



Ashes to  
Action  
»5



Milkweed owner Brenda Ingersoll serves Ronnie Hartman coffee and a donut as part of the Too Good To Go program that pairs customers with surplus unsold food at restaurants for lower prices. (Photo by Terry Faust)

## Get cheaper food to go

Too Good to Go helps prevent food waste, lowers meal bills

By JAN WILLMS

Had a tough day at work and don't feel like cooking, but don't want to pay the price for the family to eat out?

Too Good to Go (TGTG) may solve your problem, and enlist your help in preventing food waste at the same time.

Originating in Denmark in 2016, TGTG is a service with a mobile app that connects consumers to restaurants and stores that have surplus unsold food.

"We connect customers with the app," said Sarah Soteroff, the lead public relations person for the United States and Canada for TGTG. "So when you go to the Google Play Store, it will ask you for information, particularly your location. I usually put in a 15-30 mile radius to see what is available. The consumer will then see a gray or green dot. Gray dots mean the food is gone, and green dots show what

TOO GOOD TO GO » 2

## Local students fundraising for LEGO Competition

### BRAIN CHALLENGE

By JANE ST. ANTHONY

At Friendship Academy of the Arts in south Minneapolis (2600 E. 38th St.), teacher Matt Warner introduces his sixth through eighth graders to the myriad possibilities of technology. He aspires to encourage and accompany 10 students to the National Lego League Challenge in the Twin Cities, a program held throughout the U.S.

"I teach physics, science and biology," he said. "And I try to sprinkle as much technology into those classes as possible. Most of all, the challenge is about fun, team building and skills."

To those who haven't been updated for a few decades: The upcoming Lego challenge goes beyond building the Fire Fighting Breathing Fortress Dragon Knights Castle Set of yore on the living room floor.

In the annual competition, each team collaborates to design and build a Lego robot online and create programs to complete a series of missions. Each student has a role. This is about more than speed; every team is evaluated for "Gracious Professionalism" at each match.

BRAIN CHALLENGE » 7

## 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 Public Schools is getting a new superintendent in February.

On Dec. 1, with the support of both southside school board directors, the Minneapolis Public School (MPS) Board of Education approved the selection of Lisa Sayles-Adams to become the next superintendent of the city's public school system.

"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 de-

serve."

On Dec. 12, the board approved a starting date of Feb. 5 and a salary of \$107,423 to finish out this 2023-24 contract year. They also approved a three-year contract that runs from July 1, 2024-June 30, 2027, with salaries of \$266,000, \$271,000 and \$276,000 each year.

Rochelle Cox, who has been serving as the interim superintendent since the resignation of Ed Graff on June 30, 2022, was also awarded a contract and will stay on as associate superintendent.

"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."

MPS SUPERINTENDENT » 6



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

## Support groups provide belonging, community and healing through 12 steps

### Emotions Anonymous offers tools for living

By TESHAM. CHRISTENSEN

"If your life has become like a shoe that pinches, try EA."

That advertisement brought Marilyn\* to Emotions Anonymous 40 years ago.

The St. Paul resident had a reasonably happy upbringing. Her parents had some mental health issues, and she began experiencing anxiety and depression in high school. "Once I started EA, I was so happy to find that other people had similar problems, or felt the hard feelings that I felt," said Marilyn. "I felt less alone."

Marie\* credits Emotions Anonymous with keeping her alive. "When I started adult life, I was so depressed that I didn't know what to do," she said. She had a feeling that group support might help, and she started calling around to charitable organizations.

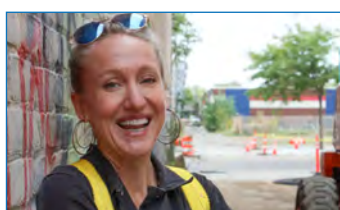
"The receptionist of the next place could hear that I really needed help. She directed me to 'First Call for Help,'" recalled Marie. "In addition to suicide prevention, they had referral information."

EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS » 3



COLUMN: Do you think you might be lonely?

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There's a new mural on the historic Coliseum building as renovation continues

PAGE 8



LCC and NENA reflect on neighborhood work over the last year

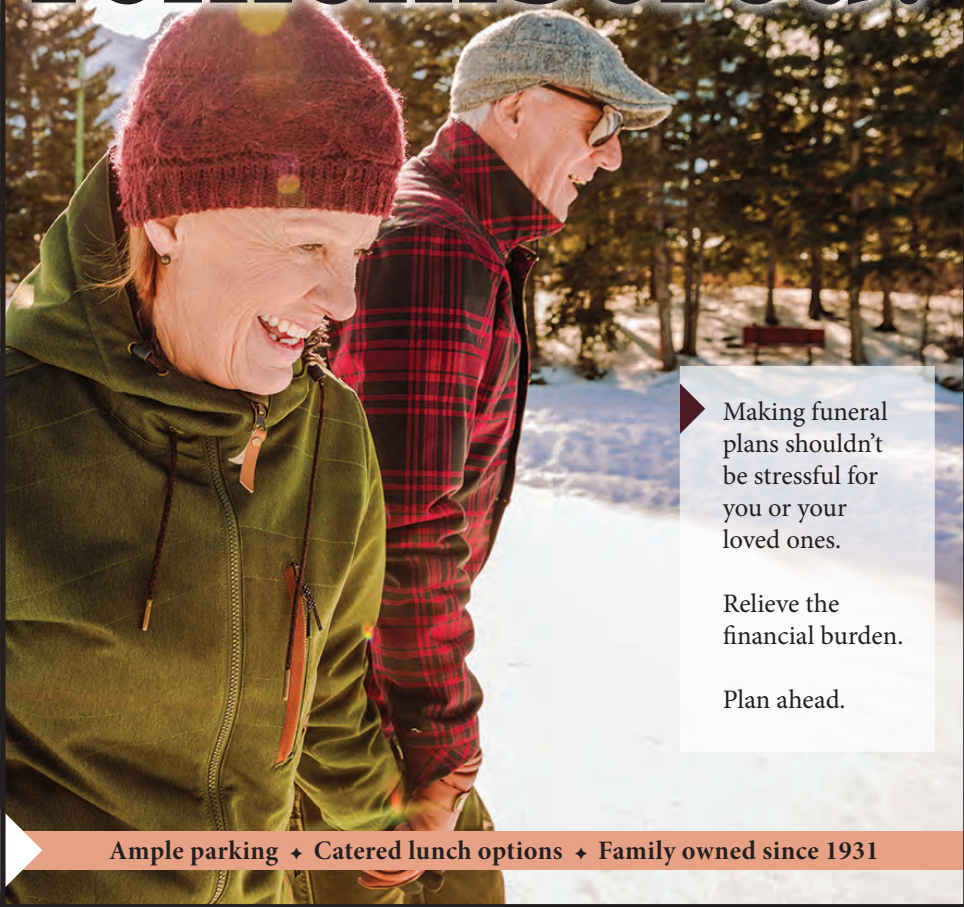
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### TOO GOOD >> from 1

food is still available in a number of categories."

Soteroff continued describing the process: "You will pick something and click reserve. You will then have a specific time frame in which to pick up the food. If you do not pick up the bag, you will still be charged for it." The store or restaurant owner sets the time frame, since they know best when they have their rush and when the food is not sold anymore that day. You go and show your reserved food on your app, swipe it and pick up your surprise bag."

