



Greener  
options  
coming  
»10

## Who gets CAREER training in high school?

*Not everyone, although  
MPS CTE staff are working  
to change school policies*

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Minneapolis Public Schools Career and Technical Education (CTE) program aims to match students with real-world skills, but some high schools are restricting access.

Even though students register, hundreds of students are turned away by their high schools because of schedule misalignments.

This includes students at Roosevelt High and Edison High, who can't take the career and technical education classes being offered at the CTE centers nested in their own buildings.

"The schedules are all over so kids have to thread the needle just right," observed Minneapolis Public Schools Tech Center Principal Michael Luseni.

MPS moved the costly, federally funded CTE programs to become district-wide offerings, and provided full two-way transportation, only to have students who enrolled in the courses find them struck from CAREER TRAINING » 8

## Labor Standards Board derailed

*Mayor Frey's veto stands  
after Jenkins and Osman  
change earlier votes*

By CAM GORDON

Despite months of research, hours of debate, and a 9-3 city council vote of approval, a new Minneapolis Labor Standards Board will not be established, at least not this year.

On Dec 5, the city council failed to override Mayor Jacob Frey's veto of the resolution they approved to create it.

LABOR STANDARDS BOARD » 5



## MOTIVATED BY A COMMON GOAL

*Neighbors along 29th Ave. S  
come together to save 40 ash  
trees in the boulevard*

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Residents along six blocks of 29th Ave. S have banded together to save 40 ash trees.

"These are public trees that the whole community benefits from," observed Loey Colebeck. "Many Greenway users choose 29th Avenue because of its wonderful shade canopy. This area of the neighbor-

*hood is just three blocks away from the shell of the old third precinct, and we were particularly affected by the burning in 2020. We are three blocks north and three blocks south of Lake Street, and we are not an affluent area of the neighborhood. Saving the tree canopy is a vital part of stabilizing our neighborhood and quality of life where there has already been much destruction and tree loss."*

The trees on 29th between the Greenway and East 33rd were initially part of a University of Minnesota study designed to determine the most effective treatment for emerald ash borer, and so they weren't removed during the Ash Canopy Replacement Plan from 2014-2022. However, in the spring of 2024, Colebeck noticed that they had all been tagged for removal and they started getting cut down. She reached out to a local arborist to see if the boulevard tree in front of her residence could still be saved since it had missed a year of treatment. Treatment is needed every two years, and it was year COMMON GOAL » 3

## Pedestrian mall plan for GF Square moves forward

*New direction aligns with  
community's alternate plan  
presented in November*

By JILL BOOGREN

On Dec. 5, 2024, the Minneapolis City Council voted to develop a pedestrian plaza at George Floyd Square. It was one of three concepts shared by the Public Works Department, who had recommended a different option that would open the streets at 38th and Chicago to all traffic in all direc-

tions. The pedestrian plaza would instead prohibit vehicular traffic on a small segment of Chicago Ave. north of 38th St., between Unity (formerly CUP) Foods and the Peoples' Way (formerly Speedway), while creating a cul-de-sac to allow access to businesses on the rest of the block.

The street concept is part of a broader resolution that supports a community-led vision for the Square that includes the Peoples' Way and memorials, and supports investments in the neighborhood, healing, truth and reconciliation. It largely reflects actions outlined in an alternate plan proposed in November by commu-

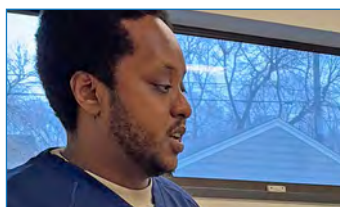
nity members, but moves up their time frame from next October to June 2025 to create a vision for the space. This work would be done while moving forward with a pedestrian plaza.

In introducing the resolution, Council Member Jason Chavez (Ward 9) said he was "speaking on behalf of a big portion of the community that has gone unheard and unnoticed, a community who feels the pain from the lack of action on police accountability and reform from this administration, and a community that believes in a vision that is comprehensive PEDESTRIAN MALL PLAN » 2



High school's culinary  
arts program goes  
beyond classroom

PAGE 6



HEALTH & WELLNESS  
First Somali-American  
chiropractor in area

PAGE 7



In its early years, Redesign  
built community by saving  
houses from wrecking ball

PAGE 16



# PEDESTRIAN MALL

## PLAN >> from 1

and respects the dignity of the area...

"This vote should be about more than just infrastructure, and it should not gloss over or erase what happened here. It should be about healing, growth and honoring the voices of those who advocate for progress," said Chavez, who was in his apartment six blocks away when George Floyd was murdered.

"I believe that we have one shot to get this right," he said.

Council Member Andrea Jenkins (Ward 8) said it's a delay and that staff already determined a pedestrian mall was not suitable in this scenario.

Council Member Katie Cashman (Ward 7) pointed to a new state statute that allows cities to create pedestrian-only spaces, provided they are not on trunk highways, among other criteria.



This vote should be about more than infrastructure, and it should not gloss over or erase what happened here. It should be about healing, growth and honoring the voices of those who advocate for progress."

Jason Chavez

"I do think we have not played out the scenario of whether it's possible to create a pedestrian mall here," said Cashman, indicating her understanding that the city pursued that legislation specifically to try it at George Floyd Square.

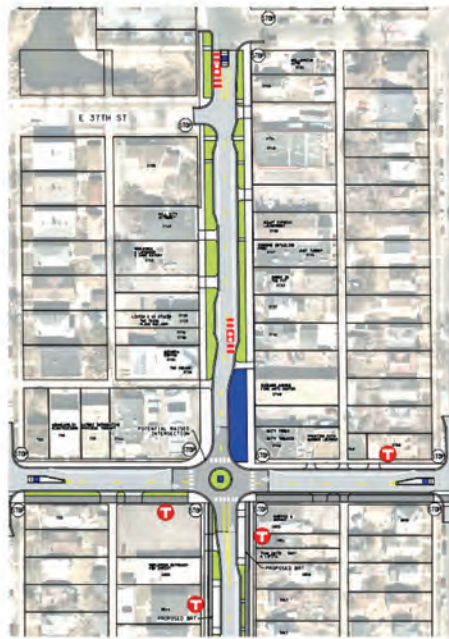
At a Nov. 13, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, Minneapolis City Operations Officer Margaret Anderson Kelliher said public works started with a pedestrian plaza.

### PEDESTRIAN PLAZA

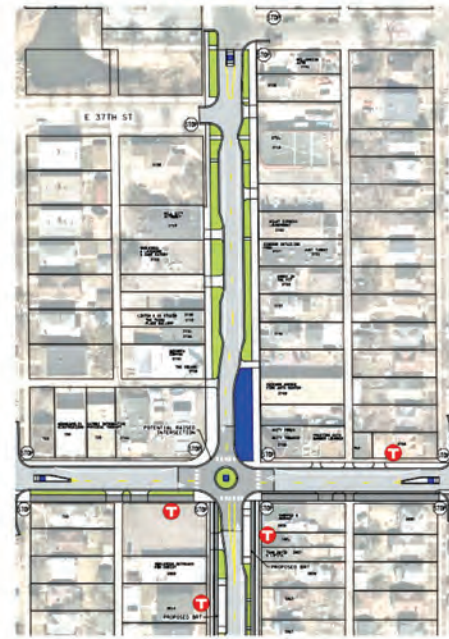


The Pedestrian Plaza concept for reconstructing 38th and Chicago creates a cul-de-sac on the 3700 block of Chicago Ave. to provide access for businesses there. It would be pedestrian only in the segment between Unity Foods and the Peoples' Way.

### TRANSIT MALL



### FLEXIBLE



"What you're seeing here is a pedestrian plaza option that would potentially work," she said, and acknowledged the legislative effort which brought the statute. "We [the city of Minneapolis] sought expanded authority because potentially of this project. It could be used on this project."

Anderson Kelliher described touring the Lorraine Motel in downtown Memphis, Tenn., where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. Now a historic site and National Civil Rights Museum, the motel is located on a street that at first wasn't closed to traffic but is now. It was from across the street that Dr. King was fatally shot.

Notably, on Dec. 4, 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) released its

findings that the Memphis Police Department uses excessive force and discriminates against Black people, similar to the findings by the DOJ in Minneapolis. The Memphis investigation was launched after Tyre Nichols, who was Black, was beaten by five Black police officers after a 2023 traffic stop and then died in the hospital three days later. The ongoing protest at George Floyd Square calls for justice for all lives – not just George Floyd's – taken through police violence.

City staff first unveiled their preferred option at an open house on Oct. 29. This was followed by a Nov. 6 Town Hall "In Defense of Black Lives" that drew hundreds of people in support of an alternate plan that would prioritize community needs over street reconstruction. The Com-

munity Visioning Council submitted a letter in support of the community's alternate plan to the council prior to the Dec. 5 meeting.

The resolution was approved on an 8-5 vote, with Council Members Katie Cashman, Jason Chavez, Aurin Chowdhury, Aisha Chughtai, Jeremiah Ellison, Jamal Osman, Elliott Payne and Robin Wonsley voting in favor. Voting no were Andrea Jenkins, Emily Koski, Linea Palmisano, Michael Rainville and LaTrisha Vetaw. The project was sent back to the Climate & Infrastructure Committee, which next meets on Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025.

Full text of the resolution can be found at swConnector.com.

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communities, cultures, and generations. Neighborhood trees have shown the ability to reduce stress, improve overall health and development in children, and encourage physical activity. And a healthy community-wide tree canopy fosters economic advantages as well as an increase in civic pride among residents.

**Nurturing biodiversity** - Trees support wildlife and aquatic life by providing habitat and helping to keep waterways healthy. This ensures that ecosystem balance can be maintained and biodiversity can thrive.

