



## Through process, youth learn something and then teach the next person to do it Green Chair Project helps homeless youth

By JAN WILLMS

Resilience, collaboration, flexibility. All choice descriptions that organizations have needed to follow in these times of pandemic and social unrest. So why not bring back a project that worked before in the early 1990s?

Joel Sisson and Chris Hand came up with the Green Chair Project around 1991. It was shortly after the Rodney King beating in LA, and Sisson had recently moved to a South Minneapolis neighborhood around 31st and Pleasant.

"It was a crack neighborhood, off and on, and Minneapolis was called Murderapolis at that time," Sisson recalled. "I got jumped and beat up by some guys, and I had to decide: fight or flight? What do I do to not be afraid of these young people who were identifying as gang members? How do I change that interaction for both them and myself, so we can get to know each other in different ways?"

And so the Green Chair Project was born. Sisson and Hand had inner city youth building Adirondack lawn chairs and painting them green. "The idea was that we would build chairs and give away two to each house on our block. We worked in the back yard that we tore up to put this project together."

And as the chairs were being constructed, Sisson noticed



Lue Her (left) and Marcellius Watley build a chair. Through the Green Chair Project at Elpis Enterprise, youth who are homeless or who have been homeless learn woodworking skills. Right now, work is being done at the Elpis workshop or outside. To purchase a chair or have a group sign up for a workshop, contact Elpis Enterprises at [info@elpisenterprises.org](mailto:info@elpisenterprises.org) or call 651-644-5080. (Photo by Jan Willms)

that neighbors came out on the street. Normally no one came out unless there was a fight, or a shooting or a bust, according to Sisson.

The project took off, and

later chairs four times the size of the original were built and placed around Minnesota and in Washington, D.C. Sisson said chairs were placed at Duke Ellington High School in D.C.,

and installations were done at the Washington Monument and at Congress.

GREEN CHAIR PROJECT >> 3

## New life for used plywood

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

In the wake of the Uprising, St. Paul was flooded with a reusable commodity that residents weren't used to seeing everywhere: plywood. Within four days of George Floyd's murder, plywood covered hundreds of businesses and organizations in Hamline Midway, Grand Avenue and Highland Park. If one business owner chose to cover windows and doors, it seemed like everybody on the block followed suit.

ReUSE Minnesota Board President Jenny Kedward is a recycling educator by trade, a professional trash talker who has been taking the message of recycling to schools, businesses, and neighborhood groups for 14 years. The Frogtown resident said, "ReUSE Minnesota stands with our communities advocating for systems change and pursuing justice for George Floyd."

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## Will they find new locations in the Midway?

By JANE MCCLURE

Midway Center businesses are moving on, after meeting a July 17 deadline to get their fixtures, equipment and any remaining inventory out of the fire-damaged building. Leases were terminated in late June by owner RK Midway.

The blow is softened by RK Midway's Rick Birdoff and Minnesota United FC owner Bill McGuire's announcement that they will provide \$10,000 to help each affected business with moving, storage and relocation costs. Relocation costs would include costs required for a new lease, new equipment and any construction-related expense, according to a July 20 email.

The shopping center was extensively damaged during un-

WILL THEY FIND >> 5

## Lloyd's Pharmacy reopens down the block after fire



Owner and pharmacist Jim Stage stands in front of the temporary location for Lloyd's Pharmacy at 694 Snelling. (Photos by Tesha M. Christensen)

### Construction on new building to start soon

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Six weeks after Lloyd's Pharmacy burned to the ground, the longtime Midway business is operating down the block at 694 Snelling Ave.

"This is our home," said owner Jim Stage. "We love being back in the neighborhood."

By the beginning of August, Stage expected to be offering all of their services again, including compounding and vaccinations. They will not be offering COVID-19 testing as that requires more space than they have.

Lloyd's customers are delighted their neighborhood pharmacy is back in the com-

munity. It had operated at 720 Snelling Ave. N. for 102 years before burning down on Friday morning, May 29, 2020 during the civil unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis.

"Some are so excited they cry," stated Stage. "It's like a reunion."

Stage pointed out that customers come in regularly to pharmacies, and they have a lot of repeat business as people refill their medications. It is much more convenient to have the pharmacy nearby for residents so they don't have to drive far.

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Local actors write, produce,  
perform one-act play

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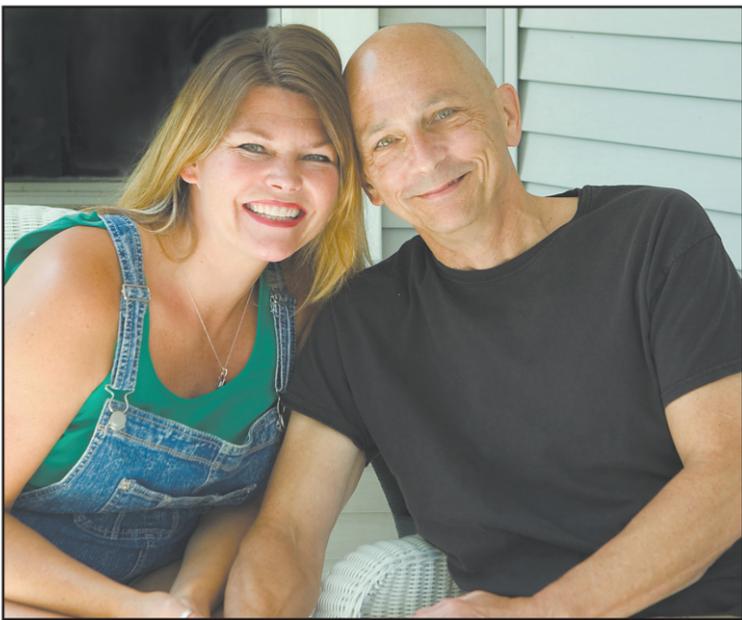
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'Crisis schooling'  
versus homeschooling

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Springboard Center  
for the Arts springs  
back after damage

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Jen Maren (left) and Pete Simmons co-created and are now performing the one-act play "My Funny Quarantine". The play navigates the first three months of their quarantine together with humor, and occasional despair. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



Local actors write, produce, direct, and perform one-act play

# MY FUNNY QUARANTINE

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

In the last line of Frank Sinatra's classic love song, "My Funny Valentine," Old Blue Eyes sang, "Stay little Valentine, stay, for each day is Valentine's Day."

Hamline Midway residents Jen Maren and Pete Simmons have been together for almost a decade. Valentine's Day came and went this year and not long after, every day became Quarantine Day. People who lived together had to stay together 24/7 – because suddenly there was nowhere else to go.

The two longtime actors watched as their theater work ground to a halt. Maren said, "Like so many other things, the performance industry collapsed under the weight of COVID-19. Pete and I have spent our lives building careers in the theater, and we aren't exactly spring chickens. In early March, I went through a period of grieving. I'm an entertainer; I'm an educator; I try to bring joy to people. I had no idea what to do."

Feeling the effects of the Stay-at-Home Order, Maren and Simmons found their way to doing what they do best. They created a play about being quarantined – and its effects on their marriage.

Simmons said, "The play had a quick gestation. It caused



"My Funny Quarantine" brings live theater, original music and swordplay to backyards and alleys across the Twin Cities. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

a few birth pangs and some post-partum depression, but it's here."

### 'Why don't we do something together?'

The early visioning process went something like this. Realizing they couldn't work with any other theater professionals, Maren said, "Why don't we do something together?"

Simmons answered, "No!" and disappeared into a room. Four days later he had written the first draft of the play.

Maren and Simmons are both energetic and clearly have strong independent streaks. Simmons said, "Before the pandemic, we worked for the Science

Museum of Minnesota through their Science Live Theatre Program during the day. I was acting in Park Square Theatre's 'Romeo and Juliet,' and would be in their production of 'Holmes and Watson' right now.

"Jen was performing in 'Dixie Swim Club' at the Old Log Theater in March, and would have been performing as Marjorie Congdon Caldwell in the History Theatre's production of 'Glensheen,' followed by a state-wide tour of that show."

Simmons said, "We've never spent more than a week together this intensely, and that would have been when we were on vacation."

MY FUNNY QUARANTINE >> 3

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# Green Chair Project helps homeless youth

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After about 12 years, Sisson stepped back from the project. He was no longer working with youth, and the chair-building was placed on a back burner.

Fast forward to the spring of 2020. A pandemic unlike anything since 1918 was ravaging the country. And then, in Minneapolis, George Floyd died as a police officer knelt on his neck for more than eight minutes. This time, not just this country, but the world exploded in social unrest.

And Sisson got a call from Paul Ramsour, executive director of Elpis Enterprises, an agency working with homeless youth. Elpis, located at 2161 University Ave. in St. Paul, offers internships in screen printing and woodworking to youths who have been homeless, are homeless, or are at risk of homelessness. They also have trainees in the summer who are a part of Right Track and Step-up youth programs in St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Normally, the woodworking trainees would be learning how to build birdhouses and bird feeders and then going out into the community and teaching younger children how to build them. However, due to COVID-19, all the park and recreational center workshops for this had been canceled.

## An idea that came back around

But Ramsour had an idea.

He and Sisson had met years ago in a church basement, where they had both been talking about their youth projects. And Ramsour had taken a couple of the crates used to build chairs and had hung onto them.

"Paul and I had talked over the years, and he messaged me not long after the riots," Sisson said. "Maybe it's time to resurrect the chair project," was Ramsour's message.

