Noche de Paz
Night of Peace
Celebrating community!
Hosted by Latina leaders and friends

BY KATHLEEN SULLIVAN AND MARY LAUREL, TRUE, POWDERHORN NEIGHBORS

What brought neighbors to come together in warmth and light on a cold February evening?

Inspired by the Peace in Powderhorn event on December 1, Powderhorn neighbors kept the bonfires burning, and came together to enjoy a Noche de Paz or Night of Peace. It was an evening of fire and ice-lanterns, love of community, and warmth of togetherness on February 13, 2011 in Powderhorn Park.

The idea was spearheaded by a group of women who shared a vision. This vision was to extend the community spirit that came out of the December gathering, in proactive ways that would continue throughout the year, with a goal of further developing a peaceful and united community.

To realize their effort became Noche de Paz.

Bonfires, melted ice lanterns, and a painting of a peace dove transformed the outdoor space, while twinkling lights and homemade peace signs adorned the cozy space indoors. Park staff generously opened their doors to the community on their day off. Participants were treated to music by young D.J. Andres, drummer Tomás, and West African drummers Onayemi and friends. An appreciative audience hummed along around the bonfires for warmth, and the wind seemed part of the show, as puppeteers Laura and John brought their story to life.

Everyone enjoyed delicious homemade soups from Sara and Senora María at La Poblana. “It’s like the loaves and fishes!” Mary Laurel said of the bottomless soup pot from La Poblana. Speaking of loaves, the New French Bakery provided dishes for a zero-waste event. Several volunteers graciously worked behind the scenes to keep a steady supply of clean dishes.

People who never thought of themselves as leaders came forward and were suddenly holding a microphone, or were being interviewed on Univision, the local Spanish TV station! (See Youtube for the video from Univision as well as one from the Minneapolis Mirror.) The entire event was in English and Spanish, and in English, Josefina and Doug invited everyone to take in the neighborhood Safety Committee. Dara invited involvement in Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association. Young Netem and younger Emmet spoke about what they love about Powderhorn.

Hosted by Mujeres en Acción y Poder (Women in Action and Power) at Corcoran Neighborhood Association, several women came together to plan this event: Silvia, Fabiola, Teresa, Josefina, Francesca, Lina, Khusaba, Fernanda, Jessica, Amada, Vienna, Kathleen, and Mary Laurel. New leaders came forward, and many neighbors became involved, forming connections with each other and furthering the goal to increase unity and peace in our community.

To all in the Powderhorn area who love their neighborhood, we invite you to a proposed Peacemakers Gathering to discuss future events and plans. To participate, contact Silvia at Mujeres en Acción y Poder 612-724-7457 or email spithalia1103@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you at this event! Find out what resources are available to help you get started. Learn about licensing requirements, startup funding, farmer training programs and how others market and distribute their products and services. Or just show your support of these efforts by joining the discussion.

Friday, April 1
6-7 pm

There is a groundswell of energy in the Metro area focused on better access to healthy food. Imagine yourself as part of the solution! Explore how to start or expand a food-based enterprise. Here’s a chance to meet and learn from others who are already doing it! Find out what resources are available to help you get started. Learn about licensing requirements, startup funding, farmer training programs and how others market and distribute their products and services. Or just show your support of these efforts by joining the discussion.

Friday, April 1
6-7 pm

UROC
2001 Plymouth Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55411

Who should attend?
• Local food entrepreneurs
• People who are considering starting a local food based business
• Those who are offering resources for business start-ups
• Advocates who want to support a local food system

Media and policy makers: Info: thecoopproject.wordpress.com/event-connecting-the-dots
or call 612-524-8878

There is no charge to attend; thanks to these generous sponsors: SARE, Gardening Matters, UROC, Seward Co-op
Commentary

NRP FUNDS...ARE MPLS. CITY HALL DEMOCRATS STILL DEMOCRATS?

Party of Compassion?? Do the Math!!
The Rich Get Richer, The Poor Get Poorer and Neighborhoods, too

BY CAROL PASS

In the midst of watching the destruction of the democratic right of collective bargaining going on next door in Wisconsin, an action bought and paid for by the billionaire Koch brothers, I attended a meeting called by a group of Democratic legislators. A graph was handed out, shown here, of the results of the reapportioning by Republicans shown in the graph. It sends approximately $9 dollars to the affluent neighborhoods for every $1 dollar to the least affluent.

The graph put out by the State Department of Revenue showed those making from $9,000 to $86,000 paying an average of 12% of their income for taxes, while those earning $447,000 and above paying only 8.9%. These wealthy folks use far more of the public resources from airports to roads to electricity, etc. yet they pay a far smaller percentage of their income in taxes than the middle and lower middle classes, who carry the greatest, by percentage income, of the tax load. How fair is this?? But these figures are primarily the result of the actions of the Republican Party. We Democrats in the room expected such.

The Council of the NRP dollars once allocated by the legislature to the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) was handed out, shown here, of the results of the most conservative Republican majorities we have had in decades??

