



LEARNING TO LOVE THEIR CURLS



Curl Power stylist Paige Graling trims and styles a young client's curly hair. Graling was bullied in school growing up because of her natural hair. Now, teaching others about how to care for their natural hair is one of Graling's passions. (Photo by Talia McWright)

2023 Minnesota law, "The CROWN Act," protects people from hair-based discrimination. Stylists from Curl Power share their personal experiences.

By TALIA MCWRIGHT

Rosie Jablonsky brushed out the curly hair of a young girl, as stylists in the Mall of America salon gathered around. "She looks like a lion," one stylist said. "She hates her hair," the girl's parents told Jablonsky. With the little girl in tears, Jablonsky knew that this would be one of her last times working at the salon.

"After that experience I was like, this isn't my job," Jablonsky said. "My job isn't to make little girls hate their hair."

Jablonsky studied film-making in college. Struggling with her career path, she made a list of what she wanted to do for work, which included: working on her feet and with her hands, being creative every day, working mostly with women, talking and telling stories, making a positive impact and being joyful. She also made a list of the things she was actively doing, one of which was cutting her friend's hair, the only thing that ticked all the boxes. In 2008, Jablonsky studied at the Vogue College of Cosmetology, in Santa Fe, N.M., and noticed immediately the lack of curly hair education.

"I was raised in a pretty counter cultural family," Jablonsky said. "I wasn't really exposed to a lot of popular trends, and so I really didn't understand how much curl hatred was in the world."

After cosmetology school, Jablonsky moved to Minnesota, and worked at a salon in the Mall of America. The salon focused heavily on straightening systems and encouraged the insecurity of curly hair, she expressed.

Soon after her time in the salon at the MOA, Jablonsky found the curly hair salon, Twisted Hare, (3401 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis) on Facebook and realized that a curly hair salon was where she belonged. She wanted to work at a salon that made people feel like the best versions of themselves, not one that capitalized on insecurities. Working at Twisted Hare expanded her curly hair education, teaching methods like dry cutting where instead of cutting curly hair in a wet or straightened state, the hair is cut dry as it naturally falls.

In the past, she'd applied to jobs that had rules against curly hair and didn't know at that time there was a history of legally controlling people's hair. It was ex-

citing to work at a place that helps people embrace their texture. She is also excited about the growth in curly hair centered salons across the state.

Jablonsky opened Curl Power in 2016 and wanted clients of different racial backgrounds, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds to feel comfortable and safe being themselves in her business. The salon started as two locations, but Jablonsky closed the Franklin Ave. location in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second and current Minneapolis location opened in 2018. She expressed that together, her team of stylists create ideas around the different ways that they can help people love their hair.

CROWN ACT >> 5



County commissioner Rena Moran worked to help pass the CROWN Act while she was serving in the Minnesota House of Representatives. (Photo submitted)

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,"

Loon sculpture to land soon

By JANE MCCLURE

A massive loon taking flight – the emblem of the Minnesota United soccer team – will soon land at the corner of University and Snelling avenues in St. Paul.

The loon statue, a permanent installation measuring some 35 feet tall with wings spread 90 feet across, is expected to anchor a new sculpture garden at the northwest edge of United Village, the 35 to 40 acre "super block" that is currently home to the Allianz Field soccer stadium, a drive-through/walk-up McDonald's and not much else.

The giant loon, which is being crafted by Glasgow sculptor Andy Scott, has been commissioned and privately funded by the McGuire Family Foundation – the same foundation behind Gold Medal Park in downtown Minneapolis – to capture the energy of the soccer team and the cultural underpinnings of the state itself.

LOON SCULPTURE >> 3



The sculpture by Glasgow artist Andy Scott is expected to be in place this spring.

Plastic-Free Challenge

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Frogtown neighbors tackle plastic pollution & more

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EDUCATION
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Boulevard garden fight resolved

By JANE MCCLURE

The battle over boulevard landscaping on Sherburne Avenue is over – for now. But ordinance changes to help boulevard gardeners citywide take effect this month. More changes could be on the way, with the work of Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) and others on behalf of Sherburne Avenue resident Iris Logan. (Read earlier story online or in the December 2023 edition of the Midway Como Frogtown Monitor.)

Logan’s elaborately landscaped boulevard and yard had long been a neighborhood showplace, until she was ordered to remove boulevard rocks and landscaping by the city. The city doesn’t allow permanent structures in a boulevard due to the need to access underground utilities.

Logan appealed the order to remove items, but in the meantime largely cleared her boulevard this fall. She lost her appeal, and her case went to the city council on Dec. 6, 2023. Neighbors and district council members went to the hearing with her.

Logan was initially given until Dec. 22 to remove everything, but cold weather

caused mounded dirt to freeze.

Marcia Moermond, legislative hearing officer, told council members that much of the work was complete, except for the mounded dirt. She outlined her meetings with Logan, her supporters and HMC. Moermond said an extension to June 6 is warranted to regrade and clean up the dirt.

Ward 4 Council Member Mitra Jalali acknowledged the many calls and emails her office got about Logan’s boulevard. While noting that the city has clear and broad language about what can and cannot be in a street boulevard, there is a need for a more holistic way to address situations such as Logan’s.

One frustration Logan’s supporters have cited is that complaints like the one about Logan’s boulevard can be made

anonymously. Another is that while some residents are told to make code-based property corrections, others don’t face penalties because their boulevard art or other items aren’t turned in.

St. Paul has allowed boulevard gardens since the 1990s. Many people put up structures including plant pots, planter beds, benches and other items in violation of the city code. The council by year’s end passed an ordinance allowing removable planter beds and pots, if a \$20 encroachment permit is obtained and conditions on height are met. Outgoing Ward 3 Council Member Chris Tolbert brought forward the ordinance changes to make the boulevard gardening process simpler. His changes came forward independent of Logan’s situation.

LOON SCULPTURE

>> from 1

In renderings, the hotel and restaurant pavilion are visible behind it. Dr. Bill McGuire said site grading has already begun, and he’s hopeful the massive bird lands in place next spring.

McGuire said in a press release that he was inspired by Scott’s signature work, “The Kelpies” – two massive Clydesdale horse structures in Falkirk, Scotland – which still draw visitors by the thousands a decade after opening.

The artist began working on a prototype loon statue a year ago last September, he said.

Beyond the statue itself, the overall real estate development vision, scaled down considerably since the master planning process unfolded in 2016, no longer calls for residences, at least not in the first phase of development, or towers of office and co-working spaces, let alone a movie theater, as once tentatively proposed.

It’s been enough, however, to spark some hope in frustrated neighborhood and St. Paul City Hall officials, who watched with dismay as the pandemic, rioting following the May 2020 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and then the redevelopment group itself eliminated some 30 small businesses from the former Midway Shopping Center.

NEW TAX DISTRICT

A flurry of year-end actions set the stage for the United Village development by Allianz Field to move forward. A new



tax increment financing (TIF) district for the block around Allianz Field and a development agreement with Snelling Midway LLC won a 5-1 vote of approval Dec. 13, 2023 from the St. Paul City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Board.

The new TIF district replaces a previous district. The new district provides financial assistance pledged up to \$13 million generated by development on five parcels of the site.

The HRA also approved a \$4 million TIF loan and a related budget amendment. This TIF comes from other TIF districts throughout the city, and has been drawn on for several other development projects.

Ward 7 Council Member Jane Prince voted against the financial package, saying she hadn’t had time to review it. Council

President Amy Brendmoen recused herself because her husband Mike Hahm is a project consultant.

Ward 4 Council Member Mitra Jalali raised several questions about the proposal, asking about work with community-based businesses as well as when the site will have housing built. Housing isn’t part of the first development phase.

St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development Director Nicolle Goodman said they are still working on how the new development could provide affordable commercial space. It is something the city hasn’t done before. “We’ll have to figure out, what does that look like?” Goodman said.

Ward 1 Council Member Russel Balenger said residents of his ward are excited and look forward to development at

the site.