"A couple other people had been whispering in my ear about it, also, and so I messaged Paul back and said yes, I would like to give the project to him and help him make it happen."

And so, inner city youth are again building chairs.

The chairs are made of 5-core cedar, the same kind of wood that is used to build decks. Sisson said they can easily last 10 years, especially if they are covered and placed inside during the winter months.

The kit for each chair unfolds into two work tables on wheels. A youth center could unfold the kit, build the chairs, then fold it up and put it away. Sisson said the kits are made to be shipped. "That's what I want to do. I really want to open source this project, and Paul is in line with that. He has kind of taken this on, with Elpis serving as the training center.

"We are trying to develop a manual that we are putting together, with pictures and diagrams of how to build the chair, so someone might be able to take this kit and set up their own workshop."

## Staying safe while building

Sisson said the initial idea was to have three workshops in the areas hardest hit by the rioting: Lake Street, North Minneapolis and St. Paul. "We would

be doing the workshops outside amidst the rubble, and building from there."

However, Sisson said he is comfortable with shifting goals if needed as long as more young people can be put to work. So the plan now is to offer the workshops at Elpis, either outside or in an upstairs space or in the woodworking shop.

"Paul has been in conversations with Ain Dah Yung," Sisson said. That is an organization that also serves homeless youth by providing housing and other benefits. He said the Green Chair Project has also worked with corporate training, and that is also a possibility.

"If we didn't have COVID-19 to worry about, we would probably be doing workshops like crazy right now. But we are all trying to figure out how to stay safe and distance."

Working safely, about four to six trainees could complete the four-hour workshop and can easily build six chairs in that time. The workshops are free, and one chair is given away for every two that are sold. The profits are used to fund the workshops. There is no capacity for painting right now, so the chairs are unpainted cedar.

Sisson said that after a workshop, the youths will have a couple chairs that they can decide what to do with: display them, paint them or sell them.

Each workshop has three stations, according to Sisson. At one station, the arms of the chair are built. At the second station, the back of the chair is built. And at the third station, all the pieces come together.

"It's good to team up a little bit," Sisson said. "We are using my favorite model. You learn how to build something, and then you have to teach the next person how to do it."

At this point, Elpis trainees have already started building chairs. Sisson said with their first run of 50 chairs, 22 have already been sold.

"Our chairs have gotten so much better over the years," Sisson stated. "The quality, the size and the longevity."

He said the development of the product has been a result of some of the people who have been involved over the years with the project. Tim Schwietzer helped design the big Adirondack chairs, which weigh over 2,000 pounds. And Mike Hoyt was involved with running the project for many years and is still involved in community art projects.

"We have the ability to extend this through the fall to the end of the year," Ramsour added. "We would like to do that, selling the chairs to help fund the workshops we do. We have an opportunity this fall to have more interns, and they can learn to build the chairs and can then teach workshops. We are excited about the process."

He said Elpis is also excited about helping bring back the Green Chair Project and that interns have the opportunity to work on a project that has been happening for a number of years.

"We have talked to a number of people about it, and people are interested. I think the challenge is figuring out how this works in the COVID-19 ecosystem. I think it can."

Ramsour explained that COVID-19 can be a reason to build the chairs. "You can have the chairs out and about so people can sit and space and talk, and the chairs are good for doing all that."

To purchase a chair or have a group sign up for a workshop, contact Elpis Enterprises at [info@elpisenterprises.org](mailto:info@elpisenterprises.org) or call 651-644-5080.



ABOVE: Woodworking coordinator Shadaria Brown relaxes in a newly completed chair. TOP LEFT: Joel Sisson joins Elpis workers constructing chairs. (Photos by Jan Willms)

# MY FUNNY QUARANTINE

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**'We believe there is value in laughter...'**

Both agreed that creating "My Funny Quarantine" has given them a renewed sense of purpose. They worked on it for two months and were ready to bring it out into the world when the Uprising exploded.

They didn't know if it made sense to perform a comedy anymore. After some serious conversations, they decided that it did.

Maren said, "We believe there is value in people coming together. We believe there is value in laughter, in taking a break from the hard stuff, so you can come back and continue the fight. In light of our commitment to racial justice, we donated 50% of proceeds from our show until July 31 to Black Lives Matter and the Alabama-based Equal Justice Initiative."

Maren and Simmons premiered "My Funny Quarantine" in their own driveway on June 17. They've since performed it across the Twin Cities metro 18 times. The show is 35-40 minutes long, depending on what kind of improvisation happens.

During a recent performance in St. Paul, three neighborhood dogs joined the actors on-stage which made for a slightly longer show.

"My Funny Quarantine" contains five original songs inspired by the work of Richard Rodgers, Irving Kahal, Dolly Parton, Jimmy Buffet and Sara Bareilles, several narrated pantomime stories, and culminates with a dramatic sword fight. There is no bloodshed, and the show is considered appropriate for children ages 5+ (though babies are welcome, too.)

A donation of \$5-10 is suggested per person.

Maren said, "It seems like people are really hungry right now for something that isn't on a screen. Watching our play is a chance to be outdoors with other people. You can still have a social experience together, even if you're 6' apart. We prefer the term 'physical distance' to 'social distance'. We've all been through a lot lately, and being catapulted into uncertain times means we need each other more than ever."

To learn more about "My Funny Quarantine," visit [www.jenmaren.com/unmasked](http://www.jenmaren.com/unmasked). To reserve a show for a group of up to 25 people, email [jen@jenmaren.com](mailto:jen@jenmaren.com). Shows can be performed anywhere that has a 10'x20' space for the performers, and room for physical distancing for the audience on a lawn or driveway.



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# The Motley Conversation

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## We're thinking of how to best care for our families

At four in the morning on March 13, the first teacher strike in St. Paul in over 70 years ended. With little rest, the district negotiations team who had spent days in intense, closed negotiations, after spending weeks and months in public negotiations, went right back to work continuing to plan for an anticipated closure of Minnesota schools due to COVID-19. This planning started weeks before, running concurrently with both negotiations and the daily operation of the state's second largest school district. When schools were closed the following week, we heard the phrase, "unprecedented times" a lot. We knew things would never be the same, we just didn't know how different they would be.

Once schools were closed everyone who doesn't work in and around public education learned what those of us who do have always known: schools are deeply connected to the communities they serve. Due to strong leadership and immense talent and operational capacity, Saint Paul Public Schools was well-positioned to respond immediately to community need and did so by repurposing staff duties and



Guest columnist

By JESSICA KOPP, Saint Paul Public School board member [jessica.kopp@spps.org](mailto:jessica.kopp@spps.org)

restructuring its nutrition services to distribute and deliver, to date, over six million meals to Saint Paul families. We also delivered tech devices and hot spots and enrichment activities. We provided childcare to first responders and essential workers. Educators from Early Childhood through Adult Education moved their classes online. We developed a virtual partnership-based program, Saint Paul Summer Connect, to keep our community close while we had to stay apart.

All of this proactive, compassionate planning began in late February and ran concurrently with an emotional and contentious teacher strike. What we didn't know at the time is this planning would also happen

alongside our community's deep and sustained racial reckoning following the killing of George Floyd and the devastating illness and death of Board of Education Chair Marny Xiong.

This planning was and is accounting for the deeply personal nature of education and the many ways our families live and work in our community. Reflection and readjustment have been present from the beginning to assess implementation and in real time, change to meet needs in an unpredictable environment. While paying close attention to the feelings connected to school closure, the team has also relied on data, best practices, and expertise from all corners of education and community to ensure not only a good start to the 2020 school year but meaningful transformation of our system of education in the future.

I am fortunate to know this team and watch them work, and the connection to Saint Paul schools runs deep among district administration staff. Many are long-time St. Paul residents, parents, aunts, and neighbors who have more than a professional stake in how this job gets done - they have personal account-

ability to their communities and families. No one inside of SPPS is thinking about doing enough to get by, they are thinking about how to make it better - even the best of what is possible in unusual times and whatever lies beyond.

Saint Paul Public Schools demonstrated incredible leadership in the early days of the statewide school closure and has shown a remarkable ability to adapt, and it's precisely because of this track record I am confident as a SPPS parent and Saint Paul school board member that we will meet the challenges ahead.

As district plans roll out, please remember this: most people are not interested in making a political statement with their back-to-school preference but rather, they are thinking about how to best care for their families. The parent who says I need an in-person school option because I have to be at work to pay the bills and can't support my child at home during distance learning or who is concerned about learning loss is not a villain, nor is the parent who is fearful that in-person learning exposes members of their family to

risk of illness, nor is the educator or nutrition services worker concerned about keeping themselves and their families safe. All these things are true.

And because they are true we can choose to show love and compassion for all our neighbors who are living through the pandemic, the fight against racial injustices, personal grief and losses, and any combination of ongoing health concerns and economic anxiety. We can acknowledge that this is hard for everyone. We can recognize and act on our deep connection and responsibility to one another and decide to do all we can to ease any burdens which may arise with what will be an imperfect and evolving back-to-school plan. Social media victory laps or pointing to a political scoreboard has never taught one child how to read or provided families reliable access to wi-fi so what we choose to do next and how we choose to treat one another matters a great deal.

In Saint Paul, I'm looking forward to unprecedented collaboration and extraordinary acts of love and kindness in the weeks and months ahead to support our schools. If you believe education is important, stand up and be counted. It's time to go to work.