According to Soteroff, the customer will know the category of food reserved, but not the exact items. For example, you will see that your bag may contain: bakery items, pizza, tacos or sushi. And you will know the value of the items.

"The customer pays one-third of the value," Soteroff explained. "If you pay \$5.99, you know you are getting \$18 worth of food."

TGTG came to the United States in August 2020, starting in New York. They are now launching the app in the Twin Cities area, and some stores and restaurants have already started participating. Current business partners with TGTG include Mama Sheila's House of Soul, T-Rex Cookie Kitchen, The Buttered Tin, Milkweed Coffee, Backstory Coffee, Intown Sushi and the Butter Bakery.

"This past month, we have been reaching out to businesses and talking with them about food waste. A business can click on toogoodtogo.com and someone will connect with them," Soteroff said. "They can get started right away. They can go to the app interface, click business, and upload the food they have. They don't need anything else."

Soteroff said the business lists food if it has a surplus. If it doesn't, it does not list any that day. "Maybe it rains, and they have extra food, and they put it on the app," she said.

"We really want a reflection of the true surplus they have," she continued. She cited an example of an ice cream shop she was in that had some labels attached incorrectly. "They had this huge stash of perfectly good ice cream that could not be sold. So they had 300 pints of ice cream to go."

She said if a business has some surplus food it wants to promote, TGTG will promote the information on its Instagram

### THE PROBLEM OF FOOD WASTE

• According to MPCAs recent report on the state of waste, food makes up 18% of landfills in Minnesota, where it breaks down and produces methane, a greenhouse gas with heat-trapping potential 25 times greater than carbon dioxide.

• Minnesotans throw out approximately 62% of food that could have been eaten or donated.

• A family of four in Minnesota could save \$1,20T a year by reducing their wasted food.

• Since launching in the U.S., Too Good To Go has saved more than 6.5 million meals from more than 14,000 partners, resulting in over \$50 million in savings for consumers to-date.

account. "Our main goal is to reduce food waste wherever it happens."

Soteroff said a business can also draw in new customers by being on the app. "Everyone is helping to lower the impact of food waste on the environment, and we help people save a little bit of money as well."

Newer partners are getting elevated as TGTG launches in the Twin Cities. "We'll have it on our Instagram, and we are adding more categories and varieties of food," Soteroff said. "We're always growing."

She said the TGTG community has no borders. "We launch somewhere and then move throughout the area. Eventually we will be national."

Having patience is Soteroff's biggest challenge. "We want to expand faster, but we have to think of the locations and not do everything all at once. We want to do as much as possible to eradicate food waste, but we have to do it methodically." She encouraged people to download the app and test it out for themselves.

Even in the home, a lot of food can be wasted. TGTG offers tips and tricks on how to preserve food. "We don't have to wait for government regulations. We can do it right now," she said.

Soteroff added that any local business, ranging from a gas station or convenience store to a high-end restaurant, can join TGTG.

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**EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS** >> from 1

"First Call for Help gave me two numbers. One was for a free program, so I started with it. In those days, EA groups had a saying: 'Come six times and if you still don't like it, try six more.' So, I sat through a couple of meetings."

"Then at the next meeting, a woman shared her feelings of desperation from that week. This was the first time I heard my feelings voiced by another person. That person never showed again but she transformed my life. I wasn't alone. I knew there must've been something here and I could share my burdens that I'd been keeping locked up inside."

**'EA GAVE ME A PLACE TO BE MYSELF'**

Marie recalls having a fine childhood, but points to a move during junior high and that sent her into a downward spin. "I never recovered and eventually let self-doubt control my life," said Marie. "This left me in a depressed state. EA kept me functioning and finally I allowed it to lead me to a happier life. Without EA, I'm not too sure I would have been able to continue living. EA gave me some place to be myself and to find other people with similar issues to me, including people who would become my friends."

She appreciates hearing personal stories from others, along with the strength and hope that others share. "Pearls of wisdom will often drop during a meeting," remarked Marie. "The acceptance of all, as well as the space to share uninterrupted, is very powerful."

**LIVING AT PEACE WITH UNSOLVED PROBLEMS**

After about five years, Marilyn stopped going to EA meetings. She got married, raised a family, and led a career. When she retired in 2018, she found that the loss of external demands on her time meant that she had more time to think. By

autumn 2019, she was playing computer games for hours, long into the night, to avoid her feelings. It was damaging her marriage, her mental health and her physical health.

"My loving husband reminded me that I'd gotten some help in the past from EA's 12-step program, and wondered if that would help me again. I went to a meeting, and decided to go to several to try to break my compulsive, self-destructive habits," said Marilyn. "It's recommended to alcoholics that they attend 90 meetings in 90 days. I did more like 30 meetings in 90 days, which helped a lot."

She wondered: How would it help her to sit around listening to other people talk about their problems? But EA is not a sounding board for continually reviewing miseries. It is a way to learn to live at peace with unsolved problems.

One of the first things Marilyn learned in EA is that emotions are neither good nor bad. As she realized that others have emotional problems, she became more accepting, giving people slack to not be perfect and treating them with compassion and understanding. "I've started to change my thinking to the idea that 'people are available, not to threaten us, but to support us,'" Marilyn observed. She is less reactive in relationships and has fewer angry outbursts. She reminds herself that she has a choice. In her volunteer life, she feels less need to control others even when in a position of responsibility.

"Every day I read the 'Just for Today's,' said Marilyn. "These give me a way to approach life and other people with optimism, gratitude, cooperation, responsibility for my own actions, positive intentions, and the possibility of happiness."

**'PEOPLE NEED BELONGING, COMMUNITY, HEALING'**

The first group of what is now Emotions Anonymous met on April 13, 1966, at the Merriam Park Community Center in St. Paul. The EA international office is based in St. Paul.



"Every day I read the 'Just for Today's.' These give me a way to approach life and other people with optimism, gratitude, cooperation, responsibility for my own actions, positive intentions, and the possibility of happiness," said Marilyn. (Photo submitted)

As an anonymous program, confidentiality is respected at all times. Members are not required to share any personal details. As a spiritual program, there is an emphasis on a Higher Power but experience has shown that the EA program works equally well for any religious affiliations and those without religious beliefs.

Meeting leaders rotate and are non-professional volunteers with no mental health training. The leader's function is to conduct the meeting, ensuring the layout is followed and there are minimal disruptions. No one person has more power than another.

People may attend in-person, virtual and via phone. In some cases, a meeting can be oriented toward a specific group of individuals, such as men, women, specific ethnic backgrounds etc. and/or groups with unique shared experiences. In Minnesota, there are two groups in St. Paul. Groups also meeting in Bloomington, St. Cloud and Brainerd. There are groups across the United States and also internationally. There are no fees.

**ABOUT EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS**

Anyone is welcome to attend Emotions Anonymous. One opportunity is the phone/in person meeting at 7 p.m. CST on Fridays, in the parlor space at Twin Cities Friends Meetinghouse, 1725 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN or by calling 206-451-6094, then as prompted, 240-591-0215#, and lastly, 722360#.

EA is self-supporting by our own contributions. EA encourages attendance whether or not one can contribute.

Emotions Anonymous offers a 12-step program to help people deal with stress in daily living and to live a healthier emotional life. EA is not affiliated with any other organization. The program is open to anyone who has a desire to become emotionally well.

