Allées of Art: Chicago, Lake, Park, and 15th Ave.
pgs. 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6
May Day Thank You & Result$ pg. 5
BYI Communities of Light pg. 8

Allées of Energy
BY HARVEY WINIE
Sue Hunter Weir writes here about an “Allée Dream Coming True” – the hope and reality of trees lining both sides of the road into Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery with each tree’s canopy touching in the center and framing an arch over the path. This desire by cemetery planners decades ago may have been inspired by allées like Austrian artist Gustav Klimt’s (1862-1918*) vision when he painted the tree-lined allée pictured here.

Patrick Cabello Hansel writes here about “Rebranding Phillips as a Community of the Arts” and advocates for “Avenues of the Arts” in Phillips, allées lined with art as well as trees.

Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926*), Italian architect and mosaic artist, brought his love of aesthetics to buildings and streets extolling that “color in certain places has the great value of making the outlines and structural planes seem more energetic.”

Allée Dream Coming True
BY SUE HUNTER WEIR
It’s been ten years since we planted 150 trees in the cemetery. The trees are well grown now as are the children who helped plant them. On May 17, 2003, Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery was the regional Arbor Day planting site. It was a landmark year for the cemetery; it was its 150th anniversary. The theme for the day was “Renewing Our Legacy: 150 Trees for 150 Years.”

Hundreds of volunteers came to plant. There were elected officials, Boy Scouts, city staff, friends, neighbors and people who have an occasional urge to hug a tree. Minnesota Territorial Pioneer newspaper James Goodhue (played by re-enactor Shawn Hoffman) was on hand to greet guests. The Minneapolis Police Band provided the music.

Children paraded down the cemetery’s only road led by the Tree of Life from Marshall Hubert Lyautey (1854-1934*) asked his gardener to plant a tree. The gardener objected that the tree was slow growing and would not reach maturity for 100 years. The Marshall replied, “In that case, there is no time to lose; plant it this afternoon!”

Oddly and coincidentally appreciation of the effect of these allées can lead to a curious association with the scientific definition called Allée Effect — named for Wader Clyde Allée who discovered that in animals and people aggregation can improve the survival rate of individuals, and that cooperation may be crucial in the overall evolution of social structure (see a longer definition on page 7).

An increase of trees and art along our streets and avenues will enhance our community with allées of energy.

“Rebranding Phillips as a Community of the Arts”
BY PATRICK CABELLO HANSEL
St. Paul’s Lutheran, working with partners throughout the neighborhood, is working on a project to create an Avenue of the Arts in Phillips, where residents and people who pass through will see the community as a living museum and arts studio, where many talents are lifted up and celebrated.

The first leg of the proposed Avenue of the Arts will begin this summer, and will extend from In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre on Lake Street at 15th Avenue and two blocks north to St. Paul’s Church on the corner of 28th Street and 15th Avenue.

“We have seen over and over how art can inspire and unite people,” Pr. Patrick Cabello Hansel of St. Paul’s says. “Many people have stopped me to say ‘we’ve seen one of the mosaic flower planters in the Allée Dream Coming True
see page 4
Avenue of Trees in the Park at Schloss Kammer
Avenue of the Arts will begin this summer, and will extend from In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre on Lake Street at 15th Avenue and two blocks north to St. Paul’s Church on the corner of 28th Street and 15th Avenue.

Running Wolf Fitness Center: A Wellness Dream Betrayed. Will We Save It?
BY ROBERT ALBE
Quite often, I sit in our conference room overlooking the westside entrance to the Phillips Community Center. There I usually see a stream of people entering the building, standing by the door to Running Wolf Fitness Center waiting to be let inside. Or it’s somebody leaving, having worked on their physical fitness routines. Almost everyone is smiling whether or coming or going! All that could go away soon, perhaps in a month or two.

It seems like Running Wolf’s sponsoring organizations, Native American Community Clinic and the Indian Health Board are dumping Running Wolf and have quit seeing its value and it’s profound impact on the rest of the Community. Building the program, they received considerable funding from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and U-Care of Minnesota, who invested close to $100,000 to get Running Wolf started. Now it seems as if they don’t care if these assets remain in Indian Country or become alienated. Do they even care who they toss the keys to as they focus more on their clinical operations?