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## Commentary

### Mayor Carter is using crisis as cover for questionable hires

By SHIRLEY ERSTAD, DAVE DURENBERGER AND LAURA GOODMAN

The year is more than half over and what a ride it has been. Globally, we have been dealing with a pandemic, economic uncertainty, social unrest and more signs of climate change, all with a presidential election in three months amid questions about how it will be safely, effectively and accurately carried out.

These situations cause communities to ask themselves how to cope, be good human beings and chart a sustainable course. They require us to take stock of where we are and to reflect on past decisions, plans and commitments. Which brings us to the question, "How are you, Saint Paul?"

We wouldn't know, given the mayor and city council's lack of transparent governance. Our leaders have used the pandemic, economic

collapse and racial unrest as cover to make questionable and highly expensive hires that on the surface seem to be working only to inflate the mayor's image. We cannot afford a fireworks show in the capital city, but the mayor needs three chiefs-of-staff and a political director to communicate with the seven-member city council.

Mayor Melvin Carter recently told Saint Paul's legislative delegation that our city budget needs to be cut by \$20 million in 2020. In March, Saint Paul implemented a hiring freeze due to COVID-19 and the unknown yet likely devastating economic impact on our city.

In 2019, Saint Paul broke a decades-old record of homicides in a year. Even before the events surrounding the murder of George Floyd, the city was already on track to break the shots-fired record that was set only last year. While violence may be increasing nationally, that is no excuse for not dealing with our own issues.

In December 2019 Mayor Carter proposed, and the city council approved, a supplemental city bud-

get. One of the components of that budget was \$1.7 million for Community First Public Safety (CFPS) to fund several programs already in place, including Right Track, which facilitates youth employment, and Community Ambassadors, which support citizen interactions with police on the street. As early as February, before COVID, city council members Jane Prince and Nelsie Yang asked the mayor's office why that money was not being spent. Months later, city council member Rebecca Noecker asked Mayor Carter that same question at a city council meeting. However, she was speaking only to an image of the mayor's name, since he had left the meeting before any questions could be asked.

Later, Mayor Carter's response was that a CFPS coordinator needed to be hired. As of this writing, that has yet to be done and the CFPS money remains unspent, even for programs already in place. Much angst and extreme passion have been expressed throughout our country that policing systems and structures need to be addressed. This makes the mayor's inaction on CFPS that much more confusing and disturbing.

Hiring mayoral staff seems

to be one of this administration's fortes. Not only has the CFPS coordinator position been created, a single chief-of-staff position has morphed into three chiefs-of-staff and we've seen the creation of a second deputy parks director. There are now 13 assistants to the mayor on the city payroll plus the recently filled position of executive project lead for redevelopment.

The director of Planning and Economic Development (PED) position has been vacant for a year. Why was a project lead hired for \$180,000 per year instead of a qualified PED director?

Also hired since the COVID lockdown began is a new political director for the mayor, ostensibly to replace the outgoing press secretary. This hire, which the mayor said is necessary for him to communicate with the city council, comes from the local AFSCME union, which endorsed Mayor Carter's candidacy in 2017 (even though there was no DFL endorsement in the mayoral race) and the candidacy of every city council member. The mayor's new political director has been employed since April, without the required approval of the city council. Despite that glitch, it stretches the imagination that the mayor and city

council cannot communicate with one another without a highly paid intermediary.

In addition to these under-the-cover-of-crisis hires, \$50,000 of public money is being paid to a public relations firm to bolster Carter's image as the "economic mayor."

We cannot escape the math. Many highly paid staff positions take funding away from other things our community needs, like mill and overlay projects for our pot-holed streets. Renters and homeowners alike are already feeling the heavy weight of city taxes.

Elected leaders and citizens have responsibilities to one another, including transparency and accountability. As we have seen at the national and now city level, some questionable things are being done during this time of uncertainty. It is our civic duty to demand accountability to stop that from happening.

*Shirley Erstad, Dave Durenberger and Laura Goodman are members of St. Paul STRONG, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving representative government in St. Paul by empowering citizen participation and encouraging open and transparent public processes at City Hall.*

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Fire destroyed the Foot Locker at the Midway Center on May 28, 2020. The leases for the stores there have been terminated prior to redevelopment. Some are looking for new locations in the Midway. (Photos by Tesha M. Christensen)

## Will they find new locations in the Midway?

**Wanting to stay, businesses face challenge of finding available space in the Midway**

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rest following the May 25 killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police. Several shops were looted and burned, including Foot Locker, To New York and Big Top Liquors. Others sustained smoke and water damage.

McGuire and Birdoff have also indicated that they are accelerating their plans to build at the Midway Center site. They have not ruled out having current tenants return in the future. But some small business owners said they cannot wait for even a few years to move into new building and what is called United Villages at Midway.

Area district councils are calling for help for Midway Center and other affected Midway businesses. They are asking that the city and public and private funders step in with help.

City officials, community development leaders, center management and business owners met July 14 to discuss next steps. Business owners had assumed that at some point, they'd have to relocate to make way for the mixed-use development planned around the Allianz Field major league soccer stadium. The fire has accelerated those plans.

Ward One Council Member Dai Thao said the city has small business resources to offer. "We grieve the loss of their business

with them, but we are prepared to help them move forward," said Thao.

"I really sympathize with these small business owners. It was important for us to hear from them and have them share their experiences with us."

One group that is offering assistance is Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA). Va-Meng Thoj, AEDA executive director, said his group is also ready to help.

But one challenge leaders cite is that of finding available space, especially in the Midway.

About a dozen businesses were affected by the fire, smoke and water damage. Foot Locker, Great Clips, Game Stop and To New York in the strip mall sustained the heaviest damage, as did the stand-alone Big Top Liquors building.

### Peking Garden, Golden Gate Cafe and Cajun Boiling Seafood

Some small business owners initially assumed they would be able to clean up their spaces and possibly reopen. Two restaurants, Peking Garden and Golden Gate Café, are the strip mall's oldest tenants. Golden Gate Café has been owned and operated by the Hui family for more than 40 years. Mary Lau's family has operated Peking Garden at Midway Center since 2006, after losing a

longtime Minneapolis location to TCF Bank Stadium development.

Lau said she watched the fire news coverage on television and went to see the damage as soon as possible. "We sustained smoke and water damage but otherwise our restaurant was OK," said Lau.

Finding out that the strip mall will be torn down was a shock, she said. "We don't know where we are going to go or what we will do." She is hoping to work with her landlord, but doesn't know what she'll do if there is a long wait for a new space.

Lau had recently renovated the Peking Garden space, investing about \$350,000. "We have lost everything," she said. "This very difficult for us."

Two Gofundme accounts have been started for Peking Garden, and have raised more than \$25,000. Wyn Huynh, a friend of Mary Lau, said he and others felt compelled to help after hearing about the restaurant's forced move.

The owners of Thien's Cajun Boiling Seafood are newcomers to Midway Center, opening up in 2018. Co-owner and chef Thien Do said his business and its neighbors at the north end of the strip mall only sustained smoke damage. "We were very surprised to get the letter indicating that our lease would be terminated," he said. "We are hoping to stay in the Midway but we don't know what we're going to do."

## What if I need to...

They look at the combination, never verbally questioning. But they don't have to – their stares speak the question as loudly as their mouths could. I don't think too much of it anymore, unless I'm in a new situation or back home in India. The funny looks they give roll off my shoulders like water off a leaf. Gradually, but still forgotten nevertheless.

When they finally get the answer their eyes are craving, they try to play it cool.

"That's cool that your adoptive parents are white. So what?"

Well, so...what.

What if I need to talk about how scared I am around police? To share my experiences and to hear others' experiences. To connect with someone who has personally felt that type of fear build up in their bones.

What if school asked me to talk about all of the characteristics I "got from my mom" and why my hair is so thick and why I am so short?

What if I want to learn about my culture, immersing myself in the smells and sights and thoughts of my homeland?

What if the doctor asks me about medical history or genetic history as they're performing tests?

### Capturing moments

By ABHA KARNICK



What if a stranger asks me if I "know that man" as my guardian comes to pick me up from practice?

What if a pandemic and riots and racism overtake me heart, soul, and mind, and I need a safe place to process, a safe place to be fully Indian?

What if...what if I don't have the answers?

Abha Karnick is a south Minneapolis resident with East Indian roots who graduated from Hamline University in 2019. She grew up in the Twin Cities and found her passions in music, photography, and writing. She has pieces published with CAAL, MNAsianStories, and HER Online Journal, and her passion lies in storytelling and finding the moments to capture.



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**In Brief**

**Our Lady hires new COO**

Kim Webster has joined Our Lady of Peace as Chief Operating Officer. Webster brings 40-years in the senior health services field, with a focus on administration, healthcare, social work, marketing and food service. Webster has a love for hospice and home care and knows personally and professionally how important hospice services are to providing dignity, respect and compassion to patients at end of life, and their loved ones. She said, "I am thrilled to be part of the Our Lady of Peace organization with such a strong heritage and mission and vision now and into the future. Hospice has a deep meaning."



For the past two years, Kim has served as Vice Chair of the Our Lady of Peace Board of Directors.



**Midway artist part of 'Roseville in Bloom'**

Midway artist Wendy McCarty (pictured above) is one of the artists chosen to participate in the Roseville in Bloom public art project, a celebration of "20 Roses in 2020." McCarty designed and decorated a seven-foot-tall rose statue. The statues are on display in public spaces throughout Roseville from July 1-Oct. 31, 2020, offering people of all ages a safe, free public art experience to enjoy in the summer and fall. The rose statues were built by TivoliToo, the local company that created the Peanuts characters for the "Peanuts on Parade" public art project in Saint Paul. The circumference of each rose blossom is 100 feet and the total weight of the statue (rose, rose pot and base) is 658 pounds.

