March 29, 2024

Serving the neighborhoods of North Minneapolis

www.mynorthnews.org

Painful cuts:

Here is what the MPS budget cuts look like for one school.

Page 8

INSIDE

Black-owned credit union earns its charter **Page 4**

Teto Wilson to buy
4th Street Saloon **Page 12**

Javion Daniels works on a vocabulary exercise on a tablet on a recent school morning. Photo by David Pierini

A state and country defined by how it funds public schools

In Ibrahima Diop's mind, it's not enough to call budget cuts for next school year

The Minneapolis Public Schools finance chief says a lack of federal funding for public schools creates "a national security crisis."

Diop explained his case after delivering a grim budget outlook to the Board of Education's Finance Committee in early March. Like many school districts across heading into the next school year.

Ours is a whopper—as much as \$115 million. Nearly 200 employees, including teachers, social workers, assistant principals and administrators, will lose their jobs. The district will no longer fund fifthgrade music and will reduce mental health and classrooms for High 5.

MPS's budget woes can largely be blamed on declining enrollment and the discontinuation of federal funds that aided schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. But Diop said at the heart of such a financial crisis is a lack of regular federal investment in public schools over the years.

"People think that when you say national security, it's an aircraft carrier, a bomber, or a spy network," Diop told North News following the meeting, "But a big part of national security is education, K-12. What is happening in the inner cities will define the country."

"We should be getting federal dollars on a local basis. They say education is a local effort. That shows the lack of parity and inequalities because the local effort in Edina is not the same local effort in North Minneapolis. If you're saying it's a local

the country, MPS is facing a budget gap wealthy will get a better education."

District officials knew the pandemic dollars would end. Under interim Supt. Rochelle Cox, MPS directed a lot of the money for intervention triads to help kids lagging behind after a long period of

The new Superintendent, Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams, has barely begun but is quickly catching up on the forces that have led to this moment. She has tried to reassure anxious parents. Already, she announced the reversal of proposed cuts to heritage language programming.

Looming in the background is a teachers' union, its members making less money than those in surrounding districts, fighting for a raise for educators in

Administrators are trying to make every trim without sacrifices to students and their achievements. Still, a nagging history of disinvestment and startling inequities in resources and outcomes leaves parents and community leaders with little faith.

Even if we assume the youngest students are oblivious to news coverage of the MPS budget woes, they still sense the concern with the adults in their schools. At effort, then you're essentially saying the Lucy Laney Community School, featured in

our cover story about the proposed cuts, kids have asked their assistant Principal Joshua Catttledge, "Did you get fired?"

Sondra Samuels, executive director of the Northside Achievement Zone, asked administrators to reconsider how cuts impact Northside families. The setbacks to learning from the pandemic were especially acute for kids here. Current test scores for reading offer stark differences between North Minneapolis and wealthier, betterresourced parts of the city.

Now is not the time to cut mental health and other services and programs that are helping students here, she said.

"COVID has absolutely pummeled us," Samuels said at a March 12 school board meeting. "It's not the same in other places. For example, white students are 72% proficient in reading, and only 17% of Black students are proficient. That suggests to me that something different has to happen in this part of the city.

"I know you have some hard decisions to make. Please don't make them on the backs of Black and Brown children in North Minneapolis. We don't have a child problem. We have an adult problem. Those scores

NORTH NEWS

2024 Issue #3

Circulation: 10,000 in North Minneapolis Delivered free on a monthly basis to public places & homes in Near North & Camden

> 3650 Fremont Ave. N Minneapolis, MN 55412 Phone: 612-701-3883 Website: www.mynorthnews.org

David Pierini Editor/Reporter/Advertising

Azhae'la Hanson Reporter/Photographer/Youth Program Coordinator

Anva Johanna DeNiro Thomas Tolev

Metro Periodical Partners

Additional support is provided by The Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Foundation.

Story ideas and letters to the editor under 300 words are always welcome. Unsigned letters will not be run

If you want North News on your doorstep NOW, subscribe for \$30 per year. Email DavidP@pillsburyunited.org or call 612-701-3883 to sign up.

> Next issue delivered: April 26, 2024 North News is an enterprise of:



ADVERTISING IN NORTH NEWS

SIZE	COLOR
Full Page	\$1265
1/2	\$700
1/4	\$400
1/8	\$230
1/16	\$125
Newsletter	\$200/wl

Please inquire for pricing if you'd like a different size than the ones listed.

Want to support NORTH NEWS?

Subscribe to home delivery today!

S30 for Northside residents -\$50 for non-Northside residents

Email davidp@pillsburyunited.org or visit www.mynorthnews.org

Be@theCapri THIS APRIL First Thursday Films @ the Capri Going To Mars: Nikki Giovanni Project Legends @ the Capri Jennifer Sings Judy Garland 4/6 and 4/7 Minneapolis St. Paul International Screening 7 Fantastic Films 4/14, 19, 20, 21 Capri Glee! Adult Community Choir In Concert / J.D. Steele, Director Camp Capri Third Saturdays For Middle School Scholars Second Annual PCYC Gala @ the Capri Celebrating 70 Years of Service Capri

North Minneapolis at a glance



Lamarcus Osborne placed 5th in state becoming the first to place for the North High wrestling team since 1998. Photo by Tay'luan Henderson

Polar wrestler places in state for the first time since 1998

By **Doretha Landers**, North High School

The state high school wrestling tournament was winding down when Lamarcus Osborne began his final match as a Polar. The spotlight was on Osborn and an opponent who had previously bean him. After a nail-biting double overtime, matter what is going on in your life. Osborn came out on top and earned a

Osborne placed fifth at state, a feat that away. hasn't been done for the North High Polars since 1998.

"I was tired, I was grateful, and excited," said Osborne. "It feels good. Especially at this time in my life. To get smiles and congratulations from people made me feel

The senior began wrestling just last year, when he wanted to keep in shape after the football season. During his first year, he also qualified for the state tournament, but

fell just short of a win. This year he says he had something to prove.

"When I went into the match, it was me versus me out there," he said, "I felt myself getting nervous, but I had to prove to myself and others that I can overcome anything and that anything is possible, no

Them being his teammates, his coaches and his late mother, who recently passed

"She taught me to be myself and to show people what I'm made of," Osborne

When he lost in the 2023 state tournament, wrestling coach Andrew Capirchio said Osborne told him something he's never heard from a student before.

"The first thing he said to me when he got off the mat was I'm sorry, I let you down, coach,"

Capirchio said that struck him, because

he couldn't have been more proud of

"It just showed me how much Lamarcus holds himself to a high standard. He does it for more than just himself," he said.

