

NORTH NEWS

October 28, 2022

Serving the neighborhoods of North Minneapolis

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Invasive to trees and wallets

How Emerald Ash Borer impacts Northsiders on fixed incomes.

Page 8

Sharon Griffin rests on what remains of an ash tree that was cut down by order of the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board. Her neighborhood association helped her pay for the removal.
Photo by David Pierini

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Young witness to George Floyd's murder writes book.
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Letter from the Editor David Pierini

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North News is an enterprise of:



I ask a lot of questions. It's a prerequisite of this job and the urge to interview tends to carry over when I am off the clock with friends and family ("Don't you ever stop being a reporter?" No).

But never have I asked the question, "What's the tea?"

Can't say I ever heard this greeting. One recent afternoon, colleague Azhae'la Hanson and I were kicking around ideas for a name to go with a youth news page that will eventually get added to our website. She suggested The T.

I loved the quick punch of it and had no idea what it meant.

From Azhae'la, I learned that young people greet each other with "What's the tea?" the way my generation might inquire "What's happening?" or "What's up?" The Urban Dictionary claims the greeting originates from southern women gathering for tea. "Tea" became shorthand for gossip.

"Tea" invites the recipient to tell a friend some news or gossip or it can be a way of saying, "Talk to me."

In addition to the fine stories and photos with her credit, Azhae'la is also our youth coordinator, supervising interns and launching an after-school journalism program. She has been gently pressing me to find some real estate for a lasting home for youth news and when she came up with The T (adding the words Talk, Trends, Truth to our version), I was inspired to move the matter to the top of the list.

You can't find The T on our website just yet. But we will be sure to let you know when it launches.

In the meantime, check out a well-reported and well-written story by two of our youth reporters, Diani Reynolds and Tay'juan Henderson on Page 19. It is the kind of story that is T material. They wrote about the rise of teen depression and with great sensitivity, interviewed a young man on the North High football team with depression as a way to pull the reader into the story.

Welcome back: When I first became editor, we decided to suspend running the columns from our two city council members. We wanted to do something different but never did figure out a new format to include the voice of our elected officials back to the paper.

I heard enough questions and complaints to realize readers appreciated the column as is. They liked hearing directly from the representatives of Wards 4 and 5 and found it useful to read their words on issues as a matter of record. So, Councilmembers Jeremiah Ellison and LaTrisha Vetaw, Page 6 is all yours.

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North Minneapolis at a glance

Northside youth can learn hockey for free

The Minneapolis Titans youth hockey program is hosting a Try Hockey for Free event Nov. 5 on its home ice, Northeast Ice Arena, 1306 NE Central Ave.

Northside youth interested in learning the sport will get to try on hockey gear, get right on the ice and experience the game first hand.

Participants will head home with a free USA Hockey jersey and information about how to join the Minneapolis Titans Hockey association.

The Titans are a co-ed program for kids from 4-13 and girls-only programs for kids 8-15. There is also a travel team. Scholarships are available and the program is open to all athletic abilities.

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Crowning achievement

Henry High School and North High School both held homecomings on Oct. 7 and as part of a long tradition, queens were crowned.



AJ Johnson was in shock after North High named her homecoming queen. Photo by Michael Roberts



Eve Chang was crowned homecoming queen at Henry High School. After the crowning ceremony, Chang received a homecoming proposal from her group of friends and 15 dates to the dance. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson



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KBEM gets creative with student work during construction

By David Pierini, Editor

KBEM-Jazz88 had to leave its North High home in early October so that its studio could be overhauled as part of a new tech career center now under construction. Plan B was a makeshift studio in what used to be the high school woodshop.

Then news of an 11-week back order on materials for a temporary soundproof room forced KBEM to scramble to find a Plan C - a short term lease at the I Heart Media Center in St. Louis Park.

This keeps KBEM on the air but the move to another city was not ideal, especially for North High students who have been learning broadcasting and serving as on air hosts since 1983.

But for this inconvenience, KBEM has a reward for aspiring DJs and broadcasters - a new streaming service featuring hip-hop music.

KBEM will continue its educational mission by deploying remote recording kits at North and other high schools and training students interested in broadcast arts. Along with an online hip-hop station, KBEM will help students develop podcasts and stream live broadcasts from sporting events.

"We've got to work out a few of the bugs but we're getting into the details now and getting very close to being able to start putting stuff on the air," said KBEM station manager Dan Larkin. "I think (hip-hop) is going to be more popular with students. Not all of them really love jazz so this creates an opportunity with music they like."

Jazz88 is a program of Minneapolis Public Schools but is financially self-sufficient through grants, partnerships, business support and listener donation.

KBEM started in the mid-1960s at a vocational school and first went on the air in 1970. In 1983, it moved to a studio at North High as part of a desegregation initiative by the district. When it settled

on jazz music as its main program in the mid-1980s, the station built a loyal and sizable audience.