**Taming stormwater** - In areas where homes, businesses, schools, roads, and parking lots expand, natural tree cover is often lost, along with the vital absorbing capacity of vegetation and soil. Without the benefits provided by trees and green infrastructure, beneficial rainfall turns into expensive stormwater runoff, surging through gutters and pipes after a storm. This runoff carries oils, heavy metals, and other harmful pollutants into our rivers and lakes. Consequently, fish and wildlife suffer, drinking water becomes costly or challenging to purify, property values decline, and our living environment deteriorates.

**WHAT IS EAB?**

Emerald ash borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire, is an exotic beetle that was discovered in southeastern Michigan near Detroit in the summer of 2002. The adult beetles nibble on ash foliage but cause little damage. The larvae (the immature stage) feed on the inner bark of ash trees, disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients.

- Woodpeckers like EAB larvae; heavy woodpecker damage on ash trees may be a sign of infestation.
- Moving firewood can spread EAB and other wood pests and diseases.



Barbara Scotford (left) and Alana Horton work together to label the ash trees in the boulevard on 29th between the Greenway and East 33rd to let others know the trees are being protected from emerald ash borer. The group of neighbors is working to raise money to keep paying for the treatments needed every two years. (Photo by submitted)

**COMMON GOAL** >> from 1

three. "The arborist said yes, so I made a little flyer to give to all the neighbors on the block to let them know about the U of M study and that the trees were going to come down, but that there was still time to act this year," recalled Colebeck.

A neighbor remarked that she didn't have any of her own boulevard trees but benefit from the ones nearby, and suggested that they act together instead of separately.

Colebeck's husband, Phillip Cryan, helped organize an initial meeting with an arborist from the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) and a representative from Rainbow Tree Care on June 11 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. About a dozen neighbors attended. The group met about three times over the summer.

"My husband, Phillip, and I organized the working group meetings, and decisions about how to proceed were made during each meeting by whomever was present. It has been very democratic, with each person taking on whatever task seems fun and related to their skill set," said Colebeck. "We've shared detailed meeting notes with our email list so anyone who isn't present can jump in, know what's been going on, and share their ideas, take action. We truly could not have done this without everyone's amazing ideas.

"We have also built community and met so many wonderful neighbors. And by doing collective action, we were able to save all the trees, including those in front of people's houses who were not able to contribute. It's so joyful!"

"We managed to raise all the funds necessary to treat the ash trees for emerald ash borer as well as two elm trees for Dutch elm disease," said Daylanne En-

glish, who has lived along 29th Ave. for 22 years. "It was thrilling to have our collective effort pay off (literally!) to preserve the tree canopy in our part of Longfellow."

"Working with my neighbors on this project meant so much more to me than I could have predicted," stated Maisy Byerly. "Through each individual effort, we arrived at an amazing outcome. When I first got involved, I did not realize how trusting and optimistic I would feel after this project."

**MODEL PROJECT**

Over the course of the last 15 years, MPRB removed 40,000 ash trees in parks and on boulevards and replaced them with 40,000 trees representing 200 varieties. Many of the ash trees that were removed were planted following the removal of the city's Dutch Elms because of Dutch Elm Disease.

The U of M tree preservation study included this section of 29th Ave. S because of the mature ash trees of about the same size and age. As the Sustainable Forestry Coordinator for MPRB, Phillip Potyondy has been a liaison between MPRB Forestry Development and community members, in addition to the tree care company and previously to the U of MN for the research that MPRB hosted. His role as Sustainable Forestry Coordinator involves urban forestry analytics and vision, arborist engagement, and community engagement, he explained. "Systematically replacing public ash trees in the face of Emerald Ash Borer, with a diverse mix of species, was a generational opportunity to dramatically increase urban forestry resiliency in a relatively short amount of time," said Potyondy. "Urban forest tree canopy provides a myriad of benefits to community. Benefits are economic, social, health, and environmental."

Potyondy praised the collaborative effort by 29th Ave. S neighbors. "This has been a model project of community growth engagement and investment in our urban forest," he said.

"Minneapolis has been a model for other cities in how to deal with emerald ash borer and, more generally, the threats to urban forests and tree canopy in the context of climate change and the various diseases and insect infestations that climate change brings," said English. "The city's work with 'our' trees (and Minneapolis trees in general) really makes me proud and appreciative of their efforts." She is grateful that the boulevard tree in front of her house was preserved by the efforts of her neighbors.

"I am well aware that an urban forest benefits everyone living here and helps protect against the effects of climate change, mitigates the urban 'heat island' effect, and helps filter pollutants," added English. She pointed out that not all folks living in Minneapolis have the same privilege of living on tree-lined streets, and believes that the best way of appreciating privilege is by doing what one can to protect the trees where they live.

"I also saw the clear benefits of preventing the trees from being taken down in quick succession," said English. "Our neighborhood would not have to feel the awful loss of all those trees being chopped down in a relatively short time period; plus, we would help maintain habitat for all the critters and (good) bugs that rely on the ash trees."

"I love trees!" remarked Byerly. "Minneapolis does a great job getting communities involved in our city's tree canopy, whether it is through the tree lottery or the establishment of green zones. In addition to city-level efforts to maintain a healthy canopy, we each can take small steps to

**ASH CANOPY REPLACEMENT PLAN**

Emerald ash borer was first discovered in Minnesota in a St. Paul tree in 2009. In Minneapolis, the first infested tree was found in Prospect Park in 2010. It spread into Seward and Cooper the next year, and was in 13 Minneapolis neighborhoods, including Longfellow and Howe, by 2014.

Minneapolis forestry crews replaced 5,000 ash trees each year for eight years between 2014-2021. This included about 30,000 boulevard trees and 10,000 trees in city parks. Resident could opt to treat non-symptomatic boulevard ash trees with insecticide at their own expense. The effort cost about \$10.8 million. In comparison, St. Paul removed 26,947 trees over 15 years and is projected to have spent \$36 million on emerald ash borer impacts by 2025.

Replacement trees were planted for every tree removed between 2015-2022.

In all, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board manages 200,000 street trees and 400,000 trees in parks. The new trees come from 200 species.

The initial MPRB plan to remove ash trees and plant young, diverse trees in their place did not extend to the ash trees on private property. Since, the city directed MPRB to condemn diseased or infested trees on private property and charge homeowners. There have been approximately 38,000 condemnations of private trees since 2001. MPRB removed 15,000 and levied special assessments against 8,000 property owners, many in south and north Minneapolis. An \$8 million federal grant helps pay for ash tree removal on private properties in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The average ash tree removal costs thousands of dollars. It costs about \$200 to treat an ash tree every two years.

sustain our natural surroundings. Just by collecting acorns and seed pods, I've grown pin oak, bur oak, Freeman maple, and Kentucky espresso saplings. The squirrels have destroyed most of them, but not all. It is so meaningful to care for trees and, in turn, benefit from their ecological impact.

"Losing all of our boulevard ash trees over a short period of time would have impacted the quality of life of so many who live in or travel through our neighborhood. When I saw that others cared just as much as I do about the trees, I felt we could accomplish a lot with a little effort."

The group of neighbors are looking for a fiscal umbrella organization so that they can take ongoing contributions for the continuing treatments needed. "Currently, we just have an account with Rainbow Tree Care which is holding our funds for the next treatment. Anyone who wants to contribute can contact Rainbow Tree Care with the memo '29th Avenue Tree Project,'" said Colebeck. "We encourage everyone to support and contribute as part of neighborhood stabilization and revitalization."



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).

## Stories and Journeys

BY DONALD L. HAMMEN



Stories and Journeys is three years old. Happy Birthday! An amazing human being by the name of Amy once observed that writing is how I process my life. Others have claimed to have made the same observation. So, here I am still processing my life as the writer of Stories and Journeys. And still I am grieving as I write with a sense of loss as a result of the presidential election – loss of our democracy and the emergence of an American oligarchy with its ruling class and Trump as authoritarian president.

### THE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS OF MY INTEREST IN DEMOCRACY

I was in junior high (maybe high school). I had discovered a book in the Des Moines North High library on marriage and family. One of the chapters discussed the idea of a family council. Once a month a family sits down and has a meeting. The purpose of the meeting would be to talk about how family life is going. A chance to talk about what's going well, air grievances and propose changes to which every one can agree. I pitched the idea to my mother, father and brother. They did

# STILL PROCESSING. STILL GRIEVING

not reject it. They just did not seem to get what I was trying to say. Looking back I believe our family's behaviours were so ingrained that something like regular family meetings seemed foreign. I thought it was a chance to take time out to give everyone a chance to have their voice heard without judgment, identify and work out conflict. An exercise in family democracy. Fast forward to a much larger universe today.

### DELUSIONAL, DECEITFUL AND DANGEROUS DONALD WINS RE-ELECTION

At this moment here's where I come down as to what happened. A low information electorate (many of whom can't even name the three branches of government) easily swayed by disinformation perpetuated by what I used to know as the right wing echo chamber, lead by what I call Fox so-called news, leads me to believe that disinformation won the election. Or even better I like the story of Robert Reich, economist and former Labor Secretary, writing on his Inequality Media Civic Action web-site:

"Back in 1994, after Republicans won control of the House and Senate in a crushing election not unlike the one we just lived through. ..." He recounts he gave a speech in which "he warned that America was becoming a two-tiered society, divided between the super-rich and disillusioned working people, whose anger could

easily be manipulated by an dangerous demagogue." And so 30 years later it has come to pass. We have our demagogue.

### MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT COME AND GONE

It is still the case that Medicare Advantage plans are not Medicare. They are insurance plans using the name Medicare to market themselves. I consider them a threat to actual Medicare. Messenger reader Joel wants to have a conversation about the three columns I wrote during Medicare Open Enrollment last year. I have invited him to Elder Voices at Turtle Bread.

So, dear reader, if you have read this far you have taken the plunge into the river(flow) of life experiences that is Stories and Journeys.

### BRIEFLY:

I am aware of a blind man who wants to read Stories and Journeys. It is possible if he goes online, according to owner Tesha M. Christensen writing in her Too Much Coffee column called "We've Got Audio – Check Out Our Web-site."