The Snelling-Midway redevelopment site is an approximately 34.5 acres, occupied for many years by Midway Center, other office and commercial buildings, and a Metro Transit bus garage. Although the development wheels began turning in 2014, a master plan won approval in 2016 and the stadium opened in 2019, the lack of development has frustrated many neighbors.

TIF allows a developer to use added tax value or increments gained through development to pay for site improvements such as streets and utilities.

The changes were sought to move forward the first phase of site development near University and Snelling. This includes a 160-room hotel with an attached 320-stall parking ramp, which will provide parking for the hotel, restaurants, stadium attendees and other surrounding uses. Also planned are a park, a sculpture plaza, an 80,000 square foot office building with ground floor retail and underground parking and a restaurant pavilion which will provide space for two new restaurants.

The council in December also approved an interim use parking permit for a lot on the east side of the property, which was used until mid-2020 by remaining Midway Center businesses. The permit allows its use for five years.

Yet another council approval in December was for \$80,000 to pay for water service to add a drinking fountain for the all-abilities park on Pascal Street. It is covered through the Ward One Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) funds.



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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 arti-

cle 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.MonitorSaintPaul.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 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 predicament. Perhaps my counselor is right about me.

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

BUILDING A STRONGER MIDWAY

BY CHAD KULAS,
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By the time you read this, there's a good chance if you had a New Year's resolution you have already abandoned it. Or if you're like me, you sometimes wait a few weeks to start the resolution (mostly out of procrastination). But in addition to resolutions, January is a good time to look at the year ahead. Here are some news stories to watch for in 2024.

THE NEW COUNCIL. There's almost always some change in a city council following an election year, but this year is especially a year of change as four the seven councilmembers chose not to run for reelection. Anika Bowie (Ward 1), Saura Jost (Ward 3), Hwa Jeong Kim (Ward 5), and Cheniqua Johnson (Ward 7) are all starting their first terms as Russel Balenger, Chris Tolbert, Amy Brendmoen and Jane Prince

THE YEAR AHEAD IN THE MIDWAY

stepped down. Council veteran Ward 4 City Councilmember Mitra Jalali is now Council President.

One of the big final pieces of legislation passed by the "old" council was in support of the United Village development near Allianz Field. A couple highlights in phase 1 are public spaces: the sculpture park and a fully inclusive playground. The sculpture park will feature a giant loon, which could become iconic in a similar way as the cherry spoon. The playground is the first fully inclusive playground in Saint Paul. Phase 1 also includes a hotel, office and retail space. (Read story starting on front page for more information.)

Staying at the Snelling/University intersection, the CVS site remains vacant. Will 2024 be the year we see new activity? What will happen to the old Fasika site?

Heading east down University Avenue to the State Capitol, the next Legislative Session will begin Feb. 12. Unlike the Saint Paul City Council, 2023 was not an election year and mostly the same legislators are back (thankfully one change is the state flag, as we retire the racist and boring old

one). A lot of new legislators were elected in 2022 which led to a massive amount of legislation passed in 2023. Will 2024 be a year to work on their secondary goals? Will they clean up any of the legislation passed last year? Last session, I was happy to see funding approved for the Promise Act, which will help businesses in areas most impacted by civil unrest in 2020. This includes a big portion of University Avenue, meaning several local businesses should get support. The application process for grants opens in the first quarter of 2024 and are available through the Neighborhood Development Center (NDC).

Anniversaries are a time to reflect on the history of an institution or project. With an opening date of June 2014, the Green Line turns 10 this year (and the Blue Line opened June 2004 meaning the Twin Cities have had light rail for 20 years). What will be said of its legacy? The Green Line consistently reached its ridership goals after it opened, though lost many riders during COVID-19 (like transit throughout the country). Without question, a lot of development has occurred along the Green

Line and especially near station stops. But how many are taking advantage of the transit line? While there's a perception of crime associated with the Green Line, it was reported in November that crime dropped 33% over the past six months on all Metro Transit operations. The drop has been tied to more visibility from law enforcement, part of the Metro Transit's Safety & Security Action Plan.

The inevitable ebb and flow of businesses will result in some old favorites closing but also making way for new places to try and embrace. Will more mixed-use development see retail space on their ground floor? One expansion and relocation I'm very excited about it is when Udo's Market moves to the old Hardware Hank site on Snelling and not only expands the grocery selection, but also opens a West African restaurant.

Whether or not you've made (and potentially broken) resolutions, make a point to try the new attractions in the neighborhood this year, and try an old one that's new to you. The Midway is walkable, and getting your steps in is a great way to find new places you'd otherwise miss as you whizz by in a car. This year, let's find new things to appreciate and love in the Midway.

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CROWN ACT

>> from 1

"It was so easy to see that people loved what we were doing and needed it," Jablonsky said.

AN ACT TO PROTECT CURLY HAIR

On Feb. 1, 2023, Minnesota adopted the CROWN Act, a law that bans race based hair discrimination. According to, The Official CROWN Act website, the Acronym CROWN stands for, "Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair." It was created in 2019 by Dove and the CROWN Coalition, in partnership with then State Senator Holly J. Mitchell of California, to ensure protection against discrimination based on race-based hairstyles by extending statutory protection to hair texture and protective styles such as braids, locs, twists, and knots in the workplace and public schools."

Jablonsky expressed that the CROWN Act creates a movement towards professionalism reflected in one's natural state. Though Jablonsky has not experienced direct hair-based discrimination, she was given the nickname "Lion girl" growing up. The nickname is a place of tension for her as it holds both positive and negative associations. A lot of Jablonsky's identity, especially for others, was tied to her hair and how her curly hair made her different from others. Though she is not always called, "Lion girl," in a positive way, the nickname makes Jablonsky feel powerful.

"Take up your space," Jablonsky said. "Be loud if you want to."

Jablonsky explained that she understands that the issue is not just about hair discrimination, but that its roots lie in a system of racial discrimination. She said one thing she does to grow her awareness is try to educate herself, and her stylists, on anti-racist efforts. Curly hair gets called messy a lot, Jablonsky said. She explained it's going to take a broad shift in the media especially for more representation of people with curly and textured hair going to work to be seen as professional.

"People of color, especially those with tighter texture, are often deemed unprofessional by White America. People view tight curls and texture as unpolished and unprofessional."

There is no such thing as a hair type, as everyone's hair is unique to them and has its own set of needs, Jablonsky said. She discussed the "Curly girl method," an idea originally created by Lorraine Massey and Deborah Chiel in 2002, in her book, "Curly girl: The Handbook." A catchphrase in the book is, "Where there's frizz, there's a curl waiting to happen." This is an idea Jablonsky recommends against, because the fear of frizz is a remnant of a racist idea, and hair does not have rules.



Curl Power Salon founder Rosie Jablonsky said, "Love your body. Your hair is a part of your body. It's natural." (Photo by Talia McWright)

"I would hope that this [The CROWN Act] opens doors for people to feel comfortable exploring their texture if they didn't before," Jablonsky said.

It's not surprising to Jablonsky that 26 states have yet to adopt the CROWN Act, but it is disappointing. She believes there needs to be more awareness and education of the issue, and people should not worry about or be bothered by what others do with their hair.

Jablonsky wants to instill confidence in her clients, and ensure that they can walk away with techniques that will help them in achieving what they'd consider to be a, "good hair day," because everyone deserves to feel confident in their hair, especially in the workplace. She thinks that it's exciting to think that people will wear more natural styles, braids and locs at work, to the point that it becomes normalized.

"Love your body," Jablonsky said. "Your hair is a part of your body. It's natural."

STYLIST CEYONN WADE

Ceyonn Wade, a North Minneapolis resident, has been natural for half of her life. For most of her childhood, her hair was chemically relaxed, which she said appealed to the Midwestern norm. At 27 years old, Wade said she's gone natural because she loves and embraces her natural hair and Black culture.