As a person who started a diabetes self-management and support program, I cannot imagine how two clinics addressing some of the highest rates of diabetes among their patients could let go of one of the major assets in that fight for better outcomes. It was just a year ago that one of the clinics also dropped its monthly diabetes breakfast which my organization promptly picked up and continues to operate.

Running Wolf Fitness Center is not just for people with diabetes, but when its staff announced the data results for people with diabetes breakfast which my organization promptly picked up and continues to operate. Running Wolf Fitness Center is not just for people with diabetes, but when its staff announced the data results for people with diabetes.
Improvement Coalition, Jacy, Jana, Member East Phillips Park Cultural and the usual spots in Longfellow, issue includes but is not limited reporters,” columnists, and art-Alley. Donations are needed, Alley Communications, a 501C-3, welcome, and Tax Deductible.

Patrick, Cathy, Dave, East Phillips Susan Gust, Holley Harrison, Dee Sue Hunter Weir; Joan Hautman. Cederberg, Community of Light, Norman, Laney Ohmans, PWNO, Sue James Bulk Delivery:

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Running Wolf Endangered!!! Running Wolf needs funding to be able to stay open for the community. Donations of all sizes are welcomed and appreciated. Please tell us ideas or comments for funding assistance, too. Please call Connie Norman-Running Wolf manager at 612-872-2388. THANK YOU.

Success By Leaps and Bounds “Look if I can do it anyone can...” BY CONNIE NORMAN

Hello from Running Wolf Fitness Center. Wow its June already! I wanted to share another special Running Wolf fitness Center success story with you. This is for all of us who struggle to develop a regular routine of exercise and wellness activities so you can live a healthier life.

last November Mr. Jackson came into Running Wolf after being dropped off by Metro Mobility. Mr. Jackson used a rolling walker and had serious one sided weakness and balance issues since a diagnosis of severe spinal stenosis and muscle atrophy a year before. His goal was to get stronger, develop better balance and be able to increase his endurance in walking and standing. He worked out 3 - 4 times a week and worked with our trainer to develop a good progressive workout routine. He also was able to use the large Park gym in the Phillips Community Center building to focus on walking endurance and upper body.

One day while he was at Running Wolf he asked about the other programs here he could be involved in. I gave him a tour and he met with the Waite House Chef Austin Bartold – who instructs the 6 week Adult Culinary arts program as well as cooks and serves food daily at the center. He also met with John Richards -Coordinator of the Waite House Urban opportunities-Self Sufficiency programs like the employment services and computer education classes. Since Mr. Jackson had previ-

ously managed several restaurants he was interested in the Waite House Culinary arts program. So he worked together with Waite House Chef and they wanted to make sure he could stand long enough to be in the program. Because of his workout routine at Running Wolf he was able to meet all the physical requirements to be in that program! Then he was directed to the computer classes offered through Waite House and attends them every Thursday. He told me last week because of the computer program they taught him how to use his first smart-phone! Mr. Jackson said that he is very grateful for all of the offerings under one roof and the way that all the different programs have worked together to provide health and wellness opportunities with other learning and employment opportunities.

Mr. Jackson said he was happy to have us share his success story with all of you. He says, “If I can do it anyone can, you just gotta’ do it on a regular schedule and work hard, it’s worth it!”

We want to encourage you to try some of Running Wolf’s fitness classes, like Yoga, Zumba and Cardio-Kickboxing and others! Meet with a dietitian to set better nutrition goals for a life-time! See the calendar for schedule of classes to live well!

Also, Come and tour all of the Phillips Community Center programs! For more information please call Connie @ Running Wolf. (612)872-2388. Happy Summer!
By Holly Harrison

Lake Street is never short on shopping, dining, and festivals. There’s one activity available 24/7, though. While driving or walking, you’ll probably spot murals and signs while driving. While walking, it’s easy to miss its treasures. A bonus is that you can have a fascinating glimpse of not paying clinics for procedures, but rather paying them for outcomes. Clinics cannot make their patients more healthy through increased doses of medications, visits and tests. Nor can they make it better through free water bottles and pedometers or give away “bling”. Instead they must embrace the very real programs like nutrition and cooking classes or physical fitness programs that help patients take greater responsibility and begin to manage their own lives. Instead of this, they want to dump Running Wolf.

