

# SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • DECEMBER 14, 2023 • VOL. 3 • NO. 1 • 25,000 CIRCULATION



**5** Real hope is messy, edgy and freeing. It's what we need.

**4** COLUMN: Join the community table and lessen loneliness

**7** Council bids farewell to Lisa Goodman after 26 years

**10** LNA: computer basics and Affordable Connectivity

## MARISSA BADER SPREADS JOY TO THE WORLD

### LET'S Connect COFFEE TIME

Linden Hills writer and mother of three embraces community in everything she does

By Eric Ortiz

Be a kind human. That has been Marissa Bader's life goal since her dad taught her that how we treat others matters, that no human is less or more important than any other, and to always treat everyone with kindness and respect. Now, she is passing these lessons down to her kids and spreading the word as a writer in every aspect of her work.

The mother of three young girls (two 7-year-old twins and an 11-year-old) and author of two children's books ("The Only Me" and "Stella's Brave Voice"), Bader was the first guest of "Let's Connect," a new Southwest Connector community speaker event series that spotlights great local people in Minneapolis doing great things. During an in-person conversation with me in front of about a dozen people at Everett & Charlie art gallery in Linden Hills



"Human beings are meant to be connected," stated author Marissa Bader (right) of Linden Hills in response to a question posed by local journalist Eric Ortiz during the first Let's Connect Coffee Time on Dec. 1, 2023. The next event will be on Jan. 12, 9-10 a.m. at Everett & Charlie art gallery.

on Dec. 1, 2023, Bader highlighted the importance of connection when it comes to parenting and building strong communities.

"It's really about community," said Bader. "So we're not parenting in a vacu-

um. We're not living in a vacuum. We're reaching out to our tribe, to other parents, to our friends, to our community that we're not doing it alone. Because on the days where I felt or feel like I'm in it alone are my hardest days. But when I know I

have a support system of other parents, of other people that kind of get it, I feel so much better.

"So to me, it really is about that. We don't know what we don't know, and we don't know



For 25 years, the warm glow of hundreds of luminaries have lit Dupont/King's Highway on Christmas Eve. The annual event not only brings neighbors together, but it has raised over \$50,000 for the Minneapolis-based Domestic Abuse Project (DAP). Starting at 5 p.m., eight blocks will be filled with good cheer, thanks in a large part to the work of two friends.



## MPS NAMES NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Lisa Sayles-Adams began career as teacher in North Minneapolis, and is niece of former Minneapolis mayor

By Cam Gordon

Minneapolis will be welcoming a new superintendent on Feb. 5, 2024.

On Dec. 1, 2023, with opposition from two southwest board members, the Minneapolis Public School (MPS) Board of Education approved the selection of Lisa Sayles-Adams.

"This is a full-circle moment for me," said Sayles-Adams. "I began my career in education working as a teacher in North Minneapolis, and that's where I learned that strong schools make a strong community. I am honored and thank the school board for their vote of confidence in my commitment to serve as the next superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools. I look forward to partnering with teachers, students, staff and the community to make sure every student gets the high-quality education they deserve."

The school board was expected to vote on her start date and contract at the Dec. 12 board meeting (after the Connector went to press). Rochelle Cox has been serving as the interim superintendent following the resignation of Ed Graff on June 30, 2022.

"We are thrilled Dr. Sayles-Adams will lead Minneapolis Public Schools into the future and are excited about her deep educational experience, passion for lifting students up and proven track record of improving student performance at public schools," said Board Chair Sharon El-Amin. "She will provide both a vision and a strategy for continued growth for every student at MPS regardless of their background or zip code."

The selection of Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams, who is currently the superintendent of Eastern Carver County Schools in Minnesota, followed a formal search



The two final candidates were Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams (top) and Dr. Sonia Stewart.



process that started this fall. It culminated in the two finalists, Dr. Sonia Stewart and Sayles-Adams, getting a "Day in the District" that included community meet and greet events and school board interviews on Nov. 27 and 29.

### SOUTHWEST BOARD MEMBERS PREFERRED OUTSIDER

During the special school board meeting on Dec. 1, both southwest area MPS Directors, Ira Jourdain from District 6 and Adriana Cerrillo from District 4, spoke and voted in support of Stewart as the new superintendent. They were the only directors of the nine who did not support Sayles-Adams.

"It's time to take a leap of faith and have an outsider, versus having an insider," said Cerrillo, whose district includes Bryn-Mawr, Lowry Hill, Loring Park, Kenwood, East Isles and Cedar-Isle Dean. She said, "In my mind and in my heart, I have no doubt that Dr. Stewart is the individual that will be serving. And when we talk about having a superintendent who serves as a healing presence, we better have no strings at-



## ▶1 MARISSA BADER

what we're feeling. Someone else is probably feeling it, too. So it's really important to reach out and to just be connected."

Bader, who lives in Linden Hills with her husband Robb and their children, has always been driven to connect (and feel connected) to others. It's why she writes. Her tagline is "connecting hearts through stories," and Bader wants to spread joy and kindness with her writing and show that despite our differences, underneath it all, we are all just human beings having a shared human experience.

Connection is the key.

"We are all in relationships with others all the time," explained Bader. "We are not on an island. We're not meant to be on an island. Human beings are meant to be connected."

Bader is also a writer/editor for Lucie's List, a website that is a survival guide for new parents. With a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, she weaves the theme of connection into everything she does.

"Kind of how our relationships mold us and how they lift us up, they can affect us in any which way. So the underpinning of everything that I write about in children's books is that notion that we're all connected, the shared journey, if you will, we're all human beings underneath it all experiencing one common shared journey despite our seeming differences. It just impacts everything that I do and write about."

Nowadays, with the last few years, the pandemic, and everybody shutting off and opening up again, it's important to get more people connected to rediscover and restore our shared humanity. Bader sees the bright side of this moment and appreciates all the people who are doing good things and who really have people's best interests at heart.

"We're so used to turning on the news

and seeing these terrible stories all the time, violence and all the things that are wrong, but what about the things that are going well?" said Bader. "What about the positive things that are happening in our community and the relationships people are building?"

"To me, that would go such a long way in restoring that sense of humanity because I think we're all at this crossroads now. We're like, what is happening in the world? And it feels like it's upside down. And maybe if we are less saturated with all the negative and had a little bit more positive, it might feel different. Maybe that's a pipe dream. But that's how I feel."

That's how a lot of people feel today. Everyone has the capability to be a little bit more positive, a little bit more kind, a little more human. We just have to do it more.

In other words, be a little more like Marissa Bader.

▶ [ENTIRE INTERVIEW @ SWCONNECTOR.COM](https://www.swconnector.com)

## Q&A WITH MARISSA BADER

### HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN LINDEN HILLS?

I have lived in Linden Hills since 2014 and we absolutely love it! My husband and I could not think of a better place to raise our three daughters. We have the most amazing community, neighborhood and enjoy walking or biking into Linden Hills with our kids for dinner, a trip to Wild Rumpus and of course ice cream at Sebastian Joe's! It feels like a small, tight knit community within the city!

