



Anna Sharratt of Twin Cities Makers Circle remarked, "The way I studied craft in Sweden, it's used to challenge gender stereotypes, and to talk about how you can make or repair things you might otherwise buy." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

## Get creative with Twin Cities Makers Circle

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Longfellow resident, handcrafter, and entrepreneur Anna Sharratt is offering up all kinds of fun classes through her new business. In her Twin Cities Makers Circle (TCMC) classes, participants use traditional Scandinavian tools and methods

to express themselves through handcraft. Maker circles are immersive handcraft classes that welcome learners of all ages and skill levels.

Here are a couple of the varied offerings from TCMC's spring schedule:

Intro to Green Wood Carving for Kids and their Grown-ups teaches the basics of

green wood carving in a cozy atmosphere. Build skill with carving knives and grips, learn about different kinds of wood, and practice carving safety. Have fun together and leave with the confidence to keep carving at home. This three-session series

MAKERS CIRCLE >> 7

## REIMAGINING 3RD PRECINCT SPACE

City staff say 'election space and storage' with addition; community members seek self-determination over reuse

By CAM GORDON

Conversations about closed and proposed safety facilities continue to bring disagreement and hope to the southside community.

While the city seeks feedback on proposals for three different facilities, residents and elected officials are raising concerns. One group is poised to release an "autonomous request for proposals" it hopes will inspire new ideas for the 3000 Minnehaha site.

In April, city staff released plans for reopening the old police station at Lake and Minnehaha, and met with area residents to discuss a new smaller Safety Center on East Lake St. as well as the larger facility the city is purchasing for \$10 million and renovating for \$4 million that will include a headquarters for 3rd precinct police at 2633 Minnehaha Ave.

### TWO SAFETY CENTERS

On March 27 at Powderhorn Park, Amanda Harrington, the city's director of community safety design and implementation, began a series of meetings to gather feedback for both the larger Community Safety Center and the Lake Street Community Safety Center.

3RD PRECINCT SITE >> 11



City staff have proposed a 4,100-square-foot addition to the former 3rd precinct building for a storage warehouse.

## An 'oppressive' experience: 57 hearings, 80 court orders and 12 parenting time schedules



By Tesha M. Christensen

Family court judges haven't been able to solve issues, and now mom on welfare is paying for special master

What do you do when 11 judges and referees, 20 therapists, 12 mediators, two parenting consultants (with 37 directives), one custody evaluator, and one guardian ad litem haven't been able to resolve a family court case?

Lexi\* would like to be out of family court after 57 hearings over 12 years. Instead, she's seen the Minnesota Who's Who list of family court professionals since she filed for an order for protection and a divorce when she was three months pregnant with her second son.

Despite being well below the federal poverty level, Lexi has been ordered by a

Ramsey Court judge to pay for a special master to resolve parenting time disputes. Essentially a private judge, special masters charge \$400-\$500 an hour. Lexi's two sons, now 15 and 11, have refused to see their dad for nearly three years. They've been refusing to get out of the car at drop-offs far longer.

When the boys started running away from school to avoid being picked up by their dad and police were called to retrieve them and enforce parenting time, they added another family therapist to the mix of professionals. She began by meeting only with the parents. From those meet-

ings, she ordered their dad to complete a number of steps to better his parenting skills and take responsibility for his actions.

He has not completed them.

Instead, he has filed multiple motions with the court requesting new professionals to review the case. In the last year alone, they've had seven judges and referees assigned to their case, and an order from over a year ago has yet to be written. He asked for – and got ordered – a brief focused assessment with a psychologist at

OPPRESSIVE EXPERIENCE >> 12



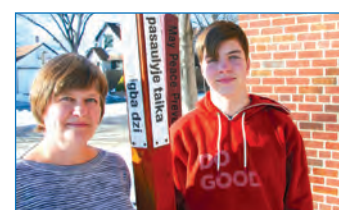
Dowling School celebrates 100 years, event May 18

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HOME & GARDEN Eat healthy with help from Nokomis Farmers Market

PAGE 8



COLUMN Lithuanian Heritage School keeps tradition going

PAGE 4



## NENA staff member organizes fundraiser selling student artwork from Poltava

By TESH M. CHRISTENSEN

Ukrainian students stuck in a war are still daring to create.

Through a fundraiser organized by Nokomis East Neighborhood Association Communications Manager Sarah Friedman, people can buy their works of art and support their school.

The artwork is on display at the Minneapolis Boulderling Project (1433 West River Road N). The cost for framed pieces is \$50 framed, and \$30 for unframed; donations welcome. "Please consider purchasing art from students who are working for a brighter future," said Friedman.

"It's so powerful to me to see that kids are kids no matter where they are or their circumstances."

### LAST PEACE CORP VOLUNTEER EVACUATED

Friedman joined the Peace Corps in 2011 and was sent to Poltava, Ukraine. "My favorite part about Peace Corps is the country asks for volunteers and requests them to work in different aspects. Ukraine is trying to join the European Union (EU), and one of the requirements is a certain percent of the population needs to speak English. They were requesting English language teachers. I did that as my day job, but I also worked with spreading awareness about HIV, built a ramp to my school so people with disabilities could go inside, and created student-led afterschool programs.

"Of course I learned Surzhyk while I was there (a mixture of Ukrainian and Russian), but I also learned the importance of nonverbal communication. I brought my violin, picked up the guitar while I was there, and learned to cook. I think a lot can be said with words, but more can be said with actions.

"I learned a lot about teaching and found a passion for it there. I strongly believe education builds a future, so learning how to learn and learning how to teach are some of the most valuable skills a person can know."

Friedman grew up in North Carolina and had never made a snowman before. So, her Ukrainian mentor and fellow teacher Lidiia and her students went outside and made one with her.

While she was there, Russia annexed Crimea and took over some of the east.

Friedman was the last Peace Corp volunteer to leave Ukraine in 2014 when they were evacuated. She almost refused to leave.

Friedman considers Ukraine to be her second home, and counts the people she met there as some of her closest friends.

She observed, "2022 wasn't the start of the war. It was the escalation of the war I fled in 2014."

Upon returning to the U.S., she taught for about five years at public schools in North Carolina and a foster home in Detroit. Then she followed her husband to Minnesota in 2019 when he got a job at 3M, and she pursued a master's degree at the Humphrey School of Public Policy in nonprofit management. Friedman joined the NENA staff in 2022.

"There are a lot of parallels between Peace Corps and working with the neighborhood," observed Friedman. "Both are about creating and learning about community and finding ways to work with dif-



## ART FROM WAR-TORN UKRAINE



Lidiia (last name not being used for safety), a school principal, has collaborated with Sarah Friedman on several projects to help people in Ukraine, including an art sale.

ferent organizations to make the biggest longest lasting changes possible. It's a lot of finding problems and finding creative solutions on a smaller budget. It pushes you to think creatively about how to make the best changes you can."

### A CRAZY IDEA

Lidiia is now a school principal for children ages 6-17. "I told Lidiia I had a crazy idea, and she made it happen," said Friedman. "We're a great team like that."

They held a school-wide art competition, and Lidiia sent electronic images of the art to Friedman, who printed them out and framed them. She approached a few local museums and considered coffee shops, and then settled on the Minneapolis Boulderling Project. From the minute she told them about her idea, they were enthusiastic and "amazing to work with," said Friedman.

All of the proceeds raised will go directly to the school's food pantry and school repairs such as desks and chairs. This ensures that all students will be able to have a place to sit in class and have food in their stomachs, even if they may not be able to afford food.

### AIR RAIDS DAY AND NIGHT

Currently, in Poltava, Ukraine, in a city the size of St. Louis Park, air sirens warning that Russian missiles may be coming occur three to four times per day. Everyone in the town is forced to run to their building basements, which are often unheated, until the warnings finish, according to Friedman. Air raid sirens hap-

pen throughout the day and night.

Lidiia turned the basement of the school into an air raid shelter so children may continue to learn, even through the war. The school's air raid shelter is one of the safest places to be in their town. In doing this, she had to finish the basement, raise money for chairs and desks, and ensure the ventilation was good enough for so many people to be underground for so long.

The school used to provide breakfast and lunch for 700 students, but because of the sirens, it has been increasingly problematic to cook for so many students. Students are now expected to bring their own food to school. This has put an extra burden on families who used to rely on school lunches. Lidiia is now raising money for food and small school repairs.

Friedman's prior fundraiser efforts helped pay for paint in the basement so kids don't breathe in toxic dust, and for extra chairs so students literally have a place to sit in the basement.

They were also able to buy a printer/copy machine, laminator, and speaker (for safety announcements). "Lidiia is a genius and instead of asking for money for textbooks, because she doesn't know how many children will be fleeing to the area, she simply copies and laminates and shares these textbooks with students," said Friedman.

Friedman's Russian tutor fled to Bulgaria. "She's retired and felt it was safer in another country. She described standing in American Red Cross lines and not having heat in the winter," stated Friedman.

## MEET SARAH FRIEDMAN, TALK ABOUT UKRAINE MAY 11 AT LIBRARY

### WHAT IS YOUR HOPE FOR UKRAINE?

Sarah Friedman: "I'm just a persistent optimist. If I'm daring to hope, it would be for the full Ukraine restored. Ukraine is in this position because the United States made a deal with Ukraine and Russia saying Ukraine would give up its nuclear weapons if we promised the country's safety. Ukraine held most of the nuclear arsenal after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. (This is why Chernobyl happened in Ukraine.) It is because of the deal between the United States and Russia that this happened. We need to work with Europe more to keep Russia from trying to reclaim the old USSR. If Ukraine loses any piece of its originality, it is our fault and it will make countries hesitant to make deals with us in the future."

Attend her talk at Nokomis Library on May 11 from 2-3:30 p.m. She is happy to discuss anything and everything Ukraine.