This year when Osborne was declared the winner, Capirchio says he erupted with joy and joined Lamarcus on the mat.

"The look in his eyes, it all paid off," he said. He's worked extremely hard. He's had some tough moments and bounced right

He finished his career with a 77-17 record. When he graduates in June, he wants to pursue marketing in college and play football.

"If life's not going your way now, just keep pushing through it," said Osborne. "Everybody has trials and tribulations, but it's all about what you do with it. Use it to do something good. Inspire people."

Philanthropist gives millions to three local nonprofits

Northside non-profits organizations Build Wealth MN, Appetite for Change and Twin Cities Rise were among 10 Twin Cities organizations to receive multimillion dollar donations from billionaire and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott.

Scott, an author and Amazon cofounder, began donating much of her fortune in 2020.

Twin Cities Rise, which provides job training and career advice to low-income residents, received \$3 million.

Appetite for Change, which brings meals to Northside residents, received \$2

Build Wealth MN received \$2 million. The non-profit, headed by David McGee, aims to close the gap in Black homeownership by offering financial literacy classes and loan assistance for those seeking to buy their first home.

"What a blessing MacKenzie Scott has provided to Build Wealth," McGee said. "A gift of this magnitude is a game changer for our organization. This will help us to serve hundreds of families."



A Black-owned credit union finally will *Arise* in **North Minneapolis**

By David Pierini, Editor

North Minneapolis will soon be home to the first Black-owned credit union in the

Officials announced March 20 that Arise Community Credit Union received its charter from the National Credit Union Administration. Arise will begin first as an online bank before eventually moving to a brick-and-mortar location on the Northside

"We are elated," said Debra Hurston, executive director of the Association for Black Economic Power, created to establish the credit union. "We genuinely thank the community members whose vision and grassroots efforts made this achievement possible."

A "thank-you event" and a chance to meet Arise CEO Dan Johnson was held on March 28 at Shiloh Temple International

Community leaders took steps to create a Black-owned bank in 2017 following the police shooting death of Philando Castille during a traffic stop. As the original leaders reflected on police injustice, they wanted to address systemic racism in the banking history that kept Black and Brown people from loans and other programs that helped white clients build generational wealth.

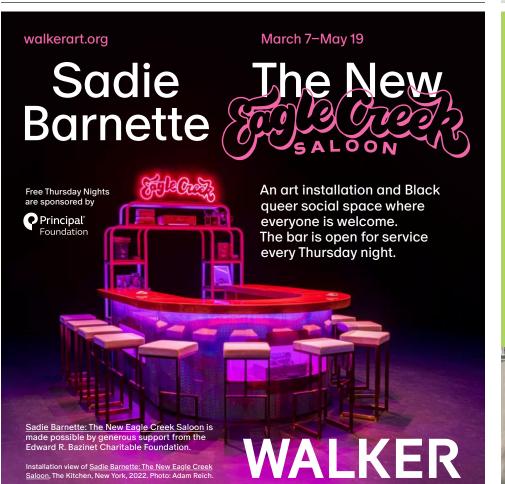
Village Financial was set to apply for a charter when the board fired the executive director and CEO after allegations of fraud and mismanagement in 2019. Hurston was hired two years later to revive the movement and lead ABEP through the regulatory hurdles.

Johnson was hired for his experience in the insurance industry and managing a Wells Fargo branch bank.

He said regulators required Arise to start as an online credit union to build traction before opening a branch.

Arise needs to get all its technology in place before it can begin opening accounts,

Continued on page 19







A redo for a 'revolutionary' road

NEWS

NEWS

By Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

If you stand on the corner of 6th and Lyndale, it's hard to imagine that the stretch of highway before you was a hub of North Minneapolis life. When Olson Memorial Highway (Highway 55) was built in the 1930s, it tore through what was formerly known as 6th Avenue, reducing lively businesses to asphalt.

"There was a walkable, accessible neighborhood that was thriving, and it was safe where people could access their basic needs and amenities from nearby. And it was nearly erased from history," said José Antonio Zayas Cabán, executive director of Our Streets Minneapolis.

Our Streets Minneapolis and the Harrison Neighborhood Association started the Bring Back 6th campaign to return the highway to the thriving Black and Jewish cultural corridor that was 6th Avenue. The U.S. Department of Transportation recently awarded \$1.6 million to Our Streets Minneapolis, the group spearheading Bring Back 6th.

Zayas Cabán said that when highways go through neighborhoods, environmental racism is a heavy component, and the Northside has been victimized by it for far too long. The Northside is in the county with the worst air in the metro state area, has the highest asthma rates, is dealing with the fallout of the HERC incinerator, and is suffocated by the car emissions from Highway 55 that go right through the community.

Ultimately, the group wants to eliminate the highway completely and restore it to a walkable main street. The publicly owned land would be placed in a land trust to ensure that new developments benefit the existing community.

"We have to work hard to present these ideas, not because they're impossible: it's because they have been done, but they haven't been afforded to all groups," Antonio Zayas Cabán said. "People may lose five minutes of driving time, but isn't it worth it if we're seeing a community fully restored or folks have access to the same generational wealth-building opportunities that have been afforded to other Minnesotans?"

After the highway's initial construction, the city praised it as revolutionary. But a revolutionary road was at the expense of a being used well under capacity, and the word 'revolutionary' is replaced with words like "dangerous" and 'antiquated.

was initially set to come down Highway 55 and promised to address safety and infrastructure issues on the

roadway, but when the route was changed, that promise was abandoned

Last year, MnDOT stepped in to conduct a study to identify the roadway's issues. 3.6 million dollars in federal funding was dedicated to revitalizing the road, coming from the Neighborhood Access and Equity Program. This program aims to connect communities by supporting neighborhood equity, safety, and affordable transportation.

The Minnesota Department Transportation (MnDOT) visited North Minneapolis in March to gather feedback from residents to reimagine Olson Memorial Highway. Renovation is scheduled for 2028. Residents said they were excited to finally scale down the 6-lane highway that has been harmful to the Northside since its asphalt was laid in the 1940s.

Resident Christi Sullivan said,

love it if there were a day where I could tell unanimous desire from residents to create a her she's old enough, and I can be confident roadway that allows communities to gather that she'll cross safely, but having to cross for local development. In a recent March The Blue Line light rail extension is scary even for myself."

> When conducting the study last summer, MnDOT received requests for

pavement is deteriorating, the roadway is "I go on walks with my daughter. I would safety when reimagining the highway and a





thriving area in the community. Today, the MNDot's Option 2 rendering for an alternative Highway 55 was a favorite of residents at the community engagement meeting in March.