Although I grew up in Saint Paul and graduated from the now Two Rivers High School, one of my very best friends grew up in Southwest Minneapolis, just one block down from the house my family currently lives in. I loved spend-



The Southwest Connector is two years old! To celebrate, we launched a new series, "Let's Connect: Coffee Talk" on Dec. 1, 2023, and enjoyed cake from Wuollet Bakery.

ing time with her and her family in this warm and charming neighborhood – we enjoyed lots of sleepovers, walks around the lakes and hanging out in Linden Hills! – and I always kept Southwest Minneapolis in my mind as an area I'd love to settle in and raise a family one day.

I grew up in Mendota Heights, a suburb of Saint Paul, and my family always got the Saint Paul Pioneer Press. When I was much younger, I wrote a piece for the paper about suffering and surviving a brain bleed in my 20s.

### WHEN DID YOU DECIDE YOU WANTED TO BE A WRITER?

I've been a writer for as long as I

can remember. Truly, writing is so much more than what I do – it's who I am. As a small girl I would spend hours upon hours journaling, writing short stories, poetry, creative non-fiction and more. For me, writing has always been my way of making sense of my thoughts, feelings, the world and my place in it; I often say that I don't know what I think or feel until I write it down. For me, writing is like oxygen; it's my lifeline!

That said, in a professional capacity, I've been working in the journalism and communications field since my early 20s: I've served as a grant writer and development associate for the Rockefeller University in New York City, a freelance writer

3

An educational series

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**Wednesday, December 6 | 1 p.m.**

**All In: Caring for Planet Earth**  
by Dale Howey of Green Rock Apartments



**Tuesday, December 12 | 11 a.m.**

**History of Medicine** by Historian JB Andersen



**Wednesday, January 24 | 1 p.m.**

**The Scam Landscape: Staying Safe**  
by Scott Nelson of AARP



**Saturday, February 10 | 10:30 a.m.**

**Spirituality and Evolving Role of Church**  
by Mark Scannell



**Saturday, March 16 | 10:30 a.m.**

**Selling Your Lakes-area Homes**  
by Ted Field of Edina Realty and Estate Law  
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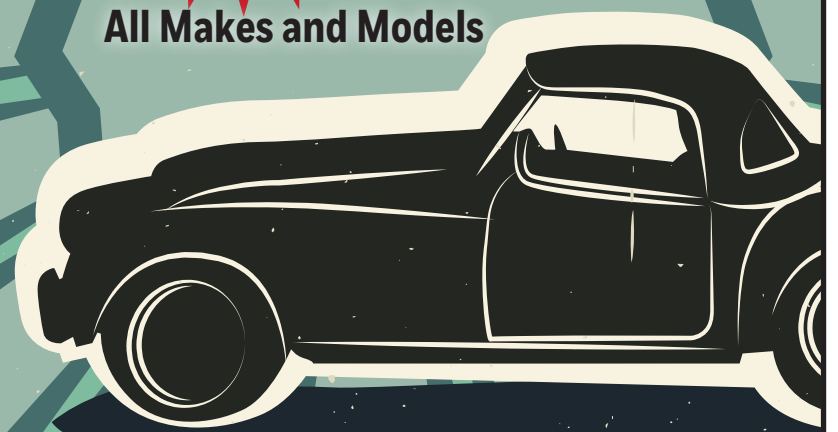
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Marissa and Robb Bader with their three daughters: Harper (11), Mila (7) and Grace (7).

► 2 **MARISSA BADER**

both in New York and here in Minneapolis, a web copywriter and editor for Life Time Fitness. I've also worked in corporate marketing and public relations, and I currently serve as the Twins editor and mental health writer at Lucie's List, a newsletter and website geared towards expectant and new parents.

**WHY CHILDREN'S BOOKS?**

I'm a huge lover of children's books – I always have been. First and foremost, I love the way picture books can evoke such wonderful and warm memories; I have the fondest memories of snuggling with my mom as she read "Goodnight Moon" to me before bed. Now when I read that same book to my own children, I can still smell her perfume and feel her tight, loving squeeze. It warms my heart.

In addition, I just love the way children's book authors skillfully weave important life lessons throughout the pages of their books in ways kids can understand and relate to. Three of my most favorite books that do this so well are "The Rabbit Listened" by Cori Doerrfeld, "The Invisible String" by Patrice Karst and Joanne Lew-Vriethoff and "I Am Enough" by Grace Byers. I love the way these books help children understand and manage emotions, build self-confidence and help them feel safe in an unpredictable world.

**HOW DO YOUR CHILDREN INSPIRE YOUR WRITING?**

My children are truly THE inspiration behind my children's book topics. I have a set of twins, now seven, and a singleton, now 11. My first book, "The Only Me," was deeply inspired by the fact that though my twins are two different people with very different personalities, likes, dis-

likes, etc., people were constantly comparing and contrasting them. This led to them measuring themselves against the other and struggling with that. I wanted them to understand that though they are twins, they are still individuals with their own set of skills, talents, amazing qualities, and so on. In "The Only Me," one of the twins, Stella, gains so much more self-confidence and assurance as she learns this lesson by book's end.

"Stella's Brave Voice," a follow-up to "The Only Me," is also based on a struggle in our home. We have a dynamic in which one of our children is more soft-spoken, while the other two are a bit louder and more assertive. We've been working hard to ensure everyone in our house knows their thoughts, feelings, opinions and voices matter. In "Stella's Brave Voice," Stella struggles with this, as her sister often interrupts and talks for and over her. She, too, is working hard to practice speaking up, and use her brave voice in her home, with her friends and at school.

**HOW DOES YOUR BACKGROUND IN MENTAL HEALTH FACTOR INTO YOUR CHILDREN'S BOOKS?**

I like to write about topics kids may be struggling with mentally and emotionally. As I mentioned, I see the challenges my children – and their friends – face, and find inspiration there. I also think it's hugely important to help build children's sense of self-esteem, worth and value; I truly aim to do that through my books, as well as in person any time I get to meet with young readers.

**WHAT DOES YOUR WRITING PROCESS LOOK LIKE?**

When an idea comes to me, I just... start. I pull out my computer or a notebook, wherever I happen to be, and begin writing. My first draft usually is... terrible. Ha! But that's what first drafts are for. I like to get all my ideas out on paper – it's almost like throwing every color of paint on a wall to see which hues work together

**DIG DEEPER**

Watch the whole "Let's Connect" conversation with Marissa Bader on the Southwest Connector YouTube channel.

The next "Let's Connect" is with Lana Gendlin Brooks and Karina Muller, the artisans and founders of HeartCentric Divine Creations, on Friday, Jan. 12, 9-10 a.m. at Everett & Charlie. Let us know if you want to be a future sponsor or speaker.

and which don't – and then re-reading and re-writing several times to determine which elements belong in the story, and which ones I need to scrap.

**WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU? ANY NEW BOOKS THAT YOU'RE WORKING ON?**

Yes! I'm currently working on another children's book about a little girl who struggles with always wanting to be and do everything perfectly. She is going to struggle with this sense of perfectionism, and learn that it's okay – great and healthy, even! – to make mistakes! In fact, this book idea was, in part, inspired by my oldest daughter's first grade teacher at Lake Harriet Community School, Ms. Bruce. She taught her that every time we make a mistake, our brain grows! We – my husband and myself included – remind each other of that every single day!