Members attend for various reasons, among them depression, anxiety, relationship problems and other emotional difficulties. EA aims for an atmosphere of love and acceptance. No questions are asked.

Meetings are volunteer led and, like AA, founded on the principle of anonymity. For more information, contact Paul at 651-402-6774 or visit [www.emotionsanonymous.org](http://www.emotionsanonymous.org).

"EA is unique as it is the 12-step group for emotional turbulence," stated Marie. "Some use EA solely; some also have psychological or psychiatric help which may consist of therapy or medicine."

"People need belonging, community, and healing. Being able to gather in an accepting atmosphere (as 12-step groups foster) provides that," said Marie. "This is one of the most basic building blocks of creating a civilized society."

\*Editor's note: In keeping with the tradition of Emotions Anonymous, we are referring to people by their first names in this article.

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Join the conversation, and let us know your diverse thoughts on the issues that affect your neighborhood. Send letters and guest commentaries to [tesha@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](mailto:tesha@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com).

guest  
column



BY TERRY FAUST

## Do you think you might be lonely?

My counselor recently asked if I thought I was lonely. I'd been doing virtual visits with him for the past year, maybe once a month, for depression. It had never occurred to me to think of myself as lonely.

My first reaction was to deny it, but I kept my mouth shut. Was I lonely? I'd admit to being a loner, not having close friends, and often preferring to be alone, but was I lonely? A part of me wanted to dismiss the idea, but this guy had made good suggestions for dealing with grief after the death of my wife seven years ago.

As a hobby writer of speculative fiction, I love to research character personalities and story ideas, so I was intrigued. I knew the word's dictionary meaning but wasn't sure it applied to me. Or did it? As a kid, I spent most of my time by myself working on projects like learning to use a camera, processing film, printing pictures, making short movies, building model airplanes, target shooting, and riding my bicycle – a lot. They were solitary activities, and that's why I liked them. I spent time alone, but did that mean I was lonely?

Well, I researched loneliness and was surprised. It is judged to be rampant and on the rise. Doctors and mental health professionals are very concerned. In the United Kingdom, it is recognized as a severe problem. They have a minister of loneliness! The BBC recently conducted a

survey called the Loneliness Experiment. Fifty-thousand listeners worldwide responded – 45,000 of them said they were lonely. The depth of the problem they described was stunning. Elsewhere, an article in the prestigious Swiss MDPI journal found that, as loneliness in poor children rose, their physical and mental well-being dramatically deteriorated. Here in America, it is estimated that 25% of us experience some form of profound loneliness. On May 3, 2023, Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General for the United States, issued an advisory on loneliness and isolation, saying the mental, social, and physical effects of loneliness are on par with the ill effects of smoking, drug abuse, and obesity.

The dictionary definition of loneliness is sadness because one has no friends or company. The BBC survey showed that the number of people present didn't determine whether a person was lonely. It is an inner feeling. The lack of being closely and emotionally connected to someone else, a community, or maybe an organization caused loneliness. Interestingly, the BBC experimenters asked respondents to describe the opposite of loneliness. The top five replies were: 1. Being connected, 2. Contentment, 3. Happiness, 4. Friendship, and 5. People who care. In the past few years, I've made an effort to call up acquaintances for lunch or a beer and connect or reconnect with people I know. I've tried joining a writing group. I hadn't felt very contented or happy. It was one reason I talked to a counselor. Even as a young boy, I'd developed coping skills that involved distractions. It's not the equivalent

of contentment or happiness, but I found it filled the void.

As for friendship, the lonely people involved with the BBC experiment were asked what they wanted in a friend. Once again, the BBC whittled it down to the top five responses. The lonely respondents said a friend should be: 1. Trustworthy, 2. Understanding, 3. Supportive, 4. Sincere, and 5. Loyal. The participants, who didn't describe themselves as lonely, were much less demanding, listing fun-loving, generous, and open as the traits they looked for in friends. The survey folks wondered if lonely people set the bar for friendship too high. Perhaps it was a reason why they had difficulty finding friends. Couple that with the discovery that about 10% of lonely people are unable to trust others – possibly because they have been bullied or discriminated against – and it suggests that high standards and trust issues might be stumbling blocks to finding friends.

Unfortunately, I found only loose suggestions for remedies. Loneliness is a complex issue involving many factors, including but not limited to unemployment, poverty, lack of early childhood bonds or attachment to parents, and mental health and personality disorders.

Two surprises in these studies were that lonely people were considered just as empathetic as non-lonely people (perhaps more so), and youngsters, teens, and young adults were counted as the largest population of lonely people. They feel it with the most intensity. Some literature I read assumed that senior citizens suffered in more significant numbers. Though old

folks like me certainly have their share of troubles, the newer loneliness information says the young are experiencing loneliness far more. The BBC report proposed that seniors who have lived with loneliness have developed coping methods, whereas loneliness may be new to younger folks and appear more daunting.

The BBC came up with a list of the top ways to alleviate loneliness offered by the lonesome participants. Again, there are five: 1. Find distracting activities or dedicate time to work, study, or hobbies (two thumbs up for this suggestion). 2. Join a social club or take up new social activities and pastimes. 3. Change your thinking to make it more positive (easier said than done, but, for me, speaking to a counselor was a good start). 4. Start a conversation with anyone (people can surprise you with their willingness to talk). 5. Talk to friends and family about your feelings (I suggest you chat with close friends and family members about your feelings before using it as an icebreaker with a stranger).

This article is just a tiny peek at the literature I found about loneliness. (Find the links in the online version of this story at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com).) If you've read this far, you might feel you are in the loneliness category. I hope the resources I've listed help. If you aren't lonely, you might look out for friends and acquaintances who are. Talking about loneliness and accepting it is challenging. A friendly word from someone, a shared cup of coffee, a phone call, or a walk together can mean a lot to a lonely person. Just listening is a good thing. Depression, anxiety, and several other mental health issues have courses of treatment and prescription drugs. Loneliness has only recently been

LONELY? >> 5

## MY TAKE AWAYS FROM MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

Stories  
and Journeys



BY DONALD L. HAMMEN

Dec. 7 has come and gone. Medicare Open Enrollment has ended for 2023. Yet it feels like the engagement with me and Medicare has just begun again. So, if you have read this far you have taken the plunge into the river(flow) of life experiences which is Stories and Journeys. By the way once this column publishes, Stories and Journeys will be two years old. Here a few of my open enrollment take aways.

1. My need to determine if Minnesota Medicare Consultants is still my broker. Kristin K. wrote to me via [tesha@longfellownokomis-messenger.com](mailto:tesha@longfellownokomis-messenger.com) about her not making contact with Leslee Gold at Minnesota Medicare Consultants (MMC). The only number I have for MMC is (952)935-4843. I tried it twice. Each time I was asked to leave my number and a brief message and somebody would get back to me. So far, no one has returned my calls. If Minnesota Medicare Consultants is no

longer my broker than who is? Senior LinkAge Line (1-800-333-2433) would be a place to start for me if I needed a broker.

2. There ought to be a law. I have a dream that one day it will be illegal for Medicare Advantage Plans to market themselves using the name Medicare. Turns out that Mark Pocan representing the 2nd District of Wisconsin in the U.S. House of Representatives has introduced the Save Medicare Act H.R. 732. It would re-name Medicare Advantage (MA) to Alternative Private Health Plan program. Also, civil penalties would be applied to MA plans with Medicare in the title of their ads. There are 21 co-sponsors. One of them is not my Congressional District 5 Representative Ilhan Omar. I'm thinking it's time for me to communicate with Rep. Omar about being a co-sponsor because I have a dream.