### KEEP UP WITH THE SCHOOL AND BUY ELECTRONIC VERSIONS OF STUDENT ART AT PATREON.COM/LIDIIASCHOOL

### BUY ART TO HELP UKRAINE

A school-wide competition was held at a school for ages 6-17 in Poltava, Ukraine (a city about the size of St. Louis Park) where air raid sirens wail throughout the day and night. The school principal sent electronic copies of the winning art to Friedman, who printed them out and framed them. Framed (\$50) and unframed (\$30) pieces are available. They are on display at the Minneapolis Boulderling Project (1433 West River Road N.).

### BUY A COOKBOOK TO HELP UKRAINE

With a few others from Returned Peace Corps Volunteers group, Friedman created a cookbook of recipes and stories created by Ukrainians and shared with Peace Corps volunteers over the years. They named it Babusya's Kitchen, which means 'Grandmother's Kitchen' in Ukrainian and are sold for \$30. All of the funds go to a grant program funding Ukrainian-led projects. When the cookbooks were sold through a table at the 2023 Nokomis Days, Friedman raised \$600. Nokomis Square Cooperative donated \$1,000 and Cross-town Covenant Church donated \$60. In all, cookbook sales have reached \$100,000 so far.

"Without being able to speak the language, being able to cook and share local food was a fast way to make friends," said Friedman.

Buy a copy of "Babusya's Kitchen" online through Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Alliance for Ukraine online or pick up a copy at Magers and Quinn (3038 Hennepin Ave.).

Oleg, one of her students, fell in love with a Russian woman and moved to Russia before the war escalated. Then he was trapped. He lived there a full year without being caught, but officials tracked him because he was wiring money to his family. He's now in prison.

"One thing that really has affected me is how close the Internet brings us. I sent photos of how downtown Minneapolis was lit up in Ukrainian colors to my friends, and they were so surprised and happy that Minneapolis did that. They thought Americans forgot them," said Friedman. "I feel like any small thing we do here to raise awareness or show solidarity goes a long way. I feel like right now they're bombarded with negative news, and if there's anyway to show we stand with them, it helps build morale."

Email Friedman at sfriedman42@gmail.com or go to the Linktree page at tr.ee/5J93uQsp4r.

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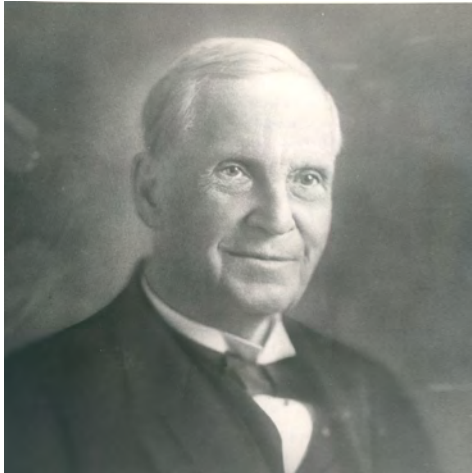
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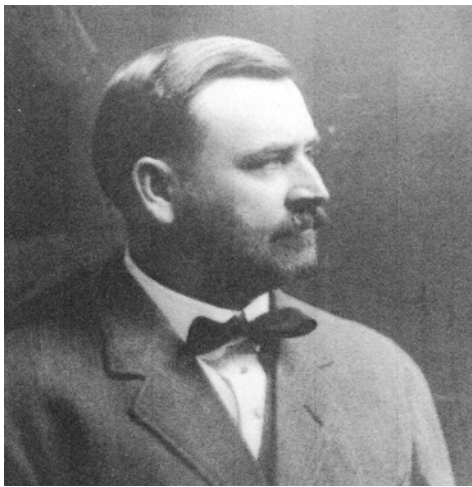
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Dowling School starts for crippled students, morphs to urban environmental learning center. Today, it is a community school.



William Eustis donated the land and paid for the construction of Dowling School, and often visited the children there.



Michael Dowling suffered severe frostbite as a child, and both legs were amputated below the knee. He had a successful career as a state politician.



Dowling School is located at 3900 West River Parkway.



DOWLING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MAY 18 Dowling Community School at 3900 West River Parkway will mark its 100th anniversary at a community-wide celebration on Saturday, May 18 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The anniversary event will feature commemorative speeches, school tours music, dancing and a carnival sponsored by the Dowling PTO. The event is free and open to the public.

Children at Dowling School. Among the notable visitors to the school over the years were President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor. Turning to the children, he said, "I hope you will all learn to swim in this fine pool. Swimming, as you know, is the only exercise I can take."

# DOWLING SCHOOL CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

By IRIC NATHANSON

Portraits of two distinguished gentlemen flank the main exit at Dowling Community School. Both are wearing high starched collars and bow ties. On one side, William Eustis looks out with a faint smile. On the other side, Michael Dowling's profile has a more serious appearance. Both men are long gone, but their presence is still being felt at the South Minneapolis school, now celebrating its 100-year anniversary.

The story of the two civic leaders and their efforts to overcome childhood disabilities provides the foundation for a community institution originally known as the Michael Dowling School for Crippled Children. Dowling lent his name to the school when it was established in 1920 in a North Minneapolis church.

As a youngster, Dowling suffered severe frostbite after being caught in a winter storm. Both of his legs below the knee were amputated along with most of the fingers on his right hand and his left arm below the elbow. Despite his disabilities, the school's namesake created a successful political career for himself, serving in the Minnesota House of Representatives and rising to the post of Speaker of the House.

"I believe I have proved that being a cripple is more a state of mind than of body," Dowling once said. "There is only one really insurmountable handicap and that is the loss of the inner power we call the mind." The much-admired civic leader was able to visit the North Minneapolis school soon after it opened in 1920, but he died in 1921 before the school relocated to South Minneapolis.

William Eustis, then in his 70s, was still immersed in civic causes when the new Dowling School at 3900 West River Parkway opened in 1924. A wealthy civic leader and former Minneapolis mayor, who was himself, crippled, Eustis donated the land for the new school building and paid for its construction.

Unlike many wealthy philanthropists at that time, who had little personal contact with the people and the causes they supported, Eustis often visited Dowling and made friends with the children who attended the school.

When Eustis died in 1928 at the age

of 83, Dowling students were saddened by his passing, according to the Minneapolis Journal. "The boys and girls ... mourned the dead philanthropist as they would one of their own playmates"

"I am so sorry he died, so so very sorry," said eighth grader Helen Babcock, who cried when she heard the news about Eustis's death. "He was an awfully nice man. He was really our friend and we all felt that he liked us. We were grateful to him for giving us the school and we knew he was interested in us. We will miss him so much."

"We fellows all liked him," added Albert Abdallah. "He used to come to our Christmas parties. It won't seem the same without him. He was awfully nice to the boys and girls at Dowling."

As the Depression of the early 1930s deepened, Dowling was able to tap federal Works Progress Administration funding to build a new therapeutic swimming pool. The pool's completion in 1936 represented a high point in the school's history when President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor came to Dowling to dedicate the new WPA project. The school newspaper, the News Reel, reported on the "great excitement as the hour of the President's arrival grew near. Suddenly crowds for blocks down the street began to shout, The President has arrived!! As the car with Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt drove on to the grounds, reporters and photographers gathered quickly. The President and his wife gave all their attention to the Dowling children who waived continuously at them."

Dowling student Martin Croze gave a short speech welcoming the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, as Mavis Wittman presented a corsage to the First Lady. In a brief talk to the crowd gathered on the school grounds, the President made an oblique reference to his own condition. Turning to the children, he said, "I hope you will all learn to swim in this fine pool. Swimming, as you know, is the only exercise I can take."

With the Depression giving way to World War II, Dowling students were involved in the war effort, doing their part by working in the Junior Red Cross and buying and selling war stamps.

In 1942, the undeveloped west end

of the Dowling site was converted to a victory garden. The community garden on 46th Avenue was part of a national movement to promote small urban plots where families could grow their own fruits and vegetable to help offset a wartime food shortage. Over the years the Minneapolis School Board has eyed the Dowling Garden as potential site for a new public school, but the gardeners and their supporters successfully resisted those efforts. The Dowling Community Garden is considered the second oldest victory garden in the U.S. still in use today.

Over succeeding decades, the school expanded, adding two new classroom wings and an auditorium. At the school's 50th anniversary in 1974, Dowling was still identified as a program for the physically handicapped, but that would soon change.

A dozen years later, in 1987, Dowling faced a turning point. That year the school took on a new identity. "For 60 years, Dowling has been a school for crippled children, but times have changed," Elizabeth Johnson wrote in the Longfellow Messenger. "What used to be seen as a commendable program is now seen as segregation."

The West River Parkway school would continue to serve children with special needs, but it would now become an Urban Environmental Learning Center. While new name became official in 1987, the change in the composition of the Dowling's student body had been more gradual. With mainstreaming special needs children now a priority, non-handicapped children had been attending Dowling and some handicapped children who had been at Dowling were now at nearby public schools.

Dowling is no longer an urban environmental magnet but it has retained an emphasis on environmental learning, says Dowling Principal Kari Page. "The centenary anniversary gives our community an opportunity to celebrate the school's achievements over the last 100 years. Dowling has always been an exciting and dynamic place. It has been a real privilege for me to serve as principal. This position has been the highlight of my career."

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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).

by LAURYNAS LATVIS

A little known fact about South Minneapolis: it is home to a Lithuanian Heritage School that has been going strong since its inception in 1999. Founded by a Lithuanian immigrant and mother of four, at the beginning it served as a gathering place of Lithuanian immigrant families to get together, share their daily going-ons, and celebrate holidays throughout the year according to Lithuanian cultural customs and traditions.

The school went through multiple transitions and various locations until it reached its current format under the guidance of the long time principal Vilma Alkhas. Minnehaha United Methodist Church in Minneapolis' Minnehaha neighborhood has been very welcoming and opened its doors to Lithuanian Heritage School in September of 2019. This school in Minneapolis is one of many similar organizations that make up a network of Lithuanian Heritage Schools in the United States and follows the bylaws of the Lithuanian Educational Council of the United States.

Twenty students aged 4-14 make up the entire student body of the school. In the previous school year there were 24. There currently is a group of adult learners of Lithuanian language and culture as well, as has been the case on many occasions in the school's history. At the end of the current school year, four students – all 14-year-olds – will be taking a graduating language test in accordance with the Education Department of Lithuania.