You can find my books locally at Wild Rumpus, Kiddywampus, Magers & Quinn and in Saint Paul at The Red Balloon Bookshop. You can also find them on Amazon and Bookshop.org: The Only Me & Stella's Brave Voice.

Feel free to follow me on Instagram @MarissaBaderWriter and check out my website at: www.marissabader.com

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**LET'S CONNECT, A NEW COMMUNITY SPEAKER SERIES**

Minneapolis is filled with great local people doing great things in the world. The Southwest Connector will showcase them with "Let's Connect," a new community speakers series.

Every month, the Southwest Connector will feature an interesting local resident to talk about their work and life in Minneapolis. The goal of "Let's Connect" is to celebrate great locals, support their work, and build community.

The "Let's Connect" speaker series is free and open to the public. All are welcome to join. Food and drinks will be provided. More on www.swConnector.com

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# A LITTLE LOCAL SUPPORT GOES A LONG WAY

**We can use generosity to do more good in our communities.**

Giving Tuesday was on Nov. 28 this year, and it was a rough one. Rough, of course, is a relative term.

Giving Tuesday 2023 raised an estimated \$3.1 billion in donations to nonprofits, according to Philanthropy.com. That's not chump change. In fact, it's a 15 percent increase from 2021 and a 25 percent increase from 2020. But it's just a 0.6 percent increase from 2022. And the number of donors, roughly 34 million Americans, decreased by 10 percent.

That doesn't mean people closed their wallets. Over 200 million Americans, more than 60 percent of the population in the United States, shopped online or in person at stores over Thanksgiving, Black Friday, and Cyber Monday – aka "Cyber Week."

Adobe Analytics reports that all those people spent a record \$9.8 billion for online Black Friday sales (a 7.5 percent increase from 2022) and \$12.4 billion on Cyber Monday (a 9.6 annual increase). People are spending money. Or, at least they're putting their purchases on a credit card. At the end of September, our nation's collective card balance was a whopping \$1.08 trillion.

This data proves the spending spirit is alive and well in America. A Deloitte survey also found that the average holiday



By Eric Ortiz

shopper expects to spend \$1,652 in 2023. But there is a difference between getting big bags of stuff at the mall and supporting a good cause to end social ills.

We're not saying don't buy things, but buying an Apple watch in every color might be a bit excessive. And excess consumerism doesn't help society. Excess consumerism leads to pollution and waste. Excess consumerism stratifies social classes and creates more social ills.

Consumerism is good for GDP growth. Rampant consumerism is bad for our health.

We have become a culture of consumers who can't stop consuming. Even though there are countless problems to solve – big and small, global and local – many people are driven to buy and own more stuff. We celebrate consumerism and the drive to buy and own more stuff. This creates more issues.

How people choose to spend their money defines what we value. At this point, over half of America must value problems because excess consumerism creates more problems and social ills. It's a vicious cycle.

Excess consumerism doesn't have to keep winning. It's a thin line between vicious and virtuous.

Spending money isn't the issue. What the money is being spent on is. Too much money is being spent on frivolous, unnecessary things. We have to be more conscious of how we spend our money and ensure we give it to those who need it most. Some businesses or organizations need it more than others. If a cup is overfilled, we don't need to keep filling it up.

We need a value shift. We need to remember what the spirit of giving means. We need to recalibrate our priorities and

focus on what really matters. This shift begins at home, in our own communities. We need to value what can make our communities stronger. It is not just about money. It is about caring about the common good.

So, how do we get more people in the giving spirit?

**SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES. SUPPORT MEANS BUYING SOMETHING. SUPPORT THE LOCAL SHOP YOU ALWAYS WALK PAST. SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION YOU'VE ALWAYS HEARD ABOUT DOING GOOD WORK. SUPPORT THE PLACES THAT NEED THE SUPPORT THE MOST AND WILL BENEFIT MOST FROM THE SUPPORT.**

If you have a choice between a big company with huge annual profits and a small local business with low margins, choose local. Did you know if each of us spent \$100 a year more on local businesses instead of chain stores, it would put an extra \$3 million a year into our economy? Not only that, but it would create thousands more jobs every year.

Think global, act local, do good. This isn't a new message or a revolutionary idea. It isn't even a revelatory idea. But it is a message worth repeating this holiday season and every season.

We don't need a Tuesday after Thanksgiving to be the only day we think about giving. Every day of the week, every day of the year, is a good day to give. Give money, give time, give away what you no longer use. Give kindness, respect, and compassion to the underserved.

If more people see the value in giving, more people will start giving. If more people start giving, more people will give. We can create a ripple effect like a pebble

dropped in a pond. The more (and larger) pebbles we drop, the bigger the ripple effect.

Communities have the power to make waves with generosity. Those waves can move mountains.

Before you know it, we will be celebrating excessive giving and solutions.

**Eric Ortiz** is a journalist and lives in the Wedge with his family. When he's not community building, he's the chief content officer for the Strong Mind Strong Body Foundation and writes bilingual children's books with his kids. Their first book, "How the Zookalex Saved the Village," is available in English and Spanish.

## WE NEED MORE THAN A CEASE-FIRE IN ISRAEL

For the past two months, a rallying cry of the growing Palestinian liberation movement has been "ceasefire now!" Activists and community members long to see an end to the constant, bloody horrors that people are seeing take place in Gaza at the hands of Israeli Occupation Forces. However, while a ceasefire might bring a sense of peace, and a deceleration in death and destruction, it is not a sufficient demand on its own. Israel has been claiming stolen Palestinian land as its own since Israel's formation in 1948, and Palestinians have since been subject to blockades on food and water, controlled movement, check points, kidnappings, political repression, shootings... the list of human rights violations goes on and on.

A ceasefire might stop the current massacre, but it is not enough to end the apartheid system upheld by the Israeli state. If a ceasefire is achieved, the fight cannot stop there. Palestinians deserve to have democratic rights in their own homelands. People need to be fighting for the full liberation of Palestinians, including self-determination and the right of return!

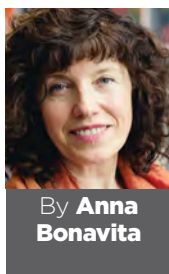
**Whitney Wildman**  
East Isles

## CREATE COMMUNITY AND LESSEN LONELINESS

You may have noticed a series of recent articles and podcasts about the emotional and physical health risks of loneliness. Everyone is writing about it, among them Hillary Clinton, David Brooks, Arthur Brooks, and the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. Not only has loneliness become recognized as one of the leading risk factors pertaining to individual health, but it seems that the future of democracy and humanity depends on how well we create and nurture real-time connections.

Being an immigrant, an introvert, and single living in Minneapolis, I have personally experienced loneliness for long periods and came to accept it as a normal part of modern life. However, I often questioned it and wondered if its opposite – conviviality, friendship, and meaningful community connection – are simply part of my past life.

