounter, he didn't realize that there was a five-bedroom house attached to the back of the store. Perhaps a renter in the future? He continued his quest to purchase the structure.

"Bank after bank wasn't interested in giving me a loan," he said. "I finally found one, but had to pay 20 percent down."

The zoning classification for the property was C1, zoned for general business purposes. However, after buying the property, Belai learned that the zone had been changed to ORI, which allowed only minimal businesses – such as nail salons. He asked neighbors to sign a petition that would grant an exception. They complied. And for more than seven months, he appeared at the courthouse to plead his case. Eventually, he won.

"At this time, I didn't have a wife and family," he said. The act of simply surviving had consumed him for years.

SPICE UP YOUR LIFE AT SELAM

Four eager tasters slid into a comfortable booth at Selam on a recent Friday evening.

Appetizers set the stage. We shared two orders of meat samosas: a smooth fried pastry stuffed with ground beef, jalapenos and onions, served with sweet chili sauce. Responses to the samosas were "peppery," "tongue tingling" and "delicious."

After studying the dinner menu assiduously, our group opted for two combination plates—meat-based and vegetarian. The portions are generous, enough to bring home "oodles of leftovers," said one diner.

In the Amharic language, "wot" is sauce or curry. Some of the six meat combos are doro wot: bone-in chicken marinated and slow cooked in onion, garlic and berbere—a combination of spices that may involve red chili peppers, fenugreek and ginger, with the addition of warm spices such as coriander, cardamom, allspice, cumin, peppercorns, cloves and cinnamon.

One of the responses to doro wot: "The chicken is so tender that it falls off the bone." Key wot is cubed beef slowly cooked with onion, garlic, berbere and herbal butter. Alichu wot has a twist, with turmeric replacing berbere in the otherwise same wot. All wots were deemed "spicy and very tasty."

The vegetable combo transforms the lives of vegetables and diners alike. Spices offer new possibilities for split lentils, yellow peas, green beans with carrots, and beets cooked with garlic, onions and more. The vegetables are heavenly. One happy vegetarian: "I'd eat vegetables three times a day if they tasted this good."

The menu offers a variety of entrees. Wine and beer are served. Desserts Tiramisu or baclava end the meal on a sweet note. Ethiopian coffee is a reason to linger.

Selam Restaurant
3860 Minnehaha Ave. S.
Minneapolis 55406
<https://www.selamrestaurantmn.com>

In 2005, he flew to the Ethiopian capitol, Adas Ababa, and on to Wollo, the city of his birth. He returned to Minneapolis with Rahel, his wife. His older sister, a friend of Rahel's mother, was involved in the meeting.

GRIT, RESOLVE >> 3

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WARD 12 CANDIDATES

>> from 1

public housing because right now there is a 4 year wait to get into public housing and that is unacceptable." He also noted that "we have to acknowledge the shameful history of our city with racial redlining and racial deed covenants."

"Right now we are living in two Minneapolis," said Chowdhury. "We have to understand that as Ward 12 residents it's our responsibility to stand with parts of the city that are getting inequitable resources and part of that is housing. Housing is safety. Housing is building economic wealth. Housing is what is going to make some people stay in the city of Minneapolis."

They agreed that the current approach to encampments needs to change.

"What we are doing right now is not working," said Chowdhury, calling for "a standard operating procedure for how we have just transitions of people from encampments."

"Our cat and mouse game right now is not working," said Ranheim, who stressed the need for a "housing first model." He added, "We need an Avivo village on the southside."

Ford talked about seeing first-hand the conditions of the encampments and is "100% against them." She added, "We need to build more low- and no-barrier housing with wrap around services to help support residents in those properties."

DIFFERENCES ON RENT CONTROL

Differences on regulating rent increases were evident.

"I'm 100% against rent control," said Ford. "It will have a negative impact on both the quality and quantity of housing."

"I think rent control will do more harm than good," said Ranheim, saying he opposed it and citing the St. Paul ordinance as a failed effort. If elected, he said that because of the rent stabilization ballot item approved in 2021, "I would start by bringing together renters, mom-and-pop landlords and the builders of housing, and come up with a solution that would meet the needs of all stakeholders."

"I have been very consistent with my position on rent stabilization. We do not need to have the St. Paul policy here," said Chowdhury. "We can make reasonable limits on rent. There are over 182 municipalities that have some form of rent stabilization," she added, noting that she would work develop a compromise proposal that could address concerns and problems of displacement related to rising costs of rents in the city.

PUBLIC SAFETY IS A CONCERN

The candidates agreed that public safety was also an important issue.

"I believe that currently the biggest challenge facing our city is public safety," said Ranheim. "We need to create a holistic public safety program for our community that meets the needs of our entire community." He said that he thinks police are understaffed, is concerned about response times, and supports alternative responses.

"We are divided on public safety," said Chowdhury, who said she would focus on the police contract that is now



Whitney Larson (right) moderates the discussion between (left to right) Ward 12 candidates Aurin Chowdhury, Nancy Ford and Luther Ranheim. The forum on Sept. 12 was sponsored by the League of Women Voters - Minneapolis. View it online at lwvmppls.org/for-voters/. (Photo by Cam Gordon)

being negotiated to "make it strong and management accountable," as well as on having a meaningful "truth and reconciliation process." She indicated that she supported adding officers to comply with a charter requirement.

"Not all police are horrible," said Ford. "We definitely need them in the ward."

They agreed that a police station should not be relocated on Lake St. at 3000 Minnehaha, but supported having a station or stations in the area.

"It doesn't need to be there, and it probably shouldn't go back there," Ford said about the previous location. "We still need something in the ward."

"I would advocate for getting a police presence back in the 3rd Precinct geography as soon as possible," said Ranheim. "One thing I would put forward is that we test and pilot public safety satellite hubs across the Ward 12 geography and see how it works."

Chowdhury said that there are "two needed conversations" related to police in the area. One would be about truth and reconciliation, and the other would be about where to have a "centrally located police precinct that looks completely different" with "comprehensive services and resources" and "a place violence interrupters could be based out of."

She also said that she would make sure the Lake Street safety center would reopen, and that "we can have multiple spots in the ward for more safety centers."

IDEAS ON CLIMATE EQUITY PLAN FUNDING

There were differing opinions about funding the recently approved Minneapolis Climate Equity Plan.

"Climate change is the battle of our generation," said Chowdhury. "I am really happy the people's climate and equity plan passed," she said before proposing that the shareholders of the utility companies themselves help fund the plan's implementation.

"We definitely do not have enough funding to address all the issues that are in our climate equity plan," said Ford, who suggested using a sales tax for the funding.

"We need to do everything at our city with a climate lens, and make the significant investment needed to help our city be more climate resilient," said Ranheim. He proposed using all of the roughly \$40 million in franchise fee funds that are

now being used to fund a variety of city programs and services. "I suggest we sequester these franchise fees and entirely dedicate them to implement the People's Climate Equity Plan," said Ranheim. He said that \$40-50 million "is a good start, but it is going to take even more than that in the coming years. Five to 10 years out, we should be spending \$75-100 million."

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Support of businesses, especially on East Lake St., also came up several times in the forum.

Ford called for swifter action dealing with vacant and abandoned property. "It has a huge negative impact on all the adjacent businesses," she said.

Ranheim wants to look at preserving parking and improving the "regulatory environment" where "sometimes the city gets in the way."

Minnehaha Ave. should be formally designated by the city as a "Cultural Corridor that would bring in additional resources," said Chowdhury. She also advocated easing restrictions on street festivals, and thinks that businesses should be consulted more and committed to meeting with them regularly. "Too often the city creates an idea and doesn't come to businesses first."

Ford said that, among other things, the city needs to "expedite the licensing and inspection processes."

SIDEWALK SNOW CLEARING

Differences were evident when the candidates were asked about sidewalk snow clearing. Earlier this year, the city council received a report about sidewalk snow clearance that included an estimate of \$40 million for clearing all the city sidewalks, as well as an outline of other potential less costly programs including senior snow clearing, snow ambassadors, snow case workers, and mobile teams.

Ford and Ranheim focused on the full city option.

"The thought of spending tax dollars to shovel the whole city makes no sense to me whatsoever," said Ford, "I am against it 100%."

"If we were to institute public shoveling at a cost of \$40 million a year that would be a bad use of your taxpayer dollars," said Ranheim, who preferred targeted enforcement and non-city funded solutions instead.

JOHNSON TO LEAVE EARLY

On Monday, Sept. 25, Ward 12 Council Member Andrew Johnson announced via his e-newsletter that he had accepted a new position and planned to leave his seat before his term is up on Dec. 31, 2023.



He wrote: "Recently, an exciting career opportunity has come along that I can't pass up; it's a great fit and allows me to continue working to make the world a better place. I'll be joining a renewable energy (ESG) investment firm which is focused on helping develop the most impactful projects to reduce greenhouse gasses - urgent and necessary work given the accelerating climate crisis. This new role starts on Oct. 10. Needless to say, this isn't perfectly timed with the end of the term. That is why I plan on continuing to participate at full council meetings to ensure constituents are represented on votes until our next council member can be sworn-in after the Nov. 7 election. The ward will also continue to receive constituent support from my talented staff without interruption. My office and I remain committed to ensuring a smooth transition and transfer of information to our next council member for their success in serving our ward."

Chowdhury suggested looking for middle ground. "We are having a conversation where people with disabilities and seniors are not having their sidewalks shoveled," she said. "I agree \$40 million a year for all the sidewalks isn't a good spend, but we can figure out ways to target approaches to help people most in need."

EXPERIENCE AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

Voters may rely as much on differences in experience and leadership styles as on policy positions when deciding who to vote for.

"I come from this community," Ranheim said. "I'm seeking to serve this community because of a deep love for this community. Together we all deserve a safe and equitable Minneapolis."

"I don't bring a political agenda to the table. I don't have a particular ideology. What drives me are the needs and desires of every single person who lives in this ward," said Ford. "The perspective I bring to the table is very different from what most candidates who typically run for office bring, and that is the perspective of a small business owner and the pragmatism that comes along with that." "The trouble we have as a city is coming together on a vision where we have unity," Chowdhury said. "For me what this is about is building a multi-generational, multi-racial coalition so we can have safe healthy communities. I have a proven record of getting things done at city hall, and that's what I'm bringing to the table."

The city council election will be on Nov. 7 and early voting is already underway. For more information and to learn how to vote visit <https://vote.minneapolis.gov/voters/> and www.VOTE411.org

"Please vote," said Lason, "your vote matters."

GRIT, RESOLVE >> from 2

"So, I liked Rahel and I thought that she liked me," said Belai.

Rahel was more detailed in her reply: "He's a good man who works hard. And he's funny, too."

They did like each other, enough to marry and return to the U.S. with Eden, their first child, on the way. And they liked each other enough to build a business. The coffee shop opened in 2007. Eventually daughters Helena and Bethlehem graced the family.

With war raging in Afghanistan and Iraq, the timing was not ideal for a coffee



shop run by foreigners.

"Rahel ran the coffee shop and I

worked two jobs," Belai said. "We were tired. There was very little cash flow. But the people at our church and others helped us," he said.