3. The need to get educated about and engage as I am able with the Minnesota Health Plan and caucus in the state legislature. On the last day of Medicare Open Enrollment, I participated in a Zoom meeting of Health Care for All Minnesota (HCAMN) and Physicians for a National Health Plan (PNHP) billed as a winter update and a look to 2024. Two things have stayed with me from that meeting. First is the observation from Rose Roach,

HCAMN Board Chair, that we have about five years to save Medicare from being overtaken by Medicare Advantage Plans. Second, looking to 2024 focusing on any Minnesota Health Plan legislation that comes up in the state House of Representatives and the activities of the Minnesota Health Plan Caucus. I learned that one of the leaders of that caucus is my state Representative Samantha Sencer-Mura, Senate District 63-A.

The Minnesota Health Plan is largely if not entirely based on the book "Healing Health Care: The Case for a Commonsense Universal Health System" by John Marty who happens to be a state senator.

4. Continue to deepen my understanding of Medicare Advantage vs. Medicare. I learn from the writing of Thom Hartmann in his "The Hidden History of American Healthcare: Why Sickness Bankrupts You and Makes Others Insanely Rich." I also learn from you, dear reader. During Medicare open enrollment Dave R., Dan M. and Lindagail R. told me their take on Medicare via [tesha@longfellownokomis-messenger.com](mailto:tesha@longfellownokomis-messenger.com). From you, I am reminded that each of our stories and journeys is unique while at the same time there are common threads that enable us to learn from each other and find common ground.

For example one of the three above writers told me: "I learned about the difference between Medicare and Medicare (dis) Advantage through Christopher Westfall's YouTube videos. He is a true advocate for seniors. I've learned that Mayo quit accepting (dis)Advantage plans a few years ago."

Another writer told me that as a corporate trainer for Blue Cross Blue Shield of MN, he "... saw first hand how the insurance industry markets itself as healthcare, which they are not!"

Another writer caught my attention with the words, "I'd like to yell it from the housetops. Don't abandon your traditional Medicare for Advantage! You'll be sorry in the long run."

In the meantime I invite me and you to keep telling our Medicare stories as they unfold. Tell yourself, tell others or tell me via [tesha@longfellownokomis-messenger.com](mailto:tesha@longfellownokomis-messenger.com). Also, if you ever want to converse in person, I offer the following option. The last Friday of the month in January and February next year 10 to 11 a.m. I will be at the table with the sign that says Elder Voices.

For now in gratitude always.

*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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# Ashes to Action

Local author Shari Seifert shares bond between church, community during uprising

By JILL BOOGREN

One of the things people found themselves asking during the uprising in May 2020 was, "What can I do?" Many brought food to distribute from makeshift food shelves. Others brought masks and hand sanitizer to protect against COVID-19. Some, like Hiawatha resident Shari Seifert, would still be at 38th and Chicago fighting for Black liberation three and a half years on.

In her book, "Ashes to Action: Finding Myself at the Intersection of the Minneapolis Uprising," Seifert shares how Calvary Lutheran Church, of which she is a member, met – and continues to meet – this moment. It serves as both a reminder of events that unfolded in the first days and weeks of the uprising, as well as a behind-the-scenes glimpse at what rolling up your sleeves looked like in real time.

Proximity placed Calvary at the back door of a revolution. Located at 39th and Chicago, the church is one block from where Minneapolis police killed George Floyd. They had already been running a food shelf serving about 25 families weekly, which quickly shot up to as many as 177 during the uprising. People volunteered to help nourish their neighbors. Calvary also set up a community table outdoors, providing water and oranges to visitors who numbered in the thousands. The first march began from their parking lot.

For the book, Seifert interviewed several neighbors about their experiences with Calvary. Three of them – Susan Heineman, Marcia Howard and Katie Dillon, each of whom lives within a block of 38th and Chicago – joined Seifert at a book launch event at church on Nov. 5, 2023. They spoke of what those early days were like and the lasting bond that has formed between Calvary and the community at George Floyd Square.

The conversation began with the banners. On the north side of the Calvary building hangs a banner that reads, "In this City for Good!" which signaled intent in two ways – to do good and to stay forever.

Heineman's first thought when the banner went up was that she didn't know any kind of spiritual group that doesn't want to do good in the world. But the staying part?

"That was like, okay... Now I have the flavor of this congregation, and I really, really like it," she said. Heineman added, "What's touched me most is that it's still up."

Draped high on the bell tower facing west is a huge black and white banner of George Floyd (designed by young congregant Ella Endo) with a halo above his head. The image is inscribed with words that had been spoken by people close to Floyd. For Dillon, these were an essential counter to the defamation of Floyd that was already underway.

"The words were so personal, and the artist had just captured so much of people



During a reading of her book "Ashes to Action: Finding Myself at the Intersection of the Minneapolis Uprising" at church in November, author Shari Seifert (second from left) and community members (left to right) Susan Heineman, Marcia Howard and Katie Dillon talk about ways that Calvary Lutheran Church showed up for their neighbors at George Floyd Square during and following the uprising. (Photos by Jill Boogren)



who loved George Floyd and put them up there for anybody to see for years and years now," she said. "I'm just so grateful for that."

Dillon spoke of a friend whose neighborhood closer to the Third Precinct was covered in ash, and who came to 38th and Chicago with Dillon for some grounding; the Square did not smell toxic. The streets were so full, and when they made their way to Calvary at the end of the block Dillon noticed a family with a little kid who needed to use a bathroom and was helped into the building.

"There was a presence that had just popped out of nowhere and was taking care of people at this very basic level of our bodies. I just loved that," she said.

For Heineman, this was much larger than a simple gesture. In setting up tables with provisions outdoors, the church had already come out to meet the needs of the community. But here, they were letting people in. Calvary also remained steadfast about not allowing the police to use their parking lot, itself a bold statement.

"Saying no to the police was like a mark," said Heineman. "We are not neutral."

Calvary made it clear through their actions that they were there for the community. They lent out chairs and equipment, provided meeting space and charging stations, and even brought in kiddie pools that demonstrators could stand in, in the event they were tear gassed by police and needed to quickly wash off. They allowed neighbors to use their kitch-

en to prepare meals for the community.

All the while the food shelf remained in operation. Howard, an English teacher at Roosevelt High School and self-described "child of poverty," shared her experience when she used the resource.

"Calvary's Food Shelf felt like being at a grocery store. It was the most dignified experience I've ever had going hat-in-hand for something that was free," she said. "Never underestimate how important allowing people to have dignity in [their time of] need is. Which is why a block and a half away in the Square, we attempt to make sure that we greet all our neighbors, our comrades, our wayfarers, with that same amount of dignity."

## A SACRED SPACE

Hectic as it was at the Square, the sanctity of the space could not be denied. Dillon remembers early on seeing a handmade banner painted on cloth that read, "This is a sacred space."

"It sort of sunk in at that moment. That's what this is. This is a sacred space. As a physical location, it is hallowed ground," she said. "From I think the beginning... Calvary was able to live into that."