KBEM continues to serve its jazz lovers but with a new studio now under construction it seeks to branch out with the other services as a way to attract more students.

Larkin said he is still trying to find a way to get students to KBEM's temporary studio. In the meantime, Peter Parker, a new associate educator with several years experience as a DJ working at commercial radio stations, will oversee the launch of the new stream service, which will be called MPS Voices.

In addition to hosting hip-hop programming, students can interview newsmakers, explore podcasting and go live with school sports.

"We don't have a place to bring students right now, so we can go to where the students are with these kits," Larkin said. "North High is where we're always going to be located but it is no longer the only place where we get students on the air."

Legal Aid taking appointments at Harrison clinic

By David Pierini, Editor

Like most lawyers, the men and women who work for Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid meet clients during office hours. The difference is in office locations.

Rather than a big glass complex with a couple dozen colleagues in a downtown high rise, Legal Aid lawyers try to find a desk with a couple of chairs in a storefront office or non-profit organization in the middle of the communities they serve.

During the winter of 2021, before COVID-19 vaccines were available and in-person gatherings discouraged, a Legal Aid lawyer quietly occupied a desk at 501 Glenwood Ave., which is also home to the Harrison Neighborhood Association.

In all, Legal Aid has five offices around Minneapolis.

"The goal of our whole unit is to be physically present in our clients' communities, to make us more accessible and a kind of partner with a trusted community organization," said Matthew Hullstein, the supervising attorney for Legal Aid's community clinics. "(The neighborhood clinics) are a great way to get started with our clients earlier when their legal problems are fresh."

The Harrison clinic is open to anyone who qualifies and needs legal advice.

Legal Aid attorneys handle a wide variety of civil cases, including family, housing, consumer, tax, public benefits and immigration. They do not take on criminal or child protective services cases.

To qualify for the free service, a person must be age 60 or older or have an income that is 200 percent or below the federal government's poverty guidelines.

The Harrison clinic hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are preferred. Call 612-746-3611.

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catch up with our Council Members



WARD 4:
LaTrisha Vetaw

Let's get lit, Ward 4! There is a lot of research to support lighting as a crime prevention tool. My office has been working to get better lighting in our ward, and the good news is the Mayor put \$9 million in the 2023-2024 budget for street lighting repairs and improvements. I have been hard at work making sure that a good portion of these funds reach Ward 4.

Last spring, I met with the Northside Youth Council who presented me with their proposal for better lighting around Henry High School and on the routes they take to and from school. I also met with a group of Ward 4 residents shortly after who expressed the same concern about inadequate lighting and its impacts on public safety.

Because of these conversations, I have been working with Public Works on a pilot to test new LED bulbs. This is happening in

two different sections of the Lind-Bohanon neighborhood: on 49th Avenue between Colfax and Bryant and on 50th Avenue between Emerson and Dupont. The bulbs are already up and operational, so check it out and please let me know what you think. If this pilot proves to be successful, Ward 4 can count on seeing improved lighting for hundreds of other bulbs.

I have a meeting scheduled with Xcel Energy executives to discuss additional lighting measures. Both the City and Xcel provide street lighting throughout the City. If you see a wood light pole, that is an Xcel light. If you see a metal pole, it is a city light. Most lights in the city are owned and operated by Xcel. The City's light posts are mostly on busier corridors with higher traffic like Lyndale and Lowry.

If you notice a city-owned light (metal pole) that has gone out, please report the

outage by contacting 311 by phone, by email minneapolis311@minneapolismn.gov, or on the 311 app (download the app by searching "Minneapolis 311" on the app store). If you notice an Xcel light (wood pole) that has gone out, you can report it by calling 1-800-895-1999, or report online by searching "Xcel Energy Outdoor Lighting Outage or Repair" on your search engine.

Another way that Northside residents can help with these efforts is to turn on their exterior lights when it gets dark. This is especially important in the coming months as the days get shorter and it gets dark earlier. In the meantime, if you find that your neighborhood has larger stretches of dark patches, please reach out to the Ward 4 office with the exact areas so that we can better advocate for improvements in targeted areas of need.

It's great to be back in North News! We are nearly halfway through this new term and a lot has been done. I am proud to share the wins we have achieved for the Northside.

On July 31, 2020 Minneapolis City Council adopted guidelines for the Minneapolis Homes Financing (MHF) program to produce and support affordable homeownership units and expand options to create perpetually affordable housing. We are beginning to see the benefits of the work from my first term come to fruition. In 2021, the Minneapolis Homes Financing program committed \$14 million to this program and this year, City Council approved an additional \$10 million of financing. There are 39 projects that were granted funding, 29 were in our ward bringing \$7.8 million of the \$10 million to Ward 5. This program continues to offer support to individuals looking to buy homes. The application process will begin this winter. You can learn more at: www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/housing-development-assistance/homeownership/minneapolis-homes/

Within the Minneapolis Homes program there is the Rehab Projects which allows for the acquisition and disposition of blighted properties for housing development. This program granted six projects throughout the city and five of

those projects are within our ward with \$500,000 being invested into those homes. I am thrilled that we continue to see new developments for housing and commercial properties get support from the city.