Eventually Belai, who worked as a quality control inspector for 14 years, was hired by another company as a "final inspector" - a step up.

The family of five worked diligently as they transformed the coffee shop into a restaurant during the pandemic. They re-covered benches and painted walls. Eden and a friend decorated the bottom of the counter with tiles.

In the morning, the girls now raise the umbrellas on the outdoor seating and

arrange the chairs.

Rahel was poised to cook, she said. "I learned to cook to make my mother happy and to make healthy food."

Both parents work a second job, for now. Five days a week Rahel works the early shift in maintenance at the University of Minnesota. As soon as Rahel returns home, Belai leaves for a 10-hour shift that dips into night.

Some 40 years after Belai escaped from war-torn Ethiopia, he, the dreamer, and Rahel, the culinary artist who dreamt with him, offer sumptuous meals in a restaurant where patrons are invited to dine in or take out. And enjoy.

Join the conversation, and let us know your diverse thoughts on the issues that affect your neighborhood. Send letters and guest commentaries to news@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com.

Give me a minute



BY VALERIE FITZGERALD
Howe resident

When I google the definition of "white," the Oxford English Dictionary tells me that one meaning is "belonging to or denoting a human group having light-colored skin (chiefly used of peoples of European extraction)." That's a good definition as far as it goes but, like any racial grouping, "white" is much too complicated to be summed up in a dictionary definition.

Resmaa Menakem is a somatic trauma therapist and bestselling author who examines, among other things, racial trauma. He wrote that "white bodies need to develop a collective container that can handle the charge, weight, speed, and texture of race." I think of this container as white identity.

Our intentions are often good. Many of us are actively involved in promoting an anti-racist society. (Ibram X. Kendi defines anti-racist as "One who is expressing an idea of racial equality, or is actively supporting a policy that leads to racial equity or justice.") However, unexamined generational trauma experienced by white people gets in the way of consistent, committed action.

By now, many of us who are white are aware of the privilege we enjoy. We are at the top of a hierarchy of human value created by political, business and religious leaders centuries ago. They used science that has been thoroughly discredited to justify the oppression of Black, Indigenous,

What does it mean to be White?

and other People of Color (BIPOC), along with the LGBTQ+ and disability communities and faith communities, like the Jewish and Muslim religions. Every area of public policy—housing, health and human services, education, environment, law enforcement, the economy and workforce—continues to reflect these outdated attitudes toward race.

I went to public school in Washington County, Minnesota. In 1970, when I was eleven years old, the census reported that Washington County's population was over 99% white. Civil rights history was being made by Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Cesar Chavez organized migrant laborers. Members of the American Indian Movement occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Landmark legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was enacted. But all that seemed very far from my world.

Over the years I've learned to see history from BIPOC perspectives. Gradually I began to see the outlines of another racial group: white people. White history and culture, including the oppression of white people by other, more powerful white people, has only become visible to me in the past year or so. Now I can't un-see it.

In *The History of White People*, Nell Irvin Painter describes racial hierarchies going back to antiquity. Ancient Romans, then Vikings and Ottomans engaged in a human trade that involved people from Europe, Asia and Africa. "Again and again," Painter writes, "racial hierarchies set the poor and powerless at the bottom and the rich and powerful at the top."

Painter described a shipment of 100

homeless children from Britain to the colonies. The City of London paid the Virginia Company 5 pounds per child to transport the children to the colonies, where they were "sold into field labor for twenty pounds of tobacco each." These children arrived in 1619, the same year as the first kidnapped African slaves. Their outcomes were not good: "Of the 300 children shipped from Britain between 1619 and 1622, only 12 were still alive in 1624."

Every July 4, historian Heather Cox Richardson writes about people like my ancestors who immigrated to the United States from Europe, "a world that had been dominated by a small class of rich men for so long that most people simply accepted that they should be forever tied to their status at birth."

These immigrants came to the United States and encountered what W.E.B. Du Bois called *The Great American Assumption*: "The American Assumption was that wealth is mainly the result of its owner's effort and that any average worker can by thrift become a capitalist." (Capitalist here means simply a wealthy, successful business owner or farmer.)

My parents were among the fortunate ones for whom the American Assumption worked. They were fine, hard working people, but their success was due in part to social conditions beyond their control. They came out of the poverty of the Great Depression and benefited from Roosevelt's New Deal. They were further uplifted by the prosperity that followed World War II.

The American Assumption is not universal. It doesn't apply to people whose ancestors were enslaved, generation after

generation forced to work in Southern cotton fields. Nor is it particularly helpful to people whose ancestors lived on this land for thousands of years before Europeans decided to colonize it. The experience of oppressed people was largely ignored in the past because it didn't support the American Assumption.

Some leaders still advocate ignoring the history of white supremacy. Ideas like the ones I'm sharing here are often dismissed as "woke," and woke people symbolize a threat. Like Mr. Potter said in *It's A Wonderful Life*, dangerous ideas about equality and justice could turn American laborers into "a discontented, lazy rabble instead of a thrifty working class." Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida is building a presidential campaign on the fight against wokeness.

Here in Minneapolis, woke or not, we continue to deal with racial injustice. Refusing to discuss it, or to see the complicated myths and realities behind race, may work for Governor DeSantis but it does not work for me.

On the contrary, the more I learn about the myths and realities of race and the complexities and contradictions of our American democracy, the more clearly I see myself and my connections to others. I think Neil deGrasse Tyson has it right: "every one of our body's atoms is traceable to the big bang and to the thermonuclear furnaces within high-mass stars that exploded more than five billion years ago. We are stardust brought to life, then empowered by the universe to figure itself out – and we have only just begun."

Valerie Fitzgerald is a licensed professional clinical counselor who worked as a case manager and care coordinator for over 10 years. She resides in Howe.

SUMMERTIME CELEBRATIONS WINDING DOWN AS FALL APPROACHES

Stories and Journeys



BY DONALD L. HAMMEN

CELEBRATING THE RESURFACING OF 46TH AVE.

I still get ecstatic along with neighbors I know. I'm looking outside at a resurfaced 46th Ave. between 38th St. and 46th Street. Thanks to Minneapolis Public Works. I didn't realize that black asphalt could look so beautiful. I was mesmerized by the whole process. The heavy machinery and trucks brought in to remove old asphalt and replace it with new asphalt. Best of all no potholes. Then a shoe dropped. Turns out myself and my neighbors are paying for this resurfacing in my case to the tune of \$1,153.45. Ouch!

CELEBRATING MY HOUR CAR EXPERIENCE

I don't own a car. I rely on Metro Transit and Hour Car to meet most of my transportation needs. It had been several years since I had driven a car. I made a reservation for a car at the 46th St. light rail hub. I was concerned that the car might have technology new to me. My sister-in-

law went with me for support. Turns out I can still drive a car even with new technology. Riding a bike is another story. I have a Trek 7200 for sale. Any takers?

CELEBRATING THE MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION MUSEUM AT THE STATE FAIR

I like going to the fair. This year, my sister-in-law Carol, my niece Kim and her fiancé, Steven, drove up from Des Moines. We rented a wheelchair. They took turns pushing the wheelchair with me in it. That was an adventure in itself. One of our stops was the Minnesota Newspaper Association Museum. I got to see type setting being done. I talked community journalism with a volunteer. I brought home a poster featuring the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. I have since learned that Tesha M. Christensen volunteered at the museum last year. Also she was honored to be featured in a story in the museum newspaper. This experience brought back for me so many community newspaper memories. Check out this exhibit sometime if you go to the fair.

So, dear reader, what if any, are your State Fair memories? Have you visited the museum? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me via tesha@longfellownokomisemessenger.com. And, oh yes, what does the First Amendment mean to you these days?

CELEBRATING U.S. CONSTITUTION DAY SEPT. 17

I was recently reminded in an email I received from Americans United for the Separation of Church and State that Sept. 17 is Constitution Day. In reflecting on this day, I remembered that I used to carry a pocket edition of the Constitution with me every day. I have actually read it. To celebrate this year I ordered for me a brand new pocket edition. I did this wondering how many of the fascists who are burrowing their way into our body politic even care about our founding document. Some wrap themselves in the Bible and the flag. Many of the them call themselves Christian Nationalists. An abuse of the word Christian in my view.

CELEBRATING TUESDAYS WITH GARY

It's Tuesday. The weather is accommodating. It's right after my online Adaptive Yoga class. I meet my neighbor Gary at the bus stop. The bus takes us to Lund's and Byerlys Highland Bridge to shop and converse. One day, Gary stopped by my house. He gave me a book he's hoping I will read. It's called "On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons From the Twentieth Century" by Timothy Snyder. It becomes part of our ongoing conversation along with the book I'm reading by Thom Hartman from his Hidden History collection. It's called "The

Hidden History of American Oligarchy: Reclaiming Our Democracy from The Ruling Class." There's these two books, an occasional article in the Messenger, and our daily life experiences that make up our conversations.

That's all for this summer's celebrations – although there are a few others. If you have read this far you have taken the plunge into the river(flow) of life experiences which is Stories and Journeys.

NEWS FROM ALL ELDERS UNITED FOR JUSTICE.

Executive Director Jonathan Rose has developed a paper called "Where Ageism, Racism and Other Systemic Inequities Intersect" which he presented to an Age Friendly Minnesota conference.

All Elders is showing up at the Legislative Task Force on aging hearings this Summer.

News From Elder Voices (Telling Our Stories/Sharing Our Journeys):

Laura and Lilly stopped by in August. On Friday, Oct. 27, Elder Voices will be back at Turtle Bread, 4205 E.34th St., 10am-11:30 a.m.

In gratitude always. Remember to Vote Nov. 7. It's our civic duty.

Donald L. Hammen is a longtime south Minneapolis resident, and serves on the All Elders United for Justice Board of Directors.

Messenger

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News for you!

The *Longfellow Nokomis Messenger* is a monthly community publication in the Longfellow and Nokomis areas of Minneapolis, owned and operated by TMC Publications CO. Sister publications: *Midway Como Frogtown Monitor* and *Southwest Connector*. Visit our website for calendar and publication dates.

Story ideas always welcome.

Letters to the editor under 200 words and news releases for publication can be e-mailed to tesha@longfellownokomisemessenger.com. Unsigned letters will not run.

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The *Messenger* is for profit and for a purpose – and we don't sacrifice one for the other. We consider ourselves a zebra company, one that is both black and white. As a media company, we work to highlight issues, solve real, meaningful problems, and repair existing social systems. We are working with our readers and advertisers to create a more just and responsible soci-

ety that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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Member of Minnesota Newspaper Association, Midwest Community Free Papers, Longfellow Business Association, Seward Civic and Commerce Association, and Nokomis East Business Association.



Look for the upcoming voters guide in the November edition of the Messenger. It is being published in collaboration with the League of Women Voters.

SAVE DEMOCRACY - EMPOWER YOUNG VOTERS

Young Americans have been gathering strength and exerting more influence in recent elections, but need help realizing their full political force as voters. For the health of our democracy, we want them to do so. While, historically underrepresented at the polls, more 18–29 year-olds voted in the 2020 presidential election nationally than in 2016, close to 50%. Even 2022 midterm turnout was better than expected, inching toward 30%. A positive trend - but a far cry from the electoral clout the second-largest age demographic in the U.S. could have.