NEWS

catch up with our **Council Members**





WARD 4: LaTrisha Vetaw



WARD 5: Jeremiah Ellison

Minneapolis City Council members LaTrisha Vetaw (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward

5) were inaugurated in January 2022 and January 2018, respectively. We have invited them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our newspaper.



voted to mandate Uber and Lyft raise unreasonably and arbitrarily high. Because of this ordinance, both Uber and Lyft have told drivers and riders that they case, the entire metro area on May 1st.

This is an incredibly irresponsible and disappointing move from my colleagues. It is paining me to see the panic and frustration this is causing many people who heavily rely on rideshare. I am sorry that this is happening, and I am sorry I don't have the political power to stop it.

During the March 21 council meeting, Council Member Andrea Jenkins brought forward a notice to reconsider the ordinance at the April 11 council meeting. I hope that by that meeting, there will be a new policy that reflects rates based on hard data and that rideshare companies can garee to.

Council Member Robin Wonsley, on behalf of the ordinance's authors, sent out an email on 3/20 with a document providing some updates on the ordinance. if there is any other plan to work with the for officers. Not top five most dangerous In that email, it states the following:

"We have been in conversation with state legislators to ensure that our policies referred me to the ordinance's authors. urgent service and need in our community. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM. These are informal are complementary."

with a shared goal of a Minneapolis updates. policy based on Minneapolis data while supporting a statewide policy based on will work together with state partners which feels a little bit funny because if statewide data."

partnership and includes a request for and I hope my colleagues see that. continued conversations"

are in contact with Business Licensing, minneapolismn.gov or leave a message including local startups and companies at 612-673-2204.

As most of you know, my colleagues that are already operating in other cities"

"Local drivers are working with the their per-mile and per-minute pay rates Drivers Coop, a worker-owned rideshare Chuahtai, Councilmember Osman, and His family members called for a mental company currently operating in New York Councilmember Chowdhury brought service, and an officer arrived on the

"We continue to be in conversation will have no other choice than to cease with drivers, who have been engaged we enter April, the Ward 5 offices wish and Travis Jordan ended up being killed. operations in Minneapolis and, in Uber's with several potential new rideshare our Muslim, Jewish, and Christian faith I thought about who was served in that companies"

"Council Members are working with city staff to remove startup barriers for new rideshare companies"

"Council is working with MetroMobility to promote their existing on-demand service"

"MetroMobility has the capacity to accommodate increased ridership of this service immediately and into 2025"

"The city's Policy and Research division is in contact with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry with the goal of getting any available Minneapolis-specific data that can assist in our city. We did a 911 problem nature us with the required ongoing evaluation code study back in 2018 and one of the

I have reached out to President Payne and Vice President Chughtai to see the top five most time-consuming calls with a more collaborative policy and they consuming calls. This told us that this is an "We continue to work with legislators authors besides the email with the above and I think that was a lot of the impetus you while we share coffee or a meal

I am hopeful that Council Members and the mayor's office to collaborate "Council President Payne, Vice on a reasonable policy that adequately community members; folks want this to you'd like to discuss. Please RSVP at President Chughtai, and IGR Chair compensates drivers while also keeping Chowdhury have sent a letter to the rideshare companies in Minneapolis. Both Minneapolis delegation affirming our of these things can exist at the same time,

As always, please feel free to "Several new rideshare companies reach out to my office at ward4@

Ramadan Mubarak, Northside! remember in 2018, my first year in office,

join Mayor Frey, Council President Payne, call to get help and not Travis himself who Commissioner Barnette, Director Nelson was ultimately killed. I think that is a big Brown and BCR Program Manager part of why you see a sense of urgency to Marisa Stevenson for a press conference ensure we can grow this program and get about the Behavioral Crisis Response it to where it needs to be.

for the past three years. I was on the elected side when we started thinking about the need for this kind of service things that we found was that mental and emotional distress calls were one of Governor and state legislature to come up but it was still their top five most timeof why we leaned into creating this.

you go around and talk to officers and be the status quo here in the city. Even www.minneapolismn.gov/ward5, and my though it is still in its pilot years, you're staff will follow up with the call-in details. seeing that folks are already demanding If you have any questions or concerns, that this be elevated to the same level as reach out to Dieu Do, Policy Associate, police, fire or EMS.

because, unfortunately, we often have feel free to contact my staff via email or to learn things the hard way in our city. I call our office at (612) 673-2205.

My office with Council Vice President there was the case of Travis Jordan. forward a Ramadan resolution this past scene and was not equipped to handle month honoring our holy holiday. As the situation that got beyond his control, communities a blessed and beautiful situation. Certainly not our officer, who Ramadan, Passover, and Easter this was in a situation that he felt was getting beyond his control, certainly not Travis's This past month, I was honored to family, who was the one who wanted to

If the city tried to build this program The BCR program has been running from scratch, we would not be where we are today. We don't have the expertise, infrastructure, or ability to hire as needed to be up and running. BCR as successful as it has been, cannot be talked about without talking about Canopy Roots and the service they have provided and delivering in this program. Thank you Canopy Roots for your partnership and the work you are doing.

As always, our office hosts weekly Open Coffee Hours on Mondays from I have not heard anything else from the We didn't have an appropriate response and a chance for me to hear directly from (virtually). Office hours are on a first The program is still in its pilot years come, first served basis. Please try not to call in past 12:50 p.m. as we want to leave enough time to chat about what at dieu.do@minneapolismn.gov. If there's I'm passionate about this program anything our office can help with, please



Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty talks with a community member about how a felony on his record impacted his life. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

Expungement clinic allows fresh start for record holders

By **Azhae'la Hanson**, Reporter

K.B. Brown was convicted and served time for a felony he committed when he was 19 years old. He's 49 today and he's served his time, but his record has cast a an hour-long wait, but they say it was now; a good human being. shadow over his life for two decades.

death sentence," Brown said. "Being able to get that removed from your record is paramount to being able to excel."

On Feb. 28, Brown and around 300 others whose lives have also been put on pause waited in the lobby for several hours to fill out the application to get their negated when you have a record. records expunged. The Hennepin County Attorney General's Office held the first Hennepin County Expungement Clinic at the Urban League Twin Cities.

From its opening at noon to its closing you committed the felony." at 8 p.m., Urban League Twin Cities was filled with dozens of people who came to file for expungement. Most were met with worth it. A couple of hours was nothing

waited for an opportunity like this.

Brown has served his time. For the approached her with their thanks. past two decades, he's been a dedicated community figure for social justice and runs felonies and have done what they need to his own business, Wolfpack Productions, in North Minneapolis. He said all of that is Moriarty said.