For about 30 Saturdays a year families from surrounding neighborhoods and towns as far away as Scandia, Prior Lake and Savage bring their children to teach them Lithuanian language, history and culture among many other things. Stu-

## KEEPING TRADITION GOING



Vilma Alkhas, principal of the school with her son Marduk, student at the Lithuanian Heritage School outside of Minnehaha United Methodist Church.

dents use old family recipes to cook and bake together. And starting at the age of seven, most of them participate in a group of traditional dancing that has performed at local Lithuanian community events as well as large basketball arenas in Minneapolis and Philadelphia.

Most families bringing their children to Saturday classes have one parent who is Lithuanian or of Lithuanian descent. The support and encouragement of parents is crucial to maintain students continuity and flow of learning. Often times parents encounter challenges that arise from scheduling extra-curricular activities and sports practices or games of students' schools they attend during the week. Parents fully understand that keeping up the Lithuanian language and traditions is a

challenging load that they are willing to carry through this learning journey.

Currently, school has seven teachers and one teacher assistant all of whom have their own children attending the classes. That is usually the case with similar schools across the country and the world – parents stepping up when their children reach the age of four and take on a teaching role in the classroom. In 2023, there were 238 Lithuanian Heritage schools spread through all corners of the world. Just to name a few: Singapore; Reykjavik, Iceland; Karaganda, Kazakhstan; Cordoba, Argentina; Johannesburg, South Africa; Melbourne, Australia and Tokyo, Japan. Lithuanian Heritage School in Minneapolis over the years has become a community welcoming people and their

descendants of the various Lithuanian immigration waves to the United States.

Chicago born and raised and now, longtime Cooper resident Kristina Liaugaudas worked alongside Vilma Alkhas at the Lithuanian Heritage School in Minneapolis for a decade. She herself attended a similar school in her hometown and was very familiar with the setting of such an institution, as well as joys and challenges parents and teachers encounter. But there was more than just connecting with other people of Lithuanian heritage at the school. It was a great shock and a surprise to find out that Liaugaudas' and Alkhas' grandfathers knew each other back in the village of Degaiciai, Lithuania. As the front line during World War II was moving westward and with the Red Army encroaching, Liaugaudas' grandfather decided to leave the country and asked Alkhas' grandfather to help him out to get to the train station. Generations later, the granddaughters of the two men met at the Lithuanian Heritage School.

Vilma Alkhas, principal of the school and long time resident of Keewaydin neighborhood of Minneapolis, has been a leader of the school for the last 11 years. Her children have been attending the school for that period of time. And, now she is ready to give up her leadership role to another person of Lithuanian heritage who would help take the school through the next decade and to the next level.

Lithuanian Heritage School is named after Martynas Mažvydas, a Lutheran minister and author who edited the first printed book in Lithuanian language in 1547 – the same language that one can hear almost 500 ears later across the world in the classrooms and hallways of a South Minneapolis church.

Laurynas Latvis is a teacher at Lithuanian Heritage School and a resident of the Howe neighborhood.

### Stories and Journeys

BY DONALD L. HAMMEN



#### IS THERE A RIFT BETWEEN THE MINNEAPOLIS REGIONAL RETIREES COUNCIL (AFL-CIO) AND ALL ELDERS UNITED FOR JUSTICE?

"Building power through unity: All Elders United for Justice aims to bring power to elders through relationships and discussion." That was the headline in a feature article written by Chloe Peter that appeared in all three TMC Publications CO newspapers back in May of 2022. It included interviews with myself (a member of the All Elders Steering Committee at the time and Greater Longfellow resident), Vic Rosenthal (primary facilitator of All Elders and St. Paul resident) and Leif Grina, (president of the Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council and Uptown resident).

"Elders from diverse backgrounds are becoming more aware of the importance of working together to build power," said Vic Rosenthal. He went on to say, "For many elders, because of race or lack of resources, there are significant inequities

## POTENTIAL RIFT AND RETIREMENT

and that everyone must work together to change the status quo."

It's been one year ago March of this year that Vic died from cancer leaving it up to others to build the organization of All Elders and carry out his vision. All Elders member Johnathan Rose felt called to fill the void. Today he is executive director. There is now a board of directors. There are the following committees: housing, care, and broadband.

In that same article, Leif Grina is said to be an All Elders member and MRRC leader who mentions that the MRRC has had difficulties including voices from people of color, but wants to heavily pursue that with All Elders. Elsewhere in the article Grina stated, "I think that's what's exciting about All Elders is that other communities are being brought in."

And (not to be left out in the same article), I stated, "Building relationships by telling our stories and using the truth contained in those stories for the purpose of building power to shape public policy whenever and where ever possible will potentially result in a world of All Elders United for Justice." I went on to say, "And when that happens, we all benefit. We all

do better when we all do better."

Given all this I was stunned and surprised when I recently heard Leif Grina state during informal conversation leading up to a Zoom meeting of the Elders Legislative Coalition that he was done investing his time and energy in All Elders given his apparent belief that All Elders was not living up to its promise. This suggests to me that there is a rift between MRRC leadership and All Elders that I will be exploring going forward.

If you have read this far you have taken the plunge with me into the river(-flow) of life experiences that is Stories and Journeys.

#### CONFIRMED: METRO TRANSIT ROUTE 23 BUS DRIVER MELANIE IS RETIRED AFTER 47 YEARS

What began as a where is Melanie conversation between me and my neighbor Gary Lagendorf as we waited for the number 23 bus, usually driven by Melanie Benson, ended up with confirmation that Melanie has retired. Gary heard this from a bus driver. I got confirmation in the form of a Sunday Star Tribune column written by Jennifer Brooks (April 14, 24). The column I read focused on remember-

ing Melanie's life as a Metro Transit bus driver mostly on route 23.

Once while riding with Melanie, I shared with her that if I had my life to do over I would be a college-educated Metro Transit bus driver. In response, she revealed to me her identity as a college-educated Metro Transit bus driver. That established my sense of connection with her.

Melanie left me a legacy of sorts. She recommended a watch repair shop near 53rd and Chicago as a place where I could get a new battery for my pocket watch. She also drove me to where I needed to go many times. For this, I thank her for her service and wish her well in retirement.

So, dear reader, is there a chance you have ever rode Metro Transit bus route 23 with Melanie? If you have stories to share tell yourself, tell others or tell me via [tesha@tmcpub.com](mailto:tesha@tmcpub.com).

#### ELDER VOICES (TELLING YOUR STORIES, SHARING YOUR JOURNEYS)

Meets the last Friday of the month, 10-11 a.m., at Turtle Bread, 4205-E. 34th Street. Look for the table with the All Elders sign. Note: there will be no meeting in May.

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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News for you!

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

#### Story ideas always welcome.

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

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### TOWN HALL

Rep. Ilhan Omar speaks at a Town Hall meeting on Monday, Feb. 26, 2024 at Sanford Middle School in Longfellow. On hand to fill in an audience of about 200 with local news, were Minnesota Representative Samantha Sencer-Mura, Ward 12 Council Member Aurin Chowdhury, and Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski. Rep. Omar updated listeners with news from Washington DC and then fielded some tough questions about the Israeli/Hamas conflict. (Photo by Terry Faust)

### PEOPLE

#### SCHOOL BOARD STUDENT REPS

The Minneapolis Board of Education has announced juniors Elliston Rounds (top right) and Leo Peralta (bottom right) will serve as the 2024 Student Board Representatives. Rounds and Peralta were selected for their roles by fellow students on the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) CityWide Student Leadership Board, after an application and interview process.



Rounds is a highly involved student at North. A heavy-weight wrestler and Northside community youth advocate, Rounds understands the importance of youth-adult partnership and collaboration to ensure student voices are heard. Because the Northside has historically been underrepresented, Rounds says, he looks forward to bringing that representation to the school board.

At Roosevelt, Peralta is part of the Roosevelt Student Council and the City-

Wide Student Leadership Board, advocating for his peers especially those in the native Spanish-speaking and queer communities. Peralta has worked extensively promoting mental health resources in schools; last year, he partnered with MPS to promote open spaces in all high schools.

Roosevelt Principal Christian Ledesma said, "Through his words and actions, Leo has shown that he embodies the Roosevelt motto of "Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve. I'm excited to see what he brings to the table as a student board representative."

Rounds and Peralta will alternate being the primary speaker at board meetings, but will keep up on board actions by reviewing materials and watching meeting videos when not in attendance. Additionally, the two will meet regularly with board staff to prepare for meetings and coordinate other duties.

The Board of Education has appointed a student representative since 2015, and for the past two years there have been two student representatives.

### CITY BRIEFS

#### CITY BUDGET LISTENING SESSION

The City of Minneapolis Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC) is seeking public input on next year's budget. CLIC is the advisory committee that reviews and recommends which city park, street, sewer, public building and other capital or infrastructure project requests get funded. People can share feedback by email and in person at their southside listening session on Thursday, May 2 at 6:15 p.m. in the Lynnhurst Recreation Center at 1345 W. Minnehaha Parkway, or at their joint meeting with the Planning Commission at 6 p.m. or May 9 in the Public Service Building at 505 Fourth Ave. S., Room 100. Get a link to see all the requests 2025-2030 submitted by city departments and agencies and share comments at CLIC@minneapolismn.gov.

#### NEW CITY PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey has nominated Timothy Sexton to be the next director of the Minneapolis Public Works Department. Sexton lives in Minneapolis and currently works for Minnesota Department of Transportation as the assistant commissioner for sustainability, planning and program management. He also served as a volunteer commissioner on the city's community environmental advisory commission from Jan. 2018-2021. The city held a hearing on the nomination on April 18, and the council is expected to approve the appointment later in the month.



#### SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET CUTS

In March, the school board started its review of a 2024-25 budget proposal. School district staff are expecting a \$110 million dollar budget reduction due to

rising costs, decreased enrollment, and an end to federal funding aid. Staff predict 413 fewer students to enroll next September than were enrolled this February. The proposed budget cuts \$47 million and includes reductions in staff and some programs, but no school closing have been announced at this point. Staff propose to cover the remaining costs by using \$55 million from the district's fund balance reserves as well as not hiring people for currently unfilled positions to save another \$13 million.