Generation Z (for Zoomer) are those born between 1997 and 2012, with Gen Z young adults expected to make up 17% of all eligible voters by 2024 and 35% by 2036. Combine Zoomers (sometimes called Plurals) with their older siblings and largest generation, Millennials, and the Brookings Institution expects them to account for a majority of all potential voters within this decade and 60% by 2036. It benefits us all that they are civically educated and engaged.

Pew Research Center describes our youngest voting block as more racially and ethnically diverse, progressive, and with positive attitudes toward government. Research also proves Gen Z's low voting numbers are not due to a lack of interest on their part. Studies from CIRCLE, the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University's Tisch College, consistently show that outreach, even one interaction, correlates with higher youth voting. When that doesn't happen, barriers for young voters



- particularly first-time voters - remain in place, perhaps for a lifetime. Although highly concerned about the issues in the 2022 midterms, less than half of the young voters CIRCLE surveyed were ever contacted by any civic or political organization, candidate, or party.

Voter outreach, education, and access to the ballot is the primary mission of the League of Women Voters. Locally, LWV Minneapolis holds voter registration drives twice yearly in the city's high schools. In our unscientific survey of the students we met this past spring, the barriers to voting they cited match some nationwide responses. Although a few said they doubted their vote would matter, most said they simply didn't know how to vote, were confused about registering, needed information about candidates, or were unaware of their eligibility.

The great news is the North Star State has made voting easier, rather than harder, while still securing elections. Sixteen and 17-year-olds can pre-register to be ready to

vote in their first election as an 18-year-old. They can register right at the polls on Election Day or get the ball rolling by checking the box on their State ID or driver's license application, a form nearly every 16-year-old is itching to fill out! By next year, it will be automatic.

Understanding that classes and work schedules may conflict with voting on Election Day, Minnesota offers early voting, and absentee ballots are the solution for college students away from home. There Secretary of State has a helpful College Students Fact Sheet at www.sos.state.mn.us. These policies have paid off with 15% more young voters in 2020 than the national average.

However, that still leaves a big segment of the Minnesota youth vote on the table with too many teens and young adults in the dark about registration and voting options.

This is a shame because the Minneapolis high school students we met have strong feelings about the issues facing them and this country and want a say in what happens. Their top two concerns, overwhelmingly and across gender and ethnic lines, were the livability of the planet and the rights of all humans. Climate change, pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss came up in nearly every conversation, including mentions of specific regions of vulnerability and pipeline controversies. These young people were well-informed and passionate. They cared deeply about vulnerable groups calling for protections of LGBTQ+ rights, policies to end racism

and women's inequality as well as the restoration of reproductive healthcare. They expressed concern for immigrants' rights and the Indigenous community.

Close behind were quality of life issues, with safety leading the conversation. These students were clearly fed up with the specter of gun violence, being scared in their schools and communities, including a lack of trust in the Minneapolis police department. Concerned about the homeless, affordable housing, and safe and reliable transportation, they value their education as key to a successful life. They criticized book banning and called for free/affordable college.

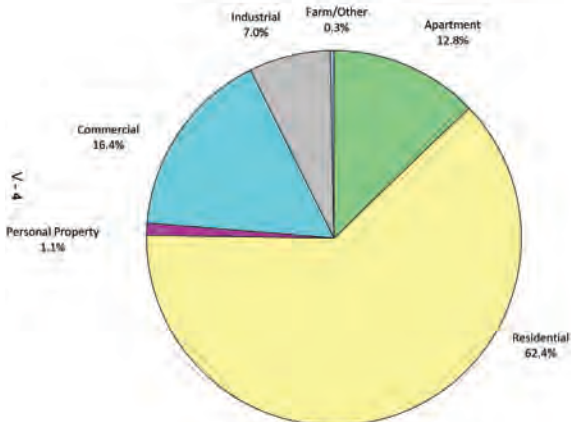
They also displayed a pretty good "baloney" detector, so politicians beware. Your young constituents and future voters reject unfulfilled promises and lies. They demand honesty, credibility, and adherence to the law from those who make them.

Civically educating and empowering this sleeping giant of a voting block cannot begin too early, and a good example is invaluable. Several students told us they would vote because their families do. CIRCLE offers many ideas to grow the youth vote at circle.tufts.edu, and its research reminds us of the power of even a single interaction encouraging a new voter. When it comes to the power of the vote, you can pay it forward with information and guidance, and LWV Minneapolis is here to help. Our democracy depends on it.

For information on voter registration and eligibility, voting deadlines and locations, questions about Ranked Choice Voting, and more, go to: vote.minneapolismn.gov. For education on this new law and to develop a voting plan contact vote@lwmpls.org.

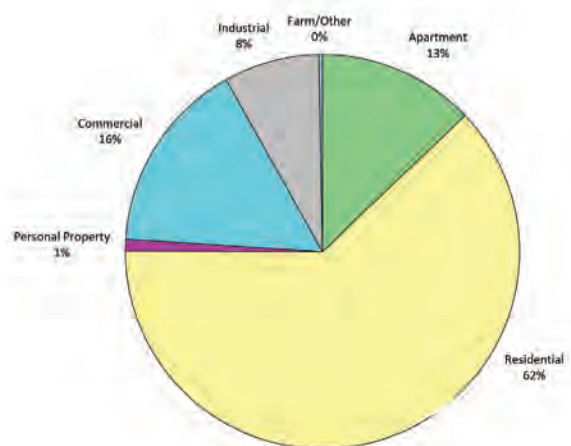
HENNEPIN COUNTY'S BUDGET AND TAX LEVY

Final Pay 2023

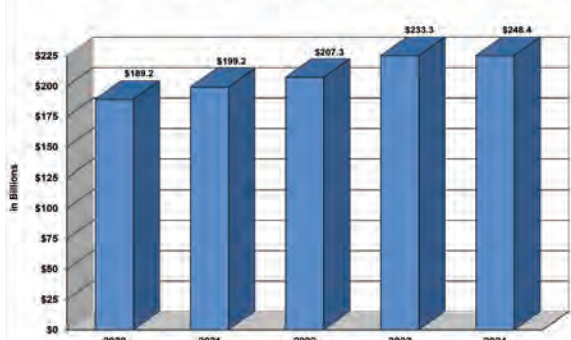


Total \$2.671 Billion

Preliminary Pay 2024



2020 - 2024 ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE



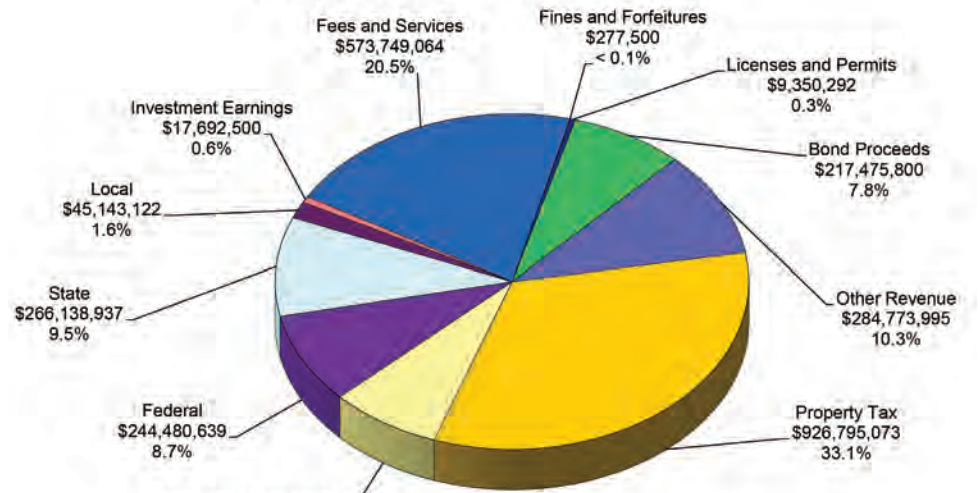
HENNEPIN COUNTY PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

On Sept. 12, David Hough, the Hennepin County Administrator, proposed a 2024 budget of \$2.64 billion to the Hennepin County Board with a net property tax levy of \$991.3 million, which is an increase of 6.5% from 2023. Property taxes cover roughly 36% of the overall county budget with federal and state funding, fees and services covering most of the rest. The Hennepin County Board used the recommendation when it set the maximum tax levy on Sept. 19 and the final levy, which could possibly be lower, will be approved with the final budget adoption set for Dec. 12, following a series of budget presentations and a public hearing, where people can make comments on the budget to the board, on Tuesday, Nov. 28 at 6 p.m. Find the administrator's recommended budget and a schedule of hearings at www.hennepin.us/budgets.

BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION LEVY

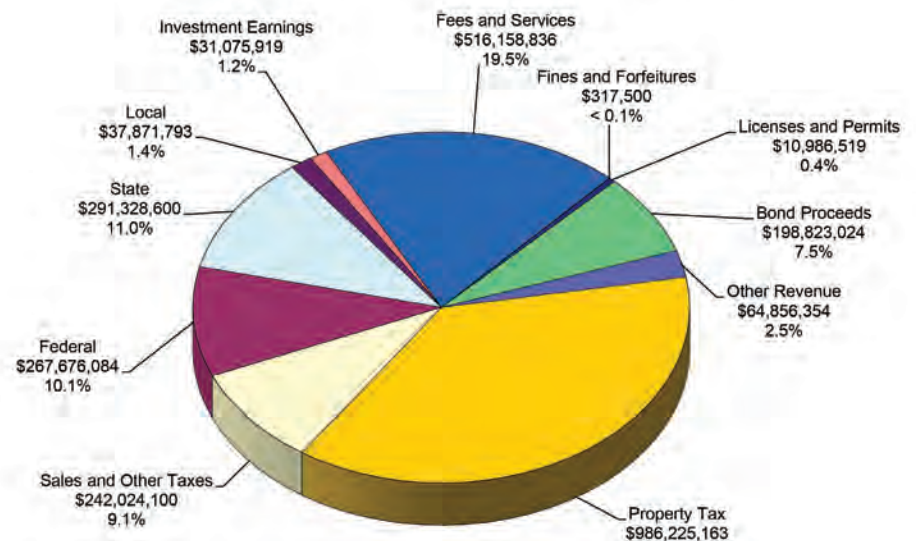
The Board of Estimate and Taxation held a public hearing on Sept. 13 to consider setting the maximum property tax levy for 2024. The board sets the maximum tax levies for the city, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, and will adopt the maximum levy for later this month. The proposed 2024 budget is \$1.8 billion with a proposed tax levy of 6.2%. The city council has started reviewing the 2024 budget and will approve and likely amend it in December after public hearings on Oct. 25 and Nov. 1, along with a final hearing before the final budget adoption Dec. 5.

2023 ADJUSTED REVENUE



Total Revenue: \$2,799,398,867

2024 PROPOSED REVENUE



Total Revenue: \$2,647,343,892

Playwright Saymoukda Vongsay's "Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals," is latest production to explore grief, spirituality and Laotian culture

THEATER MU >> from 1

plays about zombies that know Kung Fu, starring Lao American and Asian American characters inspired by herself, her surroundings and the people in her life.