I chair the All Elders United for Justice Care Giving Committee. At its last meeting we agreed to take up the topic of how the policy and practices of United Health and other like insurance organizations contribute to the health outcomes of elders.

Judith Graham is the Navigating

Aging columnist for KFF Health News, a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues. Recently she interviewed me. My story and picture were the lead in one of her columns that appeared in the Washington Post newspaper.

Alex Lawson is the executive director of Social Security Works. He spoke at the November monthly meeting of the Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council (AFL-CIO). I missed the meeting because I was testifying before the Minnesota Legislative Task Force on Aging.

The Minneapolis Advisory Committee on Aging is planning an open house meeting for Jan. 15, 1 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church. It is open to the public to come learn about the work of the committee and the process for joining. There are open seats from several wards.

### ELDER VOICES (TELLING OUR STORIES/SHARING OUR JOURNEYS) IS SCHEDULED TO MEET JAN. 31, 10-11 A.M. AT TURTLE BREAD, 4205-EAST 34TH STREET.

Look for the table with the All Elders sign. I missed in November due to a combination of illness and inclement weather. If you are processing your life or sensing a loss, do show up

### IN GRATITUDE.

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

## Parents flood school board meeting to demand solutions to overcrowded classrooms

### GUEST COMMENTARY

On Tuesday evening, Dec. 10, 2024, parents, caregivers, and teachers packed the Davis Center board room and the overflow space to voice concern over ballooning class sizes and shrinking numbers of support staff to the Minneapolis School Board. Public comments were offered by representatives from Dowling, Bryn Mawr, Lucy Lainey, Kenwood, Cityview, and Hiawatha surrounded by supporters from Nokomis, Whittier, and others.

MPS cut \$7 million from school budgets district wide for the '24-25 school year by raising the class cap sizes, forcing principals and site councils to scramble on how to provide the resources their students need. At Dowling Elementary, 60% of classrooms are at the cap or over the cap listed in the Minneapolis Teacher Union contract, up from 16% last year. The south Minneapolis EL-

ementary has grown by 80 students over last year's enrollment, but district budget allocations cut staff by eight positions. The result is a school environment that is not safe nor conducive to learning.

The Dowling community held a listening session in late November. Some of the impacts heard include:

- Teachers cannot provide the individual academic supports to students or the communication to families that is needed to be successful, instruction is suffering

- Students with IEPs or 504s, and multilingual students are not having their needs met

- Basic safety is becoming a concern around the lunchroom, tracking on campus, and increased injuries at recess

Bryn Mawr Elementary has also had 80 more students enrolled than projected. In late October, several of the classes were eight or nine students over the contractual cap, making some classrooms larger than 35 children. The district has only provided one additional teacher

and one associate educator, and Bryn Mawr has had to create an additional teacher position by overextending special education and interventionist staff. About 65 percent of Bryn Mawr classrooms are still over the cap, compared to around 25 percent of classrooms district-wide (as of October).

This represents a serious equity problem. Bryn Mawr is a Title 1 school with nearly 90 percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunches and a higher-than-district-average percent of students with special education needs. These are some of the most vulnerable students in the district, with some of the highest needs. The district expects these students to catch up on test scores and skill proficiency. Overcrowded classrooms are an impediment to these students, creating environments where teachers cannot easily differentiate by skill level and language, meet IEP needs, and manage the behaviors of stressed-out, over-stimulated children. These kids need stable learning environments

where they can receive attention from their teachers.

That is impossible when the district annually underestimates enrollment, lays off experienced staff that knows these students, and then must scramble to add staff halfway through the semester.

After over an hour of comments the message was clear. The current situation is unsustainable for students and teachers alike. Families are asking MPS to adequately staff all schools in the district giving students a safe and equitable learning experience. Multiple parent groups asked for an immediate audience with Superintendent Dr. Sayles-Adams and school board representatives to demand solutions.

Submitted by  
Laura Wilhelm (parent of Dowling Elementary students) and Maggie Koerth (Bryn Mawr parent)

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### 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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## LETTERS

## GRATEFUL YOU WROTE ABOUT JOURNALISTS IN AMERICA AND LINDA TIRADO

I have been meaning to write thank you for your piece on journalists in America and especially Linda Tirado.

When I look at Linda's two pictures it is heartbreaking how much her appearance has changed and that is an understatement!

It breaks my heart to learn about her current condition and how much Andrew Braun has changed her life for the worse.

I wanted you to know for how difficult it is to read Linda's story, I do appreciate you bringing this to all our attention.

My wish for Linda and her children is they know what a brave mom they have, and I admire her courage.

Thank you for caring and for shining a light on this tragedy.

Corinne S. Rockstad

## THANKS, GENEROUS DONORS

Thank you to all our generous community members that donated to the Warm Clothing Drive for the Elliot Park Neighborhood fire victims. Together we were able to provide for the 27 families who lost everything.

It's wonderful how quickly the word spread throughout the southside neighborhoods. We had over 80 hats, mittens, and scarves donated by neighbors who knit Plus Powderhorn, Greater Longfellow, Corcoran, Bancroft, Seward, Standish neighbors and others donated warm clothing. A special thank you to Midtown Farmers Market, and to both Rev. Brenda Froisland of Bethel Lutheran Church, and Pastor Bryan Odeen of St. Peder's Lutheran Church who provided drop off locations for donations during the collection drive. Thank you, Council Members Chowdhury and Chevez for outreach in their newsletters.

Gratefully,  
Shawne FitzGerald, Powderhorn  
Katie Simon-Dasty, Cooper



Katie Simon (front) drops off warm clothing from a community drive for victims of a fire. They are accepted by Elliot Park Neighborhood staff Jessica Focht-Perlberg and Colton Baldus. (Photo submitted)

## LABOR STANDARDS BOARD

>> from 1

"Today is a victory for small businesses and the economic future of Minneapolis," a joint statement from the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, Downtown Council, Hospitality Minnesota, Minnesota Retailers Association, and the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association said after the veto was upheld.

The establishment of the board was supported by many unions, labor groups and other organizations, representing 1000s of workers and residents, including CTUL, Kids Count On Us, Unite Here! Local 17, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, TakeAction Minnesota, MFT 59 – the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, New Justice Project MN, ISIAAH, Faith In Minnesota, SEIU Local 284, and LIUNA Minnesota & North Dakota.

It was not supported by 384 people, most who operate businesses, who wrote in a letter: "This Minneapolis Labor Standards Board was passed without allowing for public testimony, and through a process that ignored what little feedback was allowed to be given from businesses. It's unfair and works against the businesses that keep our city moving. Plus, we believe this board is unfairly weighted against the voice of business while directly impacting how we operate every day, without taking into account how different businesses operate, even within the same sector."

"Two years ago, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and the majority of city council members supported the creation of a Labor Standards Board, which would give workers a seat at the table to talk about the working conditions in their sectors," the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees wrote in November.

"Instead of working to lift up the needs of workers and small businesses," said Greg Nammacher, President of SEIU Local 26, "over the course of the past several months corporate interest groups and lobbyists spread misinformation about the board and weaponized the hardships faced by small businesses and small business owners of color as a shield for their own nefarious interests."

"Now is not the time to turn our back

on workers, who soon will face an attack from the highest level of government," said Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski before she voted to override Frey's veto. "I stand in solidarity with all those fighting for fair wages, fair working conditions and a better future for themselves and their families."

## VETO OVERRIDE FAILED BY ONE VOTE

The veto override failed by one vote, getting only 8 of the needed 9 votes. Council members Andrea Jenkins and Jamal Osman, who voted for the measure in November, joined with council members Linea Palmisano, LaTrisha Vetaw and Michael Rainville to uphold the veto.

"The conversation does not end here," said Frey in a statement read by Ward 13 Council Member Linea Palmisano after the vote. "I believe we can bring a proposal together in January."

Ward 6 Council Member Osman said that he voted to sustain the veto to pursue "a fair and balanced Labor Standards Board." He said that he is "supporting a public comment for community members to come and let us know how you want to be reflected in this resolution" and "a Labor Standards Board that is fair and balanced and represents Ward 6 and my East African community."

Osman and Ward 8 Council Member Andrea Jenkins had tried to postpone and amend the action in committee. After those efforts failed, Jenkins said "my thought at the time was that I would vote to support the ordinance and then work to improve it over time." The mayor's veto "presented an opportunity for us to work with constituents from the small business community, many of whom are women and people of color. What I've heard from folks is they do not feel they have had a voice in how the Labor Standards Board was drafted."

## PURPOSE OF BOARD

Council Members Aisha Chughtai, Aurin Chowdhury, and Katie Cashman authored the resolution.

According to the resolution they wrote, the purpose of the board was to "provide a forum for the city to engage with employers, workers, community stakeholders, and their representatives and to collaborate on matters related to work-

place regulations and standards."

If approved, it would have replaced the existing Workplace Advisory Committee, established in 2016, and advised city policymakers and staff on regulations related to workers' rights and employment. It would have been comprised of 15 members, 12 appointed by the council and three by the mayor, with five members representing employees, five workers and five other community stakeholders.

The board could have convened work groups based on sector and geography, and made recommendations on standards related to wages, benefits, and other working conditions, as well as the training needed to educate workers and employers on new standards. Work groups would have presented findings and recommendations to the board for vote before being submitted to the city council for consideration.

"I'm disappointed by this Mayoral veto and my colleagues who flipped their votes," said Ward 7 Council Member Katie Cashman. "The Labor Standards Board would have invited collaborative conversations with holistic representation from employers, employees, and community members who want to co-create recommendations towards improved, sector-specific workplace conditions. Studying and reporting on the working conditions of specific industries must be done with community representatives – they offer key insights as they also use or experience the services, products, and conditions that businesses create."

## DISAGREEMENT OVER WHO SHOULD BE ON BOARD

In his veto letter, Frey said that he could support a proposal with an even divide in membership between "employees and employers on the board, ensuring both sides are equally heard and represented." He also said that he wanted to appoint half of the members and require them to have a two-thirds majority supporting any recommendations before being forwarded to the council.