#### STATE REP 62B ELECTION

Local Democratic Farmer Labor Party members endorsed Anquam Mahamoud for State Representative of District 62B on April 14. That district includes some or all of several southside neighborhoods, including Phillips, Powderhorn Park, Bryant, Bancroft, Kingfield, Nokomis, Northrop and Regina. Bill Emory has dropped out of the race and that leaves three candidates, including Mahamoud, running for the seat currently held by Hodan Hassan who is not seeking reelection. Londell French and Ira Joudain may still run in the Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) Party primary that will be held on the Aug.13. The filing deadline is June 4, so candidates have time to leave or enter the race before then. The general election will be held on Nov. 5.

#### OPEN STREETS

The city is still looking for organizations to manage Open Streets events for Central Ave. NE and on Franklin Ave. from Portland to 26th Ave. S. They are offering up to \$50,000 for each event, as well as in-kind services to support event planning and execution. Three 2024 Open Streets events have been finalized and are pending city council approval with the Uptown Association on Lyndale on Aug. 24, West Broadway Business and Area Coalition on West Broadway on Sept. 21 and the Lyndale Neighborhood Association on Nicollet on Sept. 28. Proposals are due by 2 p.m. on May 10.

~ Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon

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**MAKERS CIRCLE** >> from 1

Anna Sharratt of Twin Cities Makers Circle, works with her son, Miles. "I learned as a kid how good it feels to make things with my hands," she observed.

is designed for kids age 8-14 and an accompanying grown-up.

The Secret Order of the Axe & Needle is a craft club for kids that mixes techniques and materials to make fun and useful things. Projects are multi-disciplinary, and may include work with wool, wood, fabric, paint, paper, or wire.

Sharratt said, "The atmosphere in our classes is typically creative, fun, playful, welcoming, and busy. What sets me apart from other traditional handcraft offerings is my focus on young people. Everything we need today can be bought in a store but our human urge to make, in community, persists."

A self-described risk-taker and adventurer, Sharratt grew up a block from Minnehaha Creek and Lake Nokomis. Camping, cross-country skiing, and climbing were all part of her childhood. Her mother was an avid knitter, and her grandfather was both a weaver and a leather worker.

She said, "I learned as a kid how good it feels to make things with my hands. I love opening kids to the world of tradi-

tional craft – the problem-solving mindset, the confidence to try new things, and an understanding of sustainability that comes with using natural materials."

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CIRCLE**

Learning in a circle is very different from sitting in classroom rows. Sharratt's teaching space is in the Signature Arts Building, located on a quiet residential street in southeast Minneapolis. A former neighborhood grocery store, the space lends itself to the friendly informality of a maker circle. Sharratt said, "Everyone who sits in the circle becomes both a student and a teacher."



I love opening kids to the world of traditional craft--the problem-solving mindset, the confidence to try new things, and an understanding of sustainability that comes with using natural materials."

Anna Sharratt

Miles Sharratt is Anna's seventh grade son and co-teacher. Sharratt said, "Our co-teaching relationship evolved over the last few years. People give feedback that having Miles as the co-teacher is a powerful part of their learning experience. We plan our class outlines together. We tag team back and forth like you would with any co-teacher. We de-brief together. It's like he's in a really cool internship."

**SWEDISH INFLUENCE**

An educator for more than 25 years and the founder of Free Forest School (see sidebar), Sharratt has facilitated leaning in kitchens, forests, classrooms and craft rooms. In 2022, she received the American Scandinavian Foundation's Folk Art Fellowship. She packed up her then 10-month old daughter, and headed to Sweden for seven weeks to study youth craft instruction.

She explained, "In Sweden, children take mandatory craft classes in school from the age of eight. When Swedish instructors come to this country, they're surprised by the lack of craft experience they

**FREE FOREST SCHOOL**

Free Forest School is a ticket into the world of nature play. Through the Local Groups feature on their website, you can connect with others who live nearby. Families come together to ask questions, share knowledge, and plan events. Affinity Groups are spaces to connect with others virtually who share a common identity or hurdle in accessing nature play. Led by participant volunteers, these are safe spaces to find support and share tips.

Dig into self-paced Explorations to hone your knowledge on nature play topics like choosing a place to play, navigating risk, and overcoming barriers. Build your confidence and deepen your understanding of unstructured play.

Local gatherings listed on the Community Events Calendar are free and open to the public, kid-friendly, and focus on unstructured outdoor play. Any participant can complete a simple orientation and then view, post or RSVP to an event. Visit [www.freeforestschool.org](http://www.freeforestschool.org) to learn more.

see in children and adults. My interest is in having kids try lots of different crafts, and to have this be part of their lives from a young age."

**LEARNING IS A PROCESS**

The American Swedish Institute and North House Folk School in Grand Marais helped launch Sharratt as a handcraft teacher and business owner. She said, "Both places continue to feed me as a teacher, but casting out on my own has given me a new level of freedom."

She continued, "The way I studied craft in Sweden, it's used to challenge gender stereotypes, and to talk about how you can make or repair things you might otherwise buy. I'm coming at handcrafting from Scandinavian techniques, but every culture in the world has a history of figuring these things out. Traditional Scandinavian handcraft is more a means to me than an end."

To learn more about class offerings with Twin Cities Makers Circle, visit their website at [www.twincitiesmakers.com](http://www.twincitiesmakers.com). The Signature Arts Building is located at 130 Warwick Street in southeast Minneapolis.

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**NOKOMIS EAST  
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By Sarah Friedman  
communications manager  
sarah.friedman@nokomiseast.org

# EAT HEALTHY WITH HELP FROM NOKOMIS FARMERS MARKET

When was the last time you've visited your local farmers market? I found myself in Bachman's just last month. My two-year-old was attempting to dance by bouncing his little knees off-beat to a great local country band while eating his very first Momo from a local vendor. We came home with locally grown tomatoes, beef from a cow that was raised in a small farm's pasture, and a heap of questions about farms and farmers markets.

This year, our local farmers market turns 10 years old, so I spoke with Mara Wack, a woman who helps organize the Bachman's Winter Markets that turn into three separate markets in the summer: Nokomis, Fulton, and Kingfield farmers markets. She spoke about the history of our local farmers markets, and the markets' potential as hubs for supporting local businesses, addressing food insecurity, fostering community, helping farmers, and giving people fresh quality food.

Kingfield farmers market was created by the Kingfield Neighborhood Association. It was so successful, other neighborhood associations reached out to learn how to create their own. This spurred the beginning of a nonprofit named "Neighborhood Roots" that created more farmers markets. With over 20 farmers markets in Minneapolis, we tend to take them for granted, but many of us - me included - don't realize how much work goes into making a farmers market successful. "Farmers markets don't just happen," Mara said. "There's so much good work farmers markets can do, and I feel really good doing it."

Vendor fees only make up 45% of



Naton and Panou Vang with one of their twins. The Vangs own Mornin' Sunshine Farm and vend at both the Nokomis and Kingfield Farmers Markets. (Photo submitted)

Farmers Markets' operating budget. They purposefully keep the fees low for accessibility. Mara noted that many businesses, such as Guava's Cuban Cafe and Northern Fires, began by selling in our farmers market. Due to the low entrance fee, Mara emphasized the importance of sponsorships. She named Nicollet Ace Hardware as one of the most significant contributors to Nokomis Farmers Market.

Farmers markets also fight food insecurity. "I see farmers markets being a really big solution to food insecurity issues," Mara said. As inflation increases, many items in a farmers market are comparable in price to items found at the local grocery store. They accept SNAP and Minne-

sota makes use of "Market Bucks." Market zBucks is a program that doubles every SNAP dollar for up to \$10 per farmers market visit. In 2021, over \$100 million in federal nutrition benefits were redeemed at farmers markets across the United States and with direct marketing farmers.

Farmers markets also bring in a sense of community. The average person has only one interaction at a grocery store, whereas at a farmers market, the average person has about five interactions. As many of us are looking for friendly faces in a post-COVID era, it was nice to be able to meet the farmers who grew the various fruits and vegetables, as well as neighbors who share the

same interests in food, farms, and music.

All of the farms at our Nokomis Farmers Market are within a 43-mile radius of the market. Many of the fruits and vegetables sold at the market are picked the same morning they are sold. With smaller farms, farmers are able to guarantee the freshness and quality of their products. They are also able to keep the money that is given directly to them instead of using middlemen who take a portion of their profits. I was shocked when I read that on average, farmers only keep about 7.8 cents per dollar consumers spend on food in the United States. By helping our local economy, we can ensure farmers are being paid a fair wage, because they are able to set their own prices when they sell directly to consumers.

Mara has big dreams for our farmers markets including solar-powered markets and community kitchens. She remains committed to the positive impact farmers markets can have on local communities and vendors. Mara is also raising money to expand two current programs. The first is named "Power of Produce" where every child can receive two dollars at each farmers market visit so they can try different fruits and vegetables. The second is called "Nourishing Neighbors," which compensates farmers for excess produce and also brings the surplus produce to local food shelves.

She expressed the need for the community to help sponsor, donate, volunteer, and most importantly, shop at our local farmers market to help keep our healthy ecosystem alive. If you're interested in volunteering or sponsoring, please go to [www.neighborhoodrootsmn.org](http://www.neighborhoodrootsmn.org).

I can't believe how easy and fun it can be to shop locally and help our community. Nokomis Farmers Market opens June 12 and will be open every Wednesday from 4-8 p.m. Hopefully I'll see you there to celebrate their 10-year anniversary!

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**LONGFELLOW  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

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


Confluence Studio is an open, critical space for neighbors to imagine different ways for our communities to live. Through creative collaboration, art, and creativity, Confluence plays through future scenarios of what life could be like – practically merged with utopia.

We are all dreamers in our own way, lost in our thoughts of what could be sometimes as a way to escape what is. The work of Confluence Studio both acknowledges the reality and our desires to shape the future through assemblies, galleries, and data. As its name suggests, it brings together ideas and tools as a way of moving forward.