Wade has been working at Curl Power since 2021. She studied cosmetology at Aveda Institutes, and expressed that she was not taught about how to care for curly hair. After touring the Curl Power salon and meeting Jablonsky, Wade said she knew she loved it. She especially loves the inclusivity of Curl Power in being LGBTQIA+ allied and owned, how it's open

to everyone and has products for all hair needs.

"I felt like Curl Power fit who I was as a person," Wade said.

Wade is happy someone acknowledged that curly hair, locs and other protective styles are professional in the Black community. She feels that the CROWN Act took initiative to bring it to life for the greater communities.

"When I first heard about it I was excited and ecstatic, and I still am," Wade said. "But I feel like it's so crazy that in order for us to not be discriminated against for wearing our hair naturally curly we have to have things like this in play for us to be safe as people of color."

In elementary to middle school, Wade was often the only girl of color in her classroom. Though her hair was relaxed, it was often in protective styles like twists. She remembers other children and their parents passive aggressively commenting on her hair, and touching it, saying things like, "Oh, it's a lot softer than I expected it to be," or, "Oh my gosh, how can you take care of this much hair?" She expressed that these experiences made her feel like she wasn't beautiful, made her question her hair when she had never before viewed it as a problem, and made her feel uncomfortable about who she was because her hair was a part of her.

"Nowadays, even before the CROWN Act came into play, people are like, 'I love your hair,'" Wade said.

Wade went natural as a sophomore in high school, and during the transition period felt really insecure about the way she looked. She hated her hair at the time. Once her hair grew into an afro, she began falling in love with it. At 18, she felt confident in her hair, and began experimenting

THE STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Esther Agbaje, born and raised in Saint Paul, has been serving in the Minnesota House of Representatives since 2021 and represents part of Minneapolis in District 59B.



"I'm just really happy to be in this role because public service has been really important to me," Agbaje said. "A lot of my jobs really focus in that area, and being able to help the people on more of a macro level has been what I've been drawn to."

The bill for the CROWN Act, written by former District 65A State Representative Rena Moran of St. Paul, was originally introduced in Minnesota in 2020. Agbaje was familiar with the movement on a national level, and carried the bill in 2021. During this time Agbaje said there were many stories coming out about teachers cutting off the braids of children in schools. She expressed that this is extremely damaging on both a physical and psychological level. The bill passed in the House in 2021, but the act was not able to get a hearing in the Senate.

"It just seemed really important to me, especially because there's so many young Black girls and Black women that are made to feel if not told outright that they need to change their hair in order to fit in, or have a specific job, or to participate in school," Agbaje said.

Agbaje is hopeful for a federal CROWN Act law. She explained that she's glad the law is passing in multiple states, but is disappointed by the need for the law.

"It's an unfortunate circumstance that in the United States of America we have to continue to pass laws that recognize the humanity of Black people, it's just really sad," she stated.

Agbaje described her relationship with her own hair as a "process." She doesn't straighten her hair very often as she's grown more comfortable having her hair in its natural state, or in protective and braiding styles. Though Agbaje expressed that she's never been directly told she couldn't do something because of her hair, she has experienced it through micro aggressions. For a large part of her life, her hair was relaxed and when it wasn't she took to methods like straightening and blowouts to "tame" her hair. She's been wearing it natural since 2016, and still finds herself questioning the judgment of other people.

"I think like most Black women who grew up in the United States we were always told you can't really wear your hair curly, you can't let it be out, and you have to figure out a way to keep it down," Agbaje said. "

Growing up in a predominantly White neighborhood, Agbaje said she found herself existing in the unwritten rules of fitting in with society, and textured hair did not fit. For interviews, jobs and during her role as a litigator, she'd have her hair blown out, or straightened because that's what made her feel professional. She said that in the U.S., frizzy hair is seen as unprofessional.

"I think that at every term we're always fighting to show that we're humans and that we are worthy of being valued and respected," Agbaje said. "I'm just glad that we value ourselves and continue to put up these movements, but it's tough that we still have at least half the country left."

Agbaje said the CROWN Act leads to the ability of people to be able to show up as who they are, and have access to opportunities and they're not arbitrarily excluded because someone thinks someone's hair is too big or too distracting.

"At the end of the day it's a civil rights issue," Agbaje said. There's people who are always looking for ways to discriminate against Black folks, or people who aren't White, and this is another way to do it."



Curl Power stylist Ceyonne Wade gives her repeat client Aisha Eady a straightened blowout. Wade commented, "A lot of times our hair is deemed as an obstacle in different industries, and career fields." (Photo by Talia McWright)

HOW TWO FROGTOWN NEIGHBORS TACKLE PLASTIC POLLUTION

by PATRICIA OHMANS
FrogTown Green

The world is awash in plastic. Every day, the equivalent of 2,000 garbage trucks full of plastic are dumped into the world's oceans, rivers, and lakes. Beyond the aesthetic mess of plastic litter, plastic items can be confusing to recycle, "plus they harm water and wildlife and have largely unknown health impacts for us," reports the Ramsey County Public Health Department.

In February, health departments in Ramsey, Washington and Hennepin Counties join together in a four-week effort to help citizens reduce plastic consumption. Families, businesses, organizations, and community groups can join the counties' "Plastic Free Challenge." Accepting the challenge for a few weeks is a great way to learn more about the impact of plastic pollution, while garnering tips on how to avoid it.

In the spirit of this challenge, FrogTown Green interviewed two FrogTown neighbors who have been avoiding plastic for decades. We asked naturopathic doctor Kristin Becker and fellow FrogTown resident Gene for their top tips, both for newbies and veterans hoping to trim their plastic consumption. Here's what they had to say:

CHALLENGE YOURSELF: GO PLASTIC-FREE FOR A MONTH

The Plastic-Free Challenge is a month-long, Ramsey County-led effort to reduce plastic consumption, especially single-use plastics. Sign-up opened on Jan. 1, and the challenge runs during the month of February 2024.

The challenge has 86 actions to choose from, in eight categories. Once you sign up, browse the categories, check off the actions you already take, and select a few more to try during the four-week challenge. You can also create a team to take the challenge along with you. Learn more, sign up, and get ready to kickstart your plastic-free journey at tropicalasticfree.ecochallenge.org.

JUST SAY NO TO BAGS

Nearly 25 years ago, Kristin made a resolution: never to take another plastic bag from a store. She has met the challenge by always carrying a cloth bag with her when she goes shopping. "Pocket" bags that fold up into a small carrying bundle make the substitution easy.

...OR WASH AND RE-USE 'EM

Gene acknowledges that Ziploc and other plastic storage bags can be handy, but she washes them out and re-uses them many times over, air drying them on a bottle drying rack. For most leftovers, she uses vintage glass refrigerator containers, instead of plastic.

MAKE IT FIZZ

Kristin's family avoids pop, but they

do enjoy unsweetened soda water. They use a soda water maker for the homemade version, but if they buy "fizzy" water, it is in cans, not plastic bottles.

BUY IN BULK

Gene and Kristin both like to shop for bulk items using glass or metal containers that can be refilled. When she runs out of a bulk item, Kristin pops the labeled jar it was in right into her cloth bag, so she remembers to refill at the co-op. The jars work as a grocery list, too.

GO BEYOND THE COOP

Check out The Tare Market, a Minneapolis grocery that sells foods and goods in bulk, or Evergreen Collective on Grand Avenue in St. Paul, another source for bulk

personal and home cleaning materials. Both stores offer bins for recycling items that aren't accepted in St. Paul's recycling program, says Gene.

DISH YOUR OWN

When invited to picnics or potlucks, Kristin grabs a to-go bag with camping plates and silverware, so she can avoid plastic dishware. Her family also carries their own metal straws with them, including extra-wide straws for their favorite boba tea, with its chunky tapioca bubbles.

FORGET THE FLEECE

Gene worries about the microplastic fibers that shed from fleece outdoor wear when it is washed. She avoids PVC, synthetic fabrics (polyesters, acrylic, spandex) and shops thrift or vintage stores for 100% cotton clothing and bedding, wool sweaters, and good leather shoes.