"I have looked at what the mayor has proposed," said Ward 12 Council Member Aurin Chowdhury, "and I want to state that giving 50% of the membership to employees and 50% to workers and giving a two-thirds majority to pass gives businesses veto power over everything."

"This was an opportunity to bring people together, and we missed that opportunity," added Chowdhury.

"I am super disappointed," said Ward 6 Council Member Jason Chavez. The mayor's proposal, he said, "puts corporations over people."

"I will not be supporting a fake version of the LSB that the mayor wants to bring forward to save face for his anti-worker veto," said Cashman.

"I am committed to supporting workers of all income levels, especially working-class people," said Jenkins. "I am equally committed to working with the authors, stakeholders, unions, and the mayor to create an advisory board that reflects fair representation and creates a Labor Standards Board we all get behind."

## UNCLEAR WHAT'S NEXT

After the years long debate and effort, it is unclear if any council members other than Jenkins and Osman, or any other stakeholders, have the energy or interest in working with the mayor to redesign it.

"At a time when a federal cabinet of billionaires hellbent on enriching themselves is about to get sworn in at the national level, it's fairly shocking that Mayor Frey is taking this extreme position that employers need more power for him to come back to supporting a board he previously supported," said Nammacher. "If the mayor wants to put forward this 'No Standards Board' that protects business interests at all cost, he can propose one. Our groups will be actively opposing it."

"The mayor showed us who he stands with, and we can't let any smoke and mirrors confuse Minneapolis residents: his proposal isn't a Labor Standards Board," said Merle Payne, executive director of CTUL. "Rather than increasing worker voice at the table, this would make it harder for workers to have input and would be a clear step backwards."

With an election around the corner, some may prefer to wait until a new term begins to revisit the issue. In the meantime, the workplace advisory committee will likely continue to meet and function. Its members representing a cross-section of business and worker stakeholders, with the mayor appointing three and the city council appointing 13 of its members.

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# HIGH SCHOOL'S CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM GOES BEYOND CLASSROOM

*Roosevelt serves up its first community meal of the year*

By ROSALIND SMITH  
Student journalist

The Roosevelt Culinary Arts (RCA) program hosts community meals a few times a year. The RCA is a class that helps students learn how to cook and practice professional chef skills.

Ben Rengstorf has been the RCA instructor since 2017. In 2022, he was named "The National ProStart Teacher of the Year" by the National Restaurant Association. He has also been interviewed by FOX 9 and KARE 11. Rengstorf's goal is to bring people together through food. He has created a loving, supportive environment for his students.

Carlyn Shanley is in her second year at Roosevelt. She was an English teacher at various schools in Minneapolis and worked parttime in kitchens. Shanley inquired about the job years ago. Many years later, a position came available and she jumped at the chance.

The inaugural community meal was in 2019. The meals were served in the front hallway. A second community meal was served at George Floyd Square. In the winter, the RCA hosts an "Empty Bowl" community meal; it's an auction for Roosevelt students' handmade ceramic bowls. Not only is food served in the bowls, all proceeds are donated to food pantries and organizations that help support people with food insecurity.

These community meals really are just that; with the Roosevelt Choir and Band singing and playing music and students, staff, friends and neighbors attending. The Ecology of Minnesota class (Roosevelt Farming Program) and jewelry class host



Roosevelt High School culinary arts teacher Ben Rengstorf (far right) stands with student volunteers at the fall community meal on Nov. 21, 2024. Rengstorf believes, "When you cook together you form a community." (Photo by Rosalind Smith)  
>> More photos online at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)

tables at these events to sell their wares and educate the public. At the fall meal, the RHS Farming Program gave away native seed packets and the jewelry program sold necklaces, earrings, and ceramic tumblers.

RCA instructors Rengstorf and Shanley buy solely from local markets and companies with the goal of putting as much back into the community as possible. Not only do these meals bring people together and nourish their bodies with good food, they also help local and family run businesses stay afloat. For the fall meal on Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024, 30 pounds of bison was ordered from Rengstorf's family farm.

Rengstorf believes, "When you cook

together you form a community." The RCA class does just that – working together, cooking together, cleaning together and eating together.

"I love that I can learn how to cook in a judgment-free environment, and in a space that is meant to be for learning," said RCA senior Charlie.

RHS Parent Liaison Crichtina Patlan added, "It's important to gather our community members together around a meal. Watching the students shine with pride when serving something they made, is absolutely the best part." She is proud of how so many come together to make something so thoughtful happen, and hopes more people come to these events.

The fall meal was served in the media

center, which was new. Attendees praised the food and the student chefs.

Now, to the food: bison meat balls with a berry sauce, corn salsa, and wild rice. Homemade maple lemonade that was a hit with all everyone. Paper menus were available on each table. The RCA made sure that plates, cups and cutlery were all compostable.

If you would like to attend an RCA Community Meal, or donate to the RCA, go to [rooseveltculinaryarts.org](http://rooseveltculinaryarts.org). Donations ensure the department is fully funded and that caring, thoughtful instructors can continue to teach RHS students how to cook in a nurturing, safe environment.

Rosalind Smith is a student at Roosevelt High School.



Roosevelt ecology teacher Ms. Nordby and jewelry teacher Ms. Cambell hosted a table to see their wares and educate the public. (Photo by Rosalind Smith)



Ben Rengstorf (left) and Carlyn Shanley work together at Roosevelt High School's culinary arts program and help organize the community meals that are open to the public. (Photo by Rosalind Smith)

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# First Somali-American chiropractor aims to help people be well

*Premier Health Chiropractors of South Minneapolis helps people from different cultures feel comfortable*

By KHALID MOHAMED

Dr. Abdiasis Inshar, a 26-year-old chiropractor working at the Premier Health Chiropractors of South Minneapolis clinic (1813 East Lake St.), believes he is the first Somali-American chiropractor in the Twin Cities.

Holistic healthcare has been on the rise in the U.S. as the percentage of people who reported using health approaches like massage therapy, chiropractic care, and yoga increased from 19.2% in 2002 to 36.7% in 2022, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Inshar said he believes that holistic healthcare is going to continue to grow across the country.

"I think people in America in general are leaning more towards holistic healthcare as opposed to allopathic healthcare because they just want to maintain and stay healthy," Inshar said. "Not everybody wants to go to the MD when they're sick. Some people want to stay healthy and more in tune with their healthcare."

Inshar said holistic healthcare work is about educating and alleviating.

"A lot of it has to do with teaching people about the human body and how it works," Inshar said. "I teach them what's going on in their body, how I can help them, and how we could use passive care, physical therapy, and chiropractic treatment to get better and back to normal."

Inshar, who moved to the U.S. from Kenya as a child and now lives in Minneapolis, said he was skeptical of chiropractic at first but looked into it after his mother was given treatment for back and neck issues from a car accident.

Inshar graduated from the University of St. Thomas with a bachelor's in biology and did IT work at United Health, then later went to Northwestern Health Sciences University in Bloomington to study chiropractic.

Inshar also did volunteer work at mosques in St. Paul as an undergraduate and at the Salvation Army as a graduate student, where he gave free chiropractic adjustments to those in need.

"It helped me realize what's important as far as being in the healthcare field," Inshar said. "That's helping as much people as you can with as much of your ability at that time."

The Premier Health Chiropractors of South Minneapolis clinic is one of seven Premier Health clinics within the Twin Cities area. The clinic, located near Lake Street, offers translation services on top of



Dr. Abdiasis Inshar shows a treatment room where patients receive chiropractic care at Premier Health Chiropractors. (Photo by Khalid Mohamed)

its chiropractic services as it mostly works with Latino and Somali patients.

Inshar said that Lake Street is the heart of Minneapolis and working in the area is important.

"It helps quite a bit because you can be in the community while working in it," Inshar said. "If you want to help the community, you have to actually be in proximity of it."

Inshar said working at the clinic has been positive since starting in January. Inshar said he decided to work at the clinic after seeing what Dr. Josey Perez, the owner of the clinic, did for the Latino community.

"He's really a pillar in his community in the sense where everybody knows him and everybody knows to go to him for any chiropractic or any musculoskeletal problems they may have," Inshar said. "Knowing that he's done it for such a long time and in such a great way, I decided to work

for him this past year so I can learn how he does what he does and how I can replicate it in the Somali community."

The clinic sees around 200 patients per week. It is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Perez said there is a huge need for people from different cultures to feel at home.

"We want to provide that type of environment for our people, for our cultures, and create that family environment for the community," Perez said. "Our people work hard and they don't have flexible schedules, so we have to accommodate to serve our communities' needs."

Perez, who moved from Mexico to the U.S. to pursue a degree in chiropractic, said he opened the clinic in South Minneapolis because of the Spanish speaking community in the area. Perez, who currently lives in Lakeville, said many clinics



The clinic, located at 1813 East Lake St, sees around 200 patients per week. (Photo by Khalid Mohamed)



Dr. Josey Perez owns Premier Health Chiropractors of South Minneapolis. Perez moved to the U.S. from Mexico in 1996 to pursue a degree in chiropractic. He graduated in 2000 and stayed after getting married. (Photo by Khalid Mohamed)

aren't able to serve communities in the Twin Cities area and he wanted to break that barrier.

"With the Latino community, they feel scared to go to the doctor just to get checked because they don't speak English," Perez said. "Our goal is to be able to provide the community with a professional clinic where we speak the language of their choice."

Perez said holistic healthcare has lots of room for growth, but it's only scraping the tip of the iceberg.

"A lot more people are looking at different alternatives other than traditional medicine," Perez said. "Our goal is to fix the cause so they can have long lasting results and not only cover up the symptoms."

Khalid Mohamed is a University of Minnesota student majoring in journalism.