It was the antidote to the very real threat of White supremacists setting things on fire and getting teargassed or shot at as the National Guard marched in. Howard reiterated that at the very beginning they wanted to keep the place safe, sanitary and sacred. Interfaith vigils were arranged with pastors, rabbis and Buddhist monks so people could come together in grief.

## CALVARY FOOD SHELF

3901 Chicago Ave.  
Re-opening in mid-December.  
Wednesdays from 11-2 p.m.  
Saturdays from 9-noon.  
By appointment.  
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"In true reflection, it put paid to this idea [that] George Floyd Square is a memorial for stolen lives. That this is what we're focused on," said Howard. "And we will say their names."

In the book, Seifert describes a vigil she was called on to lead. Not knowing what she should say in this time and place as a White-bodied woman, she chose to renounce White supremacy and the systems that uphold it. She learned that afterwards, Howard, who at the time was in the Square about 20 hours a day, was finally able to get a full night's sleep.

Eventually the lines blurred between the church and community, becoming one larger entity moving together during the most unlikely of times – a global pandemic.

"When many people were isolated during COVID, I was connected like nobody's business," said Seifert.

Going forward, Calvary hopes to nurture and be in relationship with fellow building tenants (see "Calvary church makes room for deeply affordable housing at 39th and Chicago," Messenger October 2022); the people of the Calvary Food Shelf (see sidebar); and the community at the Square.

## HUMILITY IS KEY

Originally from a small town in Texas, Seifert is not new to working for racial justice. Asked what this work might look like for the everyday church looking to dismantle racism without being in proximity to the very public, very external circumstances of a global reckoning, Seifert offered Micah 6:8 – which asks what the Lord requires of us – to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly.

"Most of the time, I feel like people ignore the walk humbly part," she said, chuckling that this doesn't come naturally for Texans.

"What I have learned is that humility as a White person wading into the waters of doing anti-racism work is really, really important, because there's much more that we don't understand than we do understand," she said. "White supremacy is so pervasive, it's baked into us. It's the air we breathe, from when we're itty bitty. It lives in us in ways that we don't realize."

Humility is key to recognizing that we operate in ways that are racist and harmful without knowing it, explained Seifert. It helps to be curious and aware of one's own physical and emotional responses when in multiracial spaces. Likewise, if people aren't in multiracial spaces, wondering about that, too. In her book she offers suggestions for those who want to do the work: going in the spirit of companionship; being prepared to listen to feedback; and letting go of perfectionism – a tool of White supremacy that can freeze someone from acting or cause them to retreat into comfort.

The point is to do the work – even and especially when it's hard. Her hope with the book is that it helps more White people engage. As Seifert writes, "Everyone has a role to play, and everyone has to play a role."

Ashes to Action is available at Moon Palace Books, on Kindle and from the publisher, Augsburg Fortress. Seifert is giving all of her royalty payments to the George Floyd Global Memorial.

## LONELY? >> from 4

seen as a mental health problem. Solutions so far seemed to be connecting with others.

Curiously, the BBC asked lonesome people what they felt were the least helpful remarks from well-wishers. The BBC came up with six top items! What folks suffering from loneliness said not to tell them were: 1. Try dating. 2. Go online and look for friends. 3. Go out to social events.

4. Get out more. 5. Join a group. 6. Take up exercise.

Oddly enough, many of the suggestions offered by the lonely as ways to alleviate their loneliness were the same bits of advice they didn't want to hear from others. I often find myself in the same pre-

dicament. Perhaps my counselor is right about me.

Terry Faust is a longtime Longfellow resident, writer and photographer. He owns Wee Weatherwaves.

## MPS NAMES NEW SUPERINTENDENT >> from 1

The selection of Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams, who is currently the Superintendent of Eastern Carver County Schools in Minnesota, followed a formal search process that started this fall and 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.

This was followed by a discussion and vote by the board at the meeting on Dec. 1.

### 'LEADER WE NEED RIGHT NOW'

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. District 5 includes most of greater Longfellow, Nokomis, and Standish-Ericson. "She is knowledgeable about Minnesota state budgets," Norvell said. "She is ready to hit the ground running."

Faheema Feerayarre is the southside's District 3 Director. District 3 includes Phillips, Central, Powderhorn Park, Corcoran, Bryant, Seward, Cedar Riverside and parts of Longfellow and Cooper.

"Sayles-Adams is the leader we need right now," said Feerayarre. "She knows what it's like to be a teacher in our district. She knows what it's like to be a leader in our district and I think she will make a positive change." Feerayarre highlighted a student superintendent advisory group Sayles-Adams discussed at her interview and said, "We need someone who can connect with not just the leadership but also the families and the students and values their opinions, asks about what they want, and how they feel and what they need."

### SOME PREFERRED OUTSIDER

Sayles-Adams grew up in the area, graduated from St. Paul Public Schools, and attended the University of Minnesota. Her aunt is former Minneapolis mayor and city council member Sharon Sayles-Belton, who now lives in the Cooper neighborhood.

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 be an assistant superintendent in St. Paul, before moving to Eastern Carver County in 2020.

Stewart has no experience living or working in Minnesota. She is currently Deputy Superintendent for the Ham-



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)

ilton County Public Schools in Chattanooga Tenn. and has also worked in Los Angeles, and Chicago.

The two southwest area MPS directors, Ira Jourdain from District 6 and Adriana Cerrillo from District 4, spoke in support of Stewart as the new superintendent and 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. "When we talk about having a superintendent who serves as a healing presence, we better have no strings attached. We better have an individual that is not going to be coming to MPS to benefit their career or their political future."

"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," said Jourdain. He pointed to research about Eastern Carver County schools showing that, while graduation rates have increased in recent years for students of color, standardized test scores had not.

“

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

“

I think this is going to be an incredibly, incredibly tough job. I totally think Dr. Sayles Adams is up for the challenge."

Lori Norvell

ty for our students."

### 'THIS IS A NO BRAINER'

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 director and Powderhorn resident, 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."

"This is a no brainer in my opinion," said Dan McGuire, a former MPS teacher who lives in Ericsson. "Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams is a Minnesotan. She started working in the MPS the same month that I did, in August 1996. She's moved for work and gained perspective from other environments, but has roots in the Twin Cities."

At-large Director, Joyner Emerick cited Sayles-Adams' 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 disabili-

### 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

"It's possibly good that she knows the school system, and therefore will have a better understanding of the issues," said Elizabeth Greenbaum, who lives in the Howe neighborhood. Greenbaum is the Executive Director of Articulture, an arts education business located in Seward, and has partnered with the schools to provide art classes. Her two children attended MPS schools.

"Reports imply that she is both level-headed and community minded," said Greenbaum. "With that in mind, having experienced extreme contention with the last superintendent, I feel it can only go up from here."

"Transition of leadership is one of the most crucial periods for any school district," Sayles-Adams said in her interview. She said, 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 public schools."

### 'REBUILD THE BROKEN TRUST'

"I wish she would come up with a growth plan for the MPS and not just accept the gradual chipping away that's been the norm for so many years," said McGuire. "What would it take for the MPS to be a district of choice in the metro area?"

"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 the spending crisis." Tilson noted that buildings, consolidations, and contract negotiations are all critically important things to address, as well as top-heavy administration, class sizes, arts, social workers, nurses, counselors, enrichment, and special ed.

"If the general public believed that every Minneapolis school should have facilities like Wayzata or Minnetonka, her job would still be very difficult, but manageable," said McGuire.