Behind the work of Confluence Studio are Sam Gould and Duaba Unenra. The two have been collaborating for years, and around February of 2020, there was an invitation for participatory development work.

"We are interested in ideas around urban space and how sociality and grassroots history play into how urban space is formed and how those spaces are informed by those histories," Gould said.

A little more than a month later and COVID-19 happened; then the uprising happened.

"Those events created a patina of what we came from; a societal eruption that stems from this space we share," Gould said. "Prior to that so much of our work was aligned with place and a reconfiguring of what we've been doing for close to a decade... Using all tools within the larger picture, but those events couldn't help but reconfigure things in some way."

# Confluence Studio merges ideas, creativity, and action to reconsider and reconfigure our societal landscapes

## THE DATA/JUSTICE LAB

In 2023, Longfellow Community Council created our communities grants program, to fund neighborhood projects, ideas, art, and more. Confluence Studio, which in-part operates out of an Autonomous Mobile Media Unit (AMMU) in the lot of Moon Palace Books, was one of the first organizations to receive grant funding from LCC, for their Data/ Justice Lab and Autonomous Request for Proposal (A-RFP).

The Data/ Justice Lab is a collaboration between Carleton College Art and Architecture Historian Ross Elflin, Statistician Claire Kelling and Confluence Studio. The program analyzes the ways in which power shows up in our relationship to public space and to each other.

"I thought this was a unique opportunity to do quantitative work that could then show up in a qualitative way," Gould said.

Currently, the team is working on developing a platform for the Data/Justice Lab – how it operates and how neighbors will be involved. The team started with an inquiry about how neighbors view neighbors as suspicious and how police view suspicious neighbors. Using a tool called the Shiny App, a bot that scrubs massive amounts of data, the team refines that data through the experiential data of our community.

"What I would like in time, is that it's not just looking at police data but power data – how are we policed outside of the notion of MPD?" Gould said. "There are many ways that all populations are policed, but a percentage of those are policed through institutional backends, by expanding the scope of social control beyond policing as we know it. I would like to see that refinement in the work that we do with

the Data Justice Lab, but that takes time and authentic engagement with neighbors to refine based on lived experience. That refinement is the core of the work we hope to do in the long term with that platform."

The Shiny App gathered data on the use of force by the Minneapolis Police Department in 2022 and 2023 and it was similar to the "suspicion person" heat map (which was created before the implementation of the Shiny App). In 2022, there were 273 officer-reported incidents of use of force by MPD, and they were heavily concentrated in Little Earth and the Midtown/Phillips areas of Ward 9. In 2023, 215 officer-reported incidents of use of force almost entirely shifted down to Lake Street and Hiawatha under the light rail tracks. But data without context is just numbers.

Living in these neighborhoods, you have the experiential and community information. In 2022, Kia car thefts were at their highest. Many of those on the Southside responsible for, or in proximity to those involved in, the thefts were teenagers living around Midtown/Phillips and Little Earth. We know this information as residents, and Gould also has insight on this from his wife, who is a public defender, and had many of these kids as her clients. In 2023, those car thefts dropped steeply, but the antisocial social life had a huge increase.

"It shows us simply and clearly MPD's policy and directives regarding how they deal with localized waves of antisocial behavior: aggression and force," Gould said. "And you often only know that if you live here. And I think it's really easy to avoid even if you live in the city and you don't live in the neighborhoods where it's happening. You might not ask why it shifts if you didn't already know what was happening on the ground."

The Shiny App provides Confluence and company information that they can transform into different projects and platforms so that people can understand this data in different ways, according to Gould. He recognized that sometimes there can be walls to understanding, and that by creating different entry points, they are creating a door rather than a wall. Through creating social tools, like the Shiny App, the AMMU (the container studio), and their monthly assemblies, Confluence Studio creates ways for people to come together and create on their own.

"When we started (the assemblies), we were hoping that the whole neighborhood would come, but of course that didn't happen," Gould said. "Size is not a guarantor of success in terms of visible numbers. It's through creating entanglements that we help one another create new meanings."

Confluence Studio hosts monthly assemblies, typically on the second Saturday of the month. Neighborhood relationships have developed throughout the year of the assemblies, as have questions around our relationship to space, power, environment, and more.

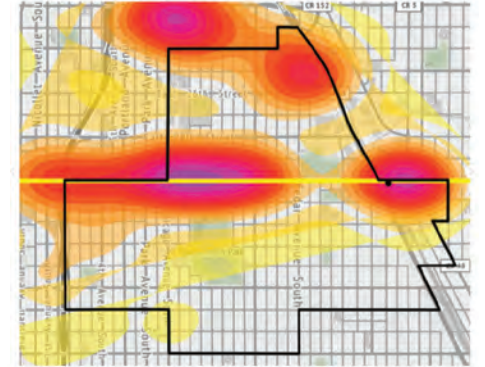
"It's a tool that relates to considering social formations, and what comes out if it is uniquely your own and starts getting into the firmament. That's when things elementally began to change – maybe in five, 10, 20 years, but together we're creating that space of critical collision and engagement," Gould said. "And without that, we are only responding to crises all the time. We wanted to create a space that avoids the machinations of crisis culture, because it's so easy to manipulate that, to create. There will always be someone showing up to put out fires, but what we want to focus on is how we can manage the land better?"

Confluence Studio is hoping that fairly soon they can implement elements of the Shiny App into the assemblies and the A-RRP.

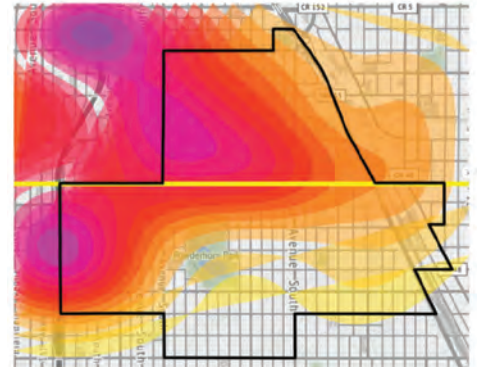
## AUTONOMOUS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Confluence Studio also received fund-

Suspicious Person and NOT 911 Call in Ward 9



Suspicious Person and 911 Call in Ward 9



ing from LCC for their Autonomous Request for Proposal, which they have begun focusing on this year. They first needed to get information and form a collective of people before they could do this work.

"In a practical and utopian sense [the A-RFP] is a way to think about the use of the literal space of the 3rd Precinct site and what it could be, but it is also a working metaphor about how we can transform space through the lens of safety, security, and support," Gould said. "How through the transformation of our built structures we can think about the ways we pass by and entangle with one another."

Gould thinks about it as a tool for critical dreaming. The A-RFP process will have an official launch next month with the goal of closing out the process at the end of the year. Those interested in getting involved with the process can join in through one of three tracks – broadly defined professionals – people who pay attention to design; neighbors; and youth.

Neighbors will be able to vote on the ideas and the outcomes that feel most applicable to the neighborhood, although as with everything Confluence Studio does, it will likely be an intermixing of a lot of different things. The A-RFP will be presented to the community through an exhibition and publication platform.

Gould is aware that the city has plans for what they want to do with that space, but he remains encouraged.

"If we do this work it will change how people show up for one another and themselves," he said. "Optimistically I would like it to actually inform future structural transformations in the neighborhood, but practically it's the former [showing up], but I think that's really useful and it has a lot of benefit. It allows us, as neighbors, to see the world around us differently"

While the future of the former 3rd Precinct site is of great concern, the goal isn't necessarily to create immediate or near-future change in that physical space, but be practiced as a community in the mindset of collective criticism, organization, and arrival when the next thing happens – that as a neighborhood, we'll be prepared with the tools we need to create the future we want to see for ourselves and our community.

If you want to learn more about Confluence Studio, check out their website: <https://confluence-studio.org/>. Or, attend their next assembly on May 11. Email [andrea@longfellow.org](mailto:andrea@longfellow.org) with any questions about the Longfellow Community Council grant program.

>> Related story on 3rd Precinct and Confluence Studio on page 1. More images at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com).

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georgefloydglobalmemorial.org



### 3RD PRECINCT >> from 1

Meetings were held with South High School students on April 19, with people who identify as Southeast Asian on April 20, and with people who identify as Latino also on the 20th. They are also planned for people who identify as African American on April 25 and with older adults April 26 and May 6.

According to the presentation in March, the Lake St. center will open this summer in a store front on or near Lake St. It will be temporary, intended to serve the residents and businesses in the East Lake St. area between 35W and Hiawatha, and will not have a full-time police presence. The city approved \$500,000 in one-time funding for the rental, design, build, and communication of the interim site.

The larger facility at 2633 Minnehaha Ave. is expected to open in early 2025 with a first phase that has yet to be defined. It will include the staff and facilities of a 3rd precinct police station, as well as other community services and resources for the entire 3rd precinct geographic area that is bounded by the Mississippi on the east, the southern city border, I35W to the west and I94 to the north.

#### NEW USE FOR OLD BUILDING

On April 8, city staff, led by City Operations Officer Margaret Anderson Kelliher, presented their recommendation that 3000 Minnehaha be reopened to house the Elections and Voter Services Center currently operating in northeast Minneapolis as well as new, yet to be defined, "community space."

Under the plan, the community space would use the main entrance, and 77% of the existing ground floor space. A new addition would be added to create more space for an election voter service center with warehouse space. When completed, 8,000 square feet of the 34,000-square foot-building will be set aside as "community space."

Anderson-Kelliher was seeking council concept approval before starting community information sessions. Site clean-up this spring would be followed by community design sessions, and a revised concept plan ready by the end of the year.

Most of the southside council members spoke against approving the design and the council voted 8 to 3 to delay action at least until their April 23 meeting (after the Messenger publication went to print). Ward 8 Council Member Andrea Jenkins voted against the delay along with council members Linea Palmisano and LaTrisha Vetaw.

"The residents I represent," said Ward 9 Council Member Chavez, "have been very clear about what they want to see, and it is that they want it to be community use."

"I am very open and want to hear

from residents about this concept plan," said Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski.