Additionally, my colleagues and I approved \$3 million to be invested into North Commons Park. The concept for the building, which is an approved direction of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners, includes a new recreation center with expanded facilities supporting recreation, arts and community gathering, a waterpark renovation and expansion, a new parking area, and the removal of the existing recreation center. The North Commons Recreation Center is also supported by a grant from the State of Minnesota in the amount of \$5.15 million, and the MPRB has currently allocated \$2 million towards this project. Additionally, U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar submitted a \$2 million Community Funding Project request. Be on the lookout for some great updates to North Commons Park.

In May we approved the funding for the Safe Routes to School program to be implemented in Near North. This program improves City's streets by making pedestrian and bicycle improvements for students and children to improve safety for pedestrians, connect three schools and three parks, and address safety on a documented crash concentration corridor.

The city has begun working to improve 0.98 miles of 16th Ave N. between Queen Ave N and Aldrich Ave N.

You may have noticed multiple roundabouts within our ward as well. These are great to help with traffic calming and to encourage slower and safer traffic speeds. These intersections are places where we received feedback from our neighbors that traffic calming is needed to keep our neighborhood and residents safe.

A few reminders, fall street sweeping has gone into effect. Signs should be in place if your street will be swept. We are just a few weeks away from election day. Be sure to vote before or on Nov. 8. Early voting is at 980 E. Hennepin Ave. and open from 7 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you have questions about voting feel free to reach out to our office or go to <https://vote.minneapolismn.gov/voters/vote-early-in-person/>

These are just a few of the wins we have accomplished thus far this year and we continue to work on policies that will benefit our Ward. As always, there are several ways to be in touch with me, so don't hesitate to reach out. You can sign up for the Ward 5 newsletter, RSVP to my weekly virtual office hours (Monday at 12 p.m - 1 p.m) or request a one-on-one meeting with me at www.minneapolismn.gov/ward5.



Quarterback Donvonate White-Sledge leads the Patriots onto the field. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

Used to losing, Henry football team rushes to winning season

By Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

The football team at Henry High hadn't eked out a single win in two seasons.

But the Patriots are marching through what could be their winningest season on record as they head into the playoff portion of the 2022 season. They finished first in the Twin City-Red Conference with a 6-0 record. The only two losses on the season came to non-conference foes. Assistant coach Tyrell Sledge credits

their turnaround season to a group of players tired of losing and willing to put in the time in weight training and conditioning to get bigger, stronger and faster. Henry, led by Head coach Mark Heiser, also started a summer practice schedule to better prepare the Patriots to be game-ready.

"I hope this year is a win for all of the Northside," Sledge said. "I want Henry and North to be champions."

The Patriots breakout season began with a blowout against Roosevelt (54-0)

that set the pace for the team.

Two huge wins followed, including last year's top two conference leaders Columbia Heights (34-14) and Brooklyn Center (35-28).

As they began to rise in the rankings, the team realized they really could be winners.

Their confidence rose as well.

Senior runningback Newman Thomas leads the Patriots with 13 touchdowns and 1,223 yards through seven games. This is more than double his yards from

the previous season.

Last year the Patriots were at the bottom of the conference in wins; this year, they are number one.

The mentality from just trying to win a game has shifted. Now the team wants to bring home a trophy.

Heiser hopes to bring their winning ways to the playoffs. Sections begin in early November. Should Henry hoist a section trophy, it would be the first time in the school's history.

Emerald Ash Borer is devastating Northside trees and property owners on fixed incomes

By David Pierini, Editor

Winston Minor has a hole in his roof, a few broken windows and is behind on his taxes. Homeownership on a monthly social security check was already hard enough when the city's parks department hired a tree service to remove a gigantic ash tree, ravaged by Emerald Ash Borer, from the backyard of his Harrison home.

All that remains for Minor, 74, is a stump and a bill for \$6,000.

"It's like trying to live on a 10-cent budget but you only have one cent," Minor said. "I can't do too much, I try to pay the bills, I try to eat, I try to live, I try to repair the house. That's life though."

Emerald Ash Borer was first detected in Minneapolis 2010 and its spread is now biting into the tree canopy of North Minneapolis, according to the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board. (MPRB) has legal authority to mandate tree removal, especially once those trees are overtaken by an invasive pest that has killed tens of millions of trees through the eastern half of the United States.

MPRB's tree inspectors this year have marked 940 trees for removal, with more than half on the Northside, according to MPRB records. Tree inspectors found 246 in zip code 55411 and 229 in 55412, records show.

Preserving the urban forest is critical to the environment but to residents living with some of the lowest median incomes in the state, tree removal is just another bill they can not pay.

