

## Minnesota Children Have Much to Lose In Health Care Debate

BY JIM KOPPEL

If rural Minnesota communities pay close attention to the current health care debates at the state capitol and in Congress, they will realize they have the most to lose if current efforts to expand health coverage for children fail. A newly-released study by the University of New Hampshire's Carsey Institute found that as the number of rural jobs that offer health benefits has declined, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of uninsured rural children. The study finds that one in three of the nation's rural children now rely on public health programs for coverage. In fact the report found that rural children made up almost all of the national increase in uninsured children between 2004 and 2005.

Minnesota, with its 79,000 uninsured children, is just beginning realize the extent of this dramatic decline in health coverage for children in rural areas. Children's Defense Fund Minnesota published its annual KIDS COUNT Data Book, which found that the regions with the highest rates of uninsured children are all outside the metro area. If left unchecked, the state will ultimately pay a heavy price for this the steady and costly dismantling of health care in rural communities.

Not only does greater Minnesota have a higher percentage of uninsured children, but the recent increases have come almost exclusively in the state's most-rural areas. Nearly 10 percent of children in northeast Minnesota are now uninsured, and that region had a 26 percent increase between 2001 and 2004. This unsettling jump in uninsured children was also seen in other regions across the state. Northwest Minnesota saw a 45 percent increase and southwest Minnesota saw a whopping 54 percent increase in that same time period. In contrast, the Metro area saw just a 4.4 percent rise.

We know that uninsured children miss key preventive checkups and immunizations, and are less likely to seek medical care until a problem becomes more acute and usually more costly. Disturbingly, in Minnesota, the fastest-growing segment of uninsured children is those under age six, who are in their most important developmental years.

Rural communities face a series of unique challenges, which often prevent the health care market from meeting their needs. The Minnesota House and Senate attempted to address this by passing legislation to cover up to 40,000 more children across the state by making coverage more affordable and removing cost and administrative barriers to Minnesota's public programs—Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare. It also would have once again invested in reaching out to families who are eligible for these programs but not enrolled.

These programs are important because they offer comprehensive coverage, including access to preventive care and early intervention and management of chronic diseases such as asthma and diabetes. All of these are essential to children's short- and long-term health.

Despite Governor Pawlenty's veto of the measure, lawmakers still have an opportunity to make significant progress on this issue before the end of the legislative session next week. As they go back to the drawing board, rural communities should demand that they not abandon the key provisions in the vetoed legislation.

Lawmakers could make this investment without raising taxes, by tapping the substantial surplus in the health care access fund, which was created to expand coverage for low-income Minnesotans.

The Governor would then need to do his part—and keep his own promise to cover all kids—and sign this bill.

*Jim Koppel is Director of Children's Defense Fund Minnesota*

## Celebrate the Reopening of the Phillips Neighborhood Clinic!

Monday, June 4th

5:00-8:00pm

2647 Bloomington Avenue S.

In front of Oliver Presbyterian Church

BY SONALI RAJAN

Join us for appetizers, drinks, and the opportunity to meet Phillips Neighborhood Clinic staff and discover what the PNC has to offer. Volunteers have been working for months to reorganize and improve the clinic and its services, so we welcome everyone to take part in our celebration and find out about the free health services now available to the Phillips Neighborhood community and beyond. The clinic will be open every Monday evening from 6:00-9:00pm starting in mid-June, offering medical care, nursing, physical therapy, nutrition counseling, public health education, social work, and pharmacy care and dispensing. All services are open to the entire community and are provided free of charge, no insurance necessary. Since it first opened five years ago, the



clinic has had two major goals: to provide patients with accessible, culturally appropriate medical care in a respectful and professional manner, and to provide health science students the opportunity to learn valuable clinical and cultural skills in a real healthcare setting. In doing so, Phillips Neighborhood Clinic volunteers hope not only to serve the community, but to become part of it. See you at the celebration!



## Inaugural Walk 07 Midtown Greenway Was on Saturday May 19th, 2007

Keynote Walkers: YWCA Otters Channel relay team

*The YWCA Otters Channel relay team is training to swim the English Channel this summer to raise awareness of health and swimming disparities in Minnesota. People of color in Hennepin County are nearly twice as likely to drown as white people. The team is raising funds for the Swim for Change campaign to help provide swimming opportunities for underrepresented children and youth through swim lessons, swim teams, and job training as lifeguards, instructors and coaches.*

Join us as we support them in this effort! For more info: [www.ywcamps.org/channel](http://www.ywcamps.org/channel)

Community partners include The Midtown Greenway Coalition, The YWCA of Minneapolis, The Midtown Global Market, The Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder Newspaper, KFAI Radio without Boundaries

## Rules of the Road Minnesota Statutes and Commuting tips

Minnesota's streets, roads and highways provide transportation for a variety of vehicles—cars, trucks, motorcycles and, yes, bicycles. By following eight rules of the road, bicyclists and motorists can share the road more safely and enjoyably. After all, bicycle safety is a two-way street. Click on each Rule for more details.