Eventually life offered me a lesson. Just a few years ago in a very difficult and lonely time of my life, I was saved by a communal table in the cafeteria of a small



By Anna Bonavita

Italian city where I lived. Although I was lonely and struggling on many fronts, I found healthy food, good conversation, reliable company, and, in due course, friendship at this cafeteria. I became a regular, and I still maintain many of those friendships. When I returned to Minneapolis following this experience, I decided to start the Communal Table here using a similar model I observed in Italy. But COVID-19 came and the plans changed overnight.

COVID is now mostly behind us (we hope), but loneliness persists in our community. So, I decided to bring back the Communal Table. I am convinced we can rediscover comfort, social connection, strength, and even inspiration when we share meals and conversation. After all, what could be more optimistic than human connection over good food?

Almost 42 percent of households in Minneapolis are comprised of just one person, making us one of the top 10 loneliest cities in the country, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. But it does not have to be this way, especially during the challenging holidays and winter period.

I am offering you an opportunity to connect with your neighbors. I invite you to come to one of the most welcoming

restaurants in Minneapolis, Harriet Brasserie, and bring spontaneity and warmth to your lives. Owners Kalinka and Fernando Silvo and a few volunteers, including me, will be there to greet you, engage with you, and laugh with you; to share a simple meal, a conversation, and perhaps a glass of wine. Feel free to invite anyone in your circle who may benefit from being in a friendly, unscripted, and warm environment.

Come as you are, come when you can, come for as long as you want... come and we will create something good together...

When: Every Thursday 6 -9 p.m. beginning Dec. 7, 2023

Where: Harriet Brasserie, 2724 W 43rd St., Minneapolis, MN 55410

What: Meal/Drink/Conversation  
Questions?: Contact me at [anna.bonavita@esperienza.org](mailto:anna.bonavita@esperienza.org)  
See you, Thursday!

**Anna Bonavita** is a former scientist with a passion for culture, cuisine and environment. She is the director of non-profit Esperienza, dedicated to sharing and celebrating the beauty of rural Italy.

## SOUTHWEST Connector

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**Story ideas always welcome.**

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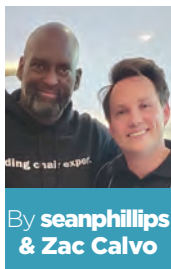


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# REAL HOPE IS MESSY, EDGY, AND FREEING. IT'S WHAT WE NEED RIGHT NOW.

On Dec. 3, 2023, more than two billion Christians around the world celebrated the first week of Advent, which is honored by lighting the first of four Advent candles. For Christians, Advent is a time of reflection and waiting in the darkness of winter. We light four candles in four weeks, and the first candle represents hope.



By seanphillips & Zac Calvo

The two of us are statistically improbable to be friends or collaborators, as churches are the final frontier of segregation in America. We are two very different people and different types of storytellers. We only met each other two short months ago at a coffee shop in Uptown through our mutual friend Richard Moody. (We mention him by name because the likelihood is very high that you, our dear reader, have had the pleasure of meeting Richard, or will very soon!)

Zac Calvo is a Seattle native and Presbyterian pastor of a small urban church where he gives weekly sermons to a mostly White, mostly liberal congregation, and Sean G. Phillips (seangarrison) is a native Detroit, writer and abstract painter influenced by the words of Nikki Giovanni, Amiri Baraka, Pablo Neruda and Yusef Komunyakaa, among others.

Our unlikely story centers several dialectics that are often present in Advent: joy yet hesitation; full of peace yet chaotic; beautiful yet rough. When we met in that coffee shop back in September, we explored whether the space at Zac's church could be used for outreach and celebration of local artists. The Technicolor Truth gallery was born out of a wondering about what could happen if a mostly White church hosted 25 provocative, justice-oriented Black artists for two months.



Grace Trinity Community Church hosted "The Technicolor Truth" art exhibit Sept. 16-Nov. 18, 2023.

We wanted the artists to feel fearless, and we wanted to make people sweat a bit. But we also had some trepidation about how church-goers may react. Art pieces came in that were notably striking and provocative, particularly around Black male sexuality, and we had no idea how folks would receive them.

What unfolded in the subsequent two months was a blur of raw energy and creativity that woke people up. The opening event hosted more than 225 people, and over the weeks that followed, a total of nearly 345 people came to visit the art work, some folks stopping by after a casual walk around Lake of the Isles, and some people arriving via bus and even airplane

to see the show. East-Isles church-goers who may have previously considered themselves woke after reading "White Fragility," engaged in unexpected and challenging conversations and were pushed to engage in the church's mission outside the walls of the sanctuary. At the gallery closing, the community got to hear from the artists firsthand and to receive their vulnerable experiences, and this helped folks to move from conversations to actions.

None of this could have happened without the willingness to try something new and to jump in without knowing what the outcome would be. When we approach issues that are difficult and fear that we may not have all the tools and re-

sources to do it the right way, we miss out on the beautiful, messy ways that hope manifests among us. Hope does not require safety, just a willing spirit to try.

Advent is meant to wake people up. We call on our community to resist the seductive comfort of a version of hope that is sanitized, naively optimistic, or familiar. To cultivate real hope, churches can and should be both spaces of healing and leading against injustices. We need to ruffle feathers. We can't heal from pain without facing it.

**Zac Calvo** is the pastor of Grace Trinity Church in Uptown, and seanphillips is a nationally-recognized artist who lives in Minneapolis.

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# 'INSIDE SENIOR LIVING' DOCU-SERIES EXPLORES AGING

## Linden Hills creator hopes this series will spark important conversations

In an exciting development for the local television landscape, "Inside Senior Living," a groundbreaking docu-series, has announced its partnership with PBS North. The series, set to premiere in 2024, delves into the lives of seniors and their families as they navigate the complexities of aging and make crucial decisions about their living arrangements.

Behind the lens of this innovative project is Melissa Fritz, a former senior living consultant, and daughter of a father diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's dementia. After over a year of persistent pitching, Fritz successfully secured a deal with PBS North, bringing her vision to life. The series aims to demystify the senior living process, providing viewers with genuine insights into the lives of older adults and their caregivers.

"I am thrilled that my vision has now materialized, and I am eagerly awaiting the start of production for this series with our co-production partner and Upper Midwest Emmy-Award winner, PBS North," expressed Fritz. "My hope is that 'Inside Senior Living' will spark important conversations that resonate widely, especially among adult children."

### UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

"Inside Senior Living" is not just a television show; it's a heartfelt exploration of the challenges and triumphs experienced by seniors and their families. The series goes beyond the conventional narratives surrounding senior living communities, immersing itself in the diverse experiences of families. Through thought-provoking interviews, expert insights, and real-life examples, the show aims to create a platform for dialogue around the opportunities and challenges faced by older adults today.

Patty Mester, General Manager of PBS North, stated, "We believe 'Inside Senior Living' is the perfect addition to our station and audience. It aligns seamlessly with our mission to inspire and enrich lives for a more vibrant and connected community, and we are confident that this series will uphold our core values of integrity, excellence, and education."