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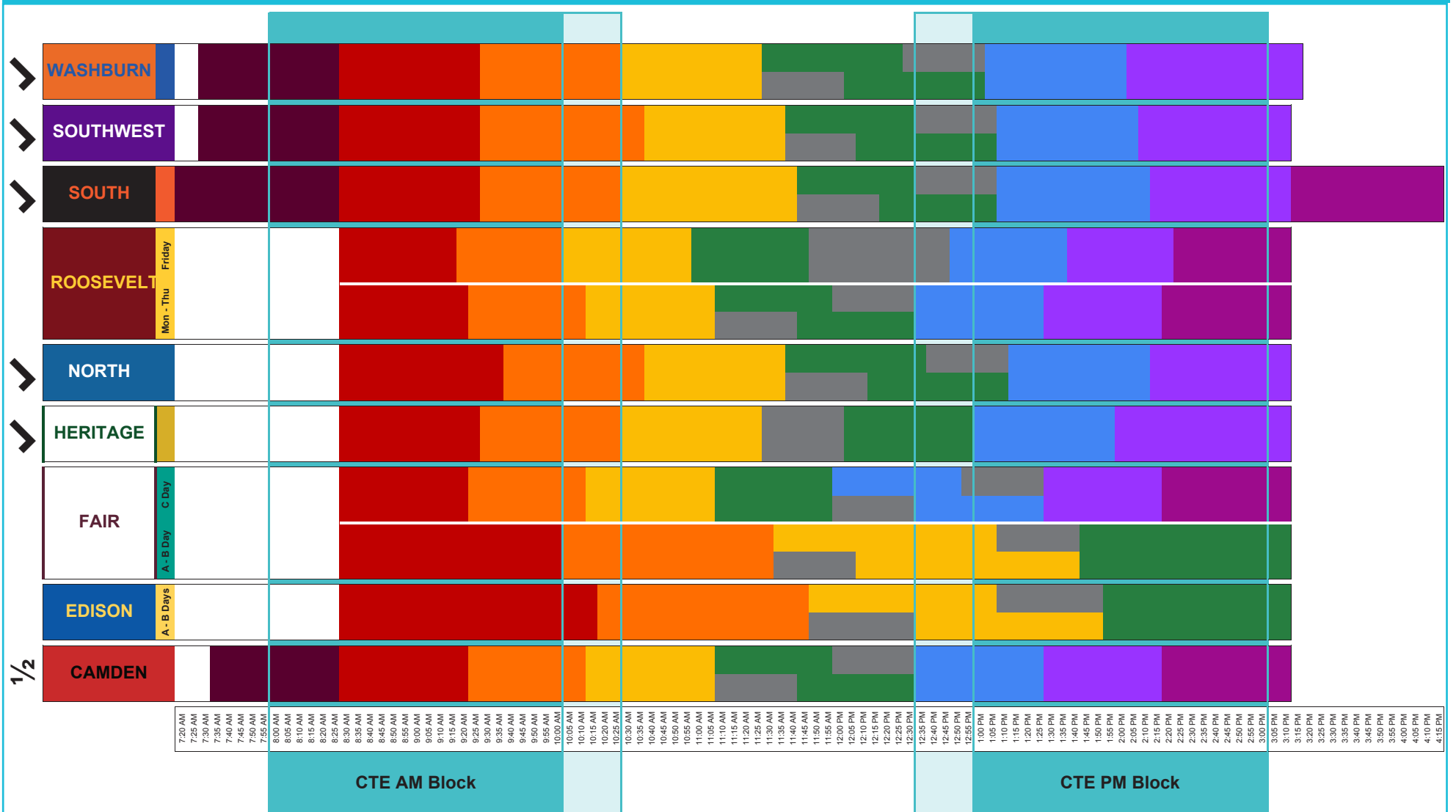
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MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULES PREVENT STUDENTS FROM TAKING CTE CLASSES



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their schedules due to incompatibility with their school's different class hours.

The district's nine high schools have varying class period schedules. One starts the day at 7:20 a.m., two at 7:30 a.m., one at 7:35 a.m., and five at 8:30 a.m. One ends at 3 p.m., five at 3:10 p.m., another at 3:15 p.m., and the last at 4:12 p.m. (See illustration above.)

Complicating things further is that class periods range from long block days to shorter class periods. Some schools have the same class times per day, while Fair operates on A-B Days with some C Days; and Roosevelt has the same schedule Mondays to Thursdays and a different one on Fridays.

The district has issued a recommended bell schedule of 8:30 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. for its schools that would standardize times and allow students to attend CTE classes. Some high school leadership have made it a priority for their students to access CTE programming, while others have not, as the diagram shows. The school board is the only entity that can mandate a schedule in the district.

The CTE class schedule, commonly referred to as the bell schedule, has an a.m. block class from 8:05-10 a.m., a mid-day block between 10:05 a.m. and 1 p.m. (this varies depending on the tech center), and a p.m. block from 1:05-3 p.m. This gives students time to travel back to their high schools from 10:05-10:25 a.m. and from high school to a tech center from 12:35-1 p.m. Breakfast is available at the tech center and students eat lunch at their home high schools.

The light turquoise block in the graphic above shows the 25-minute minimum travel time to and from a home school. If that 25-minute time interrupts another class, students can't take CTE classes without missing a class out of their schedule. — essentially taking a free hour. That isn't possible in most student's schedules.

Some classes are also offered online. Because they are asynchronous, they can be taken at any time. Students can take

general courses online to make room for CTE classes in person, but students report varying levels of support for registering for those depending on individual high school policies.

Currently, students from only five of the district's high schools can access some CTE classes because their schedules line up enough to do so (Washburn, Southwest, South, North, and Heritage), and Camden's students can make the p.m. block work.

REAL SKILLS FOR THE REAL WORLD

Getting trained in high school for well-paying jobs is the goal of the Minneapolis Public Schools CTE program.

"Real skills for the real world," said Luseni.

There are over 70 CTE courses that lead to pathways at the overlap of the most high-paying and high-demand careers in the metro area, according to the objectives of the federal Perkins grant that funds the program. Students can earn college credits and industry credentials, and are connected to a variety of career exploration activities including industry professional meetings and panels, worksite and company tours, and immersive apprenticeships and internships.

"The whole idea of CTE is that it's a full circle," stated Luseni.

"I want every student that comes through Minneapolis to be able to say, 'I can graduate from high school with my diploma and also have the confidence and skills for my next step. I have all the connections. I want a job. I can get it.'"

Luseni aims to create options for students so they have skills to work part-time earning serious money and pay their way while attending college.

One of the biggest myths CTE staff seek to dispel is that the only way to get a high-paying job is by doing a four-year university program. But emerging careers that require technical degrees for hands-on jobs are on the rise and among the best-paying jobs in America today. CTE courses prepare students for four-year degrees, two-year degrees, and jobs directly out of high school.

The shift in how the district's CTE classes are offered comes when there is an all-time high of 66 percent of high school

graduates attending colleges, but only a quarter of them are actually earning degrees. Instead, they're disengaged because they don't see a connection between their coursework and their future career, as noted in CTE promotional materials.

Of those that do graduate, half find themselves in gray-collar jobs, roles they are underemployed in, and that continues for 33 percent of graduates into their 30s.

CTE programs help address the misalignment between education and the workforce. They focus on this question: What knowledge and skills do you need to get a job today?

Georgetown University predicts only 33 percent of all jobs will require a four-year liberal arts degree or more in the future while the majority will be highly skilled jobs requiring professional and technical training. These are jobs that AI can't do.

Emerging occupations in every industry now require a combination of academic knowledge and technical ability.

"We still need to ask the question: What do we see is the purpose of high school?" remarked Luseni. "As a district, we have to answer that question."

MORE THAN FILLER CLASSES

Career and technical education (CTE) classes can be much more than filler classes, according to Luseni. CTE courses are eligible for college credit, and MPS has articulation agreements with 21 Minnesota colleges so students can seamlessly transition into their programs.

"CTE is not an elective. CTE is for kids that want to see a career in a specific area," observed Luseni.

As the perspective of parents shifts, "they're looking at CTE as an extension of their kids' next steps," said Luseni.

CTE staff also connect with large state employers to train students so that they are ready for jobs as soon as they graduate

from high school.

"If you decide I don't want to go to college, I want to get a job, we will make sure you are trained," observed Luseni.

CTE uses a pathways approach that explores 15 various careers available in agriculture, automotive tech and collision repair, business entrepreneurship and marketing, computer science, construction, cybersecurity, education, engineering, healthcare, law and public safety, machine technology, media arts, robotics and drone technology, and welding. These jobs have been identified federally as growing areas in the Twin Cities that will have high pay.

Those fascinated by media arts help run the KBEM radio station, learn sound tech, and create podcasts. Students who want to be police officers can get hands-on experience through service-learning opportunities to ready them before entering the local police force. Engineering students recently toured the Minnesota Department of Transportation to learn about infrastructure and the high-end computer systems used to manage it.

TRANSITION TO 3 CTE CENTERS

The shift from offering various CTE classes at individual high schools was part of the Comprehensive District Design. It was cited as a way to equitably offer the same classes to all students, as previously only some schools had the equipment or qualified staff who could teach these classes. The change was effective for the 2023-2024 school year when a 282,794-square-foot addition to house the largest tech center on the North High campus was ready for student with indoor areas for flying drones, classrooms and flexible spaces. There are smaller tech ed centers at Edison and Roosevelt.

Before the 2023 fall semester, CTE class offerings at individual schools varied greatly. Some had them and others didn't. The classes require teachers with specialized skills and equipment, and not every school was able to fill enough classes to make that work.

"The center-based approach creates equity in the system," said Luseni. "This way, every kid in the district has an option to say, 'I want to take a CTE course no



### CAREER TRAINING

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matter where and the district will get me there."

He added, "When you are not doing a center approach, then most of the students do not get the opportunity for some of the programming."

He acknowledged that there will be growing pains as they transition to this model, including the misalignment with school bell schedules that interferes with the ability of some students to take the classes.

Other districts in Minnesota have also moved to centralized CTE, including Anoka-Hennepin and Wright County (which supports the eight neighboring school districts of Annandale, Big Lake, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, Delano, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted, Maple Lake, Monticello, and St. Michael-Albertville).