"I remember being a connector, a storyteller and a translator very early on," Vongsay said.

Vongsay first debuted "Kung Fu Zombies" in 2013, and 10 years later she reopened the show with a second act that has a completely new storyline. The 2023 "Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals" is a two-part show about Akha and Lao women faced with challenges that force them to grow, adapt and connect with their cultural experiences, all while using kung fu to fight off evil zombies.

"The Kung Fu Zombies Saga is a huge, fun, visually stunning play with amazing actors and talent in it, and tells a really important story about Asian American and Lao American themes," Lily Tung Crystal said.

Minneapolis resident, Tung Crystal has been the artistic director at Theatre Mu since 2019. Before working at Theatre Mu, Tung Crystal lived in San Francisco, Calif. and co-founded the, "Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company," in 2010. Her directing journey began after directing David Henry Hwang's play, "Chinglish" at the Palo Alto Players theater in Palo Alto, Calif. She is the director of the Kung Fu Zombies saga.

"I would say acting is my first love, but if you're a woman theater artist, I think what's exciting about directing is that you have more agency and can make a bigger impact," Tung Crystal said.

Tung Crystal joined the actors union in 2009, and has been involved in plays and musical theater performances since high school. While living in San Francisco, she was familiar with Theatre Mu as there are a small number of Asian American theaters in the U.S. and Theatre Mu is one of the largest. Tung Crystal explained that at the time of exploring her acting career, there weren't many opportunities for Asian-American theater artists because theater has been traditionally White and male-dominated.

"Theater Mu has always been a beacon for Asian American theater artists and so I was hugely honored to be invited to lead Theater Mu," Tung Crystal said. "I often tell people that I have my dream job because I have the opportunity to support Asian-American and other BIPOC theater artists and tell the stories from our communities."

Tung Crystal connected with Vongsay through Theater Mu in 2019, as Vongsay had a long standing relationship with the theater and has been a Mellon Foundation playwright in residency since 2020. The theater celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. In honor of the anniversary, Tung Crystal asked Vongsay if she would re-premiere "Kung Fu Zombies v Cannibals" in combination with her prequel "Kung Fu Zombies v Shaman Warrior" to create the Kung Fu Zombies Saga.

Tung Crystal has a love for sci-fi, zombies and horror, and expressed that she really enjoyed helping bring Vongsay's vision for the saga to life. The play was especially important to Tung Crystal as it highlights not only Asian American stories, but southeast Asian and Lao stories.

"The fact is that she [Vongsay] reclaims for the Asian community those genres that are traditionally reserved for mainstream artists and storytellers," Tung Crystal said. "She's saying that Asian



Katie Bradley (left) and Norm Muñoz (middle) perform in the "Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals" at the Luminary Arts Center. A two-part show, it tells the story of Akha and Lao women faced with challenges that force them to connect with their cultural experiences. (Photo by Rich Ryan)



(Left to right) Sandy Augstin, Hannah Nguyen and Soudavone Khamvongsa perform in the "Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals" at the Luminary Arts Center. (Photo by Rich Ryan)



Olivia Lampert (bottom), Hanna Nguyen (middle) and Norm Muñoz (top) perform in the "Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals." (Photo by Rich Ryan)

American artists can also have a place in the American genres that often keep us out."

THE PLAYWRIGHT

In college, Vongsay was a part of a spoken word group called Free Inspiring Rising Elements (FIRE), that performed at public events. Soon after she joined a writers workshop for BIPOC women and wrote one of her most popular spoken word pieces, "When Everything Was Everything," which also inspired her children's book. She expressed that the women in the group reaffirmed her calling as a writer.

In 2010, a friend of Vongsay's invited her to join The Unit Collective of Playwrights of Color. Working with other playwrights, Vongsay would try writing using the different genres of her peers. Through this process she discovered that she liked to create within the genres of horror, sci-fi, speculative fiction and futurism. Through this exploration, what Vongsay calls the "zombieverse," was born.

"The Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals" was especially special to Vongsay as it was the first play produced by a major institution, written by a Lao person, about Lao people in Minnesota. The saga was inspired in part by Vongsay's personal life experiences and identity as a Lao and Lao-American woman. Topics in the play include spirituality, war, grief, hip hop culture, trauma and more. She and her family are Buddhist, and her family was displaced because of the Vietnam War. She grew up around people who practice Shamanism, and has personal experiences with the spirit world. She has also seen how mental health has affected members of her family, and wrote in scenes to include these topics because they've impacted her and her communities.

"I wanted to write something that would make people feel okay, and that it's

not so much a taboo not just within our communities, but outsiders of our community, too," Vongsay said.

The Kung Fu Zombies Saga started out as a story about a queer relationship within the Laotian community, and grew into a much larger story. Act one follows the story of a young Akha shaman warrior Arun, played by Hanna Nguyen, as she's on a quest to save her sisters from cannibals. Act two highlights actor Michelle de Joya who plays Sika, a Lao-American, Minnesotan teenager in search of her homeland, facing many obstacles like zombies along the way and unexpectedly falling in love.

"I've had people come up to me and say, 'I totally see you in that play.' So, a lot of the characters I feel are little bits and parts of me," Vongsay said.

THE ACTORS

de Joya, a Saint Paul resident, explained that in working with an Asian-centered cast she finds comfort tackling emotionally heavy topics specific to Asian experiences as there is an unspoken, universal understanding and environment of support. She also explained that some of her favorite things about working on the show was the highlight of culturally Asian experiences as well as female identifying leadership.

"The play is really driven by women," de Joya said. "Over half of our cast is women, and our director, designers and playwright are primarily women, as well."

Sixteen year-old actor Olivia Lampert also expressed her love for being a part of a show led by women, and one that depicts a queer relationship between women. She also appreciates the amount of historical elements the show covers.

"I feel like I've learned so much just by being in it and reading the script that Mouks wrote so beautifully, that Lily and KT have directed together," Lampert said.

COMING NEXT AT THEATER MU

Theater Mu's 2023/24 line-up spotlights more facets of Asian American identity with stories about mixed Asian Americans, first generation immigrant children, and more. Containing three world premieres and four shows overall, the season—dubbed "Asian (in) America"—showcases vastly different genres, supporting Mu's efforts to make American theater a place that welcomes Asians and Asian Americans on stage, backstage, and in the audience. "Last season highlighted Southeast Asian American stories," says Theater Mu artistic director Lily Tung Crystal, "while this season examines, among other themes, the legacy we inherit as Asian Americans and what it feels like to be Asian, American, or somewhere in between."

• **THE NOSEBLEED**

Jan 25 - 27, 2024 | McGuire Theatre at the Walker Art Center, written & directed by Aya Ogawa, co-presented with the Walker Art Center and the Great Northern

• **HELLS CANYON**

Feb 23 - Mar 17, 2024 | Jungle Theater, a world premiere written by Keiko Green, directed by Katie Bradley

• **THE NAME JAR**

Mar 22 - Apr 14, 2024 | Stages Theatre Company, a world premiere written by Susan H. Pak, based on the book by Yangsook Choi, directed by Jake Sung-Guk Sullivan, collaboration led by Stages Theatre Company

BLENDED (HARMONY): THE KIM LOO SISTERS

May 4 - 26, 2024 | History Theatre, a world premiere with book & lyrics by Jessica Huang and music by Jacinth Greywoode, directed by Lily Tung Crystal, co-commissioned and co-produced with History Theatre, inspired by Leslie Li's "Just Us Girls" book and The Kim Loo "Sisters" documentary

"There's a lot of history about Laos in the show even though it's told in a fun, light-hearted, high-energy way. Everyday I felt like I was learning something new about Laos culture."

THE IMPACT

Vongsay explained that after watching the play, people have come to her expressing how watching the play opened the door for them to have conversations they were never before able to have, with their family surrounding their own experiences.

"One of the reasons why I wanted to write that story and invite intergenerational audiences to come is because somebody said, 'If only there was a way for me to talk to my mom, to ask her questions about what happened to her and make it easy because it's so hard to ask her questions about what happened to her,'" Vongsay said.

Humor was a large element of the show. Vongsay wrote humor into almost every scene. In tense moments a joke would be made and the audience burst into laughter. Vongsay stated that she wanted to create a safe space for her audience to experience emotions and be vulnerable amongst strangers, and humor was a mechanism to create that atmosphere. She also feels that it's important to laugh about hard topics, as a way of acknowledgment.

"I've always said if you can make people laugh, you can make people cry," Vongsay said. "I think laughter brings people together."

Vongsay and Theatre Mu's "Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals" played at the Luminary Arts Center (700 N. 1st St., Minneapolis) from July 22 through Aug. 13. In September, Vongsay is self-producing "In The Camps: A Refugee Musical," at the Indigenous Roots Cultural Arts Center (788 E 7th St., St. Paul). Her goal is to build up the Laotian theater talent for her future projects. It will be the first musical written, produced, composed, and directed by a Lao artist; performed by both Lao and Southeast Asian talent. The show tells the story of Laotian refugees who've escaped communist Laos, as they remember their lives before living in refugee camps.



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How to add art to your home

Local artists share tips on how to find pieces that complement your home best

By TESHAM. CHRISTENSEN

Longfellow mosaic artist Chris Miller believes that art is like jewelry for your home.

"I made this piece in glass a few years ago and I display it each September during LoLa Art Crawl. It says 'Earth without art is just eh.' I believe that!" said Miller, of shatterandglue.tumblr.com.

Miller makes a variety of different size mosaic items, including light boxes that can be set in a living room and treated like furniture and windows.

He encourages people to consider the light in their homes when they think about what kind of art they'd like to have.

"One of the best things about art in my opinion is that there is no right or wrong. I may fall in love with a style that another person can't stand. That's OK. That's how art works," stated Miller.

"Art can turn a house into a home," agrees fellow Longfellow artist Bob Schmitt of Laughing Waters Studio. "Selecting art to hang or have in your home is a simple way to surround yourself with pieces that can say something about yourself. Bringing art into your home can also energize a space, calm a space or turn a dull space into one of interest."

For art lover and painter Suzie Marty, adding art to a home brings a personal touch both from the artist and art appreciator. "Original art holds an energy and soul like none other," she observed. "It evokes a feeling, an expression, and a sense of connection. It can make a bold statement or quietly coexist. Either way, it can be a beautiful extension of your home and you."

"Art works are very personal because they usually provide a direct communication from the artist to the purchaser, which creates a certain feeling or memory in the viewer," remarked painter Calvin deRuyter, who formerly owned the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger and Midway Como Frogtown Monitor and currently serves on the Lake Region Arts Council Board. He earned his bachelors in fine art from Hamline University, and creates abstract watercolors. "People who buy original artwork have a feeling of connection to the artwork they buy. It may 'match the couch,' but you still don't go out and buy just any old painting with those colors in it... people want more than that."

HOW DOES ONE BEGIN?

"In terms of starting out, it's easy. There are so many artists in this city, in this neighborhood," remarked Schmitt, who has been using ink and brush in the manner of Asian brush painters for over 60 years. "Pay attention to what gets your attention."