Not too long ago, I contacted an old friend from one of the wealthier Minnesota tribes and asked him if his tribe or a group of them might take over Running Wolf on behalf of all the urban Native people who have benefited from this remarkable asset for Indian Country. They are in the process of giving that idea some consideration. Perhaps in a month or two, we’ll have an answer for Running Wolf.

In order for the Phillips Community to improve the wellness for all residents, we need to have all of the clinics and health-care programs working cooperatively together. A continued pattern of competition rather than collaboration does little more than erode the current disparities resulting from uncoordinated care strategies. This means recruiting our student programs and public health organizations to become full participants.

Running Wolf Fitness Center is not the only element in a strategy for wellness in Phillips. But losing an affordable asset is no way to achieve wellness for Phillips either. I want to see more smiles from my window every day, but also want to see all of us step up and continue working toward developing and maintaining those ways to help us become healthy, be it a clinic, a pool, a gym, an exercise studio or an urban farm!

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Running Wolf Fitness Center

from page 1

diabetes who regularly participate in activities therein, most clinics would envy that kind of transfor-
mation for their patients! I take joy in those numbers because a large
majority of my program participants are regular at Running Wolf and are
included in those statistics.

Having participated a decade ago in one of the world’s finest fitness and recovery programs, Pritkin Longevity Center, north of Miami, Florida, I got a glimpse of what people with unlimited personal finances can gain from a decade of recovery. I still thank Famous Dave (Anderson) for that opportunity! Coming home from that experience, I understood in which people of extremely low incomes could have the same opportunity that I had at Pritkin, but right here in our own community. Running Wolf is one key to that dream being fulfilled — access to a program to help regain lost health with assistance from fitness specialists or from free group sessions each week in the studio space. All for ten bucks a month or so.

Although the new healthcare legislation we call “Obamacare” falls far short from what many of us would like to see, one thing they did get right was the idea of not paying clinics for procedures, but rather paying them for results. Thus healthcare organizations gain greater revenues once their patients begin having better health outcomes. Clinics cannot usually make their patients more healthy through increased doses of medications, visits and tests. Nor can they make it better through free water bottles and pedometers or give away “bling”. Instead they must embrace the very real programs like nutrition and cooking classes or physical fitness programs that help patients take greater responsibility and begin to manage their own lives. Instead of this, they want to dump Running Wolf.

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On a Cool 145th Memorial Day Thoughts and Emotions Gathered and “Warmed” by Music, a Call to Youth, and Challenge for Peace “without a Shot-Fired”

Paul to Hopkins to Austin. Youth and adult participants are trained to see their neighborhood in a new way, and then create works of art that helps others see a new, transformed community.

This spring and summer, Semilla workshops will take place at a number of places, including Waite House, Division of Indian Work, Shalom Garden and St. Paul’s Home, a 53-unit low-income apartment building for seniors, as well as in its youth programs and at neighborhood festivals. Throughout the year, there is a free open mosaic workshop every Wednesday night from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. St. Paul’s has a full schedule of programs for the community this summer, including:

- Day camp for children 3-11: June 10-14, 10 am to 2 pm.
- Arts camp for youth 11-17, June 20-24 (times to be announced)
- Block party July 27, 11 to 3 pm.
- Thursday, July 18: Open Eye Figure Theatre, on the grass at St. Paul’s, 7 pm.

In addition to the Wednesday open studio nights, youth may apply to one of two summer programs: Young Leaders, for youth 11-15, and Young Explorers for children 6-10. Young Leaders prepare for the job market and community leadership through a program that combines hands-on work experience, life skill classes and career visits to different employers in the city. Career Teams this summer are Community Arts, Gardening and Greening and Community Organizing. Young Explorers will learn photography, painting and mosaic and explore the neighborhoods.

For more information about any of these efforts, call 612-724-2862 or e-mail stpaulmcec@gmail.com. And “like” us at “Semilla Project” on Face Book!

These activities are made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the City of Minneapolis Innovative Anti-Graffiti Program.

VETERANS BURIED AT PIONEERS AND SOLDIERS CEMETERY

There are approximately 200 veterans buried in the Cemetery.