#### SKILLS, CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR K-8, TOO

MPS CTE has piloted a new program with Junior Achievement so that its young-



"I want every student that comes through Minneapolis to be able to say, 'I can graduate from high school with my diploma and also have the confidence and skills for my next step. I have all the connections. I want a job. I can get it,'" said Minneapolis Public Schools Tech Center Principal Michael Luseni. The district's tech centers offer 15 pathways that have been identified as leading to jobs at the overlap of high paying and high demand. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

er students can begin exploring careers in addition to the importance of personal finance, and the value of work. There are programs for grades kindergarten to eighth grade. It includes the popular BizTown, an immersive day-long visit to a simulated town where students operate banks, manage restaurants, write checks, and vote for mayor. Students are able to connect the dots between what they learn in school and the real world. JA Learning Experiences support national and state standards in reading, mathematics, social studies, and work and career readiness.

"Kids as early as kindergarten can ask who they want to be," said Luseni.



#### NEBA DONATES TO PTA

On behalf of the Nokomis East Business Association, treasurer Tesha M. Christensen (right) presents \$500 to the Lake Nokomis Community School PTA. Accepting were LNCS Keewaydin Community School Principal Kristiana Ward (left), Cullen Krall, and Andrew Krall. The money was raised from sales

of 2024 Nokomis Days t-shirts. The Nokomis East Business Association (NEBA) partnered with Nokomis Life and the PTA on its first ever Nokomis Days Kids Art Contest. The winning design was showcased on t-shirts and the second place design was on temporary tattoos.

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# NATURAL ORGANIC REDUCTION

*A greener burial option is coming to Minnesota*

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Live On Minnesota is working to become the first provider of Natural Organic Reduction (NOR) in the state of Minnesota. Also known as "human composting," NOR is the safe and peaceful transformation of the body into nutrient-rich compost after death.

South Minneapolis resident Erik Halaas wants to become garden compost himself one day. Through his social venture Live On Minnesota, he is exploring how this natural alternative to cremation and conventional burial can become viable in Minnesota.

Halaas has 10+ years of experience building partnerships to research, test, and apply new approaches to programming in public health and education. He uses the term "intrapreneur" to describe his role: that of a person exploring new opportunities inside longstanding institutions.

## HOW IT WORKS

There aren't many institutions older than funerary care. According to the Green Burial Council, coffin burial and cremation account for 94% of all funerals in the US. Both have significant negative impacts on the environment. Coffin burials account for 64,000 tons of steel, 1.6 million tons of concrete, and 4 million gallons of embalming fluid annually. Cremation has an annual carbon output equivalent to burning roughly 400 million pounds of coal.

Like all composting, NOR creates new life through death. Leaning into the principles of nature, NOR layers the body with organic material (wood chips, straw, alfalfa, wildflowers) in a reusable vessel, adds oxygen and movement to facilitate microbial activity, and breaks the body down into its natural and nutrient-rich



*Erik Halaas is founder of Live On Minnesota, which aims to return the body to the earth after death, while conserving land and reducing carbon emissions. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)*

elements. Inorganic materials like artificial joints are sifted and removed and the final product is ready to support new life. Once decomposition is complete, about a cubic yard of organic material can be returned to the family.

## TABOO SUBJECT

In addition to bringing NOR to Minnesota, Halaas hopes to support a culture of open communication on the topics of death and dying. He said, "Even though there's nothing as normal as death, it can

create real challenges for families. I think we could all learn to live better if we deepened our understanding of death and its inevitabilities."

Halaas added, "NOR provides a unique opportunity to process loss and grief. We typically rush through the preparations for memorial services and final disposition. Because this process is slow, usually around two months from start to finish, there's just a lot more time to reflect."

## DISPOSITION

Disposition, in end-of-life vocabulary, means the disposing of the body. All have to go somewhere when we die. Seven years ago, Halaas' mother-in-law died and his family had their first close-in experience with death. At the time, NOR was in its infancy. Without plans for her burial, the family defaulted to cremation. He said, "She was an avid gardener and would have welcomed the chance to be returned to her garden. I wish we had had this option then."

The NOR movement began in Washington state in 2014, when an architecture

## 11TH STATE TO LEGALIZE NOR

Governor Tim Walz signed the bill that legalizes human composting in Minnesota six months ago, giving Minnesota residents the option to choose NOR for their end-of-life plans. The Minnesota Department of Health license goes into effect on July 1, 2025. This is part of a broader trend in the US towards more environmentally-conscious burial practices. Minnesota is the 11th state to legalize NOR. This legislation signifies a shift toward sustainable end-of-life options that reflect a commitment to making one's last carbon footprint as small as possible.

student named Katrina Spade started looking at different systems of disposition for a thesis project. She went on to create her own company, called Recompose, which has one of the few NOR facilities up and running in the country. Washington, Nevada, and Colorado are the only three states with operational NOR facilities to date, but that will likely start to change soon.

Halaas is working to make his business, Live on Minnesota, the state's first NOR facility. He said, "I started the design of a vessel with students at the University of Minnesota last spring. My hope is to continue exploring that option. Opening a facility is a capital intensive process; the entry point is a hurdle. I have heard of other folks, both within and beyond the state of Minnesota, who have an interest in investing."

In the meantime, he's hopeful that people will start having more conversations around death and dying. He said, "Funeral costs are the third largest life expense on average for people living in the U.S. In Minnesota, the average cost for a full-service burial is over \$9,000, and can easily cost far more. In states with NOR facilities, the cost is around \$6,000. The average cost for direct cremation is around \$3,000."

Halaas concluded, "I don't expect NOR to be the burial method that all Minnesotans choose, but it's an option many may feel comfortable with. I'm excited by the possibility of offering a more sustainable alternative."

For more information on Natural Organic Reduction and the work of Erik Halaas and his team, visit [www.liveonmn.com](http://www.liveonmn.com). Mueller Memorial, a funeral home with locations in St. Paul and White Bear Lake, offers NOR coordinating resources: [www.muellermemorial.com/dust-to-dust](http://www.muellermemorial.com/dust-to-dust).

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# MICHAEL DOWLING AND THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL

*Namesake of south Minneapolis school also known for establishing first road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound*

By SCOTT TEDRICK

Mud up to hubcaps. Gumbo so slippery it felt like an ice rink. Dust so thick in the summer, travelers wore long duster coats, goggles and hats. Roads were so bad in most of the nation in 1912 that private citizen grassroots groups formed to “get out of the mud,” which was a national cry. Automobile sales were burgeoning but there were no connected, long distance roads out of town (mostly in the West) on which to drive the new black beauty. State and federal governments were doing nothing about auto road building. The time had come.

The Yellowstone Trail Association (YTA) was one of many groups pushing for long-distance roads, and it was the first group to create a transcontinental route through the northern tier of states. In 1912 a small band of men in Ipswich, S. D., envisioned a road “from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound.” They called it the Yellowstone Trail (YT) to honor the national park.

The YTA did not build roads with pick and shovel. Its 8,000 members persuaded governments to build a single road that connected to a single road from adjoining counties. Thus, a long-distance road resulted, piece by piece. They promoted cross-country tourist traffic, marked the route with yellow signs, and provided maps. It was a grassroots effort, not a governmental effort, and not the effort of a few wealthy business leaders, as was the Lincoln Highway through the Lincoln Highway Association, which was formed a year after the YTA.

Communities along the route paid a membership fee to the YTA to be advertised in its travel literature. People fought to get their towns on the Trail, envisioning tourist trade, economic development, and an efficient way to get farmers’ produce to rail heads.

The YT quickly expanded. The Trail was three years old by the time it reached Wisconsin in 1915. By 1919, the entire route was firmly established coast-to-coast. It shadowed the route of the Milwaukee Road Railroad from the Twin Cities into Montana, and then the Union Pacific further out west.

## YTA PRESIDENT DOWLING

When Michael Dowling died in 1921, it mattered to the thousands who paid their respects and it mattered to the old YTA because he had been a robust, recent association president. Dowling had also been a teacher, newspaper editor, banker, mayor, auto salesman, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence tidewater commissioner, inspirational speaker for the World War I veterans, Speaker of the Minnesota House, congressional and gubernatorial candidate and friend of U.S. presidents. Of course, he also founded a school for physically handicapped children (Dowling school in south Minneapolis). And he performed all these accomplishments in spite of the amputation of both legs, an arm and all but the stub of his thumb on his other hand following severe frostbite as a child.

While president of the YTA (1917-1919), Dowling visited military hospitals here and in Europe after World War I, inspiring wounded veterans to self-reliance. Whether he spoke to one vet alone or to 5,700 at New York’s Hippodrome, his message was the same: Don’t spend your time thinking about the things that are gone. Think of what you have left. He was, unaffectedly, leading by example.

The YTA caught Dowling’s imagina-



ABOVE Michael Dowling in his automobile.



tion. As an auto dealer in Olivia, Minn., and the first to own a car in Renville County, he had foreseen the role of the auto in the development of early 20th century of America. He knew the value of roads as an absolute economic and cultural necessity that the federal government was ignoring.

Dowling determined to assist the YTA by driving the Trail along the whole of its barely discernible 1913 route from Minnesota to the Yellowstone National Park. The trip was immortalized in the book “We Blazed the Trail” as recounted by Dowling’s daughter Dorothy Dowling Prichard to book author, Barry Prichard, her son.

Dowling led a three-car caravan with his Oakland 660 with a right-hand wheel and electric starter. Forging streams, wading through mud and fixing punctures while parked in the tall prairie grass occupied the party, but they did it!

Anxious to expand the trail east, in 1914 he shipped his car through the Great Lakes to Buffalo, N.Y., and began looking for a space to locate the Trail on the popular Rochester-Albany-Boston corridor. He

was told that “there was no more room for colored markers on poles on that route.” Indeed, 11 different colors festooned some poles already. He then blazed a more southern route: Plymouth Rock to Hartford, Conn. and southern New York to northern Pennsylvania.