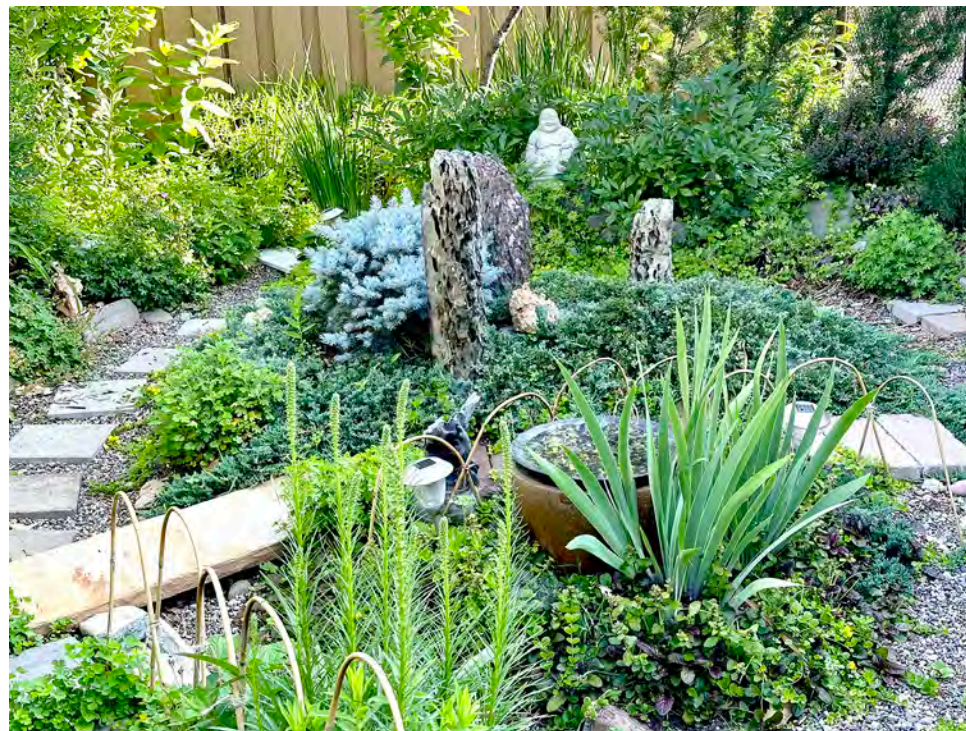
Schmitt added, "Art crawls like LoLa, buildings like Northrop King, The Casket Arts Building, The California Building offer many opportunities to both see what is out there and also to actually meet the artist. When considering purchasing art, the goal is not to impress someone else, but to feed yourself."

"Buy things that you love. That may help tell the story of who you are. If you need more energy, bring a high energy piece into your home. If you need calming from the world outside, look for something that relaxes you." He pointed to www.LoLaArt.org as a great place to visit to see the range of choices available.

Marty, who owns Everett & Charlie art gallery in Linden Hills, and also sells newspaper advertisements for TMC Publications CO, agrees that selecting art can be simple. "Let the art choose you," she



These small lightboxes made by Longfellow artist Chris Miller can brighten tables and shelves. Other larger ones function as furniture. (Photo submitted)



During the annual LoLa art crawl every September, Longfellow artist Bob Schmitt invites people into his garden. The design and decor complement the artwork he creates in the manner of Asian brush painters. (Photo submitted)

recommended. "If you work too hard to find the perfect piece based on the right size, color, medium, or price, you may be disappointed. Relax. Let it speak to you. You'll be pleasantly surprised."

TIPS FOR SELECTING ART

For LoLa artist Lisa Arnold, adding art to a home helps one feel alive. "I let my art find me. When I feel that 'zing,' I know I have to have it," said Arnold. "Buy what you like. Find room for it. Constantly move stuff around."

Art in a home enriches all who live and visit there, observed LoLa artist Kenneth Wenzel. "Choose what you respond to and keep open to learning more about art to develop your sense of taste," he suggested. "Pick out a wall for a painting/print/photo and/or a space/shelf for a

piece of sculpture and start there."

Know the spaces in your house where art would be desired, advises deRuyter. "Knowing your space is the most important part before you actually start your search for art." Don't forget the 'odd' spaces in your home that may be used, i.e. the space above the thermostat, the narrow space between that window and a door, or on top of a corner glass case that would be perfect for a piece of sculpture or a lit glass vase.

Ask, do you want one piece that just dominates the space and makes a solo statement? Or, do you want multiple pieces that you love in a "create a gallery" kind of feeling in your home?

"And don't forget that art comes in

TIPS FOR SELECTING ART

- "Start with an open mind and be willing to look at pieces of art you didn't think you'd like. Ask questions. Sometimes there is a hidden connection unveiled between a piece of art and the client that triggers the selection. That's fun to watch! Another approach is to move towards what makes you comfortable and happy. Art can be an investment and may be in your home for years so you want to be sure you get along with each other." - Suzie Marty of Everett and Charlie art gallery

- "Pick out a wall for a painting/print/photo and/or a space/shelf for a piece of sculpture and start there." - Kenneth Wenzel, www.kennethwenzel.com

- "Buy what you like. Find room for it. Constantly move stuff around." Lisa Arnold, www.instagram.com/xola_arts

- "As a practicing artist, I create many original pieces in a year. But over the years I find that many people are not ready to make a major purchase for their home. Many artists, like myself also offer prints of their original work. I have found that a lot of people can start with a print or even just a note card to begin to put beauty into, bring life to their own environment. Some of these early purchases can lead on to creating a personal connection with a particular artist. There are few things that are as personal as choosing art for your home. There is no right way to do this. Start small. Start local." - Bob Schmitt, www.shopatlaughingwatersstudio.com

- "When someone comes to my studio to purchase art, it is not unusual for them to go through every piece I have, narrow it down, and then slowly whittle it down to the one they like best. The happiest people are the ones that come back and who become a "collector" of my work - I have collectors who have purchased multiple paintings, several who have purchased upwards of five or more if they have large homes. I have two collectors who have purchased more than 10 paintings. I also have purchasers who return to the studio tour every year, and talk about the single piece in their home that they have treasured and enjoyed for many years. You know they are happy with it. The only unhappy people are those who have looked at a piece, considered purchasing, and then wanted to think about it... only to come back days or weeks later and find out that the one they want has been purchased by someone else." - Calvin deRuyter, www.calsportfolio.net

- "For someone who would like to start buying art for their home I would encourage them to hit several of the art shows held throughout the year. This is a great way to get a feel for what is out there. One can easily attend a few of these and start sorting out what they like and don't like. Then when comfortable doing so, begin making purchases. One of the best things about art in my opinion is that there is no right or wrong. I may fall in love with a style that another person can't stand. That's OK. That's how art works." - Chris Miller, shatterandglue.tumblr.com



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The city gardener



By LAUREN BETHKE, Master Gardener

Tips for planting fall bulbs



Bulbs come in different sizes. Above (left to right) are daffodil, tulip, and crocus bulbs. At right is a hardy allium, a decorative onion that features a large, puffy flower on a tall stalk. (Photo submitted)

Now that the days are becoming noticeably shorter and nights are getting colder, you may think the planting season is over. However, fall is the perfect time to put some hardy bulbs in the ground for early spring blooms! With a bit of advance planning, you can look forward to seeing flowers as soon as possible next year. Read on for tips and advice on choosing, planting, and caring for hardy bulbs.

First, some terminology. "Bulb" refers to a type of plant that stores nutrients underground in a large rounded structure. Technically, there are several different bulb-like structures that serve similar functions, including true bulbs, tubers, rhizomes, and corms, but for our purposes we will refer to them all as "bulbs." There are two main types of bulbs: "hardy" and "tender." Hardy bulbs are planted in the fall and bloom in the spring. Daffodils, tulips, snow drops, crocuses, irises, and hyacinths are all great examples of hardy bulbs. Tender bulbs (such as canna and calla lilies) are planted in the spring, bloom in the summer, and must be dug up and stored indoors over the winter.

This article will focus on the tougher and easier to care for hardy bulbs.

You can plant hardy bulbs anytime after the soil cools in the fall, but before the ground freezes. If you can still dig a hole, you can still plant a bulb! Cool soil temperatures encourage the plant to focus on growing roots and storing nutrients for the spring. Generally, bulbs should be planted in a hole with a depth 2-3 times the height of the bulb. Hardy bulbs do best when planted in well-draining soil, and some-

where that will have full sun in the spring (but keep in mind that the trees won't have leaves yet, so most locations will have full sun unless they are shaded by a building or other structure). Make sure to plant bulbs with the pointy side up and mark their location so you don't forget and accidentally dig them up in the spring!

One planting tip from personal experience: squirrels love to dig up fall-planted bulbs, so consider planting them at the maximum recommended depth or placing some chicken wire or other protection over the top of the bulbs. After a disappointing year when I planted 75 crocus bulbs and only had a handful survive the squirrels, I started using bulb baskets with great success. These are plastic baskets with perforated lids that keep squirrels out but allow bulbs to grow through. Essentially, you plant the bulbs in the basket and then bury

the entire basket at the appropriate depth for the bulbs. I like to recommend this method for maximum squirrel protection!

Hardy bulbs are easy to care for, but there are a few best practices to promote healthy plants and vibrant blooms. In the spring, you can encourage growth by pushing mulch aside when soil and air temperatures begin to warm. Most early spring bulbs can tolerate a light frost, so no need to worry unless the temperature dips into the 20s for an extended period. It's best to remove faded flowers after blooming so the plant puts its energy into the bulb and not into seed production. However, do not remove leaves until they are yellow and withered, to give the plant as much time as possible to photosynthesize nutrients and store them for the following year. Additionally, be careful not to overwater bulbs as they are prone to rotting if soil conditions



are too wet.

Most bulbs will multiply, and after several years, they may start to become crowded and not bloom as well. Every three to four years, consider dividing your bulbs to give them more space. Shortly after the foliage has died back, dig up the bulbs, remove any loose soil, and store them in a cool, dry spot until it's time to plant them again in the fall.

Finally, if you want to add something slightly unusual to your garden, my personal favorite hardy bulbs are alliums. These are decorative onions that feature a large puffy flower on a tall stalk. There are many types of alliums with different colors and heights, but they all have a charming Dr. Seuss-esque quality that livens up the garden throughout the year!

For more information, check out the University of Minnesota Extension Yard and Garden website. Extension resources are written by experts, and contain the latest and most reliable research-based information. Happy gardening!

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STANDPOINT >> from 1

The organization offered training and support for Synavone when she was a legal advocate. She expressed that Standpoint was a huge supporter for advocates in keeping them informed about how updated laws impact domestic violence and sexual violence survivors. She communicated that joining Standpoint was a perfect fit for her.

"Standpoint had always been an organization that I had looked up to and an organization that I knew supported advocates in finding justice for domestic violence and sexual violence victims," Synavone said.

Synavone explained that domestic and sexual violence cases are unique and complex, which is why Standpoint attorneys and advocates are vital as they are able to walk victim survivors through the process of hearings, and the criminal justice system. They explain specific terminology to help inform and empower.

There are many barriers victims have to face, especially those in BIPOC and marginalized communities, Synavone said. These barriers are especially prominent in reporting, in court cases and during trials. She explained that it is important to understand what justice means to each individual person in order to serve them well.