"I think this is going to be an incredibly, incredibly tough job," said Norvell. "I totally think that Dr. Sayles Adams is up for the challenge."

"I'm excited to have her come in and help us rebuild the broken trust, the broken relationships and build everyone together," said Feerayarre.



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~ Darcy DeMars, Ecumen



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BRAIN CHALLENGE >> from 1

"We hope that sponsors will respond to our situation," said Warner. "It costs to participate in the tournament."

In addition to teaching science, Warner has worked in team building and leadership training. In Minneapolis, he worked as a surveillance investigator ("health care fraud, nothing too wild"). After serving as an Army Human Resources Non-Commissioned Officer, he moved to France, where he taught English and attempted to explain baseball. He earned a master's degree in international relations at Baker University in Kansas.

As a middle school teacher who looks beyond the classroom walls, Warner has provided outdated desktop computers from Free Geek, a nonprofit on Lake Street, for students to dismantle.

"I ask for the ones that can't be recycled," said Warner. "Kids love to tear them apart. They identify CPUs - generally composed of the main memory, control unit and arithmetic-logic unit, motherboards and more. They really enjoy getting inside the computers and understanding how they work."

"In addition to traditional science classes, we work with Code.org which explains coding structure and how to code. A perk: Students can develop their own music and more. Project Beats - as in music beats - allows them to remix and even perform music, using code."

"Techs are very important in the job market: A student is certified, studies, pays for a test, passes it. Salaries begin at \$50,000. This applies to computer science and other careers. I tell students to learn a special skill. Get a foot in the door."

"Now one of my jobs is to help them prepare for the Lego League Challenge. It gives me another chance to motivate them. Get their grades up. Understand different programs for different tasks. It's a



Friendship Academy of the Arts teacher Matt Warner said, "This is a chance for students to build skills and look ahead. It's an opportunity for the community to support student who will someday be in charge of the jobs we depend on." (Photo by Jane St. Anthony)

state competition. Most of all, it's about fun. Team building, skills, breaking down roles. Each person has a purpose."

In mid-December, teacher and students sat down to talk about the challenge. Many of the sixth graders are proficient at coding and they show their interest. Seventh graders have been curious, too, but just nod their heads when asked about joining the challenge. Eighth-graders? They'll be on board eventually, Warner predicts. One eighth-grader did share this: "My mom and I used to watch Lego Masters on Fox, and I always wished I

could compete in a competition like that. I have always loved Legos and now I have an opportunity to combine my love of Legos with my competitive spirit."

"Any opportunity to use my skills and creativity will always help me be prepared for any opportunity These are tools you need to achieve any goal."

"Interested parties meet once a week after school," Warner said. "We have parents who are excited and want to be involved as we move ahead."

"I'll continue reaching out to different tech firms in the area. It takes money to

participate in the tournament."

Warner is optimistic about preparing 10 students who must have a "B" average or above and a referral. He's optimistic about raising funds for the entrance fees and expenses.

"Who doesn't like Legos?" Warner said. "Everyone loves robotics. This is a chance for students to build skills and look ahead. It's an opportunity for the community to support students who will someday be in charge of the jobs that we depend on."



It's a holiday tradition that helps about 250 Minneapolis families each year. On Friday, Dec. 15, 2023, Roosevelt High School's 53rd annual "Operation Holiday Basket" kicked into high gear.

Students and alumni rolled up their sleeves and took over Roosevelt's gymnasium, at 4029 28th Ave. S., Minneapolis, turning the space into an assembly line from 9 - 11 a.m. They filled each basket with a 12-15 pound frozen turkey plus all the trimmings, then delivered them to neighborhood families, many of whom have students enrolled at Roosevelt.



"This is a wonderful Teddy tradition that not only helps neighbors in need, it reinforces the meaning of the season for our students," said Roosevelt Principal Christian Ledesma. "Many of our students who develop a taste for volunteering throughout their lives started right here taking part in Operation Holiday Basket."

The event started in 1970 when a group of teachers decided to provide meals for about 50 families. Gary Lewis, 85, is one of the people who started "Operation Holiday Basket," and he is planning to be at Roosevelt packing boxes again this year. This year, Lewis has raised more than \$5,000 to help pay for the turkeys.

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# Neighborhood organizing: Looking back on 2023

## LONGFELLOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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



Earth is spinning faster than it was 50 years ago – days are ever so slightly shorter. It's an infinitesimal difference, a difference we can't notice, but this year I could swear I felt it. The months have seemingly slipped by, summer was gone before I could even anticipate its ending, we have tumbled into winter, and now the year is gone too.

Transitions between seasons often seem to bring about other transitions. There's a shift that always seems to arise as we move into the colder months, a sort of slow down that brings things to the surface for reflection. As I reflect on the year we've had at Longfellow Community Council, it makes my head spin. We did so much this last year it feels like it's been three years. For those of you who follow LCC, you know we've been busy. This year we held over 30 meetings, put on three large-scale events, and organized several smaller events, too.

Much of our work early this year was focused on engagement around the future of the Third Precinct. Since coming to work for LCC, this has been the issue community members wanted answers to. After our initial community conversations last year, we were chosen by the City of Minneapolis to help facilitate their engagement sessions throughout the Third Precinct. Over 800 people attended these conversations led by city officials. They were contentious, traumatic and disappointing. The city presented two locations for the Third Precinct, which left many community members feeling betrayed by the process and feeling as if their questions weren't answered and their input disregarded.

Months later, the city announced that there will be a Third Precinct Safety Center at 2633 Minnehaha Ave. in the next



Over 100 Longfellow neighbors came out to our Fall Membership Meeting and Pizza Party to try pizza and connect with organizations and residents. (Photo submitted)

year. We held an information session in mid-November, which brought council members Wonsley, Chavez and Osman to the table with community members to answer questions and discuss how we got here and where we go from here. You can find the video of this meeting on our website, longfellow.org.

Throughout 2023, we've been focusing on our Free the Deeds program, which is working to discharge racial covenants in our neighborhoods. We have helped facilitate the discharge of over 300 racial covenants in our four neighborhoods, but we still have around 800 covenants left. Through our door knocking and mailer campaign we reached so many of you and got to talk with many new residents. We will be working on this initiative into the new year with an event planned for spring, but we are always happy to answer questions and work with residents interested in this work. We'll need a lot of volunteers for spring!

When I reflect on this year, the number of large events we did this year makes me feel dizzy. All of them were literally the highlight of my year, but there is so much energy, resources, and time that goes into putting those together. Solace at the Palace was one of my favorite events to work on and to attend. So many incredible local

artists came together to sell their goods and put on free workshops for the community while we listened and danced to local musicians. It was a day of complete joy and connection and it was so gratifying to see so many people come out and express the same sentiments. I wish it was an event we could do every year.

I think my favorite event of the year was RISE (Rallying In Solidarity 4 Equity). I had the privilege of working on a lot of the planning and organizing with the Seward Neighborhood Group's former Community Organizer, Jasmine Epps-Flowers. While the turnout wasn't as good as we hoped, that event was able to help many people get services they needed like haircuts, dental checkups, foot care and more. We handed out over 100 supply kits to our unhoused neighbors and those in need including tents and sleeping bags. All of the organizations that participated were so wonderful and it was great to see how many resources exist in our city and how bringing them to people where they are at is a successful, replicable model.