- War of 1812-1814
- Civil and Indian Wars 16
- Spanish American War 16
- World War I

It was hard to tell whether summer has passed us by or is just late

145th Memorial Day Celebration

Service at Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery

Prelude Music by Seward Concert Band
Post the Flags by JROTC Color Guard
Star Spangled Banner Sung by Audience
Pledge of Allegiance by Audience
Opening Remarks by Richard Ward, Vietnam Veteran MC
 Invocation by Reverend Dan Elifson, Salem Church
General Logan’s Orders by Cadet Toriano Jones, MTS
Memorial Day Address by Brigadier General Dennis Shulstad, U.S. Air Force (ret)
God Bless America sung by Audience
Gettysburg Address by Cadet Harry Rainville
Music Selection by Seward Concert Band
America the Beautiful sung by Audience
Benediction by Reverend Dan Elifson

Everyone processes to the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery Plot for the placing of Wreaths and to Render Honors

Taps by Seward Concert Band

SPEARs and Commodore, at the Dakota and in the Community

BY RAYMOND JACKSON

Dennis Spears and Ginger Commodore performed at the Dakota Jazz Club and Restaurant May 18th. They sang many popular melodies, including a stirring rendition of, “Unchained Melody.”

They performed Louisiana style rhythms and scatting dedicated to Sue McClain who had their hometowns. Spears said, “I was born in Toledo, Ohio, but I grew up in Mangham, Louisiana. It’s near the more familiar Monroe, Louisiana, so I say I’m from Monroe.”

They performed Louisiana style rhythms and scatting dedicated to Sue McClain who had Spears and Commodore

see page 5
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING MAYDAY!

Thank you, thank you, thank you to the community for our 39th Annual MayDay Parade & Festival! One of the best ever, attended by 50,000 on glorious May 5, 2013. This brings us to a budget for increased community

Thank you for supporting MayDay!

JUNE 8 Fairy Fower Parade
HOBT & Naturalists in fan explo-
ration of the E. Butler Wildflower
Garden. 9:30-12pm $20 ea.
family $15/person (no fairy-tun-
avay for lack of funds)

JUNE 10-13 Los Viejos y Los Diablos (The Old Men and the Devils) Traditional Dance
Masks from Latin America Dance,
teach & mask making. Learn &
dance in Latin. At HOBT 10:30am-12:30pm Ages 8-12 100
T/Artist: Gustavo Boada

JUNE 10-26 Puppet
Projectionistas Digital magic with
Mpls. Art on Wheels – lo-fi hand
animation. Mobile and guerrilla;
reclaim space with light. Groups to
develop site-specific performance
Computer literacy req. See the-
how.org. At HOBT Mon. & We.,
7-10pm. Adults high school &
Sr. $180 T/Artist: Eben Kower

JUNE 17-19 Los Polítitos (Baby Chicks)
(School) Spanish and Puppets and Puppets. A puppet and story hour &
hand-on puppet project by par-
t & child. At HOBT Mon.
Wed. 900-10:30am Parents &
age 3-5cost: $75 T/Artist: Anne
Sawyer-Aitch

JUNE 17-21 Stelitz
N-Spinn Summer Camp Youth &
adults. stilt walk & fire-spin

(woohoo!) in a safely with sup-
portive environment. Celebrate
the Summer Solstice at end.
Powderhorn Park. 7-9pm Ages &
Cost: $100 T/Artist: Barn
Bach

JUNE 24-28 Fabric Funhouse
Mind, hands, & body play with
movement, shadows, & fabric.
No sewing skills req. Ends in
performance for family & friends. At
HOBT 10-11:30am Ages 5-8
$75 T/Artist: Angie Courchaine

JULY 8-12 Shadow Puppet
Cinema: At HOBT 9am-12pm
Ages 12 $150 T/Artist: Eben
Kower

JULY 8-12 I Love a Love
Parade: At HOBT 9am-12pm

JULY 15-19 The Rain
Dance Changed the World
At HOBT 9am-12pm. Ages 8-12:
$150 T/Artist: Esther Oury

JULY 15-19 Wild in
Powderhorn At Park. 1-4 pm
Ages 9-12: $150 T/Artist: Esther
Oury

JULY 16-19 The Hero’s Hand
HOBT Tu. W. F. 9am-12am
Thurs 9am-4pm. Ages 14-17 $160 (solid-
age scale fee available) T/Artist:
Stacy Lee King

Register www.hobt.org/education/summer-camps/
Mud

Jeff Nichols (“Take Shelter”) carefully and skillfully forms the story of two boys Ellis (Tye Sheridan) and Neckbone (Jacob Lofland) and their discovery of a fugitive Mud (Matthew McConaughey) who may have murdered a man. The movie takes place in the southern backcountry of Arkansas where the boys live similar to David Gordon Green’s movie “Undertow”(2004).