"For some survivors, justice looks like having their perpetrator doing time behind bars," Synavone said. "For some survivors, justice looks like them healing and regaining their ability to be free from that person, so justice looks different for everybody."

Raising awareness for domestic and sexual violence was not the work Synavone imagined she'd be a part of in her younger years. Over time her passion grew and she dedicated time and attention on trying to make a difference in the field.

"When I started doing the work, I started seeing the need."

As a parent, Synavone explained she believes that change starts at home in educating children about how domestic violence and power and control dynamics are learned behaviors. She explained that determining whether someone is going to be tolerant or not of violence starts at home. She actively teaches her kids what healthy relationships look like, and challenges the social and cultural norms of traditional gender roles.

"It's not to say that this is something that happens overnight or anything, but as a parent I was very intentional on how I modeled that message to my kids," Synavone said.



Standpoint staff Ann McFarland (left) and Michelina Lucia (right) help survivors navigate through a complex legal system. (Photos submitted)

ATTORNEY WORK

Ann McFarland has been involved at Standpoint since 2020, and has been the housing and supervising attorney since fall 2022. Before Standpoint she worked at the Volunteer Lawyers Network, and learned of Standpoint from a partnership between the two. Within the housing program, McFarland handles action line housing questions, provides training for system professionals and advocates who provide emotional and social support for survivors and families, and creates resources surrounding housing needs for victims/survivors.

"Standpoint's expertise is the intersection of domestic and sexual violence and the justice system," McFarland said.

Standpoint started in 1984 as "The Family Law Project," and aimed to raise awareness of legal services for women and children in low income circumstances. They also monitored the Domestic Abuse Act in southern Minnesota. In 1986, it was renamed the "Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project," and expanded across the state. In 2016, they became Standpoint. The mission is "to promote justice for domestic and sexual violence victims." Standpoint currently has 15 staff members, and offers assistance with family law, protective orders, housing, immigration and other legal services.

Growing up, McFarland's mother was a social worker and worked often with domestic violence shelters. McFarland expressed that she was very inspired by her mother's work, and over time as she learned more about domestic and sexual violence, she felt called to the work.

"I take so much pride in what we do and I am inspired everyday by the victims/survivors that we work with," McFarland said. "My coworkers are amazing, and I'm inspired by them, too."

A challenge McFarland experiences within the housing program, and with



domestic and sexual violence work as a whole, is a lack of funding. With more funding, she feels that Standpoint would expand, do more in depth work, and provide more training to field professionals. As the need is high, she feels the work is extremely valuable.

Hennepin resident Michelina Lucia began working as an attorney within the Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) grant in 2023. While studying as a paralegal, Lucia worked at a law firm that focused on severe domestic violence family cases. The experience sparked her interest in working with domestic and sexual violence cases. After graduating from the University of Minnesota law school, she worked for Anoka County for three years, and then moved to Standpoint. The LAV grant is primarily for non intimate partner sexual violence in Ramsey County.

"I knew from the start of my work in law that they [Standpoint] were the go to entity for learning the new or current laws of domestic or sexual violence," Lucia said. "They just created a really good name for themselves for the cases that they take on and the work that they do."

Through LAV, survivors can request protective orders. They work with schools and employers to get accommodations, and ensure that systems are following the right steps to protect survivors. Working within LAV and the appellate court brief committee, Lucia often works with children. She expressed that the experience of supporting children and their guardians through the process is very rewarding, and she admires the resilience she witnesses in young survivors. Before becoming an advocate at Standpoint, Lucia wanted to learn more about representing survivors of sexual violence. Working with the attorneys at Standpoint has taught her how to represent survivors well through informed care and representation practices.

Lucia, like Synavone, had not original-

ly imagined herself working in the field, but views the work as necessary due to the amount of cases and survivors in need of support and representation. Her work, especially in working with child survivors, bears a lot of emotional weight. Lucia expressed that it is important that she actively cares for her own mental and emotional health.

"Standpoint is very good at encouraging and modeling healthy habits to make sure that you can continue to work in this field," Lucia said.

GETTING INVOLVED

During the early stages of the pandemic in 2020, Standpoint experienced an increase in calls to their action line, which operates from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. The organization did not have to shut down their services during the pandemic as this system allowed them to continue doing their work remotely. The lockdown also inspired the organization to create a text line, as many were forced to live with their abusers. As the number of callers increased, the amount of Standpoint staff increased as well to accommodate the need.

"With the growth of our organization, we're able to participate more and provide more of our insight, experience and Standpoint's expertise around domestic violence and sexual violence and bring that voice to our collaborations and partnerships," Synavone said.

Despite increased awareness of domestic and sexual violence, Synavone said that the numbers of victims/survivors has not decreased. She expressed that funding of resources is a large issue, and that for the most part in Minnesota domestic violence shelters are full every day.

"We [Standpoint employees] say, 'This is a job that we want to work ourselves out of,'" Synavone said. "I've been doing this work since 1997, and I don't see us being able to work ourselves out of a job. It is an issue that continues to happen and there's still a lot of work to be done."

Synavone encourages people to call local domestic and sexual violence organizations to find out how they can get involved. Most organizations need volunteers, she said, and there are many ways to get involved, including donations of time, funds, and advocacy. Tickets are available for Thursday, Oct. 12, at the Day Block Center (1103 Washington Ave, Minneapolis) as Standpoint is hosting its annual "Stand with Standpoint" fundraising event which celebrates the work of their advocates, attorneys and professionals. The event features live entertainment, a silent auction and "Journey of Hope" awards ceremony.

HOW TO ADD ART >> from 8

all forms and sizes to cover walls, sit on the floor, cover at table or a desk, or even hang from the ceiling... Art belongs everywhere," said deRuyter.

"Of course, many people love to look at art, decide they love it, and then 'make' the space in their home to place it - that is the sign that you are moving from being a home designer, to an actual collector of art. A few times in my career, when I have asked someone who is seriously considering one of my paintings if they had a place in mind, and the response was 'Oh, the living room (or bath or bedroom), but we are choosing the art we love first and then building the rest of the room around that.' Now, that is the very most perfect complement to any artist."

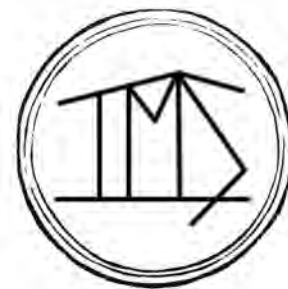
Marty sees people come into her gallery, fall in love with a piece immediately but then debate whether they have any more wall space. They may also not know exactly why they like the piece as it isn't their typical style. When they come back and tell her that the piece has been "haunting" them and they can't stop thinking about it, "that's when we both know they are meant to be together and give the piece a 'Forever Home.'"

She features only Minnesota artists in her gallery. "Minnesota is so lucky to be overflowing with talented artists," she observed.

"Buy local art and stay in touch with the artists who have made it," urges Wenzel.

"In the Twin Cities there is a thriving artist community with all kinds of art shows, studio tours, and artists who are willing to open their studio for people to look and talk with," agrees deRuyter. "There are smaller tours or art fairs, and there are bigger events. During an event like Art-A-Whirl (in May) or like Art Attack (in June), you can check out literally hundreds of artists in one building - certainly more artists than anyone could visit in a weekend." These art crawls enable people to ask themselves if they want art that is abstract or realistic, landscape or still life, impressionist or non-objective. Do they want art that screams or art that calms?

Don't feel pressured to fill a space right now, said deRuyter, or you might get something that won't speak to you for long. "Take the time to find the pieces that ... survive in your mind and heart the longest, and just enjoy the journey as you look," he stated.

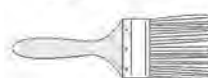


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DOWLING COMMUNITY GARDEN 80 YEARS OLD

Shelley Anderl was part of the 80th celebration held at Dowling Community Garden (39th St. and 46th Ave.) on Saturday, Aug. 19 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. There was tomato tasting, speakers, kids activities and more.

HOW AND WHY WAS THE DOWLING COMMUNITY GARDEN STARTED?

Anderl: The Dowling Garden was started as a Victory Garden in 1943, which is why we recently had our 80th year celebration.

HOW HAVE THINGS CHANGED AT THE GARDEN OVER THE YEARS? WHAT HASN'T CHANGED?

Anderl: When the garden began there were just a handful of very large plots that eventually were broken down into smaller plots. The garden expanded onto adjoining undeveloped land, and by 1993, there were 160 plots. Today we have over 190 plots, and 250 gardeners. There was no water available at the beginning, but barrels were filled from Minnehaha Creek. Now there are several in-ground spigots scattered about the property which are used to fill water barrels, but are also



used with hoses to make watering a much easier task.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE GARDEN TO THE COMMUNITY?

Anderl: I don't think you can over estimate the value of green space in an urban environment. Personally, I have been gardening there for 25 years, and having the opportunity to grow flowers and vegetables is priceless. It is a beautiful, peaceful place, and it is so interesting to see the different things that are grown and the various gardening methods that are used. We also contribute

over a thousand pounds of fresh produce to community food shelves each year.

Plots come in a variety of sizes with the average plot being about 20'X20' and some that are half that size. As an example of how large some of the earlier plots were - when I got my plot in 1999, it was part of an existing plot that was surrendered by a gardener in her 90s. That one plot was divided into nine plots with my plot being 20'X20'. We also have raised beds located near water sources for gardeners with physical challenges.

A volunteer committee manages plot assignments, finances, gardener volunteer



commitments and adherence to rules such as weed control and use of chemicals. Since we are on school property we are not allowed to use herbicides and pesticides.

WHO HAS BEEN GARDENING THERE THE LONGEST?

Anderl: Not sure, but Jerry Foley is on our committee. He is in his 90s, still gardening and he wrote a book about the Dowling Garden. Steve Dosch (pictured above) is also on the committee; he's a long time active gardener and the garden coordinator from 1989 to 1993.

EVENTS

DREAMING IN COLOR OCT. 21

The 7th Annual Minnesota Black Authors Expo is set for Oct. 21, 2023, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at DeLaSalle High School. It is the largest gathering of Black writers and book lovers in the Midwest. This year's theme is "Dreaming in Color: Telling Our Stories to Save Our Lives." It is free and open to the public. More at www.blackauthorsexpo.com. There will be 40+ local Black authors featured, as well as an art-

ist stage sponsored by Hennepin County Libraries with DJ Digie on the 1s and 2s. WCCO's Shayla Michelle will feature a kid's corner with arts and crafts provided by Northern Suburban Center for the Arts. There will be a two-hour writer's bootcamp presented by Aya Media & Publishing, and vendors will be selling food and goods. Additional sponsors are: The Loft Literary Center, TruStone, In Black Ink, Strive Publishing, The Givens Foundation for African American Literature, Saint Paul Public Libraries.

LUTEFISK DINNER NOV. 4

Minnehaha Communion Lutheran

(4101 37th Ave. S.) will hold its Annual Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner on Saturday, Nov. 4. Food is served family style with mealtimes at 3 p.m., 4:30 p.m., and 6 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults, and \$10 for kids 10 and under. To reserve your seat, call 612-722-9527.