PBS North has been the region's storyteller since 1964, harnessing the power



Collaborating together on the "Inside Senior Living" docu-series are (left to right): Steve Ash, Upper-Midwest Emmy Award winning videographer and editor; Melissa Fritz, creator and host; Nina Fredrickson, PBS North production manager; and Bill Cooper, executive producer and director. (Photo submitted)

of well-told stories to provide educational and entertaining shows to the region and share the stories of the people living throughout Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. PBS North believes in the power of storytelling, offering multimedia platforms and creating programming with communities, providing opportunities to learn, connect, and engage. More at <https://pbsnorth.org>

### CALL FOR FAMILIES: BE A PART OF THE JOURNEY

As part of the production process, the team behind "Inside Senior Living" is inviting Minnesota-based families to share their stories and be featured on the show. The series is on the lookout for engaging and diverse families willing to open their lives to the cameras and provide an authentic glimpse into the challenges and joys of aging.

To get a taste of what's in store, viewers can watch the sizzle reel and join the conversation at <https://insideseniorliving.tv/>.

The reel offers a sneak peek into the compelling narratives that will unfold in the series, showcasing the emotional depth and authenticity viewers can expect.

### A LOOK AHEAD: PREMIERE AND BEYOND

Production for the eight-episode first season of "Inside Senior Living" is scheduled to commence early 2024, with filming taking place exclusively in Minnesota. The series is slated to premiere on PBS North in November 2024, promising viewers a unique perspective on the journey of seniors and their families as they navigate the path of aging and senior living.

"Inside Senior Living" aims to be more than just a television show. It's a movement to change the way Americans approach aging and powerful testament to the resilience, love, and unity that bind families together, even in the face of challenges posed by aging.

### MEET MELISSA & DR. STUART FRITZ

Melissa Fritz, the mastermind behind the groundbreaking series "Inside Senior Living," hails from the picturesque neighborhood of Linden Hills in Minneapolis. With a heartfelt dedication to illuminating the lives of seniors and their families, Melissa, a former senior living consultant, drew inspiration from her personal experiences, particularly her father's battle with early-onset Alzheimer's dementia. She spent seven-years outside of Minnesota, having led a chamber of commerce and economic development agency in Montana, launched a community-wide wellness program for cancer prevention in Georgia, and came back to her home state where she returned to her work in marketing and senior living consulting.

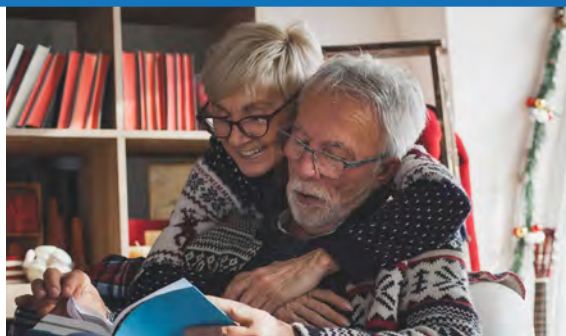
Dr. Stuart Fritz, Melissa's husband, and an executive producer of the project, is a retired emergency physician turned potter whose artistry comes to life in his pottery studio, Lake Country Potteries, nestled in the historic Foundry Building in the Como area of Minneapolis. He is deeply rooted in causes close to the community such as education and community service, having lived in the heart of Linden Hills for over 35 years. Both Melissa and Stuart are proud alumni of Hamline University.

The Fritz Family Scholarship at Hamline University is a testament to their commitment to education. This scholarship, established in honor of Stuart's parents, who were esteemed school teachers and Hamline graduates, supports minority students majoring in education. The Fritz family's legacy of promoting education and inclusivity continues through this scholarship, empowering future educators and making a lasting impact on the community.



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# CITY COUNCIL BIDS FAREWELL TO LISA GOODMAN, ANDREW JOHNSON



Andrew Johnson and Lisa Goodman were honored at a reception in the City Hall rotunda on Thursday, Dec 7.

A meeting earlier that day marked the last Minneapolis City Council meeting of the year and the final meeting of Lisa Goodman's 26-year career as a council member for Ward 7. Goodman was first elected in 1997, served with four mayors and 49 different council members. She is the longest serving council member in the history of the city. Johnson, who was first elected in 2013, ended his 10 years as a Ward 12 Council Member in November when he resigned to take another job following the election.

They also both received honorary resolutions from the mayor and city council "in recognition of their sincere gratitude and appreciation for the many contributions" they made to their wards and to the city. (Photos by Cam Gordon)



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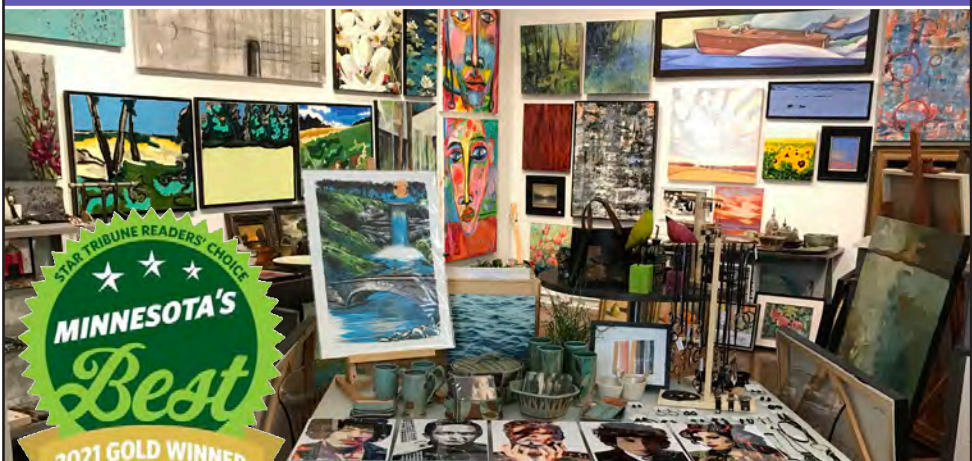
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## LUMINARY

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Mickey O’Kane and Kathryn Ringham have lived next to each other for years. It was in 1999 when they decided that a luminary along four blocks of Dupont Ave from 42nd to 46th streets would be a fine way to ring in the new millennium. Those first few years, they lit luminaria on the first night of Hanukkah, Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.

With the help of eight block captains, about 1,000 paper bags and candles are distributed to homes along the route. Each gets between six to 20 – and one has 45. They are spaced about six feet apart and held down by a cup of sand or kitty litter.

The lummies now stretch from the original 42nd-46th streets and then go around the King’s Highway corner for another four blocks towards Lake Harriet Boulevard.

Neighbors walk up and down the block, socializing and singing carols.

“Luminarias are used all over the world on special occasions and ‘light the way’ as a symbol of unity and caring for those less fortunate,” observed Ringham. “At this time of the year, with numerous holidays incorporating the bringing of light (plus the solstice), luminarias bring the glow of warmth to the winter nights.”