Free rose maps are available at numerous locations throughout Roseville, or download maps at [www.rosevilleinbloom.com](http://www.rosevilleinbloom.com)

**Karma topic of Zoom discussion Aug. 24**

The Theosophical Society will host an open discussion on karma at 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 24 on Zoom. The online URL link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88119671919?pwd=Tjc2bGNPbnRmM0FHWCcrU0VzeDZ5Zz09> Program ID is 81 1967 1919. Password is 342562. To connect by phone call (312) 626-6799.

The free event is open to the public and all are welcome to participate in the discussion. The Theosophical Society is an international organization with global headquarters in southern India and national headquarters in Illinois. The local chapter was chartered in 1887.

For more information, call (612) 208-6485 or go to [www.mn-theosociety.org](http://www.mn-theosociety.org)



Pharmacist Jim Stage (center) and staff work in the new temporary location for Lloyd's Pharmacy, located down the block from the original site. "When customers come back in, 'It's like a reunion,'" said Stage. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

## Lloyd's Pharmacy reopens down the block after fire

>> from 1

"Thanks again for being back," said one customer as they left the store on July 23.

Stage has spent most of his career at Lloyd's, and he was devastated when the business burned down. His second job out of college was for former Lloyd's owner Ron Johnson at his Rochester location, and Stage transferred to Lloyd's in 2011 when a position opened up. In 2014, at age 33, Stage purchased the pharmacy and its building when Johnson retired.

### Building had been used for storage

The temporary Lloyd's location is at the corner of Van Buren Ave. and Snelling in 450 square feet that Lloyd's had been using for storage.

To open as the temporary pharmacy, the main level was updated, and a bathroom and breakroom added in the basement.

The renovation work was completed for a July 13 opening date.

During the interim, customers were served at Setzer's, a sister pharmacy owned by Stage that operates independently (1685 Rice St. in Roseville). Lloyd's staff shared the space there.

Thirty-seven employees are back at Lloyd's.

### Site to be cleared soon

Down the block at the original site, there was still a pile of rubble surrounded by a fence. Stage had a company lined up in mid-July to clear the site but Ramsey County pushed him to find another. There is asbestos in the old building that is complicating the clean-up and adding another layer of regulation.

Once the site is cleared, Stage is ready to start rebuilding. He hopes to begin yet this summer.

The new building will sit on the same footprint as the histor-

ical one. In fact, it will look the same both inside and out, said Stage. The new building will be two stories with a basement. This time around, there will be a full basement under the whole structure.

According to Stage, there is a gap between the replacement cost the insurance company is paying and the cost of building new. The GoFundMe campaign that has raised \$113,325 so far will help cover the difference.

The planning process has been made easier as Stage is using the same architect and builder who did the renovation and addition a few years ago. Dennis Batty and Associates along with Joe Beitler Construction's familiarity with Lloyd's made the process move quickly.

"We can't wait to get that building set up for the community," said Stage. "I'm excited to get it built."

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## Menopause Center opens at temporary location near Setzer's in Little Canada

On Aug. 1, the Menopause Center of Minnesota opened at a temporary location near Setzer's Pharmacy, at 80 County Road C West, Suite 802, in Little Canada. The phone number remains 651-698-0891. The center lost its building to fire with Lloyd's Pharmacy on May 29.

The Menopause Center is offering telemedicine visits because of COVID-19, and will continue with them until the federal government lifts that allowance, according to Advanced Practice Registered Nurse/Certified Nurse Midwife Catherine Mascari.

Since March, the Menopause Center's two staff have been working from home, processing refills, answering phone calls Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and holding telemedicine appointments Tuesday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"The initial plan seemingly is to move quickly on rebuilding Lloyds Pharmacy and our practice will once more share space in the same building," said Mascari.

The Menopause Center of Minnesota will be expanding services with the ability to order screening for labs, bone scans and mammograms and will add well-women care. "We are working with a credentialing and billing/coding specialist to facilitate contracts with additional insurance companies to grant access and decrease barriers to the expert care the Menopause Center provides to women age 35 and older experiencing hormonal changes," said Mascari. "As one client said: No one has the leverage in the quality care, time and resources you provide."

## Your health is STILL our priority!

The Lloyd's Pharmacy building was destroyed during the riots last month, but we are pleased to announce that a temporary satellite location is now open at 694 Snelling Av. N., Suite A., where we can service all your pharmacy needs.

Lloyd's Pharmacy will continue to serve our longstanding customers from the Hamline Midway neighborhood at this new location while we start the process of rebuilding Lloyd's at the original site from the ground up.

We appreciate the many kindnesses and messages of support we have received in the past month. It makes us even more committed to this community. Rest assured, that Hamline-Midway is our home and we will be back to serve you at Snelling and Minnehaha once again.

- Jim Stage, Lloyd's Pharmacy

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# Back to School

## Talking dyslexia with U of M

Starting with the 2020 school year in Minnesota, all students not reading at grade level by the end of kindergarten through second grade must be screened for dyslexia. Students in third grade and above who demonstrate a reading difficulty must also be screened for dyslexia unless the reading difficulty is due to another reason.



Lori Helman

order, it often leads to feelings of confusion (e.g., questioning how others know what those words are), an avoidance of reading activities and compensating for difficulties with a variety of strategies (e.g., spending large amounts of time to get their academic work done).

**Q: How is dyslexia diagnosed?**

**Prof. Helman:** Often, it's an educator who first notices the signs of reading difficulty. In young children, this can include having difficulty taking spoken words apart by their individual sounds. For example, a child may not be able to identify that "t" is the sound at the beginning of the word "table." As expectations for reading skills increase, students may fall more and more behind their peers.

For teens and adults, there are related signs. Students may have difficulty understanding sound-spelling relationships, or may overrely on trying to memorize rather than decode words. Students who experience dyslexia are likely to score significantly lower than others on their grade level reading tests. Older students and adults may use strategies to cover up their reading difficulty,

such as avoiding reading, relying on others to do the reading and putting in extra time to keep up with the normal workload of school.

It's important to remember that, while there is no "cure" for dyslexia, there are many ways to provide support to students and help them develop in their reading.

**Q: How can a parent or guardian best support their child in reading if they are diagnosed with dyslexia?**

**Prof. Helman:** It is important for parents and guardians to realize their child needs both academic and emotional support.

From an academic perspective, remember each child is different. Students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties will need focused and systematic instruction in the sounds and symbols of the writing system as well as a supportive setting and positive feedback in order to persevere through challenges.

At home, parents and guardians may be able to support their children in learning to read by reading aloud to them, modeling the benefits of reading, and keeping interactions with text (either reading or writing) low-stress and positive. Being understanding and providing concrete help to overcome specific challenges that arise are key. For example, if students become overwhelmed and frustrated with a reading or writing task, taking a brief break,

hearing a word of encouragement, and highlighting successes in the learning will help a lot.

Students with dyslexia often have a range of magnificent gifts, such as creativity and out-of-the-box thinking. Each person's uniqueness can become a source of strength in overcoming the hardships that this learning difficulty presents. It's important to remember that difficulties reading can have an emotional impact on your child. Be supportive and encouraging, while helping your child to set realistic goals.

**Q: What resources are available for children, as well as adults, with dyslexia?**

**Prof. Helman:** Many educators and community activists are currently putting a lot of effort into providing resources and support for people with dyslexia. People can learn a lot from the Minnesota Department of Education dyslexia information page and a downloadable guidebook called Navigating the School System When a Child is Struggling with Reading or Dyslexia. Other helpful organizations include Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota and the International Dyslexia Association.

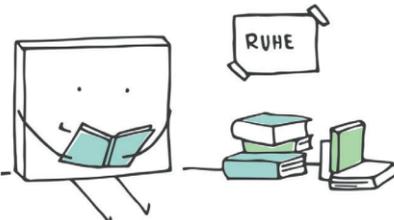
It's key to remember that troubles with academics does not mean a person with dyslexia is unable to succeed in school or in their career. What is key is that people need to gain foundational knowledge about how sounds and spelling patterns are repre-

sented in written language, as well as have opportunities to read text that allows them to practice this knowledge so they become accurate and fluent. Finding where each person is on the path to reading and writing development is the first step; then helping them move forward from that point with support and tailored instruction is critical.

**Q: How is the Minnesota Center for Reading Research supporting those with dyslexia?**

**Prof. Helman:** The University's Minnesota Center for Reading Research (MCRR) works in partnership with researchers, educators and community activists to provide information and resources to support those who work with children and teenagers with dyslexia and other reading difficulties.

Lori Helman is a professor of literacy education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the director of the Minnesota Center for Reading Research at the University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development. She teaches classes in assessment and instruction of reading difficulties and helps prepare new teachers and literacy specialists. Her research interests include the language and literacy development of students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and teacher professional development to become exceptional literacy instructors.