ANNUAL BAZAAR NOV. 18

Join Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church (4101 37th Ave. S.), Saturday, Nov. 18, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., for their Annual Bazaar. They've got it all - craft tables, silent auction, raffles, bake sale, grandma's attic. They'll also have Flotegrot and ham sandwiches available for purchase.

RIISING FROM THE ASHES RUNS THROUGH OCT. 21 AT VINE ARTS CENTER

This fall marks the end of a year of shows at the Vine Arts Center (2637 27th Ave. S.) with artwork from community members, gallery members and an artist from Iowa. "Rising From The Ashes" run Sept. 16 to Oct. 21 The gallery is open on Saturdays during shows from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Work will be shown by members Anita White, Aribert Munzner, Candace Carlson, Gordon Coons, John Box, Julie Liebelt, Kat Corrigan, Kathleen Crook, Kathleen Davis, Kim Pickering, Leah Bukovchan-Gossom, Lori Grafing, Masako Onodera, Raven Miller, Reime Jahr, Rick Pirtle, Rubin Latz, Sarah Hopkins, Stephen Hoffer, Sue Kolstad, Tanya Beyer, Thrace Soryn, Wendy Henry. The artists have continued to work during COVID-19 and through the rebuilding of the gallery.

Last year when The Vine Arts Center reopened with the annual Member Show and a celebration of the new space it was dedicated to Howard Gelb who encouraged the artists to establish the gallery in his building.

After over two years of reconstruction, The Vine Arts Center and Ivy Building For The Arts reopened. In 2020 after being closed because of COVID-19, during the civil unrest a wayward spark fell on the building roof and caused the fire. Neighbors and tenants gathered hoses and kept the fire from spreading as best they could until the fire department arrived a few hours later. The building experienced a lot of damage from smoke, water, and some flames. This required reconstruction of most of it.

The rebuild of the center has been possible through the generous contributions of organizations and individuals. It has been fortunate to receive private donations as well as grant money.

Vine Arts introduced a new policy of providing a sign language interpreter for the opening shows and will continue this for openings the rest of this year.

Vine Arts Center is a non-profit, member-run organization supporting emerging and established artists, partnering with the community, and providing space and support for visiting shows and events.

More at vineartscenter.org.



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NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

By Sarah Friedman
communications manager
sarah.friedman@nokomiseast.org



Meet Nokomis East Neighborhood Association's Board Chair, Mia Beste. Mia moved into the neighborhood in 2019. She immediately fell in love with the area. "My humble opinion is the Nokomis area is the best neighborhood in the city. I love the trails. I love the greenery. I love the lakes. I love the people. People have been here since high school, and they stay and raise their children here... I think that says something." When deciding with her now-husband Travis, who lived in Nokomis East, "Your place or mine?" she still laughs at her answer: "Obviously yours." She pointed out there's a waterfall less than two miles away and the walkability of the neighborhood.

Mia joined the board in early 2020 as a way to establish roots and meet people. She has been on boards in the past, and

MEET NENA'S BOARD CHAIR

felt like she could make a big difference in our community if she joined. Just after her very first board meeting, George Floyd was murdered. NENA sprung into action and created a neighborhood watch group. "People were coming from out of town to exacerbate the conflict, and it was awful and NENA was there," she said about the watch group. This group was composed of volunteers who would walk people home if they had to get off late from work and were afraid to go alone. Their simple presence made community members feel safer. During this time, NENA also formed a DEI committee that created a book club and community education. NENA also created partnerships with tax organizations to help people and small businesses with tax activities.

Mia noted that today, NENA has several new goals for our community. "My top priority as chair is to make NENA feel like a home again... It was really hard to connect to the community when we were all stuck in isolation. When you can't go out in

the community and connect one-on-one, it's tough to feel like you're building those bridges... I still feel like people are getting used to getting out there." She noted that "We're going through an adjustment period." She added, "There's still a lot of recovery from the pandemic."

As NENA is rebuilding our sense of community from the pandemic, Mia also pointed to budget cuts. NENA's funding has been cut by the city down to only 22% of what it needs to operate with no plan from city council on how to secure more funding. So far this year, NENA has thrown two events to raise money for neighbors who may need help affording rent, as well as written news articles to teach the public about rent support.

"If I could equate one word to NENA, it's grace. There's grace in what we do," she said. "We have our values in the right place about what it means to build community, build connections, provide services, and make Nokomis stronger for everyone who lives here. NENA is an organization whose



Mia Beste

sole purpose is to help neighbors and create community. We would love your input and your help to make Nokomis East the best neighborhood out there. Please go to www.nokomiseast.org for future events and committee dates, as well as how you can contribute to our Renter Support Fund. We would love to have your help in making our neighborhood better than ever."

New name proposed for Sibley Park

After first being solicited by the community in 2016 about changing the name for Sibley Field Park, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) initiated a community engagement process in 2021, as part of a concurrent park improvements project.

The public participated in multiple community engagement events around renaming and improvements to the park. Survey results indicated overwhelmingly that the park should be renamed.

In response to the engagement and following MPRB's Naming Policy, MPRB staff submitted Resolution 2023-171 as an action item for the Board of Commissioners meeting on Sept. 20, 2023.

The resolution initiates the renaming process by nominating "Chanté T'ínza Wínyan Park" ("Chawn-tay Teen-zah Ween-yawn Park") to replace the name Sibley Field Park. "Chanté T'ínza Wínyan" means

"Strong Hearted Women" in the Dakota language. A group of neighbors representing native communities proposed it to remember the Dakota women who, during the time of genocide, were displaced from the land where the park sits today.

Adoption of the resolution will initiate the naming process, including the following steps:

- Submission of the approved nomination to various MPRB staff and several neighborhood organizations
- Two public hearings with certain Commissioner attendance requirements
- A vote by the Board of Commissioners on the proposed name

If the Board of Commissioners does not adopt the resolution, staff would request direction on how to proceed. Commissioners may also amend the resolution and nominate a different name.

Trail connections coming at Nokomis-Hiawatha park

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is finalizing concept designs for the next round of trail connection improvements in Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park. After open house events in June and July, the final scheduled public meeting was held on Tuesday, Aug. 29, at Lake Nokomis Community Center.

There's also an interactive online map for people to review the concepts and comment.

The Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan was adopted in 2015. It provides a long-term vision for improvements at Lake Nokomis, Lake Hiawatha and surrounding parkland and trails. This project will build as many of the following unfinished, short-term connection improvements identified in the plan as possible under the project budget:

- Connection between the 54th Street E Triangle Park and West Lake Nokomis Parkway
- New trail connection between Edge-

water Boulevard//E Lake Nokomis Parkway and Cedar Avenue Bridge

- New pedestrian-only trail loop around Amelia Pond
- Cedar Avenue crossing at 52nd Street
- Cedar Avenue crossing at 50th Street
- Lake Hiawatha pedestrian-only bridge over Minnehaha Creek
- Trail crossing at the connection between Minnehaha Parkway and Lake Nokomis Parkway, just west of Lake Nokomis Community Center

View the MPRB project page for more details.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minneapolis Public Works and Hennepin County are also studying ways to reduce vehicle traffic speeds and improve safety at the intersection of Cedar Avenue, Lake Nokomis Parkway and Edgewater Boulevard. Short-term improvements are planned this year.

Visit the City of Minneapolis' project page for more information.

Faith

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www.epworthmpls.org
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www.faithlutheranmpls.org
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Sundays - Service times on website (Communion 1st and 3rd)
Mondays: Exercise Class, 10 am AA, 6:30 pm
Wednesdays: NA group, 7:30 pm
9/10 - Rally Sunday, Ice Cream and Music, 10:15 am
9/30 - 10 am-2 pm Blind Ministry

Minnehaha Communion Lutheran
4101 37th Ave. S. • 612-722-9527
www.minnehahacommunion.org
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Sunday mass 9:30 am (also live-streamed on Facebook), 12 pm
Sacrament of Reconciliation 4-4:40 pm Saturdays; Sunday 11:30-11:50 am; Or by appointment
Weekday masses at 8:15 am, M, T, Th, F in the chapel

Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls
5212 41st Ave. S. • 612-724-3691
www.trinityfalls.org
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Meet new LCC Community Organizer

**LONGFELLOW
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

By **ANDREA TRITSCHLER,**
communications
andrea@longfellow.org



Ben Howery joined LCC in August of 2023 after recently completing his undergraduate in urban studies. He joins the team from the Southeast Como Improvement Association where he gained experience in community development, event coordination, and equitable engagement. Ben has a developed passion for understanding the complexities of urban space and the individual histories that make up the communities that surround him. He believes that the collaboration between residents and their community organizations is imperative in creating a long-lasting and successful impact.

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF

Although I am originally from a small town in southern Wisconsin, I have lived in the Southeast Como neighborhood for almost four years now. I have tried my best to explore as much of the Twin Cities as possible, and have fallen in love with the abundance of local shops and restaurants. I often frequent vintage stores such

as Time Bomb Vintage and Cat and the Cobra, and always enjoy finding new coffee shops and restaurants. I am also a huge fan of public displays of art and attending interesting and unique events.

WHAT DREW YOU TO LONGFELLOW AND THIS POSITION?

Since moving up to Minneapolis four years ago, I have enjoyed frequenting the Greater Longfellow neighborhood – whether that be biking along West River Parkway, grabbing a bite to eat at Sea Salt, or being a patron at one of the hundreds of local businesses – the Longfellow neighborhood has a lot to offer for young active people like myself.

During my time at the Southeast Como Improvement Association, I fell in love with the work that has been occurring within local communities. I feel that the people that make up a neighborhood are all so unique and the public history that a community presents is often inspiring and thought provoking. Having been a community organizer in the past, I have realized that our voices truly matter, and feel that with this position I have the opportunity to amplify these voices and make sure that those who need support can and will receive it.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS ROLE?

While I'm still getting acclimated to the neighborhood and organization, I feel that a primary goal within my position is



Ben Howery says that Longfellow has a lot to offer young active people like himself. "I would like for people to feel that LCC is a resource that they can utilize with ease and comfort," Howery said. (Photo submitted)

to be aware of and listen to the needs of local residents and businesses and find ways to support them. I would like for people to feel that LCC is a resource that they can utilize with ease and comfort. Another goal of mine is to ensure that residents and businesses are informed of the programs and assistance that are available to them - making sure individuals have access to information that may be helpful to them is a top priority.

WHAT VALUE DOES LCC BRING TO THE COMMUNITY?

LCC focuses on needs and issues that

are specific to our community. We have worked to engage residents and local business owners to work together in effort to reach common ground and enact change. LCC has also worked to provide several programs that look to offer assistance to community members such as tenant outreach, housing development, and environmental justice. LCC hopes to empower, engage, and work towards the overall betterment of people living within our community.

Contact Ben at Ben@longfellow.org.