"My support is contingent on community engagement and at least the bare minimum honest conversation with Black, Brown, Indigenous, immigrant, working community members that are most impacted surrounding the 3000 Minnehaha site," said Ward 12 Council Member Aurin Chowdhury.

"We are elected to make decisions based on the information that we have about our community," said Jenkins.

"A voting center serves the entire city of Minneapolis. It is a community use. It is a function of our responsibility to ensure that the residents have an opportunity to engage in democracy. To me it seems like a really good solution."

President Elliott Payne, a Northeast resident, offered an idea for the shorter term. "I think it would be a good idea to do truth and reconciliation within the [old] 3rd precinct [building]," said Payne. Calling it a "temple of trauma," he said that it "would be powerful to host community conversations in that space."

"The city keeps telling us what we want, without giving us the opportunity to authentically listen, and engage with what neighbors actually want and are desiring. So, what I hope this autonomous RFP can do is set up space for critical dreaming. It's both practical, but at the same time, it allows us to imagine different ways of self-governing and collaborating as neighbors."

Sam Gould



acted upon by the city. The community would like a true engagement effort to be conducted and for the feedback from that engagement to determine what happens at 3000 Minnehaha Ave."

"The city has not engaged the residents to ask about the reuse of the building," LCC Communications Specialist Andrea Tritschler told the council on April 8. "This feedback is representative of what we have been hearing since 2022."



The residents I represent have been very clear about what they want to see, and it is that they want it to be community use."

Jason Chavez



quiet center, basketball court and more. (See the March edition of the Messenger for more information.)

One group, led by Confluence Studio, announced that will be launching an international Autonomous Request for Proposals (A-RFP) to "re-imagine the Third Precinct complex from the ground up" in May.

Started in March of 2020 by two Powderhorn neighborhood residents, Sam Gould and Duaba Unenra, the A-RFP idea was developed through meetings that began in the parking lot of the old police station and have continued since on a monthly basis at either at the New City Center for Healing Justice at 3104 16th Ave. or Mirror Lab at 34th and Cedar.

"The city keeps telling us what we want, without giving us the opportunity to authentically listen, and engage with what neighbors actually want and are desiring," said Gould. "It's always this kind of cat and mouse game of just giving us little bits, if that at all. So, what I hope this autonomous RFP can do is set up space for critical dreaming. It's both practical, but at the same time, it allows us to imagine different ways of self-governing and collaborating as neighbors."

The request will go out to three groups: professional, neighbor and youth. Professionals are defined as any person or group living outside the Minneapolis area with a focus on architecture, city planning, landscape design, artistic and/or critical practices. Professionals living in the neighborhood are invited to apply for either the professional or neighborhood track.

Submissions from all three tracks will be evaluated by people who live in the 3rd precinct, and the finalists from each track will then be asked to create one shared proposal to be presented and exhibited in late 2024 or early 2025.

"We're going to get out as far and wide as possible, both within the neighborhood in the city, but then through connections with different art centers around the country in the world, and architecture programs, design programs, different groups who are doing kind of critical spatial justice work like this in other cities," said Gould. "So hopefully, it gets to be a really robust conversation."

Gould thinks that too much discussion now is on "what's supposed to go

#### AN AUTONOMOUS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Other efforts to do something different on the site continue. This includes the proposal spearheaded by Frederick Brathwaite to build a Black Cultural Center, with a museum, theater, ban-

#### CLEAN-UP BEGINS SPRING 2024

The former 3rd precinct site at 3000 Minnehaha has sat for four years with a fence and barriers around it that have blocked a portion of the sidewalk. Particularly in the summer, it has smelled of smoke and mold. The city plans to begin clean-up work this spring.

As presented on April 8 to the city council, the work includes:

- Repairing the outside of the building. This includes doors and windows.
- Maintenance checks.
- Removing the temporary barriers and fencing.

The report on April 8 did not include project costs. View at [www.minneapolis.gov/Minnehaha-3000](http://www.minneapolis.gov/Minnehaha-3000)



The Confluence Studio partially operates out of a shipping container next to Moon Palace Books near the former 3rd precinct.

into building next," and not enough is about the larger history of policing in Minneapolis. He recognizes the significance of the killing of George Floyd, but thinks more needs to be acknowledged.

"It's not just that moment," said Gould. "That's one of the things that I keep coming back to again, and again, and especially in the beginning with those listening sessions last year, the city just kept talking about, well, this thing happened. It's not just this thing. That was the eruption from decades and decades of violence."

He added, "Historically, that building was just a cesspool." He is convinced that problem officers were placed there and that working there "was like an infectious social disease. It just turned you into a terrible person."

Gould believes there is a history of a "culture of racialized abuse" that includes "extra judicial racialized abuse that would happen inside that building." He described reports he has received of "humiliating, forceful, violent body cavity searches" that he said were "basically ritualized specifically with Black men" who were arrested and taken there.

"This is a historical moment and historical event we're living in," said Gould. "Let's create a space where we can actually dream big. And see that this is an opportunity to do something we haven't done before."

## Food for Older Adults



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## OPPRESSIVE EXPERIENCE

>> from 1

a cost of \$5,000 and a special master, who required an initial deposit of \$7,000. Their last parenting consultant cost \$18,000 to get fully caught up on the case, and the fees grew from there.

Lexi has lost track of the exact total she's spent over the last 13 years paying for attorneys and professionals (which included a few stints where she represented herself to save money), but it is over \$300,000. One parenting consultant alone cost \$48,000.

"I have \$200 in my bank account right now," she stated.

Lexi has found it hard to work around the varying parenting time schedules (they've had 11) and court hearings. It isn't something employers want in an employee, and so she's been doing part-time work from her home.

"I want my life back," said Lexi. "They keep me trapped in this chaotic place because they want him to parent. But they have taken away my constitutional right to parent. I wasn't the one who did anything wrong and neither did the children."

### HOW DOES A CASE LIKE THIS START?

Derek\* and Lexi met at a party in 2002. She was 26 and he was 28. They dated two years and married in a lovely September ceremony. They welcomed their first son in 2008, and lived on a quiet Roseville street. Inside the house, however, it was anything but peaceful. "He'd go red," Lexi recalled. "He started throwing things at me and made threats to my life." She never left Ethan\* alone with him.

In January 2012, after discovering massive amounts of child and adult pornography on their home computer, she fled to her sister's house. He called her 97 times in less than one hour, making threats on the recordings. She was granted a two-year order for protection (OFP). He broke it immediately, continuing to call and text her. "There were absolutely no consequences," Lexi said.

She moved, entered the Safe at Home program and got an extension on the OFP, hoping that would protect them. Lexi slept with all the lights on in the house. While some professionals called her "hyper-vigilant," the therapist she saw trained in domestic violence (DV) conducted a lethality evaluation with her and determined her safety fears were justified. A man's threats and past behavior are the surest indicators of future violence, according to domestic violence experts.

As with most couples who divorce in Minnesota, Lexi and Derek used a mediator to iron out the details of their financial split and custody issues. They agreed to use a parenting consultant (PC) to resolve additional disputes, a process that grew in popularity in Minnesota at the time to keep families from returning to court over various issues such as school choices, vacation schedules, and extracurricular options.

The PC didn't think that Derek could manage parenting both kids at the same time, and so he ordered that Ethan see his dad for three-hour stretches followed by a one-hour stretch with Mason\*. Lexi was responsible for the considerable transportation back and forth, and paid for the necessary supervisors. The kids spent a lot of time in the car traveling back and forth. Holidays involved the same hectic schedule.

"I spent my whole holiday catering to Derek's holiday," Lexi observed. This meant that neither she nor the kids could spend holidays with her family in South Dakota or even see her sister's family one hour outside the Twin Cities.

At one, Mason was diagnosed with rare, non-malignant mass. He was in and out of the ICU with treatments that lasted seven days at a time. In addition to caring for her sick baby, she also had to balance care for her four-year-old son – and still

make sure that Derek got his supervised parenting time in.

And despite being on immune suppressants with a doctor's order to avoid groups of children, the PC and Derek insisted that Mason attend ECFE

classes with his dad in the neighboring city, exposing him to the many germs there. He kept getting sick and running fevers that were over 104 degrees, requiring further hospitalization.

Their PC at the time ordered that Derek could contact Lexi by phone and text in order to talk about the children, despite the order for protection that prohibited it.

"The PCs almost polarized things more rather than helping," Lexi remarked. "They tell me it will make him a better parent. I'm still waiting for that better piece."

### INTERVENTIONS HAVEN'T HELPED

Over the years, Derek has gone through domestic violence programs, including one through Tubman. A therapist was brought in to teach him age-appropriate environments for children. He's attended parenting classes. They've both been ordered to attend the Bridging Parental Conflict class, and they use the locally-owned Our Family Wizard app for communications.

"None of it has helped," said Lexi. A mental health evaluation found Derek had a thought-processing disorder, paranoia, obsessive-compulsive issues, and a personality disorder. He's like a poorly-wired computer that can't be re-wired.

Their second PC testified that Derek was focused more on his own needs – fairness and what he was entitled to – as opposed to what was in the kids' best interests.

There were no issues discovered during Lexi's mental health evaluation. Yet, over the last 13 years, Derek, his attorneys and other professionals who never even met her have said she is "high conflict." Few of the professionals have had training in domestic violence as it wasn't previously required in order to be certified as a mediator, custody evaluator, parenting consultant, judge, referee or special master. Instead, most have training as attorneys.

A federal law, termed Kayden's Law after a child killed by her father, would require judges, referees and others working on family court cases to have training in domestic violence, child abuse or coercive control, but it has yet to be implemented in Minnesota.

"What is 'fair?'" asked Lexi. "The courts have put undo financial stress, ordered me to pay for supervisors, phones, Our Family Wizard, and medical insurance. They imputed me with a salary I have never made. All the while, he sold our family house and made money and bought a bigger one, and his business is thriving. Is that fair? The constant money-draining litigation has hurt the whole family over the last 12 years. Even when they found that he is a vexatious litigant and ordered him to pay, he didn't and there were no repercussions. Our judges never revisit that."