"To have that hovering over your head. It doesn't matter what you've done after Things like housing and employment are that or who you've become since then. You an uphill battle for those with a record. will always be the person you were when The clinic was designed to expedite the

expunged, he'll be able to be seen on County Attorney's Office, allowing people paper just as the community sees him

Hennepin County Attorney Mary

"If you have a felony, it's an economic compared to the decades some have Moriarty attended to speak, and could barely make it into the door before people

> "These are people who've committed do but still can't move on with their lives,"

Having a record takes away many privileges most don't have to consider. process for individuals with adult felony Brown says when his record is convictions originating with the Hennepin

Lucy Laney: a view from one school

schools in North Minneapolis, whose

The cuts are especially painful to

Northside school cuts total nearly

"We started the school year with

schools in North Minneapolis. Pawelak

loss not seeing those faces next year.

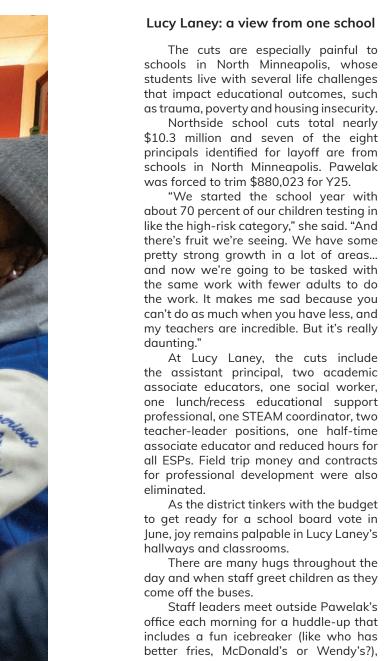
Sarah Olson, a social worker for the Stable Homes Stable Schools program, said she is concerned about how cuts and changes will impact children in unstable environments.

"When you go out back and you see all the help the kids have coming out of cabs. Some of our families are homeless and live outside the bus zone," Olson said. "And you see staff coming out and loving on them, including Joshua. (His departure) would be a huge loss to my families I work





Continued on the next page and Jayceon McMahan in a small group.



At Lucy Laney, the cuts include the assistant principal, two academic associate educators, one social worker, one lunch/recess educational support professional, one STEAM coordinator, two teacher-leader positions, one half-time associate educator and reduced hours for all ESPs. Field trip money and contracts for professional development were also

As the district tinkers with the budget to get ready for a school board vote in June, joy remains palpable in Lucy Laney's hallways and classrooms.

There are many hugs throughout the day and when staff greet children as they come off the buses.

Staff leaders meet outside Pawelak's office each morning for a huddle-up that includes a fun icebreaker (like who has better fries, McDonald's or Wendy's?), staff and student updates, and a quick cheer. In one third-grade class, faces light up as students race to scribble spelling words on small dry-erase boards.

One boy sent to cool off in the hallway after an outburst softened when assistant Principal Joshua Cartlidge spoke to him in his warm, buttery, baritone voice. He was gathering a small group of boys for a session designed to get them to talk about their feelings.

Lucy Laney has the most highly mobile or homeless students in the district but manages to nurture steady growth with a "village" approach to educating kids and connecting needy students and their families with services.



As one school starts to thrive post-COVID, its staff loses sleep over budget cuts

Photos and story by **David Pierini**, Editor

The school year at Lucy Laney Community School begins with a new

inspire and guide the school staff. The slogan is on t-shirts and is the last thing

Pawelak says each morning as she wraps gap historic and acknowledge the pain were asked to trim a few hundred up morning announcements.

For this year, Pawelak selected "Don't let anything steal your joy today."

But budget cuts are a cruel thief. Principal Lisa Pawelak stresses over Minneapolis Public Schools must trim the summer to find the perfect words to as much as \$115 million to balance the and the number of High-5 classrooms will children in the city have left many school district's budget for the next school year.

MPS officials are calling the budget

the cuts inflict.

Across all schools and administration, some 200 positions are slated for elimination. Fifth-grade music will no relief funds for schools are set to expire. longer be funded. Mental health services Declines in enrollment and school-age

No school is spared. Some principals

thousand from the school budgets. Others will have to cut more than \$1 million. Millions of dollars in pandemic

buildings half-empty.

Pawelak said she is confident that the staff will maintain the family-like bonds with students and their families



going forward, but she acknowledges Trevion Clevenger, left, Josiah Dotson Trudell, Lauranna Anderson, and Yeimi Garza got comfortable on the floor for a little focus work.

Two days after an interview with North News, Olson learned the district cut her position.

Hard to say goodbye

Pawelak has been at Lucy Laney for 17 years, much of that time as the assistant principal to Mauri Friestleben, who is now the principal at North Hiah School.

Lucy Laney has never been without an assistant principal and Cattledge's duties will undoubtedly fall to other staff. He is only in his second year as an assistant principal.

"I haven't even fully wrapped by mind around it," she said. "Our assistant principal is busy. He is working all day every day. Our students need him, our teachers need him. They love him and so it's going to be really hard to say goodbye to both the person and the position it brings to the community."

Worried parents

Many parents, grateful for Lucy Laney's reach into the community, are troubled by the cuts. Some have come to school board meetings in tears, asking administrators to reconsider the cuts.

Sarah Hollie, who has a fourth grader at Lucy Laney, told the board on March 12 that administrators have not used data to make targeted and equitable decisions.

She described Lucy Laney as a refuge supporting children through their challenges and celebrating their progress and triumphs.

"Significant budget cuts by this district are disheartening," Hollie said. "It does not consider the hard work many Northside schools are doing to improve student achievement, retain staff, have targeted resources for the students in need and continue to support students who are thriving and exceeding grade-level expectations.

"The staff, teachers and leadership should not be expected to do more with less resources and funding to support students because of this proposed budget cut."

Leona Robertson cares for seven grandchildren at home, five of whom attend Lucy Laney. Robinson said school staff have helped her address mental health challenges with her kids.

A teacher taught one daughter with a learning disability how to read.

"They help with these kids," Robertson said. "And when they talk about taking away the mental health? What will that do to these kids?"







North Minneapolis schools at a glance

As Minneapolis Public Schools wrestle with a \$115 million budget gap for next year, Northside schools will trim more than \$10 million. The list below shows the dollar amount each Northside school will cut.