This year we also dedicated more funding that goes directly to our community through our new Home Improvement Program and our community grants funding. We funded 13 community projects this year, a total of over \$90,000 for expe-



LCC Community Organizer Ben Howery and volunteer door knock for Free the Deeds. (Photo submitted)



Longfellow Community Council staff, board members, and volunteers at RISE, the health equity event LCC and SNG hosted in August 2023. (Photo submitted)

riences, improvements and initiatives that transform the ideas and visions of community members into reality.

We saw a couple of staff changes this year, but the three of us are so committed to this work, we're bringing on some interns and we are already planning for next year. We're so excited that we get the privilege to be in community with all of you. If you have ideas of things you would like to see in the new year, send me an email at andrea@longfellow.org or check out our website for our current work, longfellow.org.

## MURAL BRIGHTENS COLISEUM BUILDING AND CELEBRATES DIVERSITY



Past and present create a beautiful fusion in artist Kada Goalen's two-story mural recently completed at the Coliseum Building, which is undergoing phase two of its renovation at Lake Street and 27th Avenue South. Goalen's mural was part of the restoration of the historic Freeman's Department Store sign painted on the east exterior wall of the Coliseum Building. Freeman's served thousands of Minneapolis families who worked and lived in the Longfellow neighborhood for nearly 60 years.

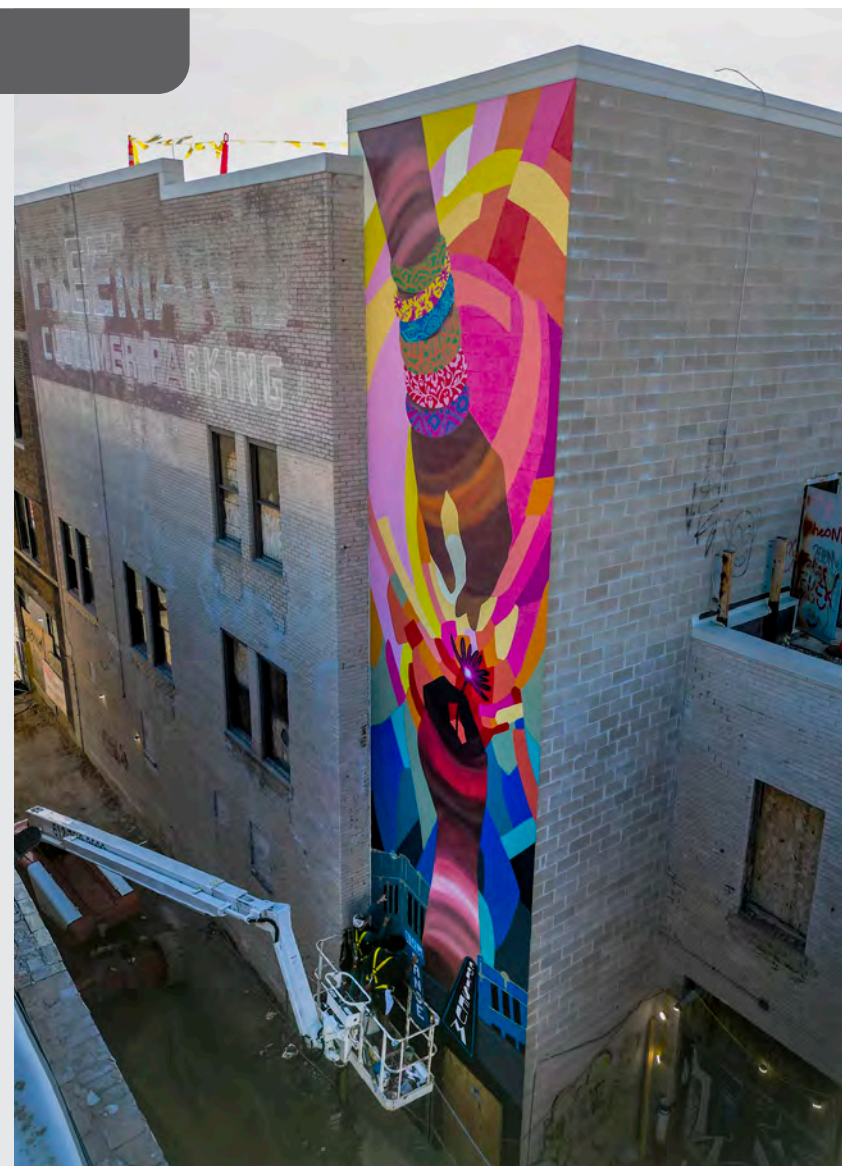
The original sign painters chose a unique location for the Freeman's sign – an alleyway near the very top of the three-story building so both pedestrians and cars motoring west on Lake Street could locate the store and its parking lot. Over time the sign faded but survived the

destruction the building suffered during the George Floyd protests, but the new owners wanted to give the old sign new life and new meaning. Keeping with the mission of the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office, Goalen (above) restored the Freeman's sign and added elements representing the community into her adjacent mural, highlighting the diverse women of Longfellow and the numerous cultures and ethnic groups they represent. The \$27 million dollar restoration is led predominantly by women of color.

"Kada's work is an outward expression of what the Historic Coliseum Building means to 'lift as we climb,' said Alicia Belton, principal architect of Urban Design Perspectives and one of the building's owners.

"It's important the community knows the Coliseum Building is a place where all are welcomed and see themselves represented in the built environment. The mural is a bright light of belonging that elevates the rich history of this diverse community while expressing a sentiment of love, hope and healing."

"I was honored to add both old and new art to the Coliseum Building," stated Goalen, whose company Kada Creative employed a teen apprentice to assist with work on the mural. "My hope is that the new mural captures the strength of the neighborhood and its bright future ahead. The mural represents unity and resilience, with the intention of celebrating the diversity of those who live in the area." fiveXfive Public Art Consultants was the lead consultant for this phase two mural and sign restoration project. fiveXfive also led the 85,000-square-foot protective art wrap for phase one of the Coliseum Building's Restoration. (Photo submitted)





# Neighborhood work in Nokomis

## NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

By Sarah Friedman  
communications manager  
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It's that time of year where we all look back at what we've done and get excited about new beginnings. It's one of my favorite times of year. When people ask me what I do, and I say I work for a neighborhood association, they always ask what that means. I'm here to reflect on the previous year, give a little insight into what Nokomis East Neighborhood Association does, and tell you about what we are looking forward to in the next year.

For starters, a neighborhood association is a nonprofit focused on creating community. We are a small team of 2.5 people (I work part-time), and we work in the Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park, and Wenonah neighborhoods. We do whatever we can to help foster community, help local businesses, connect and raise awareness about nonprofits, and see how we can get local government to help our community.

So... what have we done in the past year? I'm glad you asked.

We kicked off the year with State of Our Neighborhood, something we host each year in January/February. Our neighborhood's school and park board representatives, council members, and county commissioner got together and spoke to members of our community over Zoom to answer any questions and hear about any concerns our neighborhood has. Last year, 60 plus neighbors came to speak about local issues, and learned about the involvement of each member. It was amazing to be able to make local politics even more accessible to our neighbors.

We held two food truck rallies and a neighborhood cleanup. Dozens of members of our community came together to clean up trash around the neighborhood,

enjoy local food trucks and celebrate our amazing neighborhood.