Mud has an undying love for a woman, Jupiter (Reese Witherspoon), who is a cheater as well as being victimized by a bad boyfriend. He has to see her risking his capture by authorities. To avoid being seen, he sends a handwritten letter by way of Ellis and Neckbone to Jupiter. Even here there’s danger in the air.

For Ellis is unhappy because his mom (Sarah Paulson) leaves his tough but warmhearted dad (Ray McKinnon). This fourteen year old feels the pain of abandonment. His tough, warmhearted dad may have murdered a man. The movie takes place in the southern backcountry of Arkansas where the boys live similar to David Gordon Green’s movie “Undertow”(2004).

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For Ellis is unhappy because his mom (Sarah Paulson) leaves his tough but warmhearted dad (Ray McKinnon). This fourteen year old feels the pain of abandonment in turn finding a buddy, Neckbone, as they wander in the woods and along the river like Huckleberry Finn.

Ellis meets the man Tom Blankenship (Sam Shepard) who raised Mud. Tom is a river dweller like Ellis and his parents. Tom doesn’t exactly say all nice things about Mud and not to be believed. According to Tom, Jupiter has cheated on Mud for years in spite of him chasing her across the country.

One can argue the shootout is for another movie and not for “Mud”. I’m not so sure. The shootout may be a blemish on what is one of the best movies since the Oscars; But consider this: law enforcement is after Mud and trouble is likely to happen.

In sum, the cast is first-rate with Matthew McConaughey, Tye Sheridan (“Tree of Life”) and Jacob Lofland outstanding in particular.

June 8th 9 am-4 pm
32nd to 42nd on Chicago Ave.

40 local artists ~ 20 projects.

Powderhorn Park, Bancroft, Bryant, and Central Neighborhoods join on Chic. Ave. "tween 32nd and 42nd with diversity & creativity.

Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Assoc. & artists: Paint the Pavement at 34th near Powderhorn Park from 9 am to 1 pm.

SteveBe’s Fiber Arts Fiber Sprawl project in the courtyard.

PHAT Mobile Screen printing 23rd & Chicago by MCAD Prof. Natasha Pestich.

Poetry Mobile: write poetry on Molly Van Aver’s bicycle-powdered, rolling writing studio.

What Grows Here, a “Story Walk” 32nd to 38th St., at 2 pm Actors & storytellers Dylan Fresco &Michelle Barnes perform story-collecting project. Urban/Environment Project photographer Stephanie Rogers leads an urban nature walk at 10 am.

Wing Young Huie, Stephanie Rogers, HOTTEA, Forest Wozniack, TAWU (The Art Within Us) artists collective.
Hip Replacement Time

As for the hip, x-rays revealed lost cartilage, the left hip being bone on bone. They call it arthritis. Turns out you get only so much cartilage to begin with. Wear it out and the deal is done. Moving on...

One must submit to a second set of x-rays to appease the orthopedic surgeon—only to be told that hip replacement surgery does not proceed without a clear path to insurance. So, I hired an attorney to learn that this particular surgeon makes between $500,000 and $1,000,000 per year testifying against workers’ comp claims. My condition is related. I will not commit fraud by stating otherwise.

“Burn Job” coming...

Via the office of Teamsters Local 970, the legal obligation to turn over the record of my work was conveyed to my employer. I was to receive instead a record of all reimbursements issued. My actual work record remains “stored across the street.”

Go here, go there...

I heard about a surgeon whose technique cuts the recovery time in half. After another set of x-rays, I was told again that surgery would not commence until the matter of insurance was resolved. But Doctor, I cannot resolve the matter until a physician attests to the causal connection. The response: How do you know you didn’t wear out your hip after work!? Oh my God, you mean while watching TV, that sort of thing?

Once upon a time, in a far-away socialist land, all workers received thorough health examinations on a regular basis, free of charge. Should a serious problem develop, a lengthy retreat to a Black Sea health resort would follow... free of charge and free of humiliation. My case is still pending. There is hope.

Frank Reflections

BY FRANK ERIKSON

“Commander, thank you for giving us another interview. The readers of The Alley Newspaper are very appreciative.”