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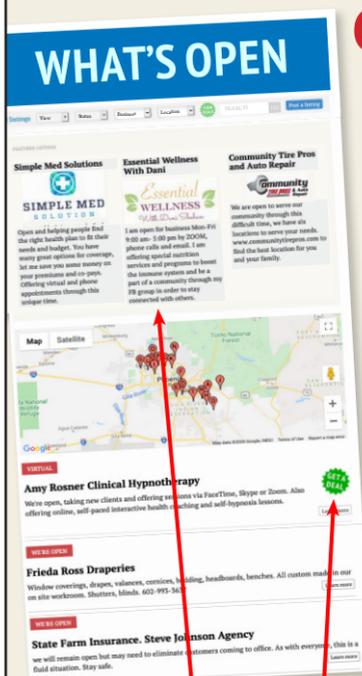
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TIP: Get word out about your GoFundMe and talk about how you're rebuilding and fixing your business up so the community knows how to support you.

# Back to School

24 authors of all walks talk about how homeschooling works for them in new book co-edited by Midway resident

## Why they love homeschooling

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

As COVID-19 forces educational changes, some parents are considering whether online schooling through their district or homeschooling on their own will work better for their families.

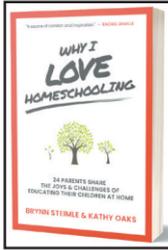
To help families decide, Midway-Hamline resident Kathy Oaks has co-edited a new book with Brynn Steimle titled, "Why I Love Homeschooling." In it are essays written by 24 people on how homeschooling works for them, including an essay by Hamline-Midway resident Carrie Pomeroy. The book is currently available on Amazon.

"For everyone, those homeschooling and those not, I'd like to reiterate that what most people did this spring isn't 'homeschooling,'" stated Oaks, who has been homeschooling

her three boys ages 8 through 16 since the beginning of their education. "For the majority, it was way harder, for the students, the parents, and the teachers. Our hearts went out to you, watching the struggle. Whatever your choice in the fall, we all wish you an easier time, and joyous learning."

The *Monitor* spoke with Oaks and contributor Theresa Redfern-Hall, whose children are currently 24, 23 and 20. She and her partner homeschooled from the birth of their first child in 1995.

"The book can be useful for those people who are considering home-schooling and for those homeschooling. There are reflections from 24 different people, all different backgrounds, lifestyles, and types of homeschool-



Kathy Oaks

ing," said Redfern-Hall. "The essays show that there is no one correct way to homeschool and that even seasoned homeschoolers have questions and bad days. It also shows that homeschooling is a wonderful opportunity to watch, learn and grow with your children."

What makes homeschooling different from crisis schooling?

Oaks: Crisis schooling is just that, throwing together a way to keep regular school going during a crisis. It's not meant to be long-term, nor is it an ideal way to learn. School teachers did not go into education to do online

school, and have been scrambling to make things fit into a different format and many are ill prepared and certainly underpaid for this extra work.

Homeschooling, on the other hand, is intentional. The best part of homeschooling is that it isn't one size fits all. **WHY THEY LOVE >> 10**

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# Why they love homeschooling

>> from 9

ilies get to find ways that work best for them, instead of trying to squeeze into a more rigid system. Some kids love online learning, but it would work better for the family if it wasn't at a set time.

Other kids do poorly with online learning, and would benefit from having more hands-on instruction. And sometimes those kids are in the same family! With home-schooling, everyone can be accommodated.

There are plenty of places that are already set up to do online learning, and do it well, for any income level, and home-schoolers have been taking advantage of them for years.

**Redfern-Hall:** I'd have to say that homeschooling is a lifestyle choice. The parent is the one making the choices on how learning will proceed and

what type of materials or programs their students will follow. Crisis schooling is just trying to keep things as much like a normal school day as possible – still following along with the school-mandated lessons or materials. Making sure that the kids will keep up with all the classes and subjects in school so they don't fall behind.

What questions have you heard from people who are thinking about switching to homeschooling and what are the reasons driving this discussion?

**Oaks:** I have seen all kinds of reasons for switching to home-schooling. For some, the stress of dealing with online

WHY THEY LOVE >> 11

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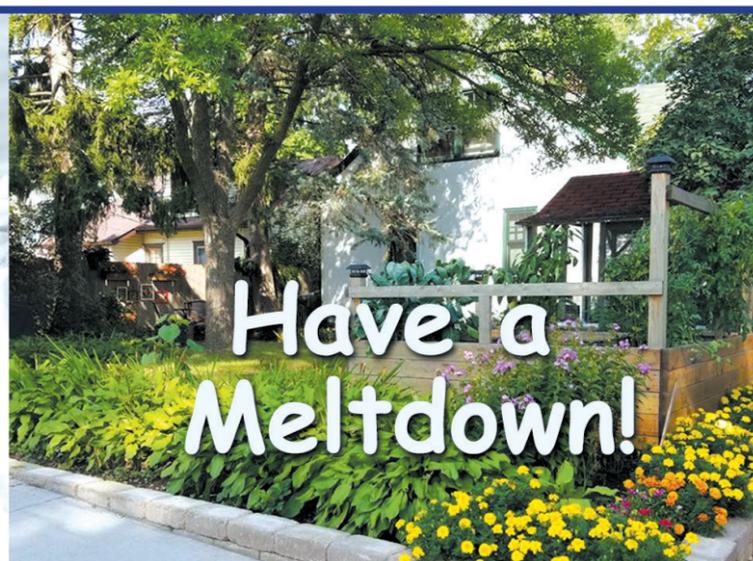
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# Why they love homeschooling >> from 10

public school was just too much, and they hope to see happier kids (and parents) through homeschooling. Others are worried that their kids won't be safe and are intending only to homeschool until the pandemic eases. Still others have said they were already considering homeschooling and are taking this opportunity to jump in.

Many of the questions I've seen have centered around finding the "right" curriculum. Honestly, there is no "right" curriculum. Sure, there are all-in-one box sets you can buy, for quite a lot of money. But what if your family ends up hating it? Many homeschoolers draw from a variety of resources rather than using one set curriculum.

## What is your advice for those who would like to transition from homeschooling to crisis schooling?

**Oaks:** The best advice I know of is first, to deschool. That is, take time off. Fortunately, the summer is helpful for that! But also spend some time thinking about what you and your family like and don't like about school. The people most likely to give up on homeschooling are those who try to faithfully reproduce school at home instead of fitting homeschooling to their unique needs. Start slowly with one subject – ideally your favorite or your child's favorite subject – and add in another as you get your footing. Adjust as you go along. Most people are surprised at how little actual instruction is needed; much of the public school day is taken up with things like moving from classroom to classroom, waiting for students to all be ready, and busywork to make sure the slowest students have enough practice.

## Does homeschooling have to be all or nothing? What are some other options for people?

**Oaks:** Anyone with more than one child has noticed they're not the same. I know a number of homeschoolers who send one child to school and work with another at home. In Minnesota, depending on the school district, homeschoolers can participate in classes and sports through their local

## Highlights from book contributors:

"Our goal with 'Why I Love Homeschooling' is to show parents the various ways that people from all walks of life homeschool," stated co-editor Kathy Oaks. "We hope it will give confidence to those who are ready to give it a try, and those who feel it's the best option for them right now, even if they don't feel ready yet. We reached out to 24 authors to get their perspectives on the joys and challenges of homeschooling and why they love educating their kids at home. Lots of people only talk about how great homeschooling is, without addressing the challenges, and leave parents unprepared. There are always challenges, but managing them can in fact become part of the learning process, adding emotional intelligence to education."

### Some quotes from the book:

**Carrie Pomeroy** ("The Art of Knowing When to Push," Home School Life Magazine) – "Above all, homeschooling requires the patience to trust that even when my kids spend most of their time on pursuits that aren't conventionally academic, there is often important learning, development, or rest and gestation happening, even if I don't see it right away."

**Mary Jo Tate** (Flourish: Balance for Homeschool Moms) – "There will never be a perfect time or place for homeschooling. Life will always present challenges, whether big or small. Instead of being disappointed and paralyzed by what you can't do, focus on what you can do and how you and your family can best use each day's opportunities."

**Melissa Calapp** (Homeschool Adventures: Learning Through the Power of Field Trips) – "Homeschooling can be examined and designed to fit your particular child and family. It can include all the things that you thought were missing and all the pieces you think they will need. There can be room to pursue individual passions. And for parents who are new to homeschooling, you can start slow."

**Michelle Huddleston** (Just for Today's Homeschooling Mom) – "Being an ex-school teacher, I had many hurdles of my own to jump. Not only did I have a teacher mindset, but I also had a public school system mindset. It was embedded in me that school looked like waking up at a certain time every morning, starting school work by a certain time every day, and having subjects taught separately according to what was in the lesson plans.... Now our homeschool doesn't look much like school at all. When it comes to home-schooling, the possibilities truly are endless."

**Faye Badenhop** (Help Me Homeschool!) – "Lest you think you do not have it in you to give and give with nothing in return, let me remind you that you get to pick what you teach! Have you ever wanted to learn to decorate fancy cupcakes, do yoga, excel in a certain art or craft, or start an herb garden? Add it as a subject and you get to learn it too!"

schools, as well. There are also local homeschool co-ops, including secular ones, that meet weekly to cover academic needs. We participate in Planet Homeschool, which is online for the fall semester. Through our co-op the kids have taken math, creative writing, history, language, fencing, ballroom dance, and theater classes, which are just a small sample of the options that have been offered over the years.

**Redfern-Hall:** No home-schooling does not have to be all or nothing. I have known

some families who have utilized some online learning programs that were perfectly okay with students having outside learning activities. Some kids have taken classes at co-ops while attending the online schools. My kids attended a project-based high school, Avalon, and still took classes outside of the classes there. They received credit for those classes and projects. Even while not homeschooling, I tended to put an educational element into most of the things we did as a family. We enjoyed and learned.