"If the roles were reversed, I wonder if I would be treated the same. I cannot pay for a Special Master or a BFA. The retainer for both cost more than what I make in half a year. And yet I am ordered to do it because the courts refuse to hold him accountable. The courts are a pay-to-play game."



Family law remains primitive in the belief that children are always best served by having a relationship with both parents regardless of the child's right to safety and autonomy."

Dr. Catherine Barrett

### HE STARTED BITING THROUGH GLASS

Ethan was three when he bit through a water glass while talking to his dad on the telephone. He started chewing through his shirts. Between ages six and eight, paid transporters dropped Ethan off at his dad's house. He laid on the floor when he got back and wouldn't get up. Mason left a vibrant kid, and returned such a different kid that the transporters questioned if his dad was drugging him, and shared their concerns with the PC.

Ethan began having trouble reading, and showed signs of having a brain injury that required OT and PT. By second grade, he had fallen behind in reading and math. He was diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because of the domestic violence, and an individualized education program (IEP) was created at school. After supervised parenting time was lifted and he began doing overnights with his dad, he was diagnosed with Persistent Depressive Disorder, anxiety, and Child Affected by Parental-Relationship Stress.

Mason also had an IEP focused on speech and stuttering.

Their PC ordered them to do exchanges at a family friend's house six times a week because her ex-husband accused her of being intimidating at exchanges. The PC didn't check with the homeowners before making the order.

"He writes stuff that sounds plausible, but it is all fiction. If any of the professionals would look at the facts instead of taking it at face value, they would see that it isn't real," remarked Lexi.

Then a guardian ad litem ordered exchanges at a police station .9 miles from Ethan's school. It would take Derek 30 minutes to drive less than a mile to pick up Mason, making Lexi late to work.

He wouldn't remember to bring their son's medication or to give it to him. She'd have to arrange to meet him again to get the medication. He didn't return winter jackets. One year, they went through 12 jackets. "Thank goodness for Cornerstone, family and friends," she said. "They kept giving me more jackets."

Later, they started doing exchanges in a gas station parking lot, and then things were switched to Derek's home. Lexi was ordered to open the doors and leave the car so her ex-husband could talk to the kids, despite a therapist pointing out that she was at high-risk due to Derek's past threats against her life. She tried to always bring a third party to witness things, and Derek accused them of intimidating him, as well. (When she started taking video of the exchanges to show what was actually happening to people who weren't there, she was court-ordered to stop.) The boys shut the doors and refused to go while she stood outside and encouraged them to go. Exchanges lasted hours.

### 'A FULL LIFE IN 50% OF THE TIME'

"We've lived every schedule in the system," said Lexi.

For many years, the boys had a different parenting time schedule and saw their dad at different times. It was tough on their relationship. The times they saw their dad varied according to the day, and

### FIERCELY EMBRACED

A new Minnesota non-profit is working to reform Minnesota's family court system. Fiercely Embraced is led by survivors who provide support to others.

### COERCIVE CONTROL IMPACTS CHILDREN

- Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten victims.
- Though often thought of as a precursor to physical violence, coercive control can include physical tactics such as assault.

- The impact of coercive control on children mirrors that of the mother. Like the mother, children experience the male batterer's imposition of rigid gender roles, low levels of sexual abuse and physical abuse (e.g. touching), and isolation that fly under the radar of social services, doctors, and other professionals.

- A major tactic used by abusers engaging in coercive control is to "weaponize" the children by having them spy on their mother or taking custody from the mother in court. Mothers are frequently put in the position of choosing between their own safety and the safety of their child.

- Within family court, perpetrators can adeptly use coercive control to unjustifiably manipulate narratives, turning the tables on their victims and, in many cases, successfully skewing the court's perception of events.

- Perpetrators of coercive control are more likely to be deficient, if not abusive, as parents. Children whose mothers had been assaulted by their male partners are more likely to be directly abused.

- Coercive control has a negative impact on children's school performance due to trauma and a resulting inability to engage in socially complex behaviors because of rigidly controlled gender roles.

- Coercive control does not necessarily end with separation of the parties. Domestic violence may escalate after separation or take new forms such as increasing emotional abuse or financial abuse. And sadly, can even lead to murder by the abuser.

### LIFELONG IMPACTS ARE PREVENTABLE

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), a long-running study at the University of Minnesota, has found that children who grow up in environments that expose them to abuse, as a witness or as the abused, that experience toxic stress or are exposed to untreated mental illness or substance abuse are more likely to have mental illness or substance abuse issues as adults.

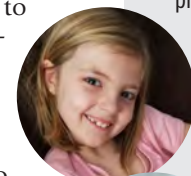
### CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR ESCALATES

- Offenders who exercise control over their partner's daily activities are more than 5 times more likely to kill them than other domestic abusers.

- In a remarkable 20 percent of domestic homicides, the murder was the first act of physical violence – but these were almost always preceded by coercive and controlling behavior.

- In Minnesota, 11 children whose parents were involved in family court cases have died since 2008. These include Autumn Hallow of Elk River and brothers William and Nelson Schladetzky of Minneapolis. Mikayla Olson was murdered in 2007 during her first unsupervised visit with her father.

- Shannon Cortez Gooden of Burnsville shot and killed police officer Paul Elmstrand, officer Matthew Ruge and firefighter/paramedic Adam Finseth on Feb. 18, 2024 with seven children in the house. He had been in family court with two former partners who both requested orders for protection that were denied.



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**REFORM FAMILY COURT**

Fiercely Embraced believes family courts in Minnesota need to change to make a better society for everyone. They point to ongoing domestic violence and a Pay-to-Play mentality that are not benefiting families. They want to stop seeing orders that force people into homelessness and poverty. "Once you are in, there is no end until a child turns 18," say Fiercely Embraced advocates. "The cottage industry of paid professionals ordered by family judges are detrimental. Judges need more training in domestic violence and coercive control, and so do guardians ad litem (GALs)."

Information from Fiercely Embraced, [www.fiercelyembraced.org](http://www.fiercelyembraced.org)

**OPPRESSIVE EXPERIENCE**

>> from 12

transfer times ran into meals and bedtimes.

Ethan's therapist stated that he needed a sense of stability and predictability, which included a consistent schedule, regular bedtimes, fewer transitions, and consistent visits with his brother, as well as the ability to resume his regular activities which were being interfered with by the inconsistent parenting time schedule.

In 2016, a judge ordered 50/50 parenting time with a 5-2-2-5 schedule, keeping sole legal custody with Lexi.

Their dad didn't allow them to attend parties on "his time" or see their friends. They couldn't attend Boy Scouts events or do other activities during "his time."

He took their phones away and wouldn't let them use their school tablets to contact friends or family.

Ethan told his mom, "I have to live a full life in 50 percent of the time."

"That was hard on him," said Lexi. His friends tried to rearrange their birthday parties and events so that they fell on mom days.

**'PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME GO'**

Ethan told his principal

that his dad drove the kids to Wisconsin, bought a knife, and set it on the center console where the kids could see it. It scared him. He pushed Ethan sometimes, and trapped him at other times. He punched Ethan in the chest. He'd threaten to take things away if he told anyone what happened.

Ethan wrote on school assignments, "I can't go to my dad's. Please don't make me go." He asked his therapists to not make him go. He told his school principal that he was scared to go to his dad's house.

Mason reported to his therapist that his dad hit him and his brother with a closed fist.

Two child protection cases were opened. Like many cases that involve parents in family court, CPS staff determined they could get services in family court and family therapy was ordered. The CPS cases didn't prevent Derek from having parenting time.

In September 2020, both boys walked to their mom's house. They described their dad's behavior as bizarre, erratic, and frightening.

Two and a half years ago, the boys started leaving school to avoid going to their dad's house. Their dad got a court order for police to retrieve them.

The younger boy was told by school staff and a police officer that he would be placed in a foster home or a facility, and not able to see his mom if he didn't go with his dad. He went that day. But the next time he was supposed to go to dad's house, his older brother came to school and snuck him out. Two law enforcement agencies and a state patrol helicopter joined 30 school staff to search for the boys, who were located four hours later at a friend's house.

Law enforcement was called eight times in September 2021 to assist Derek in exercising his parenting time.

Eventually the school and law enforcement filed motions with family court to move parenting time exchanges away from the schools, citing safety concerns and the use of resources.

After these incidents, Mason struggled with feeling safe at school, and it was difficult to get him to school on time. He had 17 tardies in two months.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGY AND FORCED CONTACT**

The boys have since refused to go at all. They want to know when they get to say they've had enough. They want the court to let them make the decision to be done with parenting time at their dad's house. In Iowa, a child's opinion is factored in at age 11, but there is no policy in Minnesota for when a child's preference matters. Instead, court rulings continue to prioritize contact with parents, with one going so far as to imprison a mom from Iowa whose daughter refuses to see the dad she said sexually abused her. (See past Voices Against Family Violence stories detailing Dani's case on our website.)

The rulings of forced contact from those involved in family court go against standard psychological advice, according to clinical forensic psychologist Dr. Catherine Barrett of Los Angeles, Calif., who has spoken nationally about reunification therapy and camps.

"Nowhere in the literature of psychology does it state that forced compliance improves a relationship. When a parent persists that a child should be forced to reunify against their will, the best interest is not in the child," stated Dr. Barrett.

She points to a confirmation bias in family court that believes women coach children to make up allegations of abuse, and then acts on that belief that children are lying about abuse. "We need to listen to kids," said Dr. Barrett. "Kids don't make this stuff up." According to a study by Dr. Joan Meiers and George Washington University Law School that was funded by the National Institute of Justice, in family court allegations of abuse are not believed 75 percent of the time. "The confirmation bias is that victims are lying," said Dr. Barrett.

"This is the generation of voice and technology," she observed. "These kids aren't being coached."

Dr. Barrett serves as an expert witness in family court and has read through many custody evaluations in the eight years she's been doing this work. The reasons why children don't want to see a parent are usually in those reports, she observed, but the evaluator reaches different conclusions from the data and pathologizes the parent the child wants to be with (who is usually the mother). "The behavior of the father isn't even on the table to look at," she said. "It gets completely ignored."