One of the legislators with us at that recent meeting commented that some of these Council Members who supported this action voted against the well-being of their own constituents. Those there applauded in recognition of the truth of this remark.

So let’s look at this. One argument for these actions by City Hall that I’ve heard is an anecdote, "This will help an older woman on fixed income found crying because she might lose her house". This is sad, but won’t wash. This woman needs real help. Not political tears. These remarks simply reveal how little this elected official knows about this issue. It’s time to get honest and get educated! We all need to face that this woman will not be helped by this reallocation.

The most she will receive is $20 to $35 dollars for one year from the Council action. Many of the programs funded by the NRP dollars are not even in her neighborhood. She is not a person of means and probably lives in a very modest home. Let’s not kid ourselves. Without real help, she will lose her home and end up with her children in a shelter. I have personally assisted with Tory’s housing prevention…I know first hand that these piddly dollars will do nothing but set her further down the poverty path.

On the other hand, she and others like her stand a real chance of being helped by a strong neighbor- hood organization with NRP funded foreclosure prevention programs and the know-how and proximity to hold her hand, get her through her hard times and help her rearrange her finances. The fact is the central government at City Hall will never even know about the vast majority of these individual tragedies until they have blanketeted our neighborhoods on masse and are dealt with through tear-downs, population loss, and much sadder stories, while never actually helping the real people that once lived there and for whom, the claim is, that City Hall is doing all this.

In the event that elected officials hear of these strange situations…what resources, financial and hands-on, will City Hall bring to the individual tables of these people?? What did the Council Member who told me of her sad constituent offer this person? A one-time $25 dollar property tax break?? Who will take these people’s hands through the complicated processes to find and secure help?? Does this Council Member know how difficult and involved this is? And for every last household, there goes a taxpayer and a home and here comes a vacant and boarded building and soon after…an empty lot, more crime and less livability for everyone else living near by? How does this misguided policy strengthen any city goals?

The truth should be faced: What is needed is serious foreclosure prevention assistance with the dol- lars found in the NRP funding which were rightfully and wisely set aside by the state legislature years ago for just such a time as this, along with the kind of help that has been and can be provided by the tough and savvy urban-core neighborhood organizations of Minneapolis, neighborhoods like Hawthorn, Harrison, Lind-Bohanon and Phillips Community.

NRP FUNDS...ARE MPLS. CITY HALL DEMOCRATS STILL DEMOCRATS?

Party of Compassion?? Do the Math!!
The Rich Get Richer, The Poor Get Poorer and Neighborhoods, too

This is a wealth transfer from poor to rich of remarkable and unjust proportions.

December 13, 2010 Minneapolis City Council Action

Impact on Minneapolis Neighborhoods

The Neighborhoods

Most Positively Affected by
Minneapolis City Council Action

Total Saved on Taxes Levied by Minneapolis
$1,321,916

Pct. of Population Below Poverty Level
4.80%

Total NRP Funds Frozen by City Council
$1,768,746

The Neighbors

Most Adversely Affected by Minneapolis City Council Action

Total Saved on Taxes Levied by Minneapolis
$373,917

Pct. of Population Below Poverty Level
29.54%

Total NRP Funds Frozen by City Council
$4,773,676

NOTE: Phillips includes 4 neighborhoods:
East Phillips, Midtown Phillips, Phillips West and Ventura Village

By Carol Pass

The Alley Newspaper • April 2011
The majority of NRP dollars in these neighborhoods from which the funds are being taken go towards housing loans/grants, foreclosure prevention assistance, rehab of foreclosures, emergency home loan safety nets, down-payment assistance, public safety efforts, youth programming, and modest staffing expenses required to do these things. In other words, if left in place, they would go toward actually helping those people like the woman mentioned as well as contributing to the retention and stabilization of the tax base of a large portion of Minneapolis where it is currently facing real decline and being replaced by crime, diminished livability and population flight.

Given these remarks, one question is, ‘Why would an administration made up entirely of Democrats create actions so clearly economically regressive?’… so regressive that the results are indistinguishable from those that would have been produced by a very conservative Republican administration, a [Wisconsin]Governor Walker administration as it were? I can only guess that since this really accomplishes nothing of significance and is so obviously damaging, it is a way of covering for a serious failure to actually make real structural choices that, over the long haul, would have helped avoid such heavy financial difficulties. Since it seems like a dramatic act, it appears to be an attempt to create a perception of care by City Hall, in the hopes it won’t be noticed that it radically penalizes the ‘least of these’, accomplishes nothing of durable value and sends a terrible and demoralizing message to all those working in the more challenged neighborhoods. In reality it says that we seem nearly all to belong to a City remarkable for the fact that they change course. I refuse to believe that those inhabitants of the southwest neighborhoods are plundered for their losses tomorrow. I have heard some members of southwest neighborhoods say “I love this City.” What can this possibly mean if the acceptance of these actions is allowed to go forth?