THINK AGAIN!

Gene's best advice fits any occasion: "When you're about to buy something plastic, or something wrapped in plastic, just stop and weigh your options. Is there an alternative? Can you make a better choice, so there's less plastic in the waste stream? Probably."

FrogTown Green is a resident-led and volunteer-powered environmental initiative in St. Paul's most diverse neighborhood.

CROWN ACT

>> from 5

more with different styles, and protection methods, so much so that others would ask her to style their hair.

During the earlier stages of the pandemic in 2021, Wade decided to cut her hair after being inspired by singer Ari Lennox, who had recently done a big chop. After cutting her hair, Wade said she cried for a long time. She'd spent so long growing it out, and couldn't believe she'd just cut it. Then, it felt like a weight had been lifted from her shoulders. She realized that so much of her identity was tied to her hair. From there, her growth journey began again with what she said was a healthier mindset and better products. The experience taught her so much about herself, and she is now able to be her authentic self without worrying about how others will judge her based on her hair.

"I can say I have a stronger bond with my hair now than I did before," Wade said.

Wade expressed that many of her clients are not people of color, weren't aware of the CROWN Act, and are shocked at the reality of the hair-based discrimination people of color experience. Wade said she's surprised at the amount of people that were unfamiliar with the CROWN Act.

"A lot of times our hair is deemed as an obstacle in different industries, and career fields," Wade stated.

STYLIST PAIGE GRALING

Growing up in Red Wing as a biracial girl with curly hair was difficult because most of the people around her had straight hair, or would straighten their hair, said Paige Graling. Her mom and

grandparents tried to instill in Graling a love for her natural hair, but she said it was hard to feel confident when no one else had or wore their hair natural like her. It wasn't until high school when she moved to the Twin Cities that she started seeing people of color with natural hair like hers, and began feeling more confident.

"But I feel like it wasn't until I worked here, that I was like, 'Oh now I actually know how to do my hair,'" stated Graling.

Graling's mom and grandparents encouraged her to pursue beauty school as they felt she was creative, and passionate about cosmetology. While studying at The Salon Professional Academy in Maplewood, Graling said that most of the people she styled had straight hair, and if they had natural or curly hair, it would be flat ironed or blown out.

"In school we really didn't learn anything about curly hair, so even if we got people in with curly hair, we'd straighten it first, then cut it," Graling said.

After graduating from beauty school, she first worked at a blow-out salon, then moved to Curl Power in 2020. Her experience at Curl Power was completely different from the past hair education she'd received. She said that in her early stages at Curl Power, she relied on what she knew about caring for her own natural hair when working with clients.

"Most of the stylists that graduated within 2019 and under will tell you that there was really no education at all for curly hair," Graling said.

Straightened hair was a trend of the 2000s, and she loves that the CROWN Act now exists. In school as a child, she does not remember anyone wearing their hair in natural styles, including her teachers, and hopes that the CROWN Act will help people accept that part of themselves.

Graling was bullied in school growing up because of her natural hair. She said she had a lot of hair, and was made to feel that it was an inconvenience to others. Sitting in the front of class, she'd slouch and shrink herself to not disturb or block the view of others.

Teaching others about how to care for their natural hair is one of Graling's passions. She wants to instill confidence in others about their curls, and is joyful about working in a salon that supports that. Still, she feels irritated by the amount of states that have yet to adopt the CROWN Act, and believes it is holding the country back.

"It's a huge part of us, and who we are, but in political terms it's hair," Graling said. "Let us do what we want with it, let us not be discriminated against doing something that's natural to us. It's time."

STYLIST CELESTE GRAVATT

Uptown resident, Celeste Gravatt joined the Curl Power team in 2017 and calls it "home." She said she's always felt safe, supported and able to practice her craft without judgment.

As a child, Gravatt attended a Montessori school and was one of the few Black children in her school. She and her family were unsure of how exactly to style her hair, but did the best they knew how, using things like coconut oil to keep it moisturized. Gravatt said that in middle school, she cut all of her hair off because she was so tired of getting teased for it, and spent the next 20 years not knowing what to do with it.

At 27, she attended the, Bloomington Empire Beauty School to become a nail technician. In beauty school, Gravatt said she was taught that all hair was the same, and that if the techniques were not working from person to person, it was an issue

with the stylist, not an issue of technique, an experience she found very frustrating. She was even once told during her education, that no one would want to wear their hair naturally curly, even though she herself has naturally curly hair. After school, she got a job as a nail tech at the Twisted Hare salon, which at the time was one of the only curly hair salons in Minnesota.

"It kind of landed in my lap," she said.

Gravatt acknowledges that hair-based discrimination stems from institutionalized racism. She believes that a good first step in combating the issue would be to have more school curriculum about textured hair. She said that several states now have legislation that require students in beauty and cosmetology schools to learn how to do textured hair before graduating, and Minnesota is not one of them.

Gravatt said she spends a lot of time destigmatizing hair, and trying to reprogram people's understanding of what is seen as professional. She tells people that they can wear their hair naturally curly and not have to fear repercussions of any kind, particularly in corporate settings. Many of her child clients are involved in activities like dance, and are told that they must wear their hair in specific styles even if their hair cannot be manipulated to fit the style.

"I love being able to empower those kids, and tell them that they can wear their hair the way that it grows," Gravatt said. "Dance companies in particular need to adjust their perspective."

In 2012, Gravatt said she put away the flat iron and never looked back. Now that she is well educated about curly and textured hair, she is growing her hair out for the first time since she was a kid.

"I really love my curls," Gravatt said.



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m DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

CHEAPER FOOD TO GO

>> from 1

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 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



Ronnie Hartman gets a coffee and a donut at Milkweed cafe 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)

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 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

THE PROBLEM OF FOOD WASTE

• According to MPCA's 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 \$1,200 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.

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.

Open January 2024



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Dr. Kathleen Murray takes office as Hamline's 21st president

Dr. Kathleen Murray took office as the 21st president of Hamline University on Jan. 1, becoming the third consecutive woman to lead Minnesota's oldest institution of higher education, which enters its 170th year in 2024. She will serve as Acting/Interim President.

Dr. Murray brings 40 years of academic and higher education leadership experience to her role at Hamline – as the first female president at Whitman College, provost and dean of the faculty at Macalester College, as provost at Birmingham-Southern College, and a professor of piano, dean of the conservatory, and dean of the faculty at Lawrence University. Dr. Murray will be the third consecutive female president of Hamline.

"The Board of Trustees was impressed by Dr. Murray's strong track record," Board Chair Ellen Watters said. "She is a dynamic, action-oriented and inclusive leader with a strong commitment to strategic fiscal management, diversity, and academic

program development. She values voices of students, faculty, and staff, and I am confident she will be an exceptional president."

Dr. Murray shared: "I am both honored and humbled by this appointment. I was deeply impressed by the passion for Hamline expressed by all of the students, faculty, staff, and alums I met during the search process, and I believe we can work together to build on the university's very strong past to prepare it to thrive into the future."

Dr. Murray retired in 2022 after serving for seven years as president of Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. In her time at Whitman, she guided the college through the COVID-19 pandemic; implemented a campus-wide financial sustainability review in 2020 that allowed



Dr. Kathleen Murray



Dr. Fayneese Miller

the college to develop and implement a sustainable budget coming out of COVID; guided a strategic planning process that informed fundraising priorities in the first phase of a comprehensive campaign which raised more than \$100 million; and successfully raised over \$10 million to build a new residence hall and dining commons.

Prior to Whitman, Dr. Murray served as provost, dean of the faculty, and professor of music at Macalester College for seven years. In addition to the responsibilities of the chief academic officer, Dr. Murray directed the planning for a \$70 million renovation and expansion of the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center. Macalester's Board of Trustees appointed her as acting president from September to December

2013 while President Brian Rosenberg was on sabbatical leave.