We hired a new community organizer, who got straight to work door knocking and meeting with neighborhood members to help connect locals and spread the word of what we do. Along with that, we gave out eight \$500 curb appeal grants to help people fix the areas around their homes and improve their home security.

We held our fourth annual kickball tournament where six teams fought for Nokomis East's prize for the best kickball team.

As it got cold, we held our first Dog Days of Nokomis. Sixty-four puppies vied for the spot of cutest dog in 2023. Our winner, Cedar, got over 150 votes!

We then had our annual community-wide garage sale. Forty homes placed themselves on our virtual map for neighbors to shop and donate money to both our rent support fund and funds of the home owner's choice.

We worked with the Minneapolis Parks Department to organize and put on the 15th annual Monarch Festival. Ten thousand people from around the city came to see five different bands/performers, sample from 13 food vendors, and connect with 30 different vendors, artists, and local non-profits.

We partnered with our neighbors at Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association, and raised nearly \$8,000 in rent support to help our neighbors afford their homes. The fundraising continues; you can learn more here: [www.nokomiseast.org/renter-support-fund](http://www.nokomiseast.org/renter-support-fund)

We continued our support for the Nokomis East Food Distribution, which gave out 20 tons (40,000 pounds) of food in the last year and consistently had 20 volunteers every week, giving a total of 50+ hours weekly of volunteer time.

We also continued to support our neighborhood's gardens: our Giving Garden, the Gateway Garden, and the Nokomis Naturescape. The Giving Garden gave a record breaking 1,090.5 pounds of food this year to people in need!

Want to learn more about our community? Come to our State of Our Neighbor-



The Nokomis Neighborhood Association Board includes Mia Beste, Daniel Gilchrist, Annie Dahlquist, Sheila O'Dougherty, Rob Schneider, Rebecca Back, Kimberly Katzmark, Lisa Dahle, Adam Somers, Christina Meyer, and Karl Schultz. (Photo submitted)



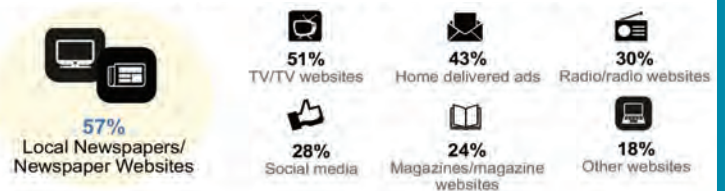
The Nokomis Neighborhood Association held two food truck rallies in 2023. (Photo submitted)

hood! It's held on Zoom, in January/early February – look for the date coming up on our socials or website.

I hope you are as excited as I am about everything NENA has been doing in the past year. I can't wait to see what the new year brings.

The research is in.  
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Source: 2021 Minnesota Market Study, by Coda Ventures)



**46% of people living in Minneapolis apartments are struggling to afford rent.**

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**RENTER SUPPORT FUND**

[www.nokomiseast.org/renter-support-fund](http://www.nokomiseast.org/renter-support-fund)

or scan here

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## CITY BRIEFS

### LIGHTING ON RIVER PARKWAY

Park Board Commissioner Becky Alper announced that she is working to amend the park's state legislative agenda to advocate for statewide solutions to the copper wire theft from the streetlights on West River Parkway, and elsewhere in Minneapolis. City staff reported that multiple miles of wire have been stolen and re-stolen making the lights inoperable and that they hope to make repairs before the ground freezes.

### NRP POLICY BOARD ORDINANCE

The city council has approved the ordinance amendments to the make-up and election of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) police board. This will add more neighborhood representatives to the board and require them to be elected at the community connections conference by delegates chosen by neighborhood organizations. Before the amendments were passed, the council added a provision to allow absentee voting within the election process.

### 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 3 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.

### CHEATHAM APARTMENTS

The city has authorized a loan of up to \$1,000,000 from its affordable housing trust fund for the Cheatham Apartments, to be built at 3716 Cheatham Ave. in the Howe neighborhood. The money will be used to construct a 98-unit apartment building with some commercial space. Of those, 32 units will be set aside for people using rental assistance and 20 units restricted for those who have been without housing. The project is in the early stages of securing financing.

### CITY OPERATIONS OFFICER

In December the council approved the mayor's nomination of 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. 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.

### CPED DIRECTOR

The city council has approved Erik Hansen as the director of the Community Planning & Economic Development department for a term ending January 2026. He had been serving as interim director since June and has worked for the city for over 15 years.

~ Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon



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## Faith

Neighborhood churches welcome you.

**Bethlehem Covenant Church**  
 3141 43rd Ave. S. • 612-721-5768  
[www.bethlehemcov.org](http://www.bethlehemcov.org)  
 Pastor Colleen Nelson  
 (Handicapped Accessible)  
 Traditional Service – 9 AM  
 Contemporary Service – 10:45 AM  
 All sermons can be found online

**Epworth United Methodist**  
 3207 37th Ave. • 612-722-0232  
[www.epworthmpls.org](http://www.epworthmpls.org)  
 A Congregation-Led Community  
 A Reconciling Congregation  
 Sundays 8:45am - Faith Formation for All Ages; 10am - Worship In-person & Live-streaming on Our FB Page - @EpworthUMCMPLS

**Faith Ev. Lutheran Church**  
 3430 East 51st St. • 612-729-5463  
[www.faithlutheranmpls.org](http://www.faithlutheranmpls.org)  
 Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jared Yogerst  
 Sundays – Service times on website (Communion 1st and 3rd)  
 Mondays: Exercise Class, 10 am AA, 6:30 pm  
 Wednesdays: NA group, 7:30 pm

**Minnehaha Communion Lutheran**  
 4101 37th Ave. S. • 612-722-9527  
[www.minnehahacommunion.org](http://www.minnehahacommunion.org)  
 Interim Pastor Matthew Johnson  
 (Handicapped Accessible)  
 9:45 am Sunday Worship in person & online. Info on church website  
 12-step groups Tuesday thru Friday evenings

**Park Avenue United Methodist Church**  
 3400 Park Ave. • 612-825-6863  
[www.parkavechurch.org](http://www.parkavechurch.org)  
 Senior Pastor Gregg Taylor, Minister of Preaching Steven Belton  
 In-person worship Sundays – 8-9am early risers, 10am service  
 10-12 children's church and youth worship  
 Livestream worship 9:45-11:30am  
 GROW women's group 3:30-4:30pm on Sundays

**St. Albert the Great Catholic**  
 E. 29th St. at 32nd Ave. S.  
 612-724-3643  
[www.saintalbertthegreat.org](http://www.saintalbertthegreat.org)  
 Fr. DePorres Durham, O.P.  
 Saturday mass 5:00 pm  
 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. • 612-724-3697  
[www.trinityfalls.org](http://www.trinityfalls.org)  
 Pastor Matt Oxendale  
 Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.  
 AA Sun & Tues 7:00 p.m.

Faith classified ads must be received by the Messenger by Jan. 12 for the Jan. 25 issue. Call 651-917-4183, email or place the order online.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCHES OFFER

- ✦ **Minnehaha Food Shelf**, Tuesdays, 10:30 am - 3 pm
- Minnehaha United Methodist** • 3701 E. 50th St. • 612-721-6231
- ✦ **Nokomis East Food Shelf**, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 2-4 pm
- Crosstown Covenant** • 5540 30th Ave. S • 612-724-3601

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