“Kathy and I have received numerous notes over the years from our neighbors. We really love the joy and feeling of community that we hear about in those notes. This tradition has made all of us feel closer and more grateful for what we all have. Lighting those candles is one more ‘chore’ to take care of during an extremely busy



Mickey O’Kane (left) and Kathryn Ringham are friends and neighbors who have worked to organize the King’s Highway Luminary on Christmas Eve for the past 25 years. This year, four blocks have joined the original four along Dupont. (Photos submitted)

time of the year, but the neighbors still look forward to being part of this,” said O’Kane. “I used to kid the new neighbors that I hoped it was made clear in their purchase agreement that duty calls on Dec. 24. I don’t think it’s caused a sale to fall through yet.”

This year, organizers are working with the park board and the city to see if they would be willing to turn off the new and extremely bright lights that are now on



the boulevard. “When we got new lights a couple of years ago, a lot of the ‘candle magic’ disappeared,” observed O’Kane. “While we just recently received permission to have the lights turned off, we’re in the midst of seeing if we can qualify/afford the required insurance. I’m still hoping for a miracle, but either way, lights on or lights off, the luminarias will go on.”

The Dupont Luminary was featured in a 2013 Southwest Journal article, and in

another in 2018. “It’s so interesting to read that in 2013, we were hoping to go over the \$10,000 mark and last year we topped \$50,000! You can see how generous and caring this group is,” said O’Kane. “Their support and allegiance to DAP is really quite overwhelming.”

For years now, each house has contributed \$15 to buy the necessary candles, paper bags and sand, and matched that with a donation earmarked for the Domestic Abuse Project. Anything left over from the supply budget is also donated.

O’Kane became involved with the Domestic Abuse Project in 2003 as a board member. “It just touched me because they deal not just with the women and children, but they deal with the men,” she said in the 2013 article. DAP assists about 3,000 men, women and children a year with whole family, wrap-around services for domestic violence. They operate a holistic victim survivor program with support groups, a youth program, intervention program for individuals who use violence, case management, and advocacy. The First Call crisis hotline can be reached at 612-874-7063 x 232 or [firstcall@mndap.org](mailto:firstcall@mndap.org).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, DAP has seen a 37% increase in need for victim services. Due to limited resources, DAP has put 244 people on wait lists or referred them elsewhere.

Join the Dupont Luminaries to help “shine a light” on domestic violence (DV), urge O’Kane and Ringham. “As DV rates increase during the holiday season, the luminarias continue to increase awareness for those impacted by DV.”

They are glad to be in a community that has brightened not only their neighborhood but the lives of families struggling with domestic violence.

## CITY BRIEFS

### COUNTY ADVISORS NEEDED

The Hennepin County Board is recruiting people to fill 30 openings on 11 different advisory boards, commissions, councils and special task forces. The deadline to apply is Dec. 29 for the appointments that will be made early next year for positions on the Adult Mental Health Local Advisory Council, Community Action Partnership, Capital Budgeting Task Force, County Extension U of M, Human Resources Board, Library Board, Mental Commitment Attorney Panel, Racial Equity Advisory Council, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Board, Lower MN River Watershed District Board and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board. To learn more and apply, visit <https://www.hennepin.us/advisoryboards>.

### CITY BUDGET APPROVED

The city council adopted a \$1.8 billion 2024 budget on Dec. 5 after holding three public hearings and making nearly

50 amendments that reallocated over \$30 million. Amendments included those that will increase domestic violence response resources, add funds for traffic calming projects, enhance services for immigrants, refugees, and seniors, fund Open Streets events, improve opioid recovery and harm reduction services, staff a new legislative department, provide renter relocation assistance, coordinate social services for those with unstable housing, expand the developers technical assistance program, and pay for labor standards co-enforcement programs. New programs created through the amendments include a Lake St. safety ambassador program, a sidewalk snow removal pilot, \$4 million for new unarmed safety services at 2633 Minnehaha Ave., and \$500,000 for a Lake St. community safety center.

### HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD PHOTOS ONLINE

Hennepin County Library has now digitized over 4,000 photographs selected from the collections of some southwest neighborhood organizations, including the Whitter Alliance, Lowry Hill residents, Inc., and the Cedar Lake Park Associa-

tion. Photographs include people, houses, buildings, events, and changes to these neighborhoods, mainly from the 1970s to the 2000s. People can find neighborhood photos by visiting <https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/collection/MplsNAs>.

### 2415 EMERSON AVE S.

The city’s department of community planning and economic development has recommended approval of the application by DJR Architects, on behalf of Isse Suliman, for the property at 2415 Emerson Ave S, just off Hennepin Ave., to allow a new six-story, 32-unit apartment building with first floor office space, to be built where there is currently a house.

### TOBACCO SAMPLING BANNED

The city council is considering changes to the tobacco dealer regulations that would, if approved, prohibit the use of price discounts and coupons for tobacco products, increase penalties and prohibit the sampling of tobacco products that had been permitted in certain adults-only tobacco shops. The ordinance was sent back

to staff for further work after objections were raised from what is believed to be the one sampling shop left in the city, Anthony’s Pipe and Cigar Lounge, located in southwest Minneapolis at 907 West Lake St.

### CITY OPERATIONS OFFICER

In December the council held a hearing and approved the mayor’s nomination of southwest resident, Margaret Anderson Kelliher, to the position of City Operations Officer (City Coordinator) for a term ending January 2026. She will be leaving her position as the director of the public works department and has been appointed to serve in this new position until January 2026. The operations officer/coordinator oversees several departments including finance, human resources, inter-governmental relations, communications, neighborhood and community engagement, community planning and economic development, regulatory services, health, civil rights, and public works.



Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

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# MANAGING PAIN WITH MINIMAL MEDICATION

## FROM YOUR CENTER WITHIN

My second total knee replacement is now behind me, whew! I am still engaged in a rigorous rehabilitation schedule and glad to be out of the acute recovery phase. I so appreciate living in our Minneapolis community with excellent health care systems and providers.



By Michele Rae

As a pharmacist, I am grateful for the medications I needed before, during and after this surgery. With the opioid crisis pervasive in our community and across our nation, alternatives for pain management are essential. As a nationally board-certified health and wellness coach, I have also engaged in many nonpharmaceutical interventions ways to reduce my pain and enhance my body's innate ability to heal itself.

What self-care practices do you include in your daily routine? Have you explored integrative therapies to support your well-being? As these are top of mind this month, I wanted to share some self-care and practitioner supported options not only for acute pain and recovery, but to maintain wellness and balance.

### SELF-CARE FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

#### Mind-body medicine

Part of my training is through the Center for Mind-Body Medicine. Research indicates meditation, biofeedback, mindfulness, soothing music, and breathing exercises activate the relaxation response. This turns down the "fight or flight" response, which can worsen chronic muscle tension and pain. These techniques are free and accessible to you every day!

#### Gentle movement

Slow movements such as yoga and tai chi stretch and strengthen muscles. My home exercise program designed by my physical therapist has been important in my recovery. Many studies have shown that gentle movement helps people manage pain caused by a host of conditions, from headaches to arthritis to lingering injuries.

#### Aromatherapy

I was gifted a diffuser with various essential oils during my recovery and I'm using it daily. The research on inhalation of essential oils, called aromatherapy, shows the oils communicate signals to the olfactory system and stimulate the brain to exert neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine. Aromatherapy is used in a wide range of healthcare settings to relieve pain, as well.