She served as provost and vice-president for academic affairs at Birmingham-Southern College. Earlier in her career she spent 19 years as professor of music, dean of the conservatory, and finally dean of the faculty at Lawrence University.

Dr. Murray holds a Doctor of Music from Northwestern University, a Master of Music from Bowling Green State University, and a Bachelor of Music from Illinois Wesleyan University. Her training focused on piano performance and pedagogy. Dr. Murray is committed to public and community service. She has served on national, state, and local committees and boards dealing with higher education, athletics, youth, music teachers and public radio.

Dr. Murray succeeds Dr. Fayneese Miller, who began a sabbatical on Dec. 31. She will retire on June 30.

NATURE-BASED SCHOOL FOR TEACHERS

A group of Minnesota educators entered the wilderness as part of the new Teacher Field School program led by Hamline University, in partnership with the University of Minnesota and Freshwater Society. This immersive, research-backed

field school is the first nature-based learning professional development series for Minnesota teachers, thanks to a \$500,000 state grant from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The grant funded two annual series of five-weekend retreats.

FUNDS FOR COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Hamline University will dedicate an additional \$124K to bolster college affordability and \$967K to embed high impact learning experiences across curriculum over the next five years. It's all part of a \$2.17 million grant Hamline received

from the U.S. Department of Education's 'Strengthening Institutions' program, which helps higher education institutions strengthen fiscal stability and expand their capacity to serve low-income students. Funding will be allocated through September 2028.

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HAMLIN HEADLINES

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A house on Holton Street was repurposed this fall semester to be a lab for Dr. Jamie Spaulding's Crime Scene and Death Investigation course. (Photo submitted)

House finds new life as university crime scene lab

Hamline University is breathing new life (and plenty of simulated death) into a house on Holton Street in St. Paul. The Hamline-owned property was repurposed this fall semester to be a lab for Dr. Jamie Spaulding's Crime Scene and Death Investigation course.

When it comes to forensic investigation, Dr. Spaulding, Hamline's professor of forensic science and a graduate of the nationally-recognized West Virginia University forensic science program, puts a premium on experiential learning and places great value on introducing students to the many challenges of the field.

"This house allows us to create very realistic scenarios for students, giving them the opportunity to hone their investigation skills in a low-stakes environment rather than encounter these challenges for the first time at actual crime scenes," Spaulding said. "I need them to make their mistakes here and learn from them so that they can be fully prepared in the real world."

Later in November, the class underwent an even more immersive exercise:

Hamline's annual After Hours Crime Scene. This exercise initiates with very little notice: students receive a call during the opening hours of a chilly November day and report to an on-campus crime scene. Over the following pre-dawn hours, students investigate a staged murder outside Hamline – complete with mannequin victims, footprints, bullet casings and a St. Paul Police presence. Students are tasked with collecting evidence, taking photos, documenting the scene and ultimately authoring a crime scene report.

"There are very, very few places that have students in the middle of the night out there actually doing the real world work, which is the only way I think I can appropriately train students to do this work," Spaulding said.

The AHCS and the crime lab house, along with Hamline's overall breadth of forensic science courses, are a true rarity in the Midwest, as Hamline is the only Minnesota university with a forensic science major – and has one of the few forensics programs in the Upper Midwest.

COMO PARK SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



BY ERIC ERICKSON Social studies teacher

COMO SENIORS PLANNING FOR FUTURE



Forty-four Como seniors participated in the Future Postsecondary Pathways Conference at the University of Minnesota (Photo submitted.)

High school seniors across the country confront challenging decisions while simultaneously navigating the present and their future. Finding the right balance between keeping up with current responsibilities, making memories, and planning for life after graduation can be tricky.

At Como, many seniors from the class of 2024 have completed college applications and are "getting in" to the schools they desire to attend. Financial aid packages that will influence their decisions are still being generated.

For other Como seniors uncertain about which path to take and how to pursue, there is support through programs such as Get Ready, College Possible, Upward Bound, and the schools' Career Pathway Center.

Get Ready is federally funded and administered through the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. Beyond campus visits for Como students this fall, they recently sponsored a field trip to the University of Minnesota for a postsecondary conference. This was a new experience for 44 seniors to be in a setting with active exploration focused on life after high school.

Presentation topics included "The Labor Market: What Employers Are Looking For," "Balancing Academics and Social Life in College," "Careers in Construction" and "What is a Gap Year?" among others. There were also panel discussions with college advisors and current university students who provided an opportunity for student-generated questions.

Over 20 Como students are active members of a new club called HOSA, which stands for Health Occupation Students of America. Como is the first SPPS school to establish a HOSA chapter. The organization is dedicated to developing the next generation of health care professionals.

Como's HOSA chapter meets on Wednesdays during the school-wide seminar session. Several guest speakers have visited to share information including an optometrist, a lab technician, a midwife, a chiropractic radiologist, and a school nurse. Many more guest speakers are lined up for 2024.

HOSA also plans to engage in community service projects and compete in healthcare competitions. Social worker Gail Grogan and science teacher Dr. Heather Norton-Bower are the staff supervisors.

SPRING MUSICAL

The spring musical at Como will be an adaptation of Disney's "The Jungle Book." Performances are scheduled to run on March 15 and 16 in the Como Park Auditorium. Choir director Huy Tran and English teacher Suzanne Myhre are in the process of organizing auditions and assembling the cast and stage crew.

SPIRIT WEEK

The final week of school in 2023 was a spirited one with thematic dress-up days. Monday was "Twin Day," Tuesday was "Celebrity Day," Wednesday was "Dress as a Teacher Day," Thursday was "Culture Day," with students celebrating their roots by wearing cultural attire, and Friday was "Como Colors Day."

The gym was filled with black and gold Friday afternoon as students supported their classmates competing in the "Battle of the Classes Futsal Tournament." The freshmen team won the title - and beat the Como staff squad!

HEALTH OCCUPATIONS



The Hamline Elementary to Hamline University Collaboration: Where college and careers begin in kindergarten.

Hamline Elementary is a public community school partnering with Hamline University to design and apply the most effective methods for teaching young learners. For over a century, the Hamline-to-Hamline Collaboration has enriched the learning of our elementary students.

As next-door neighbors, students have access to university professors, tutors, student teachers, facilities, and resources that connect and support Hamline Elementary's curriculum and the warm, supportive community offered by our teachers and staff.



Opportunities include:

Tutoring Program: University students provide literacy and math instruction to small groups of students, creating lower adult-to-student ratios.

Hand-in-Hand Mentoring: Hamline Elementary students build one-on-one relationships with university students, staff, and faculty.

Academic & Athletic Pairings: We partner with the university to create immersive experiences in the arts, sciences, and humanities and provide opportunities to engage with campus activities and athletics.

Snelling Connection: Hamline Elementary student journalists create a publication with guidance from university students and faculty.

For tours, contact karen.mccauley@spps.org

Enroll today for PreK-5: spps.org/hamline

**HAMLINE
ELEMENTARY**



BY KAREN MCCAULEY
& JESSICA KOPP

STUDENTS EXPLORE AND LEARN



Hamline Elementary is proud to invite prospective families and the community to join us at our annual Open House and Winter Warm-up! Current families and staff will be there to share with you why Hamline is a great place to learn. Location: Hamline Elementary, 1599 Englewood Avenue, St. Paul. Date: Jan. 24, 2024, 5-7 p.m.

The Hamline Elementary community experienced an autumn filled with learning, community, and joy.

The Husky Pack, our family organization, hosted a "Huskies Read" Family Night in October focusing on literacy and reading at home. With the support of our staff, families, and Saint Paul Public Schools Office of Family Engagement and Partnerships, we came together to learn from each other about how to help our kids love reading. Saint Paul Public Schools is championing literacy for all students through their "SPPS Reads" initiative, helping students improve reading skills at home, and build excitement around reading through community events.

We have been focusing on our community-defined "Core Competencies" each month. Hamline Huskies are "Collaborators, Communicators, Creators, Critical Thinkers, and Self & Community Aware." Each assembly is centered around the core competency of the month, with presentations co-led by students and staff about how we are acting upon each competency.