The most common recourse for a property owner on a fixed income is having the cost of tree removal added to their tax bill spread out over a five- or 10-year period. That includes interest.

MPRB is planning public hearings to explore additional ways to defray costs. Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid and the Harrison Neighborhood Association are working with MPRB to find financial assistance options for people like Minor.

"It's a little hard to chew," said MPRB Commissioner Becka Thompson, who represents the Northside. "I have nothing against the process because there is a

legitimate need for these trees to be removed, but there's a lot of homeowners who are retired and are living on slashed fixed incomes who are needing some form of assistance.

"I am not a forestry expert and I'm not going to claim to be, but can't we just wait a couple of years? With our economy, the inflation we're facing and the massive property tax increases... Those are real. Can we just let this pass?"

Arborists are likely to say no.

On the move

Emerald Ash Borer is native to northwest Asia but likely arrived in the U.S. on infected wood used in shipping materials, according to the National Park Service. It was first discovered in the U.S. in 2002. The first point of infestation in Minneapolis was in a southeast neighborhood park.

No state in the U.S. has more ash trees than Minnesota, according to the DNR, and with roughly 200,000 ash trees in Minneapolis alone, MPRB has worked to pre-empt the spread by taking down ash trees on boulevards and in parks.

Residents have grown to understand



Winston Minor stands where a large ash tree once stood. Now he is left with a bill that gets tacked on to his property taxes. Photo by David Pierini

a painted green ring around an ash tree marks it for removal.

The luminous green beetle burrows into the bark to lay eggs and the larvae tunnel through and eat an inner skin of the tree that transports water and nutrients to its branches.

A tree service can inject a healthy tree with an insecticide that kills the larvae, but unprotected trees, even those 50- to 80-feet tall, can die within two to four years.

NPS biologists say the beetle spreads about a mile each year, which makes removing the dying ash trees the best way to prevent or at least slow the ash borers' advance.

"There's a threshold where basically after a third of the tree dies back, it's unlikely anything will work to prevent further spread and ultimate decline," Jeremy Barrick, assistant superintendent of environmental stewardship, said at a Sept. 28 parks board meeting. "Emerald Ash Borer... is impacting the Northside this year at a higher level than other parts of the city as infestation has moved through our city, east to west and north to south. In previous years, it was in other parts of the city."

Barrick said ash trees were considered affordable and fast-growing when arborists planted them to replace elm trees which had been wiped out by Dutch Elm disease. Arborists now see that planting mostly ash was a mistake when the science now suggests urban forests are healthier with a

variety of trees, he said.

Cutting costs

The cost of removing a sizable ash tree often starts around \$2,000. The price varies based on height, diameter and location. Backyard trees can be particularly challenging because of power lines and narrow alleys to maneuver equipment like a crane and stump grinder.

One Harrison resident received a notice from MPRB listing quotes from four different services. The cheapest was \$4,000 and the most expensive was for more than \$15,000. Higher quotes generally come from services who have to rent the type of equipment some larger services already own.

Mitchel Hansen, the community outreach director for the Harrison Neighborhood Association, said his organization has been trying to help its residents since notices began going out this past spring. The organization has used about \$6,000 of a \$10,000 home improvement fund to help residents pay for tree removal.

Hanson said multiple forces, especially development, are already pricing people out of their homes in Harrison.

"There's potential for a program like this to displace people," Hanson said. "Let's talk about the 60 percent increase in property taxes over the past few years and the effect that this has had. When factoring in the Mayor's proposed 12 percent increase over the next two years, in addition to tree removals, we are in the middle of a serious crisis with many layers."

Minnesota law makes people responsible for the trees on the land they own. Management for local trees falls to municipalities and in Minneapolis, this responsibility falls to MPRB.

Residents are notified of an infected tree on their property and given a deadline. They can hire their own tree service or MPRB will hire a service and bill the resident.



Griffin holds a piece of bark that shows the destructive path of Emerald Ash Borer. Photo by David Pierini

MPRB offers two levy assessment options of five- and 10-years for property owners claiming hardship. It will also waive the \$80 administrative fee with either option.

"I have nothing against the process because there is a legitimate need for these trees to be removed, but there's a lot of homeowners who are retired and are living on slashed fixed incomes who are needing some form of assistance."

Becka Thompson,
District 2 Parks and Rec Commissioner

Hanson worries a lien on Minor's property further jeopardizes a man already behind on taxes. The neighborhood association is working with Minor in hopes of paying off the tree bill.

Sharon Griffin was able to get a grant for \$4,000 from the neighborhood

association to cover her tree removal.

Griffin's tree is down but it still rests in her side yard. A neighborhood tree enthusiast stopped by Griffin's recently to count the rings on the stump. He guessed the tree was first planted in 1932.

"I didn't worry about it because I don't have the money," said Griffin, 66, whose only income is social security. "You can do all these things, keep sending me notices and you still can't get it." She was grateful for Hanson's help, saying, "He was on the move for me."