During his tenure as YTA President, Dowling oversaw the establishment of at least 10 tourist bureaus; he saw the northern route through the East, which was refused to him in 1914, become a reality; and he spoke at all state and national YTA conventions.

The calamity of the blizzard that took Dowling’s limbs would have diminished lesser men, but instead it brought out his strength of character. This remarkable man invigorated the Yellowstone Trail Association as no other had. His very appearance inspired resolve amongst the membership. Newspapers often referred to him as the world’s most optimistic man.



## YELLOWSTONE TRAIL IN MINNEAPOLIS

The Yellowstone Trail cuts through Minneapolis and St. Paul. Follow it east on Lake Street, north on Hennepin Ave. to Washington to Third/Central to University Ave.

## DOWLING SCHOOL

Dowling Community School at 3900 West River Parkway marked its 100th anniversary at a community-wide celebration on Saturday, May 18, 2024. Michael Dowling lent his name to the school when it was established in 1920 in a North Minneapolis church. Originally known as the Michael Dowling School for Crippled Children, the school offered programs for the physically handicapped. 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.

## RETURN OF THE YTA

With the onset of the federal highway system, the YTA disbanded in 1930. Then, 25 years ago, a pair of retired professors from Eau Claire, Wis., John and Alice Ridge sought to revitalize the organization, inviting historical enthusiasts, economic development entities and others to again raise the banner of the YT brand and legacy.

In 2018, the Yellowstone Trail of Minnesota (YTMN) was formed.

In 2021, coincidentally on the day after the 100th anniversary of Dowling’s death, YTMN was awarded a Minnesota Historical Society grant to develop a Cultural Heritage Tourism Master Plan for the state of Minnesota.

The document has aided YTMN in developing connections along the trail from the Twin Cities to Ortonville. Additionally, YTMN seeks to model proactive, state affiliations, that work cooperatively with the national YTA.

The Ridges recently retired from their roles as the leaders of the YTA, handing off the organization to a reformed board.

The group is working on several initiatives to grow the organization and modernize its operations. Individuals interested in learning more or getting involved can visit the YTA’s website at <http://www.yellowstonetrail.org> and the YTMN website at [yellowstonetrailmn.com](http://yellowstonetrailmn.com).

Scott Tedrick of Granite Falls is the editor of the Renville County Register, the newspaper that Michael Dowling started. He drives to work on the road Dowling built. In 2018, he formed the Yellowstone Trail of Minnesota (YTMN) after becoming captivated by Dowling through a historical theatre project ([yellowstonetrailmn.com](http://yellowstonetrailmn.com)). He is also president of the national Yellowstone Trail Association. Reach him at [STedrick@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:STedrick@yellowstonetrail.org).



**NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**



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

# WHAT A YEAR 2024 HAS BEEN FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

**COMMUNITY**

One of our favorite parts of our neighborhood is working with the community. We teamed up with Every Third Saturday to bring a free community meal with live music to any community member who wanted to join us. We also created our newly annual Party at Bossen which included free ice cream, bouncy houses, renter's support resources, and over 70 backpacks filled with back-to-school supplies.

We co-sponsored the Morris Park's 30th Anniversary celebration. With about 500 neighbors the event included free ice cream, bingo, arts and crafts, bounce house, playground activities, and other sports and games. This event helped us create a new program called The Morris Park Toddler Time. This program includes storytelling by Nokomis Square Cooperative volunteers using books selected by the Nokomis Library youth librarian. Morris Park also has an indoor playground and recreation center for children to play.

We hosted our annual kickball tournament, where teams from across the neighborhood brought their community spirit to the field. Our annual garage sale was a great success, bringing neighbors together to hunt for the best deals. At the Monarch Festival, we set up a table where kids created nature-inspired crafts, and during Nokomis Days, families enjoyed a live band while kids transformed the parking lot into a colorful work of art with their paintings.

We worked with Hennepin County Library to provide coats, hats, and boots at the local food shelf. If you would like to donate any of these items, please drop them off at our Nokomis Library!

And who could forget the State of Our Neighborhood and Community Safety Forum – important opportunities to reflect on our shared goals and challenges? We gave neighbors a platform to speak to their representatives directly about issues community members find the most pressing.

**2025**

We are excited about all of the good work we've done in the past year and hope to make next year even better. Please join us at State of Our Neighborhood. It will



NEBA Board members pose at a recent gathering. (Photo submitted)



Community members sport NENA t-shirts at the annual kickball tournament.

be held online on Feb. 5 at 6:30 p.m. We will continue working with Morris Park in promoting toddler time! Starting Jan. 7 from 3:30-5 p.m. at Morris Park, parents and caregivers are welcome to bring their toddlers for open play fun and

storytelling. Please reach out to nena@nokomiseast.org if you would like to volunteer or visit our website at nokomiseast.org to learn about us or our upcoming events!

**ENVIRONMENT**

Environmentally focused events empowered residents to embrace sustainable practices such as our three-part workshop on Seed Saving which taught neighbors how to take seeds out of their own garden to replant in the next year. Building Better Yards helped neighbors access seeds to make their lawns more sustainable. At Earth Day Neighborhood Cleanup, dozens of volunteers came together over a cup of coffee to keep our neighborhoods clean. A friendly competition was held to see which neighbor could pick up the most trash!

**LOCAL BUSINESSES**

We continued our monthly community spotlight on businesses such as Sunbean Coffee and Watt Cycleworks. We even tried our hands with cupcake decorating at Vegan East!

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A Reconciling Congregation  
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& Live-streaming on Our FB Page  
- @EpworthUMCMPLS  
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Sunday School for: Adults at 9 am;  
Kids 0-6 @ 9:30 am  
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Wednesdays 9:30-11:30 am - Kids  
0-5 & their caregivers NO FEE

**Faith Ev. Lutheran Church**  
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www.faithlutheranmpls.org  
Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jared Yogerst  
Sundays - Sundays 9 a.m.  
(Communion 1st and 3rd)  
Mondays: Exercise Class, 10 am  
AA, 6:30 pm  
Wednesdays: NA group, 7:30 pm  
Blind Ministry, Jan. 18, 12- 2 pm

**ISKCON Minnesota Temple**  
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www.iskconminnesota.org  
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Deadline date	Publication date
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Jan. 17 (Friday)	Jan. 30
Feb. 17	Feb. 27
March 17	March 27
April 14	April 24
May 19	May 29
June 16	June 26
July 21	July 31
Aug. 18	Aug. 28
Sept. 22	Oct. 2
Oct. 20	Oct. 30
Nov. 17	Nov. 28 (Friday)
Dec. 15	Jan. 1

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#### APRIL

Home & Garden  
Drive & Ride

#### MAY

Home & Garden  
Summer in the City

#### JUNE

Pride  
Summer in the City  
Living 50+/Good Neighbor

#### JULY

Back 2 School/Education  
Summer in the City

#### AUGUST

Back 2 School/Education  
Summer in the City  
Nokomis Days

#### SEPTEMBER

Back 2 School - Health  
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#### OCTOBER

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**LONGFELLOW  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

By **LIZA DAVITCH**  
communications  
liza@longfellow.org



# LCC'S YEAR IN REVIEW

Last year was filled with growth and discovery. We gained invaluable insights from one another, as well as from the residents, partner organizations, and business owners in Greater Longfellow.

"Longfellow Community Council (LCC) went through many internal changes in 2024, but it was inspiring to see that the core of Greater Longfellow – the people – remained as driven and resilient as ever," recounted Joel McReynolds, Executive Director. "Time and again, I witnessed community members getting things done because they care about their neighbors and are passionate about where they live. Whether it was the volunteer committee organizing the 600+ attended River Gorge Festival or a handful of neighbors getting together for a block party, the accomplishments of this neighborhood and LCC were due to the hard work of caring community members."

Last year, LCC held over 35 meetings, organized 15 events, and coordinated 10 smaller gatherings to foster community connections. We also approved 28 home improvement projects for the Home Improvement Rebate program and distributed \$112,000 to supplement project costs.

We continued our work on the "Free the Deeds," a program inherited from a collective of local artists that focuses on eliminating racial covenants in our neighborhoods. So far, we've successfully facilitated the discharge of over 300 racially restrictive covenants across our four communities. We're excited about our progress, and we are looking to share our process and work with other neighborhoods so they can begin their own program.



Participants are led on an observational hike by Santee Sioux Dakota elder Ramona State-ly at the River Gorge Festival. (Photo by Liza Davitch)

Coming out of the "Free the Deeds" program, a group of neighbors came to LCC with the concern of changing the name of Edmund Boulevard, which was named to honor the originator of many local racial covenants. The "Reclaiming Edmund Boulevard" initiative has worked to make connections with city council members, form relationships with decision makers, provide support and promote educational efforts. Learn more at <https://www.reclaimingedmund.com>.

Other community-led initiatives that LCC supported in 2024 included Save Cooper Playground ([plaympls.org](http://plaympls.org)), 36th ART ([36thart.org](http://36thart.org)), and the Longfellow Business Association's Summer Savings Passport ([longfellowbusinessassociation.org/](http://longfellowbusinessassociation.org/)).

We continued to work with the City of Minneapolis to engage residents around the redevelopment of 3000 Minnehaha and the new South Minneapolis Community Safety Center. LCC also held its own engagement sessions for 3000 Minnehaha and presented community responses to the city and our staff provided reports to city officials and the city council on the community feedback sessions in hopes that the need for greater community engagement efforts are determined to be both needed and deserved. The report also showed a need for more community engagement around that site.

As we move into the winter season, LCC's snow shoveling program is a priority focus as we work to connect volunteer shovelers with residents in need. It makes



LCC Community Organizer Ben Howery (center), and Ward 9 Council Member Jason Chavez (left) lead a panel at a Longfellow Business Association morning mixer. (Photo by Liza Davitch)

a huge difference to our community not only for those receiving the services, but for those who depend on clear sidewalks to be able to get around.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all our dedicated volunteers and neighbors who have engaged with LCC, as well as to those who have recently joined our committees, attended events, or supported our organization through donations.