Bethune Community School \$1,982,751

Cityview Community School \$471,626

Franklin Middle School \$804.511

Hall STEM Academy \$1,060,725

Henry (Camden) High School \$1,407,782

Hmong International Academy \$636,792

> Jenny Lind Elementary \$1,063,762

Lucy Laney Community School

Nellie Stone Johnson \$447,964

North High School \$920,136

Olson Middle School \$610,014

> Total \$10,286,086

Assistant Principal Joshua Cattledge is slated to lose his job if budget cuts for next year are approved. Kids respond to his peaceful energy and Cattledge is a valuable thought partner, Pawelak said.

School secretary Kelly Knodel and Cattledge work in tandem to request silent passage through the hall.

Honesty Gordon-Scott hugged her principal to start her day.

Q&A: Inside the **Bonding Bill with Chair Lee**

By Aketzally Murillo Alvarado, ThreeSixty Journalism

Rep. Fue Lee (DFL, North Minneapolis) leads the committee chair for this year's investment bill. The Capitol Investment Bill is more commonly referred to as the "bonding bill" because the state typically relies on borrowed money — bonds — to invest in public works projects. Bonding bills typically run on a two-year cycle. The first year is the budget year, when they decide how to allocate taxpayer money and money they already have in general. The second year is typically the policy year, which tends to focus on allocating borrowed money and passing policies that don't cost anything.

This year is the policy year, so the legislature is prioritizing investing into well-planned projects, infrastructure and zero-cost policies. Even though the legislative session only recently began. some thought has been given to projects such as the light rail and Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC). The HERC facility in downtown Minneapolis burns garbage to generate energy and greatly affects the air quality around it in the process.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Q: Would you like to see funds go to having the light rail expand into North Minneapolis?

A: I think whatever projects we fund, I really want to represent what a lot of the community wants. There are some concerns with some of the residents who will be impacted, and businesses, and I do agree with them. If we're going to have one of the best forms of transit, we must provide support for those businesses and those residents that will be impacted. So that'll be an ongoing conversation over

I think we do need some form of transit there to help connect our residents to other parts of the region. I'll be supportive of whatever project ends up there by making sure our residents are being heard, and

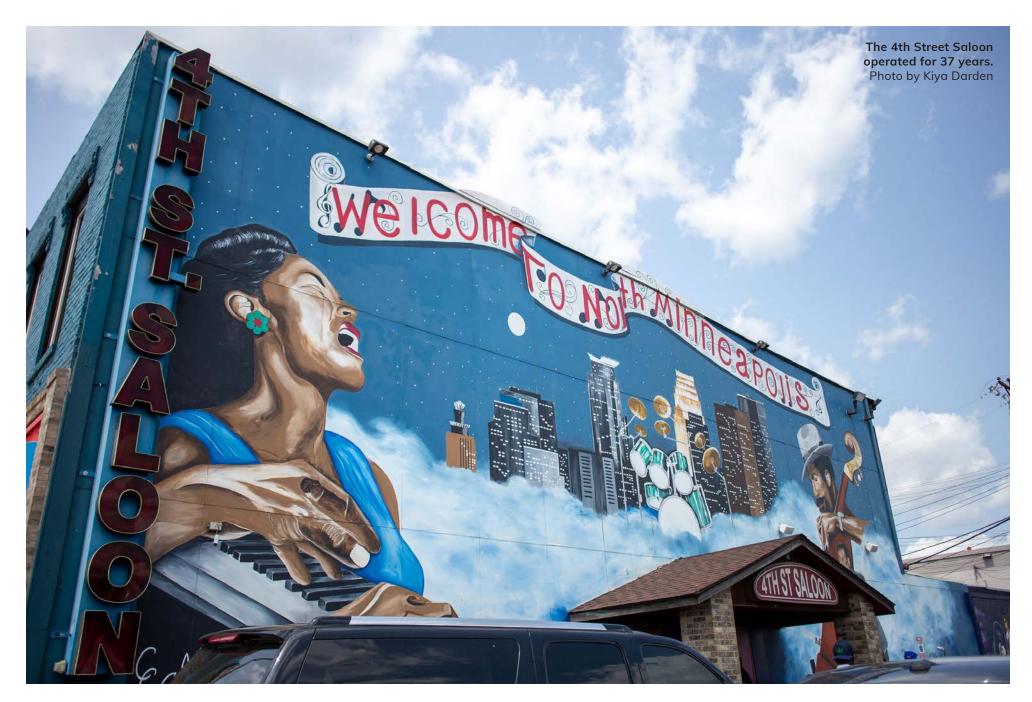


with Rep. Fue Lee during a workskop on covering the State Capitol. Photo provided by ThreeSixty Journalism

... Having money for light rail or projects allow for the Metropolitan Council to raise like that, will be a nonstarter for my counterparts on the other side of the gisle. so that will be a tough one. Fortunately,

actually get the resources that they need. last year, we were able to pass a law to





A saloon closes and the dream of a Swank Eatery begins

By **Azhae'la Hanson**, Reporter and David Pierini, Editor

A landmark has closed, but a transform it into a destination for visitors to North Minneapolis.

The 4th Street Saloon was set for its last call on March 31. Barber Teto Wilson is buying the building and seeking investors to help him renovate it and create a food hall called Swank Eatery. The 13,000-square-foot commercial development ideas announced to take space could cost an estimated \$11,000 to advantage of its proximity to the proposed

"It's a great space for many reasons," Wilson said. "It's kind of like the gateway to food hall. North Minneapolis. From that standpoint, it's a great space. There's a food deficit in North Minneapolis. People are going and is best known for the Charles Caldwell outside of the community to get what they mural on the side of the building that

"This won't solve the food problem community pillar is buying the building to but it gives us more options. It will be right here, in North Minneapolis, where people live and work."

Already, Wilson has received a he's a community guy and a friend of \$500,000 grant from Hennepin County mine. He was interested and it just blew toward his investment. If Wilson is up into something that looks like it's going successful in securing investors, Swank to be amazing." Eatery would be one of the first significant Blue Line light rail extension. Wilson said this not the motivation for opening the planned to retire near his 70th birthday,

The bar has operated on West serves as a welcome to North Minneapolis.

So long saloon

Owner Greg Hegwood had always which comes up this year.

Over the years, the saloon was known Broadway Avenue near I-94 for 37 years for attracting motorcycle groups who sometimes barbequed in the parking lot. The older regulars would open the place, arriving in the morning to watch "The Price "I talked to Tito right away when we is Right" and then make way for workers found out it was going to be up for sale," after their shifts for a Happy Hour drink. said Mike Oker, general manager of 4th At night, there would be live music, a DJ or Street Saloon since 2000. "Knowing that karaoke. Oker started at the saloon as a Hip-Hop DJ and essentially never left.

The saloon hosted a farewell event on March 24, inviting regulars to bring in photos, catch up with old friends and share stories about the saloon.