The University of Minnesota Raptor

Center visited our after-school program, Extended Day Learning (EDL), and our students asked many great questions while learning about owls, hawks, kestrels, eagles, and raptors in general. Thanks to the staff at the Raptor Center and the wonderful birds they brought to share with our scholars.

In science, fourth graders learned about transferring energy by building and testing different kinds of cars. Students have built cars that are propelled by balloons. They tested their own car slingshots while learning about variables and fair testing. They also studied the science of collisions, and built safety devices to protect eggs in our crash test lab.

In science class in the other grades, kindergarten learned about plant and animal needs; first graders learned how plant structures help them disperse seeds; second graders learned about landforms and how to use maps and other models; third graders learned about forces and designing their own amusement parks; and fifth

graders learned about material properties as well as physical and chemical reactions.

Kindergarteners are in their third round of Creator Space, which will end in mid-January. This unit we have been exploring different holidays and celebrations that are observed in our community. We learned some dances, made puppets, acted out origin stories, played games, and created decorations that connect to Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Hanukkah, and Hmong New Year! We also wrote and shared about the important holidays and traditions in our own families.

Pre-K is finishing their third unit on motion and ramps. We have been reading books and watching videos to learn about inclines and slopes, working together to experiment with rolling versus sliding, different levels of steepness, and comparing speeds within sizes and weight. Friends have used many materials to build their own ramps and obstacle courses, and have also been following their imaginations to create some of their own masterpieces!

It's so fun to see all the connections and learning each day!

Hamline's Girls on the Run (GOTR) team wrapped up their fall 2023 season with a celebratory 5k at the State Fairgrounds on Sunday, Nov. 12. This event celebrated all that the GOTR participants learned and achieved over the nine-week program. GOTR will be back at Hamline for the spring season (running April 1-June 2). Registration will open Feb. 1. More info available at www.gotrmn.org.

HAMLINE TO HAMLINE COLLABORATION

The longstanding collaboration between Hamline Elementary and Hamline University is a one-of-kind program in Saint Paul and the first of its kind in the nation. We are truly two campuses and one community in the heart of the Hamline Midway neighborhood, and our cross-campus collaboration team is hard at work creating opportunities to bring the Hamline Elementary and Hamline University communities together for learning and connection.

As 2023 comes to a close, our H2H Collaboration team is thrilled with the growth of all of our programs this fall. With over 40 tutors working in classrooms and our mentorship programming growing every day, we are seeing the positive impact of having so many caring adults working and volunteering at Hamline Elementary. We are preparing some amazing grade-level and all-school experiences for the new year as well as looking forward to Hamline Elementary students exploring their interests through hands-on activities provided by Hamline University faculty at our Discovery Expo and planning a field day for Hamline Elementary students hosted by Hamline University student athletes at Klas Field.

Learn more at <https://www.hamline.edu/academics/college-schools/education-leadership/hamline-collaboration>.

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PLANTING SEEDS

BY DR. ARTIKA TYNER, dr.artikatyner@gmail.com



Local Minnesota leaders return from Sierra Leone and Ghana Community Outreach Initiative

EDUCATION WILL CHANGE THE WORLD



2019 Sankofa trip members. A trip to Ghana is being planned for 2024.

Planting People Growing Justice™ Leadership Institute (PPGJLI) and Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church (739 Selby Ave.) founding pastor, Rev. Carl Walker, have just returned from a visit to Africa that focused on promoting literacy and fostering community development.

PLANTING SEEDS IN SIERRA LEONE

While in Sierra Leone, we partnered with the Living Word International Academy to support their literacy program and contribute to building a well. The support received through PPGJLI and Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church through these community development projects encouraged students and the community in multiple ways.

Literacy is essential for academic success and career development. Nearly half of the youth and young adult population in Sierra Leone are unable to read. Living Word seeks to eradicate this reading crisis by taking an intergenerational approach to reading and family education.

sible to students and their families.

GROWING FUTURES IN GHANA

While in Ghana, we had the honor of meeting with Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III, the Akwamuhene and Paramount Chief of the Akwamu State in Ghana, to support his literacy initiative and education fund. Odeneho Akoto III has declared 'war' against illiteracy. He stated: "The war against poverty must be fought with the mind and hearts. In the words of Nelson Mandela, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.'" In furtherance of this vision, we provided inspiring books that will ignite the minds of our children, fostering a love for learning, growth, and leadership development.

In addition, we partnered with the Ghana Scholarship Fund and Senchi Ferry Community Library to host a youth leadership development workshop where we explored STEAM education and related

career pathways.

Our visits to Sierra Leone and Ghana are contributing to the education, literacy, and health of young people now and into the future. These efforts advance our mission of planting seeds of social change through education, training, and community outreach.

2024 SANKOFA TRIP

Planting People Growing Justice is excited to announce our 2024 Sankofa trip to Ghana. Returning to Africa is a Sankofa moment. Sankofa reflects the philosophy of "go back and fetch it." It also means "we must return to the source." During our 2024 visit, community participants will recapture their cultural heritage and pride. They will see a reflection of the ancestors who paved the way for our very existence through their hard work, fierce determination, and unwavering faith.

To learn about how you can embark



Children's book authors: J. Darnell Johnson and Dr. Artika R. Tyner

SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED FOR CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS

Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute is passionate about celebrating diverse voices and empowering young readers through impactful literature.

The PPGJLI Children's Book Awards recognize outstanding children's books that champion diversity, equity, and inclusion. These awards honor stories that inspire empathy, celebrate cultural richness, and foster a more inclusive world for our young readers. If you're an author or publisher of a children's book that promotes diversity and social justice, you are invited to submit your work for consideration by Feb. 1, 2024.

More at https://www.ppgjli.org/ppgjli-childrens-book-awards

on a Sankofa journey by discovering our shared humanity and common destiny, visit: https://www.ppgjli.org/ghana2024

Through her organization, Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute, Dr. Artika Tyner seeks to plant seeds of social change through education, training, and community outreach.

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PEACE BUBBLES

BY MELVIN GILES
peacebubbles@q.com



"Take a leap of faith and begin this wondrous new year by believing." - Sarah Ban Breathnach

"We need to feel the cheer and inspiration of meeting each othe. We need to gain the courage and fresh life that comes from the mingling of congenial souls, of those working for the same ends." - Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin

"Whenever it feels uncomfortable to tell the truth, that's often the most important time to tell it." - Jennifer Lopez

Happy New Year Monitor readers,

It's a Leap Year, which gives extra energy for taking, trusting, and believing in Great Leaps of Faith-ing, particularly, for going towards your destinies and striving together to bend the Arc of Justice forward. Although 2023 was a strange, weird, crazy, and simply an unbelievable and unpredictable year that historians, filmmakers, mystics, and children will have abundant stories to document and recall – hopefully, they will start with the climate shift record changes. For instance, 2023 was the year that many climate change deniers woke-up, in the midst of growing fear of hearing the truth.

For me, 2023 was a great year of working hard to stay optimistic and practicing radical self-care; thank you, Dr. Joi Lewis! In 2023, I was drawn to resting, restoration, renewing; to relationship building, remembering/recalling, rediscovering, reuniting, re-evaluating, re-committing, re-energizing, reflection and so much of re-stuff. In short, 2023, was a grand year for me of being re-grateful for the shoulders I stand on and appreciating still being around to witness the great changes in the Circle of Life that don't happen overnight or in a few years.

This coming year of 2024, I plan on sharing monthly more messages and expressions from my partners, allies, and justice intergenerational champions.

A NEW WORLD OF CHANGING WAYS

I want start the year with sharing a re-discovered New Year's message written by my old-fashion preacher dad in 1964 for the new world of 1965. Please try to read

A MESSAGE FROM MY DAD, A PASTOR

Text—"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Hebrew 10:24



The Rev. Robert B. Giles, Pastor St. John's Baptist Church 715 - 6th St. S.W.