MPRB voted on Sept. 28 to hold public hearings to hear concerns of distressed property owners and determine if it can do more to help them. A hearing date has not been set.

Thompson, in her first year as a parks board member, isn't sure what actions she and her colleagues can take to bring relief to hardship cases.

"This is where being a rookie politician is a bit of a disadvantage," Thompson said. "I don't have all the answers but I'm trying to figure out what we can do in the larger scope. I'm not alone on this. There are a lot of people in the department and on the board who are empathetic to what's happening on the Northside. They want to make it right."



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A DAY TO CELEBRATE



Attendees of Spirit Day were up and moving during a dance session and were encouraged to listen to their body and move freely. Queer Space Collective, GLAAD, Out4Good and Minneapolis Public Schools held the second-annual event in Victory Park on Oct. 18 to celebrate LGBTQ+ youth. Photo by SaBrea Johnson

AG deems Winner Gas Station, Merwin Liquors 'nuisance properties'

By Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

Merwin Liquors and nearby Winner Gas have 30 days to present a security strategy to the Attorney General's office or risk being sued for unlawful public nuisance. After a short investigation, Attorney General Keith Ellison deemed the two West Broadway Avenue businesses nuisance properties for ongoing criminal activity in the parking lots. According to Ellison's office, nuisance activity continued on the properties regardless of the notice of investigation. In September alone, there were three

shootings. If the businesses fail to implement a plan to address the criminal activity, they potentially face a yearlong shutdown, Ellison said. "I look forward to working constructively with these businesses as they abate these conditions so neighbors can thrive and feel safe wherever they go, as everyone in every neighborhood has a right to," Ellison said in a written statement. Ellison launched the investigation in September after community

members blocked the entrances of both establishments and threatened to continue unless the businesses gave the community a safety plan to address the violence that has occurred in the parking lots for decades. Since the announcement of the investigation, Merwin Liquors has hired the organization "We Push for Peace" to mediate the activity outside of the liquor store. The gas station has yet to make a public comment.

Young author shares the story of Floyd's murder with Northside school

By Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

Judeah Reynolds' had no idea her trip to a convenience store for candy would make her a witness to a horrific event that would reverberate around the world.

She was 9 when she and her cousin Darnella Frazier, walked to Cup Foods in south Minneapolis and saw George Floyd take his last gasps for air as a police officer kneeled on his neck to restrain him.

Judeah had a story to tell and she knew the audience she would need to reach - kids like her.

On Oct. 14, Judeah, now 11, officially released her illustrated children's book, *A Walk to the Store*, at the Dr. Josie R. Johnson Montessori School.

In the immediate aftermath of the killing, Judeah and her family were put under the international microscope of the world and the media. Frazier used her smartphone to record Floyd's final moments and released the video to the world on social media.

"We didn't know what was going on, but we knew it was wrong," Judeah said. "I was sad and mad, and I couldn't sleep at night."

For Judeah, the microscope prolonged the process of recovering from the most traumatic moments of her life. As Judeah regained her confidence, she met her co-author Sheletta Brundidge and her young daughter Cameron who also authors her own book. Judeah was inspired by Cameron, and she decided to write a book to share her story.

"It was hard to deal with," she said. "But now that I'm older, I am feeling pretty good about myself."

She chose Oct. 14 for her book release to commemorate the loss of Floyd on what would have been his 49th birthday.

Despite the young audience, the students of the Montessori school welcomed Judeah with a standing ovation as she read her book aloud.

The topic of injustice didn't phase the students. Learning about it is built into the curriculum.

Board member Crown Shepherd stressed the necessity of teaching students social-emotional learning and how to cope with trauma from a young age, instead of waiting until they're older.

"Just because they're little kids doesn't mean they don't feel the same pain that we feel," Shepherd said.

She hoped by having Judeah visit and speak about her story, it would inspire students who are near her age to do something similar.

"There is a big focus on social justice here in the school because the students live it every day," Shepherd said. "They live in situations where they are traumatized and here, we help them express and cope with their emotions."