The area has sometimes been a hotspot for criminal activities, but Oker said his memories of the people he served will last a lifetime.

"You're not just a bartender," Oker said. "Sometimes vou're somebody's comedian when they need to laugh; sometimes you're somebody's therapist when they need to cry. You know, sometimes you're somebody's counselor when they don't even know what they need, but they might need you to tell them what they need.

"So, you know, a lot comes with it, but all I can say is that I got to experience a lot of beautiful people."

Swank image

Wilson has wanted to open a bar and restaurant with a relaxed vibe for more than a decade. He felt he wanted to do it by the time he turned 50.

He saw a chance when he began discussing a purchase price with the owner of the Five Points Building located at the corner of Penn and West Broadway

Wilson said there was an ideal space for a lounge and was directly across the street from his barber shop.

But the proposed Blue Line light rail extension, which will come down 21st Avenue and connect with West Broadway around James, derailed those plans. He had gone as far as having plans drawn up. That was gone.

The Blue Line presented another problem. Would a lengthy construction period send his customers elsewhere? Would his old building survive the vibrations caused by heavy construction?

He said Northsiders are starting to buy properties along West Broadway and are building momentum. He worries the train could dampen that enterprising spirit.

Wilson hopes project managers are genuinely listening, as they say, and hope compensation for displacement is not just the value of an old building but a payment that will make businesses whole.

Wilson said, "I'm worried this project is at the municipal consent stage and they have shared their plan to help with displacement."

Ironically, Wilson's first construction grant of \$500,000 is tied to the Blue Line. He is the first to receive a grant through

Teto Wilson in his barbershop on West Broadway Avenue. Photo by David Pierini

FEATURE



A plant-based bodega is on its way to North **Minneapolis**

By Ayanna Melander, North High School

Come April, the community will be able to access a community bodega for

free at Sanctuary Church. The young chef behind the bodega hopes her plant-based soul food is food for the soul.

"Food is what fuels us and so we have to be very conscious about what we are putting into our bodies," said founder Mykela Jackson, who goes by the to access healthier foods or what options nickname Keiko.

Mykela Jackson grew up with food at the center of her cultural identity. Home-cooked meals and watching Food Network with her mom taught her to rely on Southern soul food staples like fried chicken, baked mac and cheese, and stews. When she graduated high school,

discovery after a revelation to change her eating habits. She became a vegan and developed an alkaline-based diet in 2017.

At first, the decision to do away with the foods she was used to posed many challenges for Jackson. Not knowing how existed was a challenge that left her with an identity crisis. But after realizing she wasn't alone, it turned that into a pathway to food justice. She didn't want to do away completely with the foods she knew best, so she added a vegan twist.

In 2019, she began soul food popups across North Minneapolis and later she began down a long road of self- became a head chef to curate vegan

"I realized that the only way that I would be able to convince people to try plant based foods was to create good vegan food and also educate people on the conditions that we are in," she said.

Food sustainability and education essentially became a part of Jackson's mission to fight food insecurity and create healthy, affordable and accessible food alternatives within majority Black communities.

She was inspired to create the Food Trap Project Initiative (FTP) and is

Continued on page 19

A Polar is your newest MPS board student representative

By Shakara Anderson-Jefferson, North High School

When Elliston Rounds entered his junior year at North High, he wanted to make his last year count. He felt he could make a change and encourage students to use their voices.

This was important to Rounds because he felt like he didn't have one for most of his

He wanted to be the person people could go to when their concerns weren't heard, so he became one of two student district representatives for Minneapolis Public Schools.

"For the majority of my life I felt no one ever listened to me or felt seen, so I want to be that person people can come to, to listen and help solve their problems," Rounds

He is the first North High student to take on the role in the school's history. He started his year-long term in January and has been slowly getting comfortable in his new role by advocating for the school board to address issues that he experiences alongside his classmates. At North High, he is a wrestler, a football player, and a boxer. He prides himself on giving Northside you a voice. He believes that Northside youth, in particular, have historically been underrepresented.

"I think the Northside is misjudged," Rounds said. "There are families and people who live here, and their voices matter."

Issues like extending eating periods, teacher pay, and learning about school budgets for future generations of students have been his top priority. At North High, he said it's difficult for students to get to school in time for breakfast, which leaves them hungry until lunch.

"Extending the breakfast period could help students start their day off right," Rounds said. "If students are required to come to school every day, at least let them make it to school and get something in their bellies."

He also wants to make some changes

"Representatives should be able to vote. We have an opinion, but we don't



have an influence," Rounds said.

He believes being able to vote could help and truly make a difference for MPS students; he feels like he isn't helping if his opinions and thoughts are not acknowledged.

Representing a younger generation in a room full of adults poses challenges and can be overwhelming, but he says he loves meeting new people and getting to know their points of view from different schools. Krista Schimelpfenia, a special

education teacher at North High who has known Rounds for two years, said he has always been a student who is empathetic towards his classmates.

"He's always asking questions and talking about ways he can better the community," Schimelpfenia said. "He's a

Elliston has big plans for how he wants to change the community in the future. He plans on attending an HBCU to study law when he graduates in 2025.

"I want to improve the Northside by having more peace," he said. "There's too much violence and not enough people coming together. My ancestors did not go through so much pain for hundreds of years for us to turn around and fight each

For now, he hopes his peers will trust him to represent well.



NOW HIRING

190+ Openings

Seasonal Field and Lab Positions

All Training Provided

\$16.50 - \$20.05/hour

Paid Time Off and Holiday Pay Offered

Offices in Andover, Jordan, Maple Grove, Oakdale, Plymouth, Rosemount, and Saint Paul

Info and application at mmcd.org

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employer



FEATURE 16 **NORTH NEWS** March 29, 2024

An incredible musical journey started on her mother's lap

By **Azhae'la Hanson**, Reporter

Ann Nesby would bring her daughter to church and sit her on her lap while she sang. When she finished, she would silently sit with other churchagers and pray.

The adults in the room knew that when that happens, you stop singing. But a sweet little voice was coming from the lap of Ann, her daughter Jamecia Bennett, who was 2 at the time.

"She kept on singing," Nesby said. "We knew she had a gift."

In late February, Jamecia Bennett became the first woman to be a resident artist at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, and the one-time performance was the accumulation of a lifetime's dedication to finding her voice.

Raised in a family of musicians, Bennett's passion for music was cultivated from a young age. Her musical roots run deep, stemming from the harmonies taught by her mother, a former lead singer for the Grammy Award-winning music troupe Sounds of Blackness.