“You’re welcome, nice to be here.”

“Commander, let me start by commenting on the bombs that blew up during the Boston Marathon...if the Tsarnaev brothers had attacked Boston with a military, and hit ‘military targets’, they would have been free to maim and kill as many civilians as they wanted to, for as long as they wanted to, say, up to 8 years with over 100,000 killed, like the U.S. did in Iraq...Commander, who’s guilty of the largest crimes?”

It is not that simple, you’re making an unfair comparison. The terrorists in Boston were deliberately targeting civilians!

“But they didn’t get close to 100,000 of them. I’m just trying to find out how one gets the ticket in, ‘how you get yourself in.’

“The ticket into what?”

“Into a realm where you are free to kill civilians, a ticket that the Tsarnaev brothers obviously did not have. Maybe this will give us some insight—Leonard Peltier says he never shot anyone at Wounded Knee, but for the sake of argument, let’s say he did engage the FBI in armed conflict and did kill an agent, why is he in prison for life?”

“Because he murdered an FBI agent!”

“Yet it was armed conflict, and ‘war’ is defined as armed conflict. Why do some people after killing and destroying during armed conflict get to go home to their families, and others like Peltier go to prison.”

“Well, the ‘War Powers Resolution’ is the procedure to legally declare ‘war’ that the U.S. government uses.”

“Well, maybe the Native Americans had their own ‘War Powers Resolution’ to legally declare ‘war’ on the U.S., and besides this resolution to legally declare ‘war’ was not around when whites had the freedom to kill the British in the ‘Revolutionary War’ during armed conflict, and they all got to go home. ‘War’ is conveniently and opportunistically used to define only certain armed conflict situations that benefit the powers that be, wouldn’t you agree?”

“No, I will not agree. We can’t just let every armed conflict situation be a ‘war’, and then the participants get to go home after it is over.”

“Alright then, that is what we are going to talk about. Is it a ‘war’ when it is a ‘war’, certainly not Leonard Peltier, he is not on the deciding committee. Well, Commander, I know you are a busy man, so I will let you run. Before you go, I just want to touch on one more thing. I will discuss the next time we meet...a local high school student from South High School, who is an avid history student, wants to ask you, how all the past conflicts that are defined as ‘wars’...he presents an interesting question.”

“Yes, I will have to think about that one.

“Thank you, Commander.”

Allee effect definition

Although the concept of Allee effect had no title at the time, it was first described in the 1930s by its namesake, Warder Clyde Allee. Through experimental studies, Allee was able to demonstrate that goldfish grow more rapidly when there are more individuals within the tank. This led him to conclude that aggregation can improve the survival rate of individuals, and that cooperation may be crucial in the overall evolution of social structure. The introduction to the term “Allee principle” took place in the 1950s, a time when the field of ecology was heavily focused on the role of competition among and within species.

The classical view of population dynamics stated that due to competition for resources, a population will experience a reduced overall growth rate at higher density and increased growth rate at lower density. In other words, we would be better off when there are fewer of us around due to a limited amount of resources. However, the Allee effect concept introduced the idea that the reverse holds true when the population density is low. Individuals within a species generally require the assistance of another for more than simple reproductive reasons in order to exist. Examples of these can easily be seen in animals that hunt for prey or defend against predators as a group.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is Communities of Light (COL)?
   Communities of Light represents the efforts of residents in several inner-city communities in Minneapolis to use the co-op business model to help residents attain family and personal solvency and self-sufficiency and sustainable energy independence as a gateway to improving their health.

The Co-op is part of the Rebirthing Community Citizen Health Action Team (CHAT). The initiative funded by the Allina Health and Clinic’s Backyard Initiative (BYI) for the purpose of improving the mental, physical and spiritual health of residents in five communities in the BYI. The BYI is administered by the Cultural Wellness Center in South Minneapolis.

Families participate in workshops that discuss community and individual and family changes that need to be made to make the community physically, mentally and spiritually healthier.

2. Our main reasons for starting COL?
   The reasons we formed Communities of Light in 2010 was that there were very few jobs available in the community. Most jobs were construction jobs and these jobs were held by people outside our community. The statistics pointed to a revolving door of dependency, serial incarceration with long prison times resulting in unstable households. Few families had the means to get a foothold to live the American dream of prosperity and physical and spiritual well-being.