CITY BRIEFS

NEW DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES

Mayor Jacob Frey has nominated the City of Minneapolis' director of inspection services, Enrique Velázquez, to be the next director of regulatory services. If approved by the city council, he would replace Saray Garnett-Hochuli, who left the position in June to become the city's deputy city operations officer, and lead more than 190 department staff members in divisions that include traffic control, housing inspections and animal care and control.



employee, making over \$300,000 annually. In 2020, Barnette was the first person of color to be elected chief judge of Hennepin County District Court. As Chief Judge he is paid \$171,000 and oversees the state's largest county court operations, managing 63 judges and supporting over 550 employees. "I am grateful for this opportunity and eager to work collaboratively with local, county, and state leaders to develop innovative solutions that promote safety and foster positive relationships between law enforcement, the city, and the community," said Barnette when his nomination was announced.



EMERGENCY HOUSING MEETING

On Tuesday, Council Member Chavez held an emergency housing meeting about the state of homelessness in the area and the government's response. There, elected officials were asked to advance solutions including a multi-jurisdictional coordinated encampment response policy, safe outdoor spaces, overdose prevention sites, direct housing, treatment and recovery investments for encampment residents, homelessness navigation hubs, and pathways to economic mobility.

NEW COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMISSIONER

On Sept. 11, Mayor Jacob Frey nominated Hennepin County Chief Judge Todd Barnette to serve as the city's next Community Safety Commissioner. If his nomination is approved by a City Council majority, he will be replacing Cedric Alexander, who resigned after serving only one year of a 4-year term. The safety commissioner is likely the highest paid city

FIRST METRO B LINE SHELTERS

Installation of shelters and other station amenities along Line B began in late September starting in St. Paul. Resurfacing of Lake Street between Minnehaha Ave and West River Parkway could begin as early as Sept. 25. Metro Transit Outreach staff will be available weekly on Thursdays from 2:15-3:45 p.m. at Dogwood Coffee (4021 E. Lake St.) for walk-in conversations and to answer questions about construction. Or call the construction hotline at 651-356-6995 or email at BLine@metrotransit.org.



CITY BUILDING AT 3000 MINNEHAHA AVE.

The site of the former 3rd precinct police station, now called "Minnehaha 3000," is no longer being considered as an option for a future police station. The city has announced that in the weeks ahead it will be securing funding for the site cleanup, which will include securing the building, replacing windows, and removing the barricades. That work is expected to be completed next spring. The city is establishing a work group to explore future uses of the property that could include both city and noncity functions. It has contracted with DeYoung Consulting to help determine possibilities for what other uses could be there.

~ Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon

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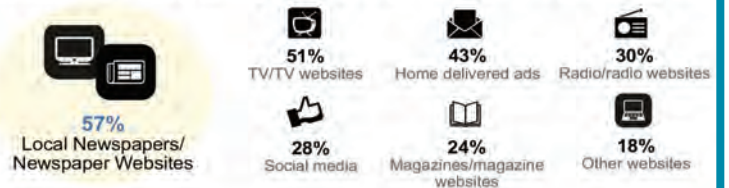
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~ Emily, Minneapolis

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PARKS FOR ALL MURAL PROJECT

Nine community artists are creating murals this year in Minneapolis parks they have ties to

By TALIA MCWRIGHT

Kao Lee Thao and Ash Kubesh spent 66 hours over 10 days painting two new murals that represent Thao's Hmong heritage at Boom Island Park. The artwork is part of the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board's 2023 "Parks for All Mural Project."

Nine artists in all were chosen to paint murals at multiple park locations, with the aim to decrease tagging and vandalism.

Parks for All is a comprehensive plan adopted by the board in 2021 as a way to create and accomplish nine goals that will sustainably benefit parks across the state for years to come. (See sidebar for complete list.) The mural project was funded through the board's budget and grant initiatives, as well as by local organizations. Artists were chosen for the mural project through a call for artists application in collaboration with Forecast Public Art. Over 140 artists applied. Once selected, the artists were given \$6,000 for labor and \$3,000 for materials.

"I'm really excited to help communicate out to community what the park board has adopted as policy through the interpretation of visual artists," Carrie Christensen said.

Christensen, a Saint Paul resident, is a senior planner for Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board with a background in urban planning, landscape architecture, strategic planning and more. Her role with Minneapolis Parks and Rec has allowed her to use her previous experience in her current position. Christensen leads the comprehensive planning process for the Parks for All initiative. The project is a collaboration between the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation planning division that works with policy, and the paint shop that focuses on park maintenance.

"This is a really fun partnership for us where we both identify that there is a need in our system for maintaining clean and well-managed park infrastructure," Christensen said.

Artists were chosen, in part, based on their prior experience creating murals. They were paired with parks based on their connectedness to the goals and their familiarity with the park. The nine goals for the Parks for All project are to be in effect for the next 15 years. Christensen explained that it's important for the park board to support artists that are a part of or have close connections to the communities by funding their work.

"I have a deep belief in the power of arts and artist storytelling in helping engage community in civic space making," Christensen said.

Once painted, the board's paint shop is responsible for mural upkeep. As tagging and vandalism are a concern, the paint shop takes measures to preserve the artwork by painting protective coatings on the murals that make it easier to wash away damage, touch up paint chipping, and clean as needed.

"Basically the artists install the murals, and we'll take it from there and care for the murals," Christensen said.

ARTIST JACQUI ROSENBUUSH

Artist Jacqui Rosenbush, a Bloomington resident, is the chair of the city's Creative Place Making Commission. Rosenbush is a painter and has worked on over 35 murals, many of which she created during her time working with GoodSpace



During design for a mural at the Lake Harriet trolley tunnel, Jacqui Rosenbush researched water quality control. She included lily pads and cattails in her mural after discovering the large role they play in filtering water. (Photo by Talia McWright)



Artists Kao Lee Thao and Ash Kubesh work on a mural at Boom Island Park that fills two sides of a concrete wall near the river. Thao painted a woman on one side of the mural wall. "Over there she symbolizes mother nature and earth," Thao said. "When you see a woman in my pieces, it's like she's a storyteller. Like she's telling a story about the importance of water and parks and nature." (Photo by Talia McWright)

Murals. She also works with the non-profit performing arts circus school for youth, Circus Juventas, creating artistic pieces for their productions.

"I really love design on an epic scale and how we experience spaces, so that drives a lot of the kinds of work that I do and murals are a part of that scope," Rosenbush said.

Rosenbush has a bachelor's degree in studio art from the University of Minnesota. She has a background in sculptural art, and is captivated by the immersive experience of sculptural art. She spent nine years working with Greta McLain and GoodSpace Murals, and has been an independent artist for two years.

"It's been a lifelong pursuit and I'm sure it'll keep going for my whole life," Rosenbush said.

For the Parks for All Mural Project, Rosenbush was assigned goal number four – "Work from our strengths and determine our role in partnerships" – at the Lake Harriet trolley tunnel. Rosenbush's project specifically highlighted the management of water quality. She expressed that this goal encompassed the role of the relationship between people and nature in managing water quality. During design preparation, she researched water quality control, and included lily pads and cattails in her mural after discovering the large role they play in filtering water.

"I wanted to look at those two things, water quality and relationship through the lens of leveraging a natural relationship that we can use to foster better care of the water," Rosenbush said.

Her favorite artist is sculptor Andy Goldworthy because he creates temporary art with materials found in nature. In her work with Circus Juventas, Rosenbush gets to practice this style of temporary art, as

her work is used during a season of performances, then removed. Nature is a large aspect of the artist's work, which influences her impressionistic and expressionistic painting style. She enjoys painting murals because of how large the work is and its attachment to the location.

"I really enjoy tunnels because they're such transitional spaces, and they're usually a space that's a bit dark so I love to come in and bring a brightness to it," Rosenbush said. "My favorite part of the design process is thinking about how someone will experience the whole thing."

Rosenbush has worked on many community-oriented projects in the past. She explained that she enjoys working on projects that involve community members, and allow people to experience art in a personal way. Her work is connected to her spiritual life and belief in God, and she is excited to partake in something larger than herself.

"Its [art] become the most true thing that I've done in my life," Rosenbush said. "It's so connected to who I am that it's just an outpouring of me. It feels very authentic and alive and exciting to really harness the power of being an artist."

ARTISTS KAO LEE THAO AND ASH KUBESH

Thao and Kubesh have worked together since 2003. The two started a 3D animation studio, Folklore Studio, in 2004. Together they have worked on over eight murals. Kubesh is a technical artist with a background in ceramics. He combines both ceramics and technology in his work with Folklore Studio. Thao works often with watercolor art which she describes as loose and fluid. Over the many years of working together, the two said that they have each learned different sets of skills from one another. They agreed that they

A MURAL PROJECT REFLECTING 9 PARK GOALS

- Goal 1: Foster belonging and equity
Artist: Aaron Johnson-Ortiz at Powderhorn Park restroom building
- Goal 2: Steward a continuum of nature and recreation. Artist: Jacob Dwyer at Franklin Steele Square park building
- Goal 3: Provide core services with care
Artist: Melodee Strong at Cleveland Park restroom building
- Goal 4: Work from our strengths and determine our role in partnerships
Artist: Jacqui Rosenbush. Location: Lake Harriet trolley tunnel
- Goal 5: Expand focus on health equity
Artist: Constanza Carballo at Van Cleave Park pump house
- Goal 6: Strengthen ecological connections. Artist: Thomasina TopBear at Bde Maka Ska Parkway wall
- Goal 7: Connect through communications and technology. Artist: Kao Lee Thao at Boom Island river wall
- Goal 8: Cultivate a thriving workforce
Artist: Rock Martinez at Windom NE Park warming room
- Goal 9: Operate a financially sustainable enterprise. Artist: Xena Goldman at West River Parkway retaining wall

both support their individual and collective artistic goals, and that working as a team has made it easier to keep going.

Thao was assigned goal number seven – connect through communication and technology – on the Boom Island river wall. As an animator, Thao felt excited to work on this goal as it combined her passion for fine arts and technology. After finishing the mural, she plans to add augmented reality (AR) components to the piece, making the painting an interactive experience.

"I try to connect community with technology because AR is the future right now," Thao said.

Much of her inspiration for the mural comes from her Hmong heritage. She explained that in Hmong culture, water holds significance as many believe that dragons may lurk in open bodies of water. To change the fearful narrative, Thao painted a dragon that is meant to be playful and inviting. She also expressed that the mural symbolized a journey for many Hmong people who had to cross the Mekong river due to the Vietnam war, and those who came to America and changed their views and beliefs since living in the country. Her intent with the mural was both to represent and validate these experiences.

"It's a reminder that nature is so important," Thao said. "I think we forget about that because we're so attached to our technology and social media, but being out in nature is really important."

The mural is painted with bright colors of teal and green, pink and orange. For Thao, the colors aren't only vibrant because they're her favorite colors, but because they represent the diversity of the communities she lives and works in.

"I paint with vibrant colors because it speaks to people of color," Thao said.

Thao also painted a woman on one side of the mural wall. She described how in Hmong culture, women often hand stitch their clothing and costumes. The woman Thao painted in bright colors on the mural, is inspired by and in honor of Hmong women.

"Over there she symbolizes mother nature and earth," Thao said looking at the woman she painted on the mural. "When you see a woman in my pieces, it's like she's a storyteller. Like she's telling a story about the importance of water and parks and nature."

The Parks for All Mural Project is set to be completed in the fall. Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board plans to have an unveiling celebration once all the murals are finished, which they will announce on their website.