# Marketplace

Want ads must be received by the Monitor by Aug. 28 for the Sept. 10 issue. Call 651-917-4183 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at [www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com)

Monitor Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, 5139 34th Ave. S. #17097, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Ad copy can be e-mailed to [denis@monitorsaintpaul.com](mailto:denis@monitorsaintpaul.com), or call 651-917-4183.

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Call the Minnesota Day One Crisis Hotline at 1-866-223-1111 if you or someone you know is seeking shelter due to a dangerous relationship or needs to create a safety plan. B-20



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## FREE FARMERS MARKET IN A BOX AT ALLIANZ FIELD

During the Farmers Market in a Box food distribution at Allianz Field on Friday, July 31, about 900 participants who preregistered received a box of vegetables, a box of dairy and a box of meat. For those who missed it, there will be another distribution on the last Fridays in August and September. "This moment we are in is why food shelves exist," said Keystone CEO Mary McKeown. "Food shelves are for helping stabilize your household during this unstabilizing time." Keystone operates two food shelves in the neighborhood, one off University and one off Rice St. Plus they have a mobile food shelf. Check out the easy-to-understand schedule on the Keystone web site. (Photos courtesy of MNUFC)



Call the Minnesota Day One Crisis Hotline at 1-866-223-1111 if you or someone you know is seeking shelter due to a dangerous relationship or needs to create a safety plan. B-20

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IDEAS: Thank a teacher. Recognize a neighbor. Promote your side hustle. Make checks payable to TMC Publications.

By JANE McCLURE

**Tenant protections approved**

St. Paul's new tenant protections measures won unanimous city council approval on July 8. But the work is just beginning as city officials start to set up measures in place to enforce the new ordinance before it takes effect March 1, 2021.

Advocates contend that the measures will reduce displacement and protect tenants from unethical landlords. They point to the city's shortage of affordable housing and cite the need to help low-income people and people of color. That's especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic as advocates are braced for an upcoming wave of foreclosures and evictions.

But many landlords and property management companies object to the new regulations, claiming that they add to costs and complexities of renting. Some predict that more landlords will sell their properties, rather than deal with additional regulations.

More than half of St. Paul residents are renters. The city is facing an affordable housing shortage.

One of the most controversial aspects of the new regulations is on "just cause." St. Paul is the first city in the state to have such a measure for tenant protection. The provision requires landlords to specifically say why a lease isn't being renewed and limits conditions under which a landlord may end a lease. Some tenants and advocacy groups claimed leases were being terminated simply because tenants asked for repairs.

Landlords can still opt to not renew a lease if a tenant hasn't paid rent or is habitually late with rent, or violated significant lease conditions. A lease can also end if a landlord wishes to renovate a



Ward 4 Council Member Mitra Jalali said COVID-19 has put the spotlight on housing access as an essential public health issue, and supported the new ordinance.

dwelling unit or wants to rent that unit to a family member.

The ordinance also limits how landlords can screen tenants, when looking at past evictions, criminal histories or credit scores. Tenants cannot be denied on the basis of a misdemeanor if that conviction is more than three years old, or on the basis of a felony that is more than seven years old. Landlords can still turn down prospective tenants who have convictions for murders, distributing or manufacturing controlled substances, arson, kidnapping, assault, robbery, manslaughter and criminal sexual conduct convictions older than 10 years. Tenants can also be turned down if they are on the lifetime sex offender registration roster.

The ordinance limits how much of a deposit a landlord can require, capping it at one month's rent. Landlords of all types of rental residential property are required to provide the city and tenants with advance notice of sale. Landlords are also required to provide tenants with packets of information on tenants' rights and responsibilities.

Council members praised the ordinance, as did Mayor Melvin Carter in a statement after the vote. Supporters cited the two years work on the ordinance.

Ward Four Council Member



Improvements to the Como Golf Course by the city will be delayed because the Capitol Region Watershed District is in the middle of a clean water project there. See details about that work on page 13.

Mitra Jalali said the COVID-19 pandemic has put the spotlight on housing access as an essential public health issue. She said she is "incredibly proud" to have played a role in the ordinance's passage.

"I believe it couldn't have come at a more important time," Jalai said.

**Golf courses' work delayed**

Delays to work at Como and Phalen golf courses won approval from the St. Paul City Council July 8. The council approved amendments to its agreements with course manager-operator Four-some Golf Management Group LLC. The agreements are in place through 2027.

The agreements for each course call for capital investments. The agreement requires \$400,000 to be invested in each course over the 10-year lease that started in 2018.

But a sewer project caused a drop in revenues at Phalen last year. Como improvements are delayed because of a Capital Region Watershed District project. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected golf course operations and income.

The council agreed to delays in the capital improvements. Plans had called for \$200,000 per course to be invested by the end of 2019. The change calls for investments to be completed by the end of 2021.

**Fence approved for charter school**

Despite opposition, Twin Cities German Immersion School in Como neighborhood will receive \$70,000 in year-round Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) funding to build a fence.

The fence funds were approved without discussion on July 22 by the St. Paul City Council, as part of the consent agenda. Two neighbors sent letters of opposition to the proposed stone fence at 1023 Como Ave. They contend that the fence won't reduce noise levels from the charter school.

They also asked that the city postpone a decision on funding until school officials can meet with neighbors and discuss fence design.

The school sought fence funding in a past competitive neighborhood STAR round, but finished at the bottom of the neighborhood STAR Board's recommendations and didn't receive funding. Schools officials then applied for year-round dollars, which are reviewed by the board but approved on a project-by-project basis by the city council. Council members have their own sales tax dollars they can allocate to projects in their wards.

By JANE McCLURE

**Taco Bell wants to rebuild**

Border Foods' request to rebuild the Taco Bell at 565 N. Snelling Ave. faces a possible vote of denial at the St. Paul Planning Commission Aug. 7. On July 24, the commission laid over a vote to give city staff more time to prepare a resolution spelling out the reasons to deny the project's needed conditional use permit.

The commission's Zoning Committee recommended denial on a 3-1 vote July 16.

Taco Bell has been closed since unrest in the community in May, when the restaurant was damaged. The building has been there since 1973 and has housed different restaurants. But it has a long and tangled history, with owner Border Foods seeking to rebuild the restaurant over the past five years without success.

All drive-through services in the city, be they for banks, coffee shops and restaurants, require conditional use permits. The permits regulate levels of noise from speaker boxes, and business operating and design conditions.

The Taco Bell has been controversial with its early-morning window hours, rowdy patron behavior, noise and neighborhood disruption. Hamline Midway Coalition recommended against the permit, indicating that shorter hours should go into place if it is approved. Several neighbors also objected.

Some objections center on inconsistency with neighborhood plans and the site's underlying zoning, which is for traditional neighborhoods mixed-use. The site was rezoned several years ago as part of a larger neighborhood-wide rezoning.

City staff recommended approval, based on changes to the drive-through lane location 61 feet away from the nearest home. City staff had recommended denial of past plans.

With approval, city staff had recommended three conditions. Drive-through operations would cease no later than 3 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, and no later than 2 a.m. Monday through Friday. Speaker box sounds from the drive-through lane would not be plainly audible so as to unreasonably disturb the peace and quiet of abutting residential property. Final plans approved by the zoning administrator for this use would be in substantial compliance with the plan submitted and approved as part of this permit.

Barry Zelickson of Border Foods told the Zoning Committee that the restaurant owners are willing to make site changes, such as working on a fence between the restaurant and neighboring properties. He and attorney Brian Alton noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the need for the drive-through service, to deliver food safely to customers.

But a majority of zoning committee members opposed the conditional use permit, recommending denial on a 3-1 vote.

One issue committee members raised is Taco Bell's proximity to the Kimball Court supportive housing development, and how residents there would be impacted by noise. They also cited inconsistency with the underlying zoning. Traditional neighborhoods zoning is meant to deter auto-oriented uses. The current building is 1,834 gross square feet, and the proposed building is 1,847 gross square feet. There would be reduction in off-street parking spaces, from 28 to 17, and fewer curb cuts.

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# Hamline Midway / Como

## What do you want at Hamline Park play area?

The Hamline Park play area will be renovated in 2020-2021, and we need community feedback to help guide the design process over the next several months. Online and in-person surveys in August will be followed by up to three community meetings, during which time a Community Advisory Committee will work with St. Paul Parks and Recreation to develop a final design.

Proposed work includes removal and replacement of existing play equipment and new surfacing. Other enhancements may include new walks, site furnishings, signage, and landscaping. The most recent improvements to

**Hamline Midway Coalition**

By **KATE MUDGE**  
kate@hamlinemidway.org



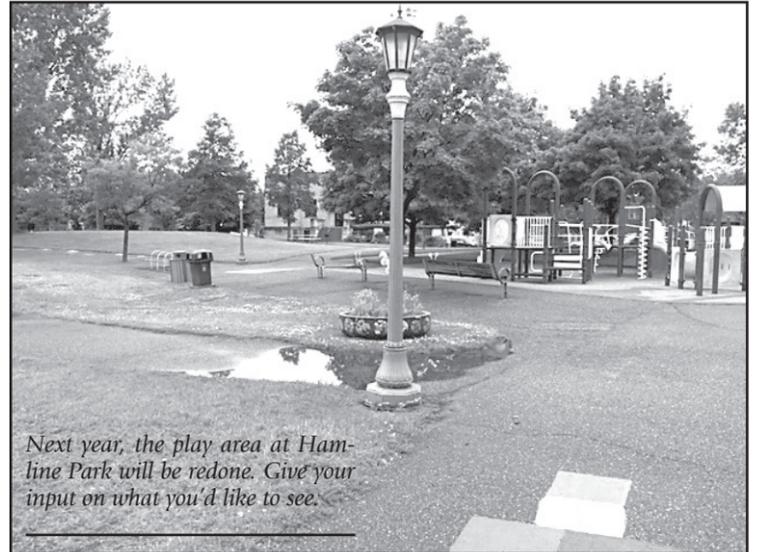
the play area were 28 years ago, in 1992.