A NEW WORLD OF CHANGING WAYS

between the lines of the time period; I believe some of my father's message is what inspires my brother, Metric, to encourage men to examine their male chauvinist, sexist behaviors and become recovering male chauvinists or sexists, as we both encourage our White allies to become recovering racists. Happy Repeat 1965 New Year's 2024 message:

Text: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good woks." Hebrews 10:24

"Greeting and best wishes to everyone in the name of Jesus Christ. It's a joy to me to speak with you about our new world. Sure, I know there are many even some of my good friends, long time pals, who are to blind to behold the new world we now live in. Those whom I pray, always, that God would open their understanding. Oh, that they may look and live. If only they would truly open their heart to the love of God. "The time has come when we be renewed in the spirit of mind; that we put on the new man [and woman], which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man [and woman] truth with his [her] neighbor: For we are neighbors of one another." Eph. 4:23-25.

While sitting in church New Year's, singing and praying, praising God for bringing us in and out of the year 1964, and by His grace alive into this year of 1965, I realized that here we were in a new world of changing ways. Knowing that the world we left would never be forgotten. Looking back to

the other side as the bell rings the year out, we knew it was the end of another chapter in life. The beginning of a new world, needing the strength, the courage, the cooperation and understanding of every member of the human race of this new world, that would be ever expanding.

Left behind are many memories both precious and regrettable. We can be thankful for the world of '64 because it was the year, when the churches both large and small, far and near, here and every where and our land of America, rose to their true colors. Thusly, proving that this is the land of liberty, the searchers of justice, the field of opportunity, the home of the brave, the palace of democracy, the pursuers of spiritual kingdom, and the desires of true brotherhood [sisterhood]. So let us face the new world, a world that has change, because we have changed with hope – new hope. "Trusting not to ourselves, but with all our hearts trust in the Lord, and not our own understanding. But in all thy ways acknowledge him and he will direct thy path." Prov. 3:5-6.

(Again, my dad was of the King James Bible and the male domination rule generation. Fortunately, my brother Robert Jr. introduced me to the Good News (GN) Bible, which came after the Revised Standard Bible. The GN translation of Proverb 3:5-6 is "Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the LORD in everything you do, and he will show you the right way." I'm happy that we have expanded be-

yond the GN version these days).

For in this good, but not perfect world, new world or should I say better world, it's true that we must follow Jesus. If there is going to be any real peace and unity, my friends, in this new world, we must practice what we preach or receive the reward of undue rest. From what ever station we serve, be it the church, school, politics, laborers, etc.; oh, let us take the word of God for our blueprint to happiness in life. The new world of our changing times has declared that men [women] everywhere, respect the Golden Rule, to accept that we are all our brother's [sister's] keepers. To try and deny this is to attempt to make God's word devoid. Or, as Jesus says to Saul – "It is hard to kick against the pricks," meaning the almighty rock of our salvation. But thanks be to God Saul saw a new world, accepted the changed way, a world with new aim and new end, and cried out, "Lord what would you have me to do." But Christ would have Saul to know there were things he must do, for you and me it is true also. Acts 5:5,6. Yes, we are asking what can we do to make this a world of better understanding of each other. We are getting our answers from everywhere, in all types of communication. Will you join me in the new world, with new determination, to press forward for higher achievements in Christ? The theme of the new world is to do unto others, as I would have others to do unto me. A prayer with you I share: A charge to keep, I have a God to glorify and ever dying soul to save that fit it for the sky to serve this present age, my calling to fulfill. Oh, may all my powers engage to do my Master's will.

For in Christ there is no east or west, in Him no north or south. But one great fellowship of love throughout the earth. Join hands brothers [sisters] of the faith whatever your race may be. Who serves my Father as son, is sure kin to me.

Best Wishes, The Rev. Robert B. Giles (reprinted from the Mason City, IA Globe-Gazette Newspaper, Jan. 2nd, 1965)

I believe my preacher dad would be okay with me saying whatever your faith, gender, race, culture or way of life, to be optimistic and to Start the Day with Love; Spend the Day with Love; Fill the Day with Love; and, End the Day with Love. Happy New World 2024!!!!

Also, great honor and respect to our veterans and firefighters, Good Apple Peace Officers, health providers, educators and other first responders! Peace and joy to all.

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TIDBITS

KID-DESIGNED PLAY SPACE AT DUNNING PARK

In October, volunteers built the new play space at Dunning Recreation Center in the Rondo neighborhood that will spark joy and foster a sense of belonging for around 1,300 kids each year. Collaborating were Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, Saint Paul Parks Conservancy, UnitedHealthcare, Sierra, and KABOOM!

HMONG CULTURAL CENTER TO EXPAND

The Hmong Cultural Center Museum will be expanding in early 2024 with an additional 650 square feet of storefront space. This will give them a total of 2,000 square feet of storefront exhibit space at University and Western Avenues just a few blocks west of the Minnesota State Capitol.

HELP SOLVE COLD-CASE MURDER

An anonymous donor is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who murdered Cheryl Prokop in 1988 in her St. Paul home. Contact the BCA at 877-996-6222, via email at bca.tips@state.mn.us, or through the BCA's See It Say It Send It tip app.

WINTER CARNIVAL BUTTONS

Kao Lee (at right with Lisa Sanderson) is a Frogtown native and the first member of the Hmong community to design the Winter Carnival buttons. "The Winter Carnival is a fond memory from my childhood and designing the buttons resurrected the whimsical wonder from those youthful days. The design was a chance to infuse the carnival with the threads of my cultural identity and the magic of shared traditions," said Lee. Proceeds from the sale of the souvenir buttons are the largest fundraiser for the Saint Paul Festival and Heritage Foundation, the producers of the Saint Paul Winter Carnival.

Kao Lee's artistic contributions extend beyond buttons to encompass stunning public art installations. Her work includes the Springboard for the Arts Fiberglass installation, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Parks for All at Boom Island mural, and the mural at Mississippi Creative Arts. She is currently working with the United Family Medicine on a history wall in Saint Paul and even invited the community to join her in painting during a movie in the park event hosted by Saint Paul Parks and Recreation.



ARTISTS RESPOND: PEOPLE, PLACE, PROSPERITY

Springboard for the Arts is proud to welcome the 2024 cohort to Artists Respond: People, Place, Prosperity. The selected artists will create public projects that demonstrate the root causes that lead to the need for guaranteed income, and the impact of guaranteed income on the families and communities that are supported by it. Look for public projects and opportunities to connect with the cohort this winter and spring of 2024.

Artists Respond: People, Place Prosperity runs alongside Springboard's GMI pilot for artists, which currently supports 75 artists based in Rondo, Frogtown, and Otter Tail County, MN with \$500/month for 18 months in 2023-24. More at <https://springboardforthearts.org/guaranteed-income/>.

The selected artists are: Arnée Martin (Saint Paul), Alicia Thao (Saint Paul), Jess Torgerson (Fergus Falls), Kandace Creel Falcón (Fergus Falls), Michele Spaise (Saint Paul), Sara'i Aliyyima al-Jamal (Minnesota), Rodrigo Sanchez-Chavarria (Saint Paul) and Torri Hanna (Fergus Falls). The artists join fellow cohort artists Briauna Williams, DejaJoelle, Kashimana, Katey DeCelle, and Nicole Mary Milligan.