#### Nutrition

What you eat and drink supports or diminishes your health. There is a proven correlation between inflammation and

pain. Reducing ultra-processed foods, deep fried food, artificial additives, and sweetened drinks decreases inflammation. Increasing anti-inflammatory foods such as nuts, vegetables, garlic, fruits, unprocessed olive oil, whole grains, and green tea accelerates healing.

#### Pets and animals

Interacting with animals can increase your level of the hormone oxytocin, which can increase pain thresholds and promote healing. Spending time with your pets has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, ease loneliness, encourage exercise and playfulness. Make a bit of extra time to enjoy the animals in your life.

### INTEGRATIVE THERAPIES

In addition to these self-care techniques, utilizing practitioners trained in pain reducing modalities can be supportive. Here are several I have seen to support me as I prepared for surgery and during my recovery.

#### Healing Touch

Healing Touch is a gentle biofield therapy recognized by the National Institute of Health which promotes the healing process. It is often helpful in reducing pain, diminishing nausea and stimulates wound healing. I leave my sessions with a deep sense of calm and peace.

#### Acupuncture

Acupuncture involves inserting needles into specific points along meridians in your body to stimulate the central ner-

vous system. This process releases chemicals into the muscles, spinal cord, and brain, and these changes stimulate the body's natural healing abilities. Research has shown that acupuncture is helpful for back or neck pain, knee pain associated with osteoarthritis, and postoperative pain. My acupuncturist is speeding my recovery.

#### Massage

My massage therapist has been instrumental in my healing process. As I was doing a bit of research, I came across this information on the American Massage Therapy Association website. So true!

"According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 50 million Americans suffer from chronic pain. For pain relief, many people have turned to prescription opioids, which carry a serious risk of addiction, abuse, and overdose, in addition to several side effects. For this reason, health organizations and governmental agencies are looking at integrative health care approaches that can relieve pain but won't create new challenges. Massage therapy is one of the safe and effective options."

Make your health and well-being a priority during this holiday season.



**Michele Rae, RPh, MA, NBC-HWC** is the founder of The Center Within, LLC and author of "Living From the Center Within: Co-Creating Who You Are Becoming." She provides holistic coaching designed to accelerate and support personal, professional, and organizational transformation.

## 1 SUPERINTENDENT

tached. We better have an individual that is not going to be coming to MPS to benefit their career or their political future."

Stewart has not lived or worked in Minnesota. She is currently Deputy Superintendent for the Hamilton County Public Schools in Chattanooga Tenn., and has also worked in Los Angeles and Chicago.

Sayles-Adams grew up in the area, graduated from St. Paul Public Schools, and attended the University of Minnesota. Her aunt, Sharon Sayles-Belton, is well known in the area as a former mayor, city council president and city council member from south Minneapolis.

After working as a teacher and principal in Minneapolis, Sayles-Adams was a principal for a high school and two elementary schools from 2004 to 2012 in Clayton County Schools in Georgia. Then she returned to work as an assistant superintendent in St. Paul, before moving to Eastern Carver County in 2020. Sayles-Adams has four adult children.

### 'TWO GREAT CANDIDATES'

Nearly all the school board directors had praise for both candidates. "We have two great candidates," said Jourdain. "It is a very hard choice for me." His district includes West Maka Ska, East Bde Maka Ska, South Uptown, Linden Hills, East Harriet, Kingfield, Fulton, Lynnhurst, Tangletown, Armatage, Kenny and Windom.

"I just cannot in good conscience hire a director who has seen a decline in test scores among our students with the most needs, our African American students, our Latino black and brown students, our Native American students," Jourdain said. He pointed to Eastern Carver County school data showing that, while graduation rates have increased in recent years for students of color, standardized test scores have not.

Most school board directors spoke in favor of Sayles-Adams. Southside's District 5 Director, Lori Norvell, cited Sayles-Adams' experience working with union leaders, improved graduation rates and her history working in Minnesota as reasons for hiring her. "She is knowledgeable about Minnesota state budgets," Norvell said. "She is ready to hit the ground running."

At-large director, Joyner Emerick, cited



Dr. Lisa Sayles-Belton is shown here greeting student at Jonathan Elementary in Chaska on the first day of school on Sept. 8, 2021. She has worked as the Eastern Carver County Schools Superintendent since 2020. (Photo courtesy of Southwest News Media)

her work in St. Paul. She said, "There is tremendous value to knowing some of the history in Minnesota and in the metropolitan area pertaining to this long-term work pertaining to the intersection of race and disability for our students."

"I believe that she already knows the city," said at-large director Collin Beachy. "We have someone who already does love Minneapolis, and already knows Minneapolis and believes in Minneapolis."

Her history with the city and metropolitan area has been noted by non-board members, as well.

"I'm a Sayles-Adams team all the way," said former school board member David Tilson. "I thought her interview was, well, actually kind of inspiring. I also like that she's local and committed to staying for more than a few years. This revolving door of superintendents has not been a good thing."

Lynnell Mickelsen is a southwest resident and follower of the public schools with three sons who attended and graduated from the city's public schools.

"In the case of the two finalists, I don't think it matters," said Mickelson. "I understand that Ira Jourdain wanted an outsider superintendent with 'fresh eyes'; the others thought Lisa Sayles-Adams' previous experience in the district would be helpful. Both are valid viewpoints."

Contract negotiations are expected to be concluded by the end of the month, and plans for the leadership transition are

already underway.

"I am encouraged by Dr. Sayles-Adams' hiring and wish her the best," said Linden Hills resident, Sara Spafford-Freeman, whose three children attend Minneapolis public schools. "She will assume leadership for MPS at a particularly challenging time. The district has warned of a financial crisis and begun the process of discussing school transformations that several board members have said will require school closures. It's not an ideal environment in which to become superintendent, but she seems to have eyes wide open regarding the challenges and opportunities."

It's great to have a Black woman in charge. But it also means this Black woman is going to be blamed and vilified for somehow not being able to 'fix' an aging institution that is largely controlled by White middle-class people and voters who want to avoid conflict and hassle."

**Lynnell Mickelsen**

### 100-DAY ENTRY PLAN

"Transition of leadership is one of the most crucial periods for any school district," Sayles-Adams said in her interview. She added that, if selected, she would consider it "crucial to establish a formal entry plan to create a culture of trust, transparency and collaboration that reflects the mission, vision and values of Minneapolis



I like that she's local and committed to staying for more than a few years. This revolving door of superintendents has not been a good thing."

**David Tilson**



public schools."

Sayles-Adams has shared plans to use a process of listening, learning, evaluating and leading. She identified the goal areas of "teaching and learning; culture and climate; collaborative governance; and, community connections and public relations" to be addressed during a 100-day entry plan.

### 'HEALING NEEDS TO START NOW'

Mickelsen believes that the district's problems are "deeply structural and cultural." "It's very similar to the Minneapolis police," she said. "Neither the MPS superintendent nor the MPS police chief truly has the power to change the institution and the culture. That power lies with the unions and the public."

"The healing needs to start now, and I believe Dr. Sayles-Adams is going to be the person that can do that," said Beachy.