3. What does COL offer?
   What we have created is a community-based infrastructure for designing, manufacturing, selling and installing solar lanterns and portable solar electric generators. COL uses two existing technologies—solar panels and electric storage batteries—to produce a third, new technology—portable solar electric generators and solar lanterns.

In solar generator workshops, each co-op member assembles and installs a courtesy generator in their own home or apartment after producing, selling and installing at least one generator in the community at large. These solar powered electric generators are 5,000 watts and can drive most household appliances and lights. They are similar to their cousins offered at the big national hardware and lumber stores but use no gasoline and are virtually noiseless. The generators are modular which means that you can start with a small generator starter set and add more components for more electric power.

Electricity is stored in batteries that are recharged during the day by solar panels and will power a house, apartment, garage, cabin or camper for several days even without sun.

In addition to learning sales techniques, co-op members learn how to perform a solar energy assessment of potential customer's needs and how to configure the right solar generator. Members also learn how to install and service the generators.

4. Why the co-op model?
   Our co-op model empowers members with tools for energy conservation and independence. The co-op also provides the means for employment, financial solvency, self-sufficiency and spiritual and physical well-being.

What is really important is that the co-op becomes the economic engine to design, assemble, sell and install new products. This entire process facilitates the rebirth of our community by empowering the people.

5. Who benefits immediately from the solution?
   There are 5 major benefits of our co-op model:
   1. New capacity for the community to produce and sell solar and renewable energy products.
   2. We have created a sustainable infrastructure for co-op members self-sufficiency.
   3. Increased member financial solvency (pay bills from co-op earnings).
   4. Members have developed a consensus and a methodology to act on issues important to them in the community.
   5. There is increased family cohesion and stability. Families are now talking to and problem solving with each other.

How do we measure our success?
We measure our success in terms of the number of workshops, the number of families, the number of solar lanterns and generators produced.

Our initial capacity will be 30 solar generators and 9 solar lanterns per week. This is equivalent to 5 people working 40 hours per week. Our first-year’s capacity will grow to 40 generators per week, meaning 10 people working 40 hours per week. However, many of our members will work part-time, meaning 20 people working 20 hours per week.

We have conducted over 80 workshops. More than 145 families have attended our workshops. Over 1000 people in our community have been exposed to our message of personal financial solvency, self-sufficiency and the need to develop independent energy strategies. We have created large inventories of solar lanterns and portable personal solar electric generators for sale within our store display room.

Rebirthing a community is not easy work. Communities of Light says, “We shall not be self-centered.” But we all need to be self-centered. So, as we are trying to rebirth our communities, we have a hard time giving up of ourselves and becoming more flowing, more open, more loving, more sharing and more caring.

Since it is not easy to rebirth a community, it is very important to develop a model in our community here in the five communities of the Allina Backyard Initiative so we can have an example and people can come here to see how things work.

Putting two people together is hard. Putting three together is harder. Putting four and five and twelve together is even harder. This is why we have developed meditation tools so that people can consider and gain agreement on what our community should be like. Our Communities of Light workshops, where we produce solar energy products—solar lanterns and portable solar electric generators, serve that purpose.

Communities of Light are for people who have reached a point where they want to sacrifice a little bit for something greater.

These people do not say, “Me, me, me only.” If they do say this, they are not going to last very long in the Communities of Light because to be a full participant in Communities of Light, they have to at least give equal of what they take. Otherwise, the communities will not last very long.

You see, if there is so much water in a glass, and I keep drinking it up, what happens to this water? It is going to be used up. But, if I replace the water I used plus a little more, what happens? After a while, the glass is overflowing because we are adding more water to the glass.

We tend not to like to sacrifice. We say, “What’s in it for me?” I want to get something out of this. Am I going to get more out of this or am I going to have to give more than I get?”

As long as we have this “me” attitude we are not ready for full participation in Communities of Light.

But if we reach a peak to know “I want to be a part of this community and I want to give more than I receive,” we can live together, help one another and we will be willing to take on some responsibility that makes other people more free, comfortable and secure. It is hard to find such people. But, we at Communities of Light know you are out there. Join us in our quest for personal solvency and self-sufficiency.

Please call 612-239-4336 to participate in our workshops or visit our Solar Store to purchase our products at the Midtown Global Market 920 E. Lake Street, Minneapolis MN 55407. – Lake Street Entrance –