In light of this, many of us question the acceptance of these actions is allowed to go forth. As to why some Council Members supported this against the well-being of their own constituents…? Some possible reasons: perhaps they just didn’t realize do the math and think it all the way through and were impressed by the current economic situation. Perhaps they were intimidated by forceful colleagues on the Council…Perhaps they are weary of the cacophony of the neighborhood voices…Perhaps they wish to be rid of the NRP administration and consolidate City Hall… but none of these reasons or all of them together are big enough to justify this action. There can be no morally or fiscally appropriate excuse for any Democrat who actually understands this to support such a level of injustice as this wealth transfer from poor to rich is and especially when it creates no real accomplishment and only the illusion of help.

My second question is: Are Southwest neighborhood dwellers aware of how regressive the actions of City Hall are that produced their small tax break for next year? They apparently thought they voted for a Mayor and Council who are expressive of the values of the Democratic Party. Are they aware of how closely these regressive results resemble a conservative Republican agenda? Do they really desire with their low citizens, and profited from the pockets of the rich almost unheard of in the history of this City is unacceptable?

I believe that the injustice of this action by City Hall is economically and morally unparalleled in its blatancy, but also in the level to which these facts are being ignored and left shamefully unexamined. These issues need to be raised and faced. This has created a class division in the heart of the City remarkable for the fact that we seem nearly all to belong to the Democratic Party. What can this possibly mean that the poor of this City are treated this way and footed by fellow party members of what was once the party of compassion? Have we nowhere to go? In light of this, many of us in Phillips Community and other challenged neighborhoods call upon members of the affluent neighborhoods to be bold enough to represent these actions by the City and contact their own Council Members, if need be, to demand that they change course. I refuse to believe that those inhabitants of these regressed neighborhoods are not really helping to their Council Members that a wealth transfer from the poor to the pockets of the rich almost unheard of in the history of this City is unacceptable?

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Phillips Student Erika Espey-Sundt Honored for Songwriting

BY KEVIN BURGER

Erika Espey-Sundt, a senior studying music at the Perpich Center for Arts Education, is winner of Zeitgeist’s 16th annual Eric Stokes Song Contest in the youth composer category. Her piece, “Grant of Wind,” reflects the different stages of an adventure, from whimsy and playfulness to mystery and intensity.

The daughter of Kristen Sundt Espey-Sundt began composing just three months ago, under the direction of local composer and Arts High School music teacher Janika VanderVeld. Erika studies viola, violin and also enjoys singing.

“Composing this song started as a class assignment, but I spent a lot of time out of class working on it as well,” Erika said. “I can’t wait to see how they will arrange it and hear it performed. This is amazing.”

The Eric Stokes Song Contest is sponsored by new music group Zeitgeist in memory of late composer Eric Stokes. Designed to encourage and celebrate amateur composers throughout the Twin Cities.

The winning composers have the opportunity to participate in Zeitgeist’s annual Playing it Close to Home concerts in February; in addition, she also receives a $1800 First-of-Its-Kind Recovery Center in Minnesota Opens Doors for Adults Suffering from Co-Occurring Chemical Dependency and Mental Illness

April 6th Open House: Public Invited for Tours of Restored Crosby Mansion, Information, Refreshments

After raising nearly $2 million in start-up funds, People Incorporated Mental Health Services has announced the opening of its innovative new facility, Huss Center for Recovery and Stark Mental Health Clinic, at 2120 Park Avenue in Minneapolis. The public is invited to attend an open house from 1:00 – 4:00 PM on Wednesday, April 6. There will be a brief program, refreshments, and a chance to tour the restored Crosby mansion (Huss Center for Recovery locale) and its carriage house (Stark Mental Health Clinic locale). View facility photos at Facebook photo album.

Program Distinction. Using elements of the “recovery model” – rather than the Twelve Step approach – the Huss Center will provide treatment for metro area residents who are diagnosed with chemical dependency (CD) and mental illness (MI), who need or have underlying MI. The abstinence-based Twelve Step approach has generally not worked well for people with CD and MI who need a setting where relapse is not viewed as total failure. The center provides residential treatment, a day program, and aftercare. The clinic offers psychiatric, nursing, and counseling services. Together, the center and clinic will treat approximately 400 people annually.

Hennepin County asked People Incorporated to open a harm reduction CD/MI program. After raising nearly $2 million and investing approximately $500,000 of its own capital, People Incorporated purchased the Crosby mansion on Park Avenue in the summer of 2010. Renovations were completed in early March 2011, and the first clients took up residence on March 7. Fees for residential and outpatient services will cover anticipated expenses moving forward.

About People Incorporated Mental Health Services. People Incorporated is a nonprofit founded in 1969 to promote and secure services for people with chemical dependency and mental illness. People Incorporated is a member of the Minnesota Conference of Mental Health Services.

Walker Church and MINED Announce Arts Grant

Walker Community Church and MINED ARTS are a 2011 recipient of a Partners in Arts Participation Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

A writing group and an art group: Expression for Wellness and Effectiveness. For more information, please visit the online registration at www.peopleincorporated.org.

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