Located alongside Snelling Ave., Hamline Park contains a variety of amenities for visitors

to use across four sections divided by trails. The northern section features a spacious playground, the eastern quarter features a recently-renovated futsal court, to the south is a basketball court as well as bike racks and additional fitness equipment, and adjacent to Snelling Avenue is open green space.

The community feedback survey can be found <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HamlinePark>

Please email Kate Mudge at [kate@hamlinemidway.org](mailto:kate@hamlinemidway.org) or Jonathan Oppenheimer at [oppenhooa@gmail.com](mailto:oppenhooa@gmail.com) with any questions.



Next year, the play area at Hamline Park will be redone. Give your input on what you'd like to see.

## Como Golf Course clean water project begins

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) and the city of Saint Paul began construction on a clean water project at Como Golf Course on July 6 that is expected to capture and clean 11 million gallons of runoff before it reaches Como Lake.

This is the third project the two entities have collaborated on in 2020.

An herbicide treatment was completed in March to reduce invasive curly-leaf pondweed and an alum treatment in April to reduce phosphorous cycling inside of the lake to improve water clarity and reduce algae blooms.

The biggest challenge facing Como Lake is too much phosphorus, a pollutant carried to the lake through runoff in storm drains. Phosphorus comes from decaying organic matter like leaves, grass clippings, pet waste, and soil. Over time, high levels of phosphorus in the lake – three

times higher than Minnesota standards – have led to algae blooms that choke the oxygen from the lake, leading to fish kills and strong odors mid-summer.

CRWD and the city of Saint Paul examined Como Regional Park to identify sites to strategically manage stormwater runoff. Sites were prioritized based on the availability of suitable land and water quality treatment provided. Two locations were selected at Como Golf Course as part of this process, the fairway of Hole 7 and the stormwater pond between Holes 3 and 11.

"The analysis done at Como Regional Park ensures that CRWD, the city of Saint Paul and its residents are getting the most water quality benefits for their money. It also helps to safeguard the recent investment in an alum treatment by reducing new phosphorous flowing into the lake," said Forrest Kelley, Capitol Re-

gion Watershed District Regulatory Division Manager.

**Hole 7 Fairway:** An existing storm sewer pipe near the fairway of Hole 7 captures runoff from 63-acres of land including the zoo and surrounding neighborhood. Water from the pipe will be diverted to an infiltration basin, similar to a large rain garden, and an underground infiltration system. Polluted rainwater will fill the basin and any excess water will flow into a series of underground pipes with thousands of holes in them to allow the water to soak into the ground. Native plants will help soak up water, provide pollinator habitat, and enhance the beauty of the area. The water is cleaned as it moves through the soil, removing pollutants that would have otherwise ended up in Como Lake.

**Northwest Pond:** Water from 150-acres of land within



Work at the golf course this summer will benefit Como Lake water quality.

the cities of Saint Paul, Roseville, and Falcon Heights drains to a stormwater pond between Holes 3 and 11. An iron-enhanced sand filter will be added along the eastern edge of the pond to remove dissolved phosphorus, a pollutant in the water that fuels algae growth. Iron filings mixed into sand create a bond with phosphorus, removing it from the water before it enters Como Lake.

A smart control system added at the pond's overflow outlet will help control the level

of the pond to optimize the effects of the iron-enhanced sand filter and reduce flooding on the course.

The green at Hole 7 was closed on July 6, 2020, and will reopen for play in the spring of 2021. A temporary green at Hole 7 has been established.

CRWD appreciates the patience of golfers during the work to improve water quality in Como Lake. The improvements will prevent approximately 55 pounds of phosphorus from entering Como Lake each year.

CRWD received a \$1.76 million grant award from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, with funds from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, to improve water quality in Como Lake and Lake McCarrons. A portion of the grant, along with funding from CRWD, will be used to cover project costs, estimated at \$1.4 million.

Learn more at [capitolregion-wd.org](http://capitolregion-wd.org).

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# Frogtown

## SPRINGBOARD FOR THE ARTS SPRINGS BACK

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Springboard for the Arts is a one-of-a-kind resource for working artists, connecting artists to each other and to the broader community. The organization operated out of their offices in Lowertown, St. Paul for 25 years. In 2018, Springboard purchased and began renovating a used car dealership at 262 University Ave. W. Renovation had progressed far enough for the 16 employees to move into their new building in February.

One month later, when the Governor's Stay-at-Home order was implemented, everybody went home.

Executive Director Laura Zabel said, "We had so much planned for this spring and summer. Everything changed in mid-March when the bottom fell out

for the creative community. We switched into high gear and started fundraising fulltime for our Artist Emergency Relief Fund."

That assistance fund has an average annual budget of \$10,000. It is meant to provide a small amount of gap funding, should artists lose a revenue stream in an emergency.

This year, Springboard staff raised one million dollars in record time for artists – because there was record need.

Zabel said, "We were able to provide grants for more than 2,000 artists in the early stages of the pandemic. There's no safety net for artists, and people get that. Donations came in from existing donors and foundations, but there was also an outpouring of support from donors we had never heard from before. To me,

that shows that people were understanding the role and importance of artists in a new way."

On Thursday, May 28, Zabel watched on security camera footage as the Springboard building was broken into and set on fire. She said, "Two things are true here. First, and most importantly, that George Floyd's murder illuminated the deep racism in our cities and in our systems. At the same time, it was heartbreaking to witness damage to the communities and spaces we care about so much.

"As for our building," Zabel continued, "the good news is that our newly installed sprinklers put out the flames. The bad news is that the building suffered a lot of water damage." If all goes as hoped for, insurance should cover the full costs of repair.

Once the second renovation is complete, Springboard will be a tremendous asset for the community. With its third floor deck view of the Capitol dome, tree-tops, and neighborhood church spires, it's not hard to imagine that this could have been prime luxury condominiums instead.

Zabel said, "We feel the urgency of holding space for the community in Frogtown right now. The concerns about who is going to acquire property in the burned and damaged parts of the neighborhood will become even more pressing in the months to come."

The building will offer several spaces for artist use including a second floor resource center and lending library. Work is under way to transform the parking lot on University Ave. into a

Springboard for the Arts' mission is to cultivate vibrant communities by connecting artists with the skills, information, and services they need to make a living and a life.

Their work is about creating communities and artists that have a reciprocal relationship, where artists are key contributors to community issues, and are visible and valued for the impact they create. They do this by creating simple, practical solutions and systems to support artists. Those programs support Springboard's goal of helping to create a local culture movement.

SPRINGBOARD >> 15

### I am still hopeful

Hello Greater Hamline/Midway Community,

Like many I started this year with a New Year's Resolution. My resolution has been very challenging due to not seeing the results. In fact, it seems I have been seeing the exact opposite results. My resolution was to take a minute every day to thoughtfully say the Universal Peace Message of May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities and May Peace Prevail On Earth with a focus on May Peace Be In Our Local Communities and to encourage others to do the same. It is documented that if 1% of neighbors collectively repeat a peace message daily then that neighborhood will begin to see increase peace and if a critical mass of 10% are participating in the daily peace message then less crime and senseless acts of violence will occur.

Although, COVID-19, the senseless murder of George Floyd, the record number of homicides, the continual questionable police accountability in our country, and the dysfunctional national leadership has been very discouraging and simply unbelievable; I am still hopeful and inspired to encourage myself and others to believe and take action towards working and making Good & Necessary Trouble for increasing the peace in our communities.

My former student and now summer garden intern, Ashley Davis, recently reminded me that

### Peace bubbles

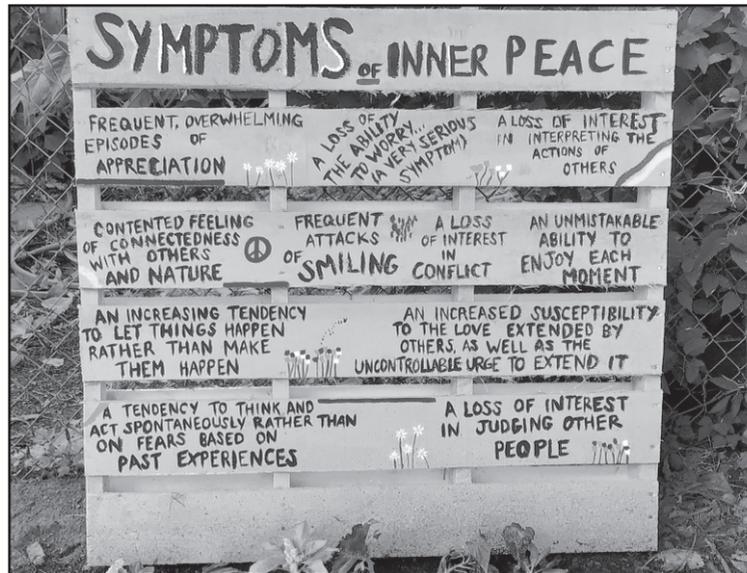
By MELVIN GILES  
peacebubbles@q.com



peace must first start within ourselves. I am including a photo of an assignment she completed this summer. Her creative work of art will be traveling to the Urban Farm & Garden Alliance (UFGA) community garden sites for the remainder of the growing season (<http://urbanfarmandgardenalliance.org/>). I will start using her expressions for food for thought, in particular, I will meditate greatly on "the tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences" and "a loss of interest in judging other people."