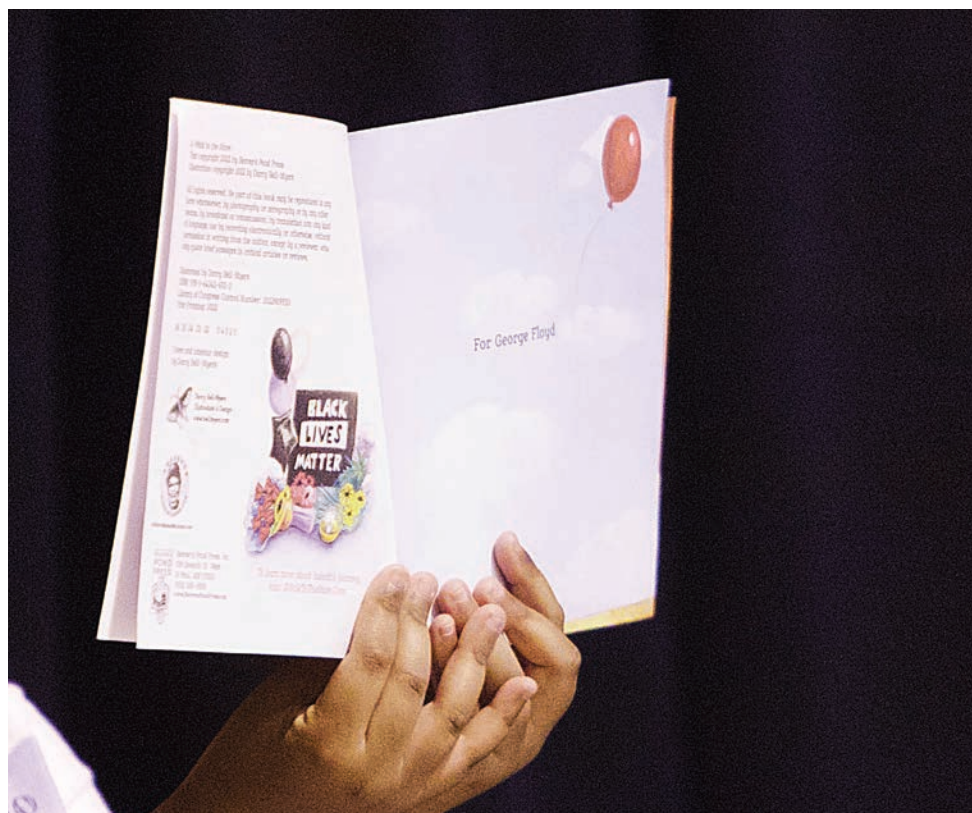
The school takes self-care days, creates projects that identify people who were unjustly murdered by police, and makes space to talk through traumatic events that happen in the community.

Following the book release, students gathered outside to release a balloon and sing happy birthday to Floyd.

Children pointed toward the sky. Some said they hoped the balloon would reach heaven.



Principal Tonicia Abdur Salaam (left), Judeah Reynolds (middle), and Sheletta Brundidge (right) lead the 'Happy Birthday' song for Floyd before they release the balloon. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

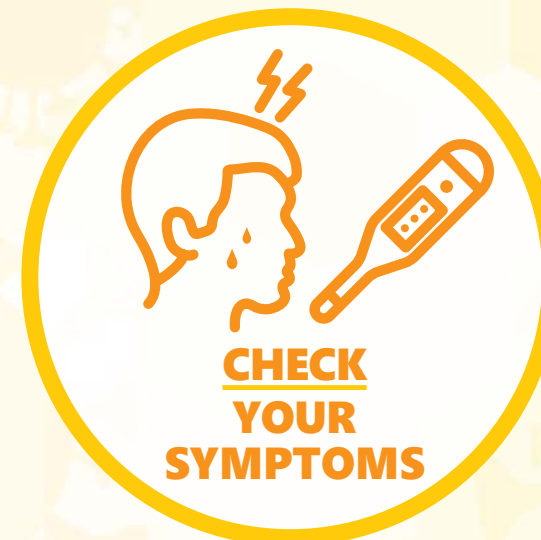


Cameron Brundidge shows the audience the book illustrations while Judeah reads her story. The first page was dedicated to George Floyd. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson



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New plant-based restaurant heals the mind, body, and soul

By **Azhae'la Hanson**, Reporter

North Minneapolis's first plant-based restaurant has finally arrived.

Owner Sierra Carter comes from a long legacy of Northsiders and remembered growing up wanting to create the things she didn't have or couldn't experience here.

"The one thing is that I'm very selfish about the business I create," Carter said.

She became tired of not having any healthy food options in her community. So she created her own.

On Sept. 5, she opened the doors to H.E.A.L. (Herbs, Eats, All Love) at 4171 Lyndale Ave. N in the Camdent neighborhood.

In 2020 Carter ran the Zen Bin, spending a day giving out 750 plant-based meals to Northsiders. After her work was completed, she came to the realization that would start her journey into running a fully functional restaurant – that healing should not be a temporary thing.

H.E.A.L. was built as the manifestation of the belief that the community deserves good quality food that tastes good and has nutritional value.

C.O.O Nancy Kingoina joined Carter to lead the business with a shared love of food. Both are from families where feeding people wasn't up for debate.

"If people bereaved, if they were dealing with loss, or if they just wanted someone to talk to, there would always be food in my childhood home," Kingoina said.

There is a lot of love that goes into the meals they cook. The restaurant features plant-based comfort food that spans the Black diaspora on a menu that changes every day.

"We have a 'spirit-led' menu," Kingoina said. "When the weather changes, the menu changes."

They serve hot soups on cold days and cool dishes when it's warm.

"It gives people a reason to keep coming back," Kingoina said.