Want to get more involved with LCC? The Environment & River Gorge Committee works on environmental projects and events in the community, while the Equitable Development Committee reviews and discusses development projects in the neighborhood. Our board meets virtually every third Tuesday of the month and the committees meet on the first Wednesday of every month. All meetings are open to the public.

If you have ideas for what you'd like to see in the new year, please don't hesitate to reach out via email. You can reach LCC at [info@longfellow.org](mailto:info@longfellow.org) and by visiting [longfellow.org](http://longfellow.org) or following us on Facebook or Instagram.

Let's make next year even better together!

## CITY BRIEFS

### COUNCIL APPROVES BUDGET

Despite a veto from Mayor Jacob Frey, the Minneapolis City Council approved a budget for next year after lowering expenses, revenues and the mayor's proposed property tax levy by 1.5%, or \$12,708,577 and approving over 70 amendments.

### 2025 CITY ELECTION

There will be mayoral, city council and park board elections next year. Emily Koski, DeWayne Davis, Omar Fateh, Brenda Short and Jacob Frey have all announced that they are running for mayor in 2025. With Koski's decision, Ward 11 is now an open seat, with one candidate, Jamison Whiting, running so far. The executive director of the Stevens Square-Loring Heights Community Organization, Lydia Millard, has announced her candidacy for Ward 10 council member. She will likely be challenging council member Aisha Chughtai, who was elected in 2021 and reelected in 2023. Becky Thompson, park commissioner from the northside's district 2, has announced she will be running for city council for ward 12, where Aurin Chowdhury will be running for reelection.

Soren Stevenson announced he is running for city council in ward 8 again for the seat that is currently held by Andrea Jenkins.

### FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

The city has authorized agreements for Great Streets Facade Improvement Grants for next year, totaling \$380,000, including to southside organizations as follows: \$50,000 to the Lake Street Council, \$20,000 to the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association, and \$20,000 to the Standish Ericsson Neighborhood Association. The Facade Improvement Matching Grant Program provides grants to businesses and property owners for building improvements and, according to city staff, has stimulated over \$11.9 million of investment in business facade improvements since its inception in 2008, including \$3,477,044 in matching grants that helped leverage \$8,477,203 in private investment.

### COOPER PLAYGROUND

On Dec. 13 the Minneapolis Public Schools' operations office, Tom Parent, announced that the school district was awarded a \$100,000 grant from Hennepin County to improve the Cooper playground which "will remain under MPS ownership and care." They plan to work

with the Longfellow Community Council to develop a plan and make the playground improvements in 2025.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDED

The city council has approved \$2,255,000 funding for Cheatham Apartments (3716 Cheatham Ave.) for new construction of 98 units of mixed income housing with a significant number of large family units.

### CITY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The city council has approved a 2025 Legislative Agenda. It prioritizes state funding requests for the Nicollet Ave. Bridge over Minnehaha Creek (\$2 million), renewal of a 36-inch water main, (\$12.36 million), three flood mitigation projects and \$5.7 million toward the community purchase of the Roof Depot site for use as a community-envisioned urban farm. It also calls for funding for programs that support small businesses, entrepreneurs, and local artists; affordable housing and homelessness prevention; and for zero-waste initiatives that will help prepare for the closure of the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center.

### COUNTY JAIL SPACE

The Hennepin County Board has ap-

proved spending \$5.4 million over the next six months to reduce its jail population to 600 of fewer inmates. The money will go to seven other counties to meet a state order to reduce the population at its Minneapolis jail.

### COUNTY ADVISORY BOARDS

Hennepin County accepted applications until Dec. 31 from residents interested in volunteering to serve on advisory boards, commissions, councils and special task forces. This includes their Adult Mental Health Local Advisory Council, Library Board, Racial Equity Advisory Council, Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and more. People can apply at [hennepin.us/advisoryboards](http://hennepin.us/advisoryboards).

### FOOD WASTE SURVEY

The county is requesting input on a new food waste prevention plan that it is developing. They are seeking people to share ideas and provide feedback on proposed strategies to prevent wasted food and make progress toward zero-waste and climate-action goals. Find the survey at [www.jotform.com/mplshdrpi/Hennepin-County-Wasted-Food](http://www.jotform.com/mplshdrpi/Hennepin-County-Wasted-Food)

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## DON'T LET THE MPLS. HOUSING AUTHORITY CAST A SHADOW OVER OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

Support your Seward West Project Area Committee. They are fighting to save homes... not destroy them.

**REMEMBER: Once "the man" downtown mutilates our neighborhood... it can never be replaced.**

By IRIC NATHANSON

*Part one of a series.*

The decade of the 1960s, with its anti-war protests, urban unrest and tumultuous politics, was coming to end. Now, in South Minneapolis, some young activists had turned their attention to a cause closer to home – the campaign to save the city's Seward West neighborhood from the urban renewal bulldozers.

While the struggle to shape the future of this historic blue-collar district was underway, two groups of community activists with very different operating styles joined forces to promote community-based redevelopment in Seward.

One of the of the groups, calling itself Neighborhood Research and Development (NRD), was based at a local church, Trinity Lutheran. NRD's aim was to provide housing for low and moderate income people, some of whom would be displaced by the city's Seward West urban renewal project. Later NRD would partner with an advisory body, known as the Seward West Project Area Committee (PAC), established by the city of Minneapolis to oversee the Seward project. The PAC may have been set up by the city but its members had their own ideas about urban renewal and its implementation in their neighborhood.

The NRD-PAC partnership created a new organization with long-term staying power. Over the span of 50 years, this grass roots group would change its name several times and reinvent itself to take on new challenges and opportunities. Today, known as Redesign Inc, this unique community organization has helped to reshape a broad swath of South Minneapolis.

### ORIGINS

The NRP-PAC alliance took a while to jell. The Trinity group took the initiative, reaching out to the PAC, but the Seward activists were not at all sure they wanted to link up with these "do gooders" from outside the neighborhood.

Trinity Church, itself, had succumbed to the bulldozers in 1962, but those bulldozers were not making way for urban renewal. Instead, they were clearing a path for Interstate 94, the freeway that would connect downtown Minneapolis with downtown St. Paul. The congregation may

# SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY BUILDER



In the 1970s, Tony Scallon (l) and Bob Roscoe spearheaded the Seward West preservation movement." TOP LEFT: This house on 23rd Avenue was rehabbed by Redesign in 1975. (Photos courtesy of the Hennepin History Museum)

have lacked a building but it had money in the bank from the sale of its property to the Minnesota Highway Department. With a strong commitment to social justice, congregation members decided they would use some of the church funds to purchase run-down houses in the neighborhood and sell them to low- and moderate-income home buyers.

While Trinity was making plans for a housing initiative in the early 1970s, the PAC was taking on an increasingly dominant role in Seward West, prodding city's Housing and Redevelopment Authority to change its focus from clearance to rehabilitation.

The PAC was composed of young activists, members of the counter culture, some of whom proudly identified themselves as hippies. In the 1960s, they had started moving into the aging blue-collar neighborhood around Milwaukee Avenue, the narrow two-block long street lined with modest workers cottages built in the 1880s. One local humorously quipped that Milwaukee Avenue was a place where "the houses were close together but the people were spaced out!"

The PAC leaders included a vociferous, hard charging young school teacher named Tony Scallon. The renewal battles in Seward helped launch Scallon's political career, culminating with his chairmanship of the city council's powerful Community Development Committee. (More than 40 years later, Tony Scallon would retain close ties to Redesign, serving as a member of the group's Board of Directors.)

On the PAC, Scallon teamed up with a young architect named Bob Roscoe, who helped bring the historic preservation movement to Seward. Roscoe oversaw Milwaukee Avenue's revitalization. Later, he chaired the city's Historic Preservation Commission.

The PAC activists imbued with an anti-establishment ideology, took an aggressive stance in dealing with the HRA. In one of its campaign flyers, the activists warned Seward West residents not to "let the Mpls Housing Authority cast a shadow over our neighborhood.... REMEMBER once the 'man' downtown mutilates our neighborhood it can never be replaced."

Scallon, Roscoe and their followers opposed the HRA clearance plan, but they wanted to replace it with a community-led effort to rehab the houses in Seward West and make them available to current neighborhood residents. In that way, they shared a common cause with the people from Trinity Church

Dave Raymond, a leader of Trinity

group, remembers those early efforts to connect with the PAC. "They viewed us as outsiders and they rebuffed our early efforts to partner with them. We thought they were pretty scruffy and a little crazy but we knew they were doing some interesting things. After meeting with them for a couple of months, we decided to join them. We basically gave away our money and our corporation to them."

"I guess it was our Norwegian background coming into play," Raymond went on to explain. "There is this dictum against boasting. You are not supposed to

*In the early years, Redesign fought city HRA's plan to tear down homes and worked to rehab them for residents*

flaunt yourself. You go out and do good things but you are not supposed to talk about it. That's why we let Trinity take a back seat and let the people from the PAC take control."

As its first project, SWR wanted to purchase six houses from the HRA, rehab them and sell them to neighborhood residents. But almost immediately, Redesign ran into a roadblock when the local HUD office refused to approve the plan. Then, "arm wrestling" HUD with muscle provided by the PAC, SWR was finally able to persuade the local housing officials to let their organization move ahead with its first project.

HUD's green light launched Redesign's long-term effort to promote community development in and around Seward. During its first few years, the non-profit group rehabbed several dozen single family homes, and developed a series of low income and market rate housing projects in its South Minneapolis neighborhood.

By the early 1980s, Redesign was at a cross roads. Many of its early housing objectives had been achieved, and some in the neighborhood wondered if there was a future for this unique organization born through the marriage of two unlikely partners.

But soon, Redesign rejuvenated itself, moved in a new direction and took on a monumental housing stabilization effort that would define its community building legacy.

Watch for part two of Redesign's Early Years an upcoming issue of the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger.

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