My hopefulness is also from the wonderful and pro-active energy of our young people. I and others of my generation are so proud of the young rising-up to take positive and peaceful action of bending the arc of justice forward and assisting everyone, particularly the powers in civic positions to get out of denial of systematic and institutional racism. I love that the young and others are embracing and coming to terms that truly Black Lives Matter!!!!

I close with an opportunity for our youth to participate in promoting May Peace Be In Our



Communities; however, this is a simply action that we all can participate in our own way. Have a great August and be the change you want to see. Peaceful, wellness, and grateful thoughts....

### A Call for the Voices of our Youth

Peace Pals International has been invited by our friend Philip Hellmich of The Shift Network to submit videos for this year's International Day of Peace

This year the Shift Network will be partnering with UnityEarth and the SINE Network. Peace Pals International Youth have been invited to share a 2-3 minute video message saying:

"Hello from \_\_\_\_\_ I'm \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ And I am celebrating the International Day of Peace

2020.

My message of peace is \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ "Please close your video with "May Peace Prevail on Earth" OR "May Peace be in (the name of your country) - May Peace Prevail On Earth."

It would be great if you can have anything in the background that is representative of where you live.

### How to submit your videos

If you would like to participate in this project, it's easy. The next steps are:

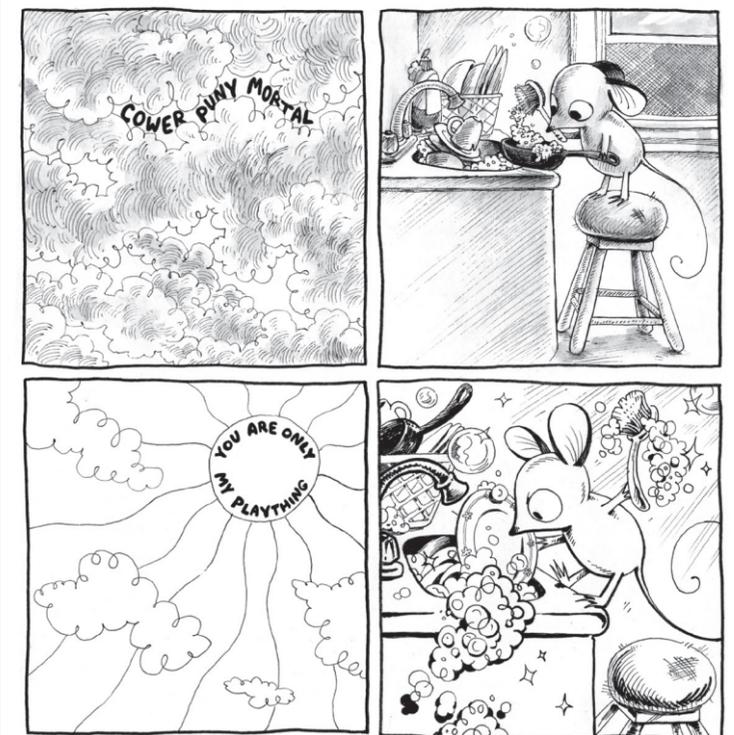
1. You can use your phone, zoom or any other video method that is easy for you.
2. Please submit your peace message by Aug. 17, 2020 to [peacepals@worldpeace.org](mailto:peacepals@worldpeace.org)
3. In the subject line, please state the country where you live and Video for Peace.
4. Also, please share your video on social media #internationaldayofpeace - #unitetheworld and #maypeaceprevailonearth.

This is a beautiful way to celebrate The International Day of Peace for 2020 (Sept. 21) and to help uplift our global community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to send me an email at: [peacepals@worldpeace.org](mailto:peacepals@worldpeace.org).

*May Peace Prevail Be In Rondo, Frogtown, & Hamline/Midway Communities*  
*May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities*  
*May Peace Prevail On Earth (MPPOE!)*

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Executive director Laura Zabel stands outside the new headquarters for Springboard for the Arts in Frogtown. A second renovation is in progress, following extensive property damage sustained last month. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

SPRINGBOARD >> from 14

public green space. Zabel said, "We hope it will feel like a neighborhood front yard. That's our priority right now, because of the need for people to be able to safely gather outdoors."

The Artist Emergency Relief Fund has dominated the development work of Springboard since March. Prior to the pandemic, money had been set aside to fund a major public arts project in the neighborhood. Springboard just completed an RFQ (Request for Qualifications)

process, and will select artists for these projects later in the fall. The projects will prioritize artists who live in, work in, or have a deep family connection to Frogtown or Rondo.

Zabel concluded, "The multiple crises we've all experienced in the last five months have been very intense. What keeps us going here is seeing the inventiveness, the many ways that art and artists are bringing people together. We were able to support 10 Black artists to make murals in response to the Uprising. All of the murals on our building are still up for

viewing.

"We're moving forward at Springboard. Our Community Green Space will be completed this fall, and we're hoping for a grand opening of our building in spring of 2021. I'm an impatient optimist; I believe deep, positive change is possible in our community – but I'm ready for it right now."

For more information on the work of Springboard for the Arts, RFQs, services, online workshops and their job board, visit [www.springboardforthearts.org](http://www.springboardforthearts.org).

## We Believe That Black Lives Matter

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US Representative John Lewis on youth climate activists in a statement released in September 2019



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The Art of Food in Frogtown & Rondo Coalition collaborates on and explores innovative ways to support community engagement, entrepreneurship, revitalization, and healthy food access in the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods.

For more information or to get involved in our work at the intersection of art, culture, food & economic development to advance social change, please contact [artoffoodstpaul@gmail.com](mailto:artoffoodstpaul@gmail.com)



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# Rebuild Repair Recycle

ReUSE Minnesota focuses on plain boards that will get reused in building projects and more

## New life for used plywood

>> from 1

ReUSE Minnesota is a member-based network that promotes Minnesota's reuse, rental, and repair sector. As the only organization of its kind in the state, ReUSE Minnesota highlights the benefits of reuse both for people and the environment.

Kedward reflected, "The main thing on everybody's mind is, 'What can I do now?' As a reuse organization, we are committed to keeping as much of the used plywood out of the waste stream as we can. We don't want this stuff going into incinerators. Toward that goal, our board started a new initiative called Twin Cities Plywood Rescue."

So far, ReUSE Minnesota has collected 642 pieces of plywood and strand board. Their volunteers have made 46 pick-ups from local businesses and organizations at no charge.

Kedward wants to keep spreading the word that Twin Cities Plywood Rescue is alive and well. She said, "We're in the phase now of getting those materials back out into the community to be used in new ways."

St. Paul's Mano a Mano (which means Hand to Hand in Spanish) received 40 boards to use in shipping recycled medical materials to underserved people in the mountains of Bolivia. Pillsbury United Communities used 30 boards to protect the floor of their newly expanded food shelf in South Minneapolis.

Non-profits or individuals may request boards for free, if

it's a hardship to pay. If possible, ReUSE Minnesota requests \$3 for a full sheet of strand board and \$4 for a full sheet of plywood. A full sheet measures 4' X 8'. The fee offsets disposal costs for reclaimed boards that aren't usable.

A full sheet of strand board normally costs about \$15; a full sheet of plywood costs about \$25.

### Board with murals treated differently

Kedward said, "When people hear about Plywood Rescue, their first concern is for the murals. We've separated out the boards we've collected that have graffiti on them. We're offering those boards to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) organizations and neighborhood museums first. Then we will reach out to larger institutions like the Minnesota History Center. We understand the emotions associated with artwork and controversies in working with larger institutions."

ReUSE Minnesota is interested in plain boards for community redistribution. To donate strand board or plywood, visit their website at [www.reusemn.org](http://www.reusemn.org). (minimum size 2' X 4').

The vision of their organization is to build a strong Minnesota reuse economy that leads the nation in well-paying reuse jobs and sales, and is driven by citizens and institutions who support a circular economy aimed at reducing waste.



ReUSE Minnesota Board President Jenny Kedward said, "We are leading the effort to collect, store, and distribute plywood used in the Uprising for reuse. We respect all artwork and murals. We are working with several organizations to preserve those pieces, and to get unmarked boards back out into the community where they can be used again." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

"ReUSE Minnesota is a network of people led by a volunteer board of directors. We facilitate connections in the reuse, rental, and repair sector. Our members are from both for-profit and non-profit organizations of any size that are part of this sector. We welcome government partners whose works focuses on waste reduction and reuse – and we welcome individuals who are passionate about reuse."

~ Board President Jenny Kedward

### PLYWOOD FOR GOOD

Another local initiative focuses on plywood with artwork.

According to Plywood for Good organizers: The plywood covering Minneapolis and St. Paul businesses following the killing of George Floyd is a grassroots art project. It captures the cries emanating from the people of our cities and nation to combat police brutality and systemic racism. We want to connect with the artists and businesses owners and learn their stories. Our goal is to help preserve and protect the art of this movement, to make sure art doesn't get tossed out when taken down."

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