"The board needs to have discussions and set clear expectations for the new administration," said Tilson. "This needs to include, of course, the budget and spending crisis has to be there." He listed buildings, consolidations, and contract negotiations as critically important things to address, and also worries about top-heavy administrators, class sizes, arts, social workers, nurses, counselors, enrichment, and special ed.

"I wish Lisa Sayles-Adams all the best," said Mickelsen. "It's great to have a Black woman in charge. But it also means this Black woman is going to be blamed and vilified for somehow not being able to 'fix' an aging institution that is largely controlled by White middle-class people and voters who want to avoid conflict and hassle. Which is why superintendents (and police chiefs) come and go and the status quo just rolls on."

"I fully intend on being here for the long haul," Sayles-Adams said.

### MINNEAPOLIS SUPERINTENDENTS

- Incoming: Lisa Sayles-Adams
- 2022-current: Rochelle Cox, interim
- 2016 to 2022: Ed Graff
- 2015 to 2016: Michael Goar, interim
- 2011 to 2015: Bernadeia Johnson

LYNDALE

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Imagine you are an older adult living in a low-income apartment complex in the heart of Minneapolis. You need help paying your monthly internet bill and learn about a low-cost internet discount program. It sounds great, but you need to fill out an online application and email documents to verify your income. Also, all communication on the program (like application status, follow up questions and acceptance) is shared via email. After that, you need to call your internet service provider to use the discount. This is time-consuming and frustrating for anyone to navigate, but now imagine you have never used email before. In fact, you don't know how to use a web browser or a computer mouse. You also don't speak English. This is the reality for many of our Lyndale neighbors who want to participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), a federal discount that helps lower-income households afford internet service. Based on income level, 58% of Lyndale residents would qualify for ACP. Over the last several months, the Lyndale Neighborhood Association (LNA) has been providing 1:1 assistance to bring accessible internet to our neighbors living in Charles Horn Towers Public Housing.

WHAT IS ACP

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a government funded program designed to provide accessible internet access and devices to folks with lower incomes. The program allows for a monthly discount of \$30 to be used for internet connection and a one-time discount of \$100 to be applied towards a laptop or tablet device per household.

To utilize ACP, individuals must first complete an application with verification that they qualify for the program. A household qualifies for the program by income, participation in other federal benefits programs (like Medicaid, WIC or SNAP), meeting the qualifications for an internet provider's low-cost internet plan, or are already enrolled in the Lifeline program.

After an applicant is approved, they must reach out to an ACP-accepting internet provider to apply the discount.



ABOVE Karsten Potts works at at Horn Towers with students in LNA's Computer Basics class.

AT RIGHT: Sami Smetana is the new executive director at Lyndale Neighborhood Association.

LNA'S OUTREACH EFFORTS

LNA's team of Grayson Betz and Karsten Potts have been working directly with residents at Horn Towers to educate them about the program and to help them through the lengthy application process. As of November 2023, Grayson and Karsten have provided information about the ACP to 154 residents.

LNA has been teaching English and basic computer skills classes at Horn Towers since summer 2022. Through these classes, LNA saw that our neighbors had a real need for low-cost internet and assistance applying for this program—especially because the ACP application process is completely managed online. Many Horn Towers residents do not know how to use a computer, how to access their email account or how to send a photo of their verification documents. Additionally for many, their primary language is not English. For them, the process is truly formidable. LNA is thrilled to expand our outreach efforts to meet this need in our community. Since August 2023, Grayson and Karsten have been hosting information sessions in which they work 1:1 with neighbors to establish email access, complete the lengthy application, compile verification documents and follow up on



submitted applications. After an ACP application has been approved, Grayson and Karsten help residents contact their internet service providers to get the discount applied to their account. It takes several hours of 1:1 assistance to help each resident from start to finish. So far, 67 residents have been approved for the ACP with our help with another 24 residents midway through the process.

For many neighbors in our community, ACP is an exciting opportunity to make internet access affordable. Through in-person information sessions, LNA's team has helped 91 Horn Towers residents navigate the hurdles to low-cost internet access, in addition to the free computer and English classes that LNA teaches at the apartment buildings. Through this work, LNA brings our vision to life: engaging our diverse community members to build a safe, vibrant, and sustainable neighborhood.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

If you would benefit from reduced rate internet, visit the city of Minneapolis website to learn how to qualify and apply.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

LIGHTS RIDE

Bryn Mawr Bikes Lights Ride will go past cheerful holiday lights on Sunday, Dec. 17. The group will leave from the corner of W. Laurel Ave and Cedar Lake Road at 6 p.m. First time riding with Bryn Mawr bikes? All riders joining for their first ride will receive a free set of battery-operated holiday lights to attach to their bike. All are encouraged to decorate their bikes for the holidays for this 5-8 mile ride to peep at some of the neighborhood's best holiday light displays. Got questions about winter bike set up or not sure if this ride is for you? Contact [josh.nichols@bmna.org](mailto:josh.nichols@bmna.org).

COUGAR KILLED ON 394

The DNR is in possession of the cougar that was struck and killed on Interstate 394 on Dec. 6. The cougar had been sighted in Lowry Hills, and was the subject of an alert issued by the city of Minneapolis on Tuesday. The cougar will be transported to DNR Wildlife Research in Grand Rapids, where it will undergo a necropsy. The cougar was marked, and DNR has confirmed with Nebraska Game & Fish that it was a wild cougar tagged in northwest Nebraska. The cougar was a male and 2.3 years old.

COOKIE EXCHANGE

The 3rd Annual Lyndale Cookie Exchange will be on Saturday, Dec. 16 from 10-11 a.m. at South Nicollet Action Center Community Room (3537 Nicollet Avenue). Bring your favorite homemade cookies to share with neighbors and friends, and leave with a delightful assortment of treats to enjoy throughout the holiday season. All are welcome.

TWIN CITIES NOW IN ZONE 5A FOR PLANT

The USDA recently updated its Plant Hardiness Zone Map for the first time in a decade. This is an essential reference material for gardeners and growers to decide which plants are likely to grow well. Most parts of Minnesota have increased at least half a zone, which means that parts of the Twin Cities are now considered Zone 5a.



NEW SPARK'D STUDIOS AT WHITTIER PARK

On Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board celebrated the new Spark'd Studios location opening at Whittier Recreation Center. Spark'd Studios are new spaces in Minneapolis park buildings that help young people build creative skills and career readiness through free multimedia arts programs, access to technology, and mentorship from creative professionals.

This is the third of six planned Spark'd Studios locations. The other two are at Powderhorn Recreation Center and Harrison Recreation Center, with locations planned at Phillips Community Center, Luxton Recreation Center, and the new park building under construction at Graco Park.

The Spark'd Studios space at Whittier Recreation Center features top-of-the-line multimedia equipment and creative professional staff to produce opportunities for youth and teens to explore their interests. All Spark'd Studios programs and equipment are free.

Whittier Recreation Center, located at 425 W 26th St., had its lobby remodeled and air conditioning installed as part of this project. Next year a new playground and basketball/futsal court are also planned for construction at Whittier Park.

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