Bennett recalls the melodies of her and her mother's voices carrying the tunes of Black artists throughout their home, some of whom have greatly influenced Bennett's own sound later on.

"Understanding my position as being the first woman to do this is, it gives me that feeling of fulfillment to know that now I have other young girls to look up to me and see that this is happening for me and I'm from the Northside.'

Jamecia Bennett

"The legends like Rosetta Tharpe, Aretha Franklin, and Chaka Khan are some of the many amazing artists that inspire me." Bennett said.

She began to trailblaze her way into the stars in her teens. At 16, she became the



Jamecia Bennett during her one-night residency in late february. She became the first woman to grace the Ordway stage in such a fashion. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

youngest member of Sounds of Blackness and embarked on a global musical career collaborating with renowned producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. When she graduated from North High School in 1991, she was in London performing instead of at

After meeting the legendary producers, Bennett was thrown into a full-fledged music career. A global tour with the Sounds of Blackness led to a solo contract from Mercury Records, resulting in platinum and gold albums for her contributions to movie soundtracks such as Jason's Lyric, Kazaam, and Posse. In 2012. Bennett and Sounds of Blackness won an NAACP Image Award. She also won a Grammy Award for her work with Gospel Artist Le'Andria Johnson.

Bennett's versatility extends to the Billboard charts, where she reached No. 8 as a featured lead soloist with Dove and Stellar nominees James Grear and



Bennett directed choreography to her background singers during rehearsal. On the left is her aunt Shirley 'Marie' Graham, who joined Bennett on-stage for backing Continued on page 19 vocals. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

NORTH NE







THE NEWSLETTER

Don't want to wait a month?

Get a little bit of North News each week with The North Newsletter.

Sign up to receive our weekly newsletter in your email by opening the built-in camera feature on your phone or tablet. Point the camera at the QR code, tap the banner that appears and follow the instructions on screen to sign in.



If you don't want to use the QR code, visit mynorthnews.org and click on the subscribe tab or send an email to DavidP@pillsburyunited.org

www.mynorthnews.org

NOTICES

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Youth Club: St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2901 Emerson Ave. N. grades 6-12, Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Transportation available. To enroll, call 612-529-7726.

Hockey for boys and girls ages 6-17: at North Commons Park and Northeast Arena during the months of November through February. All equipment is provided and the cost is minimal. Register and get more information at North Commons Park, 612-370-4921.

Safe Station: Struggling with substance abuse? Start your recovery journey at Minneapolis Fire Station 14, 2002 Lowry Ave. N., where a firefighter or recovery coach can help get you a variety of services. Open 24 hours. No judgment or shame. Safe Station is a partnership with the Twin Cities Recovery Project and the Minneapolis Fire Department.

Free legal advice: Legal Aid takes on civil cases, such as housing, family, consumer tax, immigration and public benefits. The non-profit organization now has a clinic

Association, 1501 Glenwood Ave. Services are free for those who qualify. Must be 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines or age 60-plus. Hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Walk-ins welcome, but appointments are preferred. Call 612-746-3611 to make an appointment.

Homework help: Sumner Library, which is closed for the next year for renovation, has a temporary site at UROC, 2001 Plymouth Ave. N. Limited service includes homework help, computer access, on-site technology assistance and printing and copying. Free tutoring and help with homework runs each Monday and Thursday from 4-7 p.m.

The Healing Place: The Healing Place is back at Zion Missionary Baptist Church, 621 Elwood Ave. N. It is committed to healing trauma in the Black community by helping to break the cycle of oppression. It is a safe space if you need a prayer, a conversation or just a place to sit. Every Wednesday from 1

Food Distribution: Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, 3355 4th Street N., will distribute free fresh food on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month from 10

in the office of the Harrison Neighborhood a.m.-noon. There are no pre-qualifications. Evervone is welcome.

> Free Dinners: The Camden Collective and the Sanneh Foundation sponsor a weekly free food pickup at Salem Lutheran Church, 4150 Dupont Ave. N., each Saturday from 1-3 p.m. Call 612-521-3644 for more information. Walk-ups are welcome.

> **Pet supplies:** Are you in need of pet supplies or pet resources? The North Minneapolis Pet Resource Center, 1401 44th Ave. N., is open for curbside pickup Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 p.m.-8 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Call 764-273-0710 to place an order and leave a voicemail.

> Radio updates in your language: Tune into Minneapolis's cultural radio programs for COVID-19 updates. The city is broadcasting updates on KMOJ 89.9 FM (English), La Raza 95.7 FM (Spanish), KALY 101.7 FM (Somali) and WIXK AM 1590 (Hmong).

Minneapolis Ward 4 contact info: If you live in Ward 4 and want to reach City Councilwoman LaTrisha Vetaw. contact Magaie Kohl via email: maggie.kohl@minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-258-3982. Contact Betsy Brock pillsburyunited.org. with other needs via email: betsy.brock@

minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-257-5242. You can also reach Vetaw via email: latrisha. vetaw@minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-322-

Minneapolis Ward 5 contact info: If you live in Ward 5 and want to reach City Councilman Jeremiah Ellison, call his office at 612-673-2205 or email him at ward5@minneapolismn. gov. You can also contact his policy associate Bethany Turnwall at bethany.turnwall@ minneapolismn.gov.

Hennepin County District 2 contact info: To reach Hennepin County Commissioner Irene Fernando, call 612-348-7882 or email her at irene.fernando@hennepin.us. For constituent services, contact policy aide Bill Emory at 612-348-3526 or at bill.emory@hennepin.us.

Minneapolis Public Schools. District 2: Sharon El-Amin is the Board of Education director representing North Minneapolis. She can be reached at 612-986-3281 or Sharon. El-Amin@mpls.k12.mn.us

Do you have an ongoing program, meeting or event you would like to see published in North News? Please send the details to DavidP@

Spring ahead with **Planned Parenthood!**

Whether rain or shine, snow or blue skies-take care of your sexual health this season!



Black-owned credit union Continued from page 4

NEWS

a process that will take six to nine months. Close to 3,000 potential members

have pledged to open accounts with Arise. "We need to dot every 'i' and cross every 't' before we can hit the ground running," Johnson said. "We will be in compliance and meet the expectations of (regulators). Once those things are done, people can start becoming members."

lohnson said the first account would go to Hurston.

Olsen Memorial **Continued from page 5**

meeting to gain feedback on designs, MN DOT revealed its top five priority features for the highway to be walking and biking safety, vehicle safety, walking and biking mobility, and improving the pavement

Two ideas caught the eye of Bring Back 6th and community members. MnDOT's Alternative options 2 and 4 reduce the highway to feature bus-only lanes, oneor two-way vehicle lanes, and separated bike lanes. MnDOT hopes it's a step in the right direction.