Dr. Barrett is concerned about the harm that courts are doing by not understanding coercive control. She said, "It is undeniable as proven through research that a child's right to be safe is undermined by the minimization of abuse reports. Courts often maintain the parent-child relationship at all costs, contributing to the perpetuation of abuse by choosing to ignore it."

"Family law remains primitive in the belief that children are always best served by having a relationship with both parents regardless of the child's right to safety and autonomy."

**SUPPORTING DAD**

Derek and his string of attorneys have regularly accused Lexi of "alienating" the boys from their father.

Professionals stated that both parents needed to learn to get along, and said that both were creating the problem. Her therapist was disregarded because he sided with her and believed her when she detailed the power and control dynamics of the relationship during and post separation.

When Lexi brought up issues or asked that Derek follow the rules in place, she was scolded. "I'm creating issues because I'm trying to hold him to things," she said.

Two years ago, Lexi learned from a letter written to her attorney that Derek was getting remarried. The letter demanded that she drive the kids to his house, leave

the 12 year old and eight year old in her car, hand the keys over to him, and find a way home.

She was told to lie to the boys and not tell them where she was driving them when she brought them to an exchange.

Lexi worked with therapists and came up with a plan: she drove the boys three hours north to attend their dad's wedding. She walked them in and then waited in the hotel lobby, far from the ceremony. Derek later wrote in an affidavit to the court that she interfered with his wedding and wrecked his day.

"The kids are not going, but it isn't me that made that decision," said Lexi. "They're just done."

They've also had to attend therapy to repair the mother-child relationship because the kids have been angry at Lexi for not listening to them, and for "forcing" and coercing them to go to their dad's.

They have pointed out that there's something wrong if their dad needs to involve the police to get them to go with him.

"How much is enough?" asks Lexi. "I have done all the things. I've had the top of the top on my case. When do they decide enough is enough? I can't afford it. It would be one thing if any of this stuff has helped. But it hasn't."

**WHAT IS A SPECIAL MASTER?**

Minnesota is testing out a new program using special masters in complex family court cases. Essentially a privatized judge, a special master has the authority of a judge and fees are \$400-\$500 an hour. They aren't supposed to be used for cases like Lexi's, but that didn't stop a judge from ordering it.

Lexi has in forma pauperis (IFP) status with the court in recognition of her low wages and need for state assistance programs. She was ordered to pay \$2,450 to the special master immediately as a deposit and \$1,750 for the brief focused assessment. That's a substantial part of her annual income.

She provided documentation of her income to the special master, who ordered the payment to herself and the therapist doing the BFA be made anyway. In court filings, Derek accused her of blocking the process and keeping him from his kids because she didn't make the payments.

Lexi doesn't own a house and isn't sure how she can pay her rent. Her retirement accounts are empty, in part because she had to assume the \$170,000 in medical bills from Mason's medical issues. She's on a payment plan with her attorney.

Meanwhile, Derek lives in a \$550,000 house that he owns, and has three cars. Derek pays \$162 a month in child support, although she's had the two boys full-time for nearly three years.

"I want to rebuild my life and be financially stable, but the court orders keep preventing that," she said. "I have literally nothing left and he does - and they keep adding all these other professional fees. Is that justice? Or is that abuse perpetrated in a different way?"

**AN 'OPPRESSIVE' EXPERIENCE**

"This whole experience has been oppressive," said Lexi.

They've come full circle again, as he's been ordered to go through another psychological exam, one that looks at his inability to retain information and learn if there is a biological reason for why his narrative keeps changing.

"They need to come up with some kind of solution so we can be out of this chaos loop," said Lexi. "There are no checks and balances."

She added, "This will be the 57th hearing I've had. And it doesn't look like it will end anytime soon."

*\*Editor's note: In writing the articles in this series, I have reviewed dozens of court documents, and reports by professionals. In recognition of the sensitive nature of these articles, we have opted to refer to people by their first names or aliases, and have not used details that can be used to identify the family.*

**Coercive control impacts all areas of a child's life****WHAT IS A SPECIAL MASTER?**

A special master in Minnesota family court cases is a legal professional appointed by the court to assist in the resolution of complex cases. They act as a neutral third party. Special masters are responsible for managing and coordinating the various aspects of a family law case. They gather and evaluate evidence relevant to the case, and make rulings. They charge \$400-500 an hour.

**WHAT IS A REFEREE?**

Under the Minnesota Rules of Civil Procedure, a referee is essentially an appointed judge. They technically operate under the supervision of a judge, who must sign off on their orders, but there are rarely situations where they are not signed off on. Referees typically have experience in the area of law to which they are appointed (i.e. family, probate, juvenile, or other special court). In comparison, judges are either chosen in nonpartisan elections or appointed by the Governor of Minnesota when there is a judicial vacancy.

**WHAT IS A PC?**

Parenting Consulting is an alternative dispute resolution process authorized by MN Statute Rule 114.02 (a) (10). PC decisions are binding on the parties. Often, PCs are also attorneys but some are licensed therapists. PCs are not mandated reporters of child maltreatment. Fees range from \$250 to \$500 an hour.

**CONDUCT RULES**

Judges and referees in Minnesota are not prohibited from belonging to the same professional organizations that attorneys, mediators, Guardian Ad Litem (GALs), custody evaluators, Parenting Consultants, Special Masters, and others who charge for their services are. This is standard in other states to maintain impartiality and avoid kickbacks. Professional organizations include The Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) and the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC).



# Rachel Boeke leaves Longfellow Community Council

By CAM GORDON

Rachel Boeke has left her position as executive director of the Longfellow Community Council (LCC).

She was hired to help lead the organization in the fall of 2021 and her last day on the job was April 16, 2024, after she accepted a position as executive director of LeadMN, which serves and represents the roughly 100,000 two-year public college students in Minnesota.

"Rachel brought a burst of new energy to an organization that had come through a very hard time with the pandemic and the uprising after the murder of George Floyd," said LCC Board Chair Lisa Boyd. "Rachel was so good at wearing all the hats an executive director needs to wear – motivating and supervising staff, finances, building partnerships, recruiting volunteers, putting on events, and supporting programs. She got us connected to some very exciting partnerships, and she also led the board through the creation of a solid strategic plan. Rachel has been tenacious and dedicated to this work and always did it with an upbeat attitude and a can-do spirit."

"I really enjoyed working with Rachel during my time in office," said former Ward 12 Council Member Andrew Johnson. "She cares deeply about our community, and it showed in the way she showed up, always advocating to make sure residents were heard through some of the most difficult issues. She didn't hesitate to speak out or hold the city accountable, yet



Outgoing Longfellow Community Council Executive Director Rachel Boeke (at right) chats with Ward 9 City Council Member Jason Chavez (left) and Ward 12 City Council Member Aurin Chowdhury. (Photo courtesy of LCC)

she did so with professionalism and grace. I could always count on her as a partner who worked to find ways for LCC to lead and contribute despite dwindling resources. She earned the respect of peers as a knowledgeable collaborator and reasoned voice. I feel fortunate for the time she gave us Longfellow residents, and wish her all the best in her next chapter."

"I have nothing but positive things to say about Rachel," said Russ Adams, Lake Street Council Corridor Recovery Initia-

tives Manager. "It is a huge loss for the organization. Everything she was doing for the council and the neighborhood was well organized, responsive to everyone's concerns and catalyzed everyone in a positive way. Her 3rd precinct engagement was huge. She recruited great staff, and it has been a pleasure to work with her. Her events were inclusive, and she consistently showed courageous leadership."

"Rachel is not only someone with a lot of ideas but is someone who has the

ability and passion to bring those ideas to fruition," said LCC's Communications Manager Andrea Tritschler. "In the last two years, LCC has grown so much and expanded our reach and support in the community, and I think that's really a testament to Rachel's leadership. While we still are working to increase our outreach, I think she's helped LCC build a really strong foundation."

"During my time at LCC, I am most proud of the move to intentional engagement focusing on our most underrepresented populations," said Boeke. "We diversified the ways we gather feedback from community members and we could see the direct increase in young people, renters, low-income folks and from within communities of color responding. My wish for the work that will continue is the push for the city to engage, listen and actually hear residents' thoughts and concerns about developments and programs that are meant to serve that same community."

"Saying goodbye to the wonderful people across greater Longfellow and the amazingly fun work at Longfellow Community Council was tough," she said. "The laughter around the staff table every Wednesday was real (and loud). The relationships with community members and council members were genuine and meaningful. The connections will stay with me forever. And it's not like I'm gone for good – I will be back for LCC's Trivia Night on May 16, and I challenge anyone to build a team to come beat me."

LCC is in the process of filling the position.

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[bethel-mpls.org](http://bethel-mpls.org)  
Rev. Brenda Froisland  
ALL ARE WELCOME  
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Sunday Worship 10am  
In-person and online  
Our 125th Anniversary—June 8 and 9  
6/8 3:30pm Tree planting, dinner  
6/9 10am Worship, picnic after

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

**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

**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  
Sundays: 8-9am early risers, 10am service, 10-12 children and youth  
Livestream worship 9:45-11:30am

**Faith Ev. Lutheran Church**  
3430 E 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  
Blind Ministry May 18 12-2 p.m.  
Senior Exercise Class Mondays 10 a.m.

**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; Or by appointment  
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**Epworth United Methodist**  
3207 37th Ave. • 612-722-0232  
[www.epworthmpls.org](http://www.epworthmpls.org)  
A Congregation-Lead Community  
A Reconciling Congregation  
Sundays 8:45am - Faith Formation for All Ages; 10am - Worship In-person & Live-streaming on Our FB Page - @EpworthUMCMPLS  
Weed & Water Wednesdays Begins 5/15, 9:30-11:30am. NO FEE - Stories, playtime & snacks!

**Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls**  
5212 41st Ave. S • 612-724-3691  
[www.trinityfalls.org](http://www.trinityfalls.org)  
Pastor Matt Oxendale  
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Children's Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
AA Sun & Tues 7:00 p.m.

### 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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