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2024 DEADLINES



MONITOR SCHEDULE

Deadlines typically last or 1st Monday. Publication typically 2nd Thursday. * Some exceptions

Deadline date	Publication date
Dec. 29 (Friday)	Jan. 11
Jan. 29	Feb. 8
March 4	March 14
April 1	April 11
April 29	May 9
June 3	June 13
June 28 (Friday)	July 11
July 29	Aug. 8
Aug. 30 (Friday)	Sept. 12
Sept. 30	Oct. 10
Nov. 4	Nov. 14
Dec. 2	Dec. 12

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► "I always start reading with the intent to skim, but end up making it through the entire paper each time!" Emily Regan

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MARCH

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APRIL

Home & Garden
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MAY

Home & Garden
Summer in the City

JUNE

Paws & Claws
Summer in the City
Living 50+

JULY

Back to School
Summer in the City

AUGUST

Back to School
Summer in the City
Nokomis Days

SEPTEMBER

Back to School - Health
Living 50+

OCTOBER

Home Improvement
Voters Guide

NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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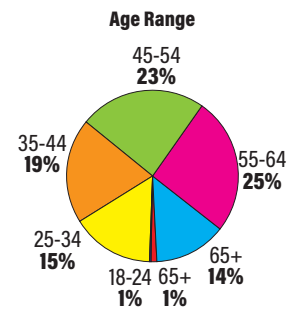
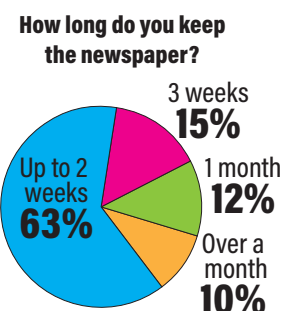
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**ST. PAUL
CITY COUNCIL**

**BY AMY BRENDMOEN
Ward 5**



IT'S A WRAP - AN 11-YEAR REVIEW



Outgoing Ward 5 council member Amy Brendmoen stands with sons Sawyer, Haakon and Lars Neske, and husband Mike Hahm (former Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Director).

From Amy Brendmoen's e-newsletter:
Thursday (Dec. 28, 2023) = in city hall, Jessica (Larson Johnston) and I met with Councilmember-elect Hwa Jeong Kim and future Legislative Aide, Abdihamid Badri, to loop them into the on-going drum beat that is Ward 5 and Saint Paul. They are eager, curious, interested, fun, and professional. I feel excited to see how they will partner together and with the new majority council in the days and months to come. I'd say you're in good hands, people.

We cleaned out the Ward 5 office to ready it for its new occupants. We helped Janie Vang pack out to join Ward 7, and we welcomed Jenna McCullough in to her new office space as the Ward 5 Executive Assistant – she's excited to serve her home ward! Then Jessica and I left the Courthouse together, hugged outside of the iconic building in absolute joy and in bitter-sweetness for these wonderful years.

Thank you Ward 5 residents, friends, family, supporters, agitators, stakeholders, lake-lappers, community, and beyond for your important roles in this incredible journey. It has been an absolute high-flying roller coaster ride; with highs and lows, climbs and drops, loops and curves, speed, vistas and so much glee. The kind of ride where it comes to an end and you're hoarse from screaming, exhausted from laughing, whiplashed from the unexpected and all you can do is smile and look at your seatmate and say, "THAT WAS AWESOME! WHAT SHOULD WE DO NEXT?" I'm so proud of what we've accomplished, together.

I'll be here, in Como Park, cheering for our lovely Saint Paul as we continue moving forward. Be in touch!

With Love and Gratitude,
Amy

PS: My dear friend and colleague, Mayor Carter, declared December 22, 2023 Amy Brendmoen Day in Saint Paul. Read all about it below.

Whereas, Amy Brendmoen was first sworn in to the Saint Paul City Council in 2012, was elected Council President by her peers in 2018, and has served in that role since. Throughout her time in office, Amy has focused on the betterment of Saint Paul and on drawing special attention and

investment to the neighborhoods of Ward 5 including the Greater East Side, Railroad Island, the North End, Rice and Larpenteur, and Como Park; and

Whereas, Amy has served on the Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority since 2012, serving as its chair from 2015-2018 through the height of the mortgage crisis to housing recovery. Amy crafted the council's omnibus Fair Housing Resolution of 2017 that laid the groundwork for the city's Fair Housing Action plan. She advocated for the first rental

rehabilitation program, led an overhaul of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit scorecard, and retooled the city's housing renovation program to match the housing environment and our affordability goals; and

Whereas, as Council President, Amy wrangled the council's annual budget process and its related policy development, leading a group of seven individuals with varied backgrounds, talents, and priorities. She has been highly successful in facilitating inclusive processes – where the

councilmembers' individual interests are vetted and merged to craft a shared priorities agenda, providing greater potential for political and community success; and

Whereas, among notable contributions, Amy established the Railroad Island Neighborhood Group, advanced the vision and construction of the North End Community Center, brought new turf fields to Sylvan Park, delivered Sepak Tekraw to Marydale Park, re-opened Wilder Recreation Center, and championed housing at Willow Reserve, Swede Hollow and Rice and Sycamore. Amy launched and grew the Rice Larpenteur Alliance which expedited the inevitable closing of the city's last strip club, and most recently, she convened the Como, Front and Dale Entrepreneur Zone and kicked off and secured funding for a process to reimagine the city-owned Como Lakeside Pavilion; and

Whereas, with her sharp wit and sense of humor, Amy has the ability to make people feel welcome and at ease, whether giving opening remarks for the council, the mayor, or on a community member's doorstep, she is spot on. Amy routinely invited young people to sit at the dias and talk into the microphones to introduce themselves and talk about Saint Paul. Amy has been a lifelong champion of and intentional mentor to women in leadership. She is now fittingly passing the torch to our first all-women council. Amy led a successful campaign to supplant the imposing murals in the chambers that were non-inclusive of women and marginalized black and indigenous men; and

Whereas, Amy is a fun-seeker and has a deep connection to the outdoors. This was exemplified by her marriage-celebration to Mike Hahm featuring a 30-boat flotilla of costumed friends on the Mississippi River. Further incorporating this spirit it was Amy's nearly 1,000 miles of "lake laps" with community members and the displays of dozens of local artists featured in her office. Amy is a proud mom to three outstanding young men: Sawyer, Haakon and Lars Neske. These civic-minded, engaged gents are products of our Saint Paul public schools, libraries, parks, and rec centers; and

Whereas, we join members from across our community in thanking and celebrating Council President Brendmoen's service to our city, and wish her well as she continues to find new ways to make her mark on Saint Paul; and

Now, Therefore, I, Melvin Carter, Mayor of the City of Saint Paul, do hereby proclaim Friday, Dec. 22, 2023 to be:

Amy Brendmoen Day
In the City of Saint Paul



Ward 5 Legislative Aide Jessica Larson Johnston and Ward 5 Council Member Amy Brendmoen leave the Ward 5 office after 11 years.

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7 of 10 PEOPLE WHO GET THE MONITOR AT THEIR FRONT DOORS READ IT.

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St. Paul police are shifting the focus off simple equipment violation stops, such as nonfunctioning lights, so they can focus on moving violations. The St. Paul police welcome drivers to come in and get advice and repair coupons rather than waiting to be pulled over. (Photos by Terry Faust)

PROJECT SELF STOP

* MORE PHOTOS @ MonitorSaintPaul.com



A hijacked KIA crashed into a tree at 36th Ave. S. and 31 St. E. Having called in the incident, Longfellow resident Jeff Adams tells a Minneapolis police officer how a young man ran from the scene. According to police, carjackers sometimes steal cars to crash them for excitement. Police are offering free steering-wheel locks to owners of Kia and Hyundai vehicles.



ABOVE Midway resident Jonnay Putnam listens to coupon options to get equipment violations fixed from St. Paul Officer Ron Himes on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023. Sergeant Antwan Denson will follow up with anti-theft advice during the event at 1680 Como Avenue, a parking lot south of the State Fair Grounds. The drive-through event was a first-of-its-kind event for the police department, which partnered with Lights On! and other community partners to provide resources to event attendees.

LOWER RIGHT St. Paul Police Chief Alex Henry (not shown) explained elements of Project Self Stop to police cadets (right) Calli Swink and (left) Hsi Hsi. Officer Swink confessed to never being pulled over and was interested in the procedure.



Office Ron Himes holds up a steering-wheel lock, which can be extended to inside the diameter of the steering wheel and locked, making control of a car impossible.



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