That same care and consideration is reflected in their dining area. She wanted to reflect the same aesthetic of her heart, that is family, comfort, and food. All are present in the restaurant.

"We wanted it to feel like an extension of people's homes, living rooms, offices and we want everyone to be comfortable," Carter said.

It is surely an extension of hers. She pointed to various decorations, the quotes on the walls, the chairs and the pillows on them.

They were all created by her family.

One of the very special things about H.E.A.L. is they don't just have food for the soul, but also a headache, a stomach ache, and any other ailment a customer might have.

A woman approached the register and told Carter about how they had trouble sleeping. Carter came from behind the register and began pulling various herbs from a shelf.

"This should help you," Carter replied, showing the customer a bottle of herbs.

Carter is also a holistic counselor and partners with a local apothecary to keep herbs in the restaurant where she can treat clients.

They nourish the mind, body, and spirit. In addition to food, H.E.A.L. hosts educational workshops on how certain foods impact the body, yoga classes, writing workshops, and is looking forward to starting spoken word sessions.

"This is a place for community," said Kingoina. "We just want to facilitate our customers being around longer and the healthiest version of themselves."

H.E.A.L. wants readers to know that health is attainable.

"We are all on this healing journey together," Kingoina said. "If you're looking to start your healing journey to eat a better lifestyle we will help you as far as you want to go."

The restaurant is a salve of its own for the residents of North Minneapolis and those lucky enough to enter its doors.



Sierra Carter (Owner) is joined by C.O.O Nancy Kingoina behind the register, which also happens to be Carter's favorite place to be since she made fake groceries when she was a kid.



H.E.A.L.'s menu changes everyday. Their barista is going through a list of drink options that she's had in mind to try out in the upcoming week.



Although the menu is always different, there is one item that makes its way back from time to time. The Northside Nachos are a big hit with customers.

NEIGHBORS

NEWS

Blue Line officials say feedback will guide final route decisions

By **David Pierini**, Editor

Transportation officials have nixed some route options for the Metro Blue Line Extension in North Minneapolis as the light rail project enters a new stage to assess impacts to the community.

The Blue Line remains a couple of years away from being drawn with indelible ink.

Project managers are considering two main routes through North Minneapolis – West Broadway Avenue or 21st Avenue. They are also studying two options to connect Target Field downtown to West Broadway – Lyndale Avenue or Washington Avenue.

The Metropolitan Council, which oversees transportation, will not move forward on options that would have split light rail lines and traffic lanes between 21st and West Broadway. Met Council also pulled one downtown connection option that would have run along West I-94.

Blue Line extension Project Director Christine Beckwith said community involvement will guide final decisions.

"What we learned in this process is our communities want to be walking with us as we're going through this," Beckwith said. "When several lines on a map are down to two or three, that is where we pivot and bring those back out to the community to talk pros and cons and explain what we're doing."

The walk with transportation officials hasn't exactly been hand-in-hand. Lyn Park residents are fighting to keep light rail off Lyndale Avenue, fearing construction and eventual train operation will disrupt and change the relative peace of the neighborhood.

During driveway meetings in Lyn Park over the summer, officials struggled to get through presentations to address fear and anger expressed by homeowners. Many said they believed officials had already made up their minds.

"I can say honestly that the voice we heard from Lyn Park, have made a difference, will make a difference, on how we analyze getting from Target Field Station to West Broadway," Dan Soler, director of Transit and Mobility for Hennepin County, told North News in June. "Because of their voices, because of their request, we are

adding analysis on Washington. We haven't taken the Lyndale piece off the table, but public involvement has been heard and we're going to consider that."

Joining in the debate is a charter school, which could be displaced if the downtown connector goes along Washington Avenue.

Community members living along any of the proposed routes have through Nov. 7 to comment on possible environmental, social and economic impacts, to study for a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Once the scope is approved, studies will get underway with a draft of the EIS scheduled for release later next year.

Visit bluelineext.org to leave a comment.

Medicare workshop will ease the pain of picking a plan

By **David Pierini**, Editor

Seniors have to sort through nearly 140 Medicare plans to find one that fits

their budget and provides the right amount of coverage.

The process can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be.

Minnesota Senior LinkAge Line and Trellis are sponsoring a free luncheon at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, 3355 N. Fourth St., on Nov. 5 from 10:30 a.m. to noon to help seniors navigate the many plans and connect them with a navigator to ease the process.

The workshop is called "Let's talk Medicare!" and Emmy-award winning radio personality Sheletta Brundidge will host the event and share her experience helping a family member through the process.

Lunch is free and so are the tools and resources seniors will need to cost-compare the various Medicare plans. In addition to Brundidge's testimonial, other speakers will share their experience working with the Senior LinkAge Line.

Open enrollment began on Oct. 15 and runs through Dec. 7.