"We're hoping to get enough community input and do enough technical analysis to create an Olson Memorial Highway that is representative of what people are looking for," said Christina Perfetti, MnDOT West Area Coordinator.

MnDOT will be taking feedback on their current re-designs for the highway online until April 7th. Link: https://www. surveymonkey.com/r/Olson Memorial 2

For more information on the Bring Back 6th Campaign, https://www. ourstreetsmpls.org/olson

Expungement clinic **Continued from page 7**

who were convicted of felonies and served their sentences a chance to shed their record and start fresh.

Moriarty told the room that she was both proud that her office was able to host the event, but also heartbroken.

"We can see tremendous disparities in the system and how the system impacts people in the community," she said, "This is indicative of the fact that we need to do

The process, which usually takes up to a year and is costly, was free and expedited to 60 days. The clinic was the first of a tour around Hennepin County to ensure they are

reaching communities in person to make the process accessible and equitable for eligible applicants. The Hennepin County Attorney's office is also establishing a new criminal expungement board.

**Note: Convictions involving homicide, sexual assault, child abuse, and domestic violence are not eligible for expungement.

O&A with Rep. Fue Lee **Continued from page 11**

revenue through taxes so that if they want to move forward, I think actually use some of the funds that they were able to raise to put towards that project.

Q: Will this year's bonding bill impact

A: Last year, it was in my budget that I required them to have a plan to shut down the HERC. Right now, they're not moving forward with that plan. ... I think that I would still want to require them to have a plan to close it down. If you're asking me, are we going to have funds to, shift or repurpose that? I don't think we will have that capacity in our bill. We're still going to put the challenge on Hennepin County to come up with a plan to really listen to our citizens to shut that down.

Q: Is there a major concern that the 2024 bonding bill does not cover that vou think should be considered?

A: I think this will probably fall more into one of those three goals that I have around advancing racial equity. Typically, we can only fund nonprofit projects with general fund cash, but we might not have some cash available this year. So just taking a step back, bonds were borrowed against state debt, and so that's why we need to only fund public projects where we have cash on hand that we can use to pay for projects. Without cash this year, we might not be able to support community organizations that do crucial work in all of our communities across the entire state.

Aketzally worked with Madison McVan, a reporter with the Minnesota Reformer, and Harry Colbert, Jr., MinnPost Managing Editor, to finish their story. This story was completed at ThreeSixty's Winter News Team: Capitol Edition in February 2024, where high school journalists covered critical legislative issues, impacting Minnesota youth. Lennox Tan, another student journalist contributed to this report.

Swank Eatery Continued from page 13

the Affordable Commercial Incentive Company. She is a multidisciplinary talent Fund, which was created for viable projects planned near the proposed Blue and Tyler Perry's "Family Reunion." Line corridor

Wilson said he has conditional approval for a bank loan and hopes to originally came in 2020, when the Ordway wrap up the paperwork soon. He hopes to break ground this fall and once the a one-night show. building is in his name, he can seek other investors

"For many years, I wanted to own a restaurant, but I kept saying, 'I don't want to do it now. Maybe when I'm 50," "Wilson said. "I'm actually 50-years-old this year."

Plant-based bodega **Continued from page 14**

bringing her newest project back to North Minneapolis, a classified food desert. The bodega will be accessible inside Sanctuary Church alongside its existing food pantry. When operations begin in April, it will offer a station with a fridge and freezer full of free plant-based meals, vegan cookbooks, dry goods, educational resources, and home essentials.

"We want to support young people who have dreams and ideas, we want to be a place where they can try something new to address old issues," said Andrea Lee, Sanctuary Church Director of Operations. "Mykela's Food Trap/Bodega would help provide needed resources on a 24-7 basis."

Hunger Solutions Minnesota says 7.2 million Minnesotans visited food shelves in 2023, 1.8 million more than the previous year. Food pantries across North Minneapolis have reported a swell of new people seeking food for their families. Needs have doubled, staff capacity has been stretched to its limit, and organizations are scrambling for food to meet the need.

Jackson hopes that the bodega will be one of many for the residents of the future Twin Cities to continue fighting against food disparities in Black communities. By 2030, she hopes five F.T.P Community Bodeaas will permanently reside in North Minneapolis, another in Camden, Cedar-Riverside, George Floyd Square, and the Frogtown-Rondo area of Saint Paul.

Jackson is currently raising awareness about the FTP Bodega to gain sponsors and donors. The bodega is set to open in mid-April at Sanctuary Church and will run from 8am to 8pm daily.

Musical Journey **Continued from page 16**

as an actress in "The Color Purple," "RENT."

NORTH NEWS 19

The opportunity to add 'history maker' to her long list of accomplishments approached her with the idea of performing

"I was ecstatic," Bennett said. "And then the pandemic happened."

The constraints imposed by the pandemic confined Bennett to performing on the docks outside the Ordway Center. In 2022, the Ordway approached her to bring her talents to their main stage yet again.

Since then, she's been perfecting the February show for two years, which her band, I Movement, has sold out at the Dakota Jazz Club for three nights in a row.

"When you go from selling out a 250-person room to now having someone believe in you to sell out, you know, 1,000 or so seats, it's just a blessing for me to have this opportunity," Bennett said.

Before the big show started, an announcer got on stage to address the

"I know we're used to golf clapping," he joked. "But if you need to stand, clap, or shout, do it. That's what kind of performance this is."

She is no stranger to the Ordway. Ushers who volunteered specifically for her performance beamed in the aisles, recalling Bennett's performance as Ms. Potts in Beauty and the Beast.

"She stole the show back then," said one usher. "I said to myself that she (Bennett) should have her own show. I just had to volunteer when I saw she would be performing tonight."

Even though Bennett is a familiar face, she is the first woman to have an artist residency in the venue's 39-year history.

Her Aunt Shirley 'Marie' Graham ioined her on stage to sing background vocals, and the crowd was packed with friends and family.

"Our family is blessed with the gift of music, to be able to share that with you all is amazing," Graham said. "To be able to support her on this big night is a blessing."

The one-night-only performance didn't disappoint. The auditorium was engulfed in a beautiful blue light, and the audience was in awe as Bennett sang classics with her fusion of jazz, blues, and

"Three Grammys later and, you know, maybe about 50 shows under my belt in this theater world, that everything is possible. Everything is possible," she said.





Northrop and Liquid Music Present

Sarah Davachi, solo organ

Apr 23

Purchase Your Tickets Today!

northrop.umn.edu

Photo courtesy of artist.

Liquid Music

NORTHROP

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to Discover*