"It can be complicated," said Jetta Wiedemeier Bower, the volunteer and outreach manager for Minnesota Senior LinkAge Line. "The typical mistake for the consumer is simplifying looking at the price of the deductible. But you need to know

what you are paying every month for a premium and then you need to figure out whether you want to keep your doctor and the formulas for drug costs on your Part D. Do you go south for the winner? What's your favorite pharmacy? We ask the kinds of questions to help narrow it down."

The Senior LinkAge Line can navigate the deep dive into plans. It is a free statewide service of the Minnesota Board of Aging that provides one-on-one medicare counseling. There are more than 30 volunteers in the Twin Cities who can meet with seniors in-person or by phone to help them choose a plan.

The LinkAge Line will not try to sell you anything.

"It's free, objective and unbiased," Wiedemeier Bower said. None of us can be insurance brokers. Our goal is to simply help older adults find the right plan for them."

To register for the luncheon, go to bit.ly/Sheletta-nov5. To live stream the event on eventbrite, register at tinyurl.com/Sheletta-nov5.

Seniors can reach the LinkAge Line by calling 800-333-2433 or going online at mn.gov/senior-linkage-line

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Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church

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"I call the Senior LinkAge Line every year to go over my Medicare plan. They are so knowledgeable and friendly, and they have saved me a lot of money over the years."

— Senior LinkAge Line caller

Sheletta Brundidge is an Emmy-Award winning comedian, radio host and entrepreneur. She can be heard weekly on The Sheletta Show on CBS Radio or her podcast, "Sheletta Makes Me Laugh."



YOUTH

Shining a Light on Depression: Battling the darker months inside and out

By **Diani Reynolds** and **Tay'Juan Henderson**, North High School

William "Will" Smith is a North High senior and the starting running back for the Polars football team.

He loves football season, the Friday night lights, the fans, and the fight to victory. But when the lights go out, the fight isn't over, and William goes home to be reminded of a different fight.

A fight with his mind. Smith was diagnosed with depression in 2020 and battles it everyday.

When Smith was diagnosed with depression during the COVID-19 shutdown, like many students, he was isolated and didn't have any outlets to navigate his mental health.

"I didn't feel like myself. I had suicidal thoughts, I gave up on my dreams, I gained a lot of weight, and I let myself go," Smith said.

According to Newport Healthcare studies, teen depression rates are at an all-time high in 2022 and are steadily increasing. Around 12 percent of Minnesota teens are experiencing depression, the study said.

North High Counselor Patience Dolo has seen this trend with North students as well. With the pandemic, racial injustice, the teacher strike, and the loss of student and football player Deshaun Hill, students feel overwhelmed from back-to-back traumatic events.

"Depression affects how you sleep, how you eat, your friendships and

relationships, and your attitude towards life," Dolo said.

Smith has tried to keep his head above water by keeping himself distracted.

"I try to keep myself distracted by giving myself a task, schoolwork, or sports so I can keep myself out of my own head." But distraction can prolong the problem.

"What has helped my depression a lot is being back at school with my friends and people I love"

William Smith

After receiving some counseling, Smith counteracts his depression by making sure he gets out of the house. Because a shutdown, a teacher strike,

and other circumstances won't hold him back from spending time with the people he loves.

"What has helped my depression a lot is being back at school with my friends and people I love. They keep me out of it," said Smith. "It's always a better time at school."

North High School counselor Patience Dolo listed a few triggers of depression.

"A lot of times it has to do with loss, such as the death of a family member or a friend. It can be housing insecurity, family drama, or substance abuse," said Dolo. "It can also just be a combination of things that build up that you don't talk about."

Depression is a serious problem and can happen to anyone and no one should fight the battle alone. Check on yourself and others, seek help and assistance. Students can take advantage of the resources in their schools through the social workers, counselors and therapists.

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Help with homework: St. Olaf Lutheran Church offers after-school tutoring with an “expert mathematician” on hand. Sessions run 3 to 5 pm, Mondays and Thursday and 3 to 6 pm Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The church also offers a Youth Club for grades 6 through 12 on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Transportation available. Call 612-529-7726 to enroll in tutoring or the Youth Club.

Skate through the winter: North Commons Park is offering figure skating lessons and a youth hockey program beginning Nov. 1 at a low cost. Sign up on Wednesday from 6-8 p.m. beginning Nov. 1. Transportation is available. Call 612-588-9177 for more information.

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 in the office of the Harrison Neighborhood Association, 1501 Glenwood Ave. Services are free for those who qualify. Must be 200% 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.

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 to 5 p.m.

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 a.m.-noon. There are no pre-qualifications. Everyone 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. Walkups are welcome.

Community Dinner: Pillsbury United Communities offers free dinners every

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Oak Park Community Center, 1701 Oak Park Ave. N. Meals are currently to go during the pandemic, but PUC hopes to re-open its indoor sit-down space soon.

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 Maggie Kohl via email: maggie.kohl@minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-258-3982. Contact Betsy Brock 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: 612-322-1143.

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 Bethny Turnwall at bethny.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@pillsburyunited.org

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