1. Bicyclists may ride on all Minnesota roads, except where restricted.
2. Bicyclists should ride on the road, and must ride in the same direction as traffic.
3. Motorists must at all times maintain a three-foot clearance when passing a bicyclist.
4. Bicyclists must obey all traffic control signs and signals, just as motorists.
5. Motorists and bicyclists must yield the right-of-way to each other.
6. Bicyclists should signal their turns and should ride in a predictable manner.
7. Lights and reflectors are required at night.
8. EIGHT Bicyclists should always wear helmets.

There are, of course, other Rules of the Road—the Rules presented here are most frequently cited and will have the greatest effect in increasing bicycle safety. There are many excellent guides that describe additional strategies for safe and effective bicycling on streets, roads and highways. Two of the best are the Better Bicycling Fact Sheets of the League of American Bicyclists and the Colorado Bicycling Manual: A Guide for Using Roads and Trails.

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## Support the Mercado Central

Since May 19th's raids in the Lake & Bloomington area, we have both heard about and witnessed a noticeable drop in activity at the Mercado Central. The Mercado is a vital part of Lake Street and a big draw for local tourism. However, it needs day to day foot traffic from area residents to keep thriving. Show your support for Lake Street's Hispanic business community and stop in today! You won't regret it; there are a lot of great eating and shopping options every way you turn. Other area restaurants like La Poblanita and Guayaquil would be happy to serve you a meal of their great food as well.

## Open Arms to build \$7M building at 25<sup>th</sup>& Bloomington

see pg. 4

## Phillips Free Clinic Re-opens

see pg. 8

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It's NOT TOO LATE To

Save Block 5!



## Heritage Award Acceptance Remarks

BY JULIE MILLER

Save Block 5! is a group of 12 neighbors who fought for 18 months to protect the historic housing stock on the 2500 blocks of Chicago and Columbus Avenues from an onslaught by Children's Hospital. Children's encroachment represented a blatant and unprecedented violation of the Multi-Block Land Use Covenant, a good neighbor agreement that protected every house on every block surrounding Children's and Abbott Northwestern hospitals, including the block designated Block 5, throughout its 30-plus year existence.

As ordinary citizens, we educat-

phone calls; creating displays for and staffing tables at community events; holding planning meetings and barbeques; attending countless neighborhood meetings; enlisting the support of State Representative Karen Clark and State Senator Linda Berglin, who wrote letters and attended meetings on our behalf; gathering over 600 signatures for a petition in support of a moratorium.

Though our community education efforts were successful, our goal of housing preservation was not. Of the first eight properties purchased by Children's Hospital, seven century-old homes most of them Queen Anne Victorians were

*The Community Advisory Committee mentioned in these articles meets at Abbott-Northwestern Hospital on the 3rd Monday of each month at 5:30. There is an elected Committee and all meetings are open to the public. That Committee has now changed its name to include the Phillips Eye Institute, Allina and Children's. The new acronym/name is ANW-PEI-ALLINA-CHIL-DREN'S Community Advisory Committee*

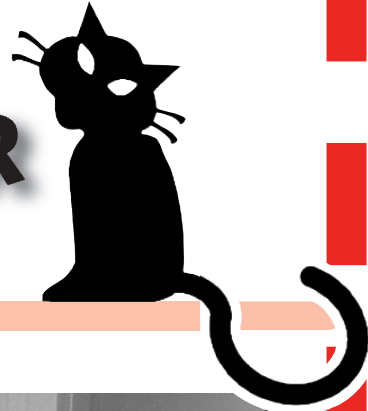
ed the community about the need for preservation of historic properties, development that is appropriate in scale and type, and maintenance of neighborhood character. We did this through presentations at neighborhood meetings; design of a website/blog; articles in community newspapers; organizational networking to gain information and support; obtaining information from City offices regarding zoning, demo permits, and other city ordinances; hosting a Minneapolis Historic Preservation Summer Walking Tour; flyer the neighborhood; writing letters; making

demolished. Now the hospital owns, or will soon own, the remaining five homes.

In the end, Save Block 5! found the worthy goal of preservation impossible to achieve given the combined disadvantages of a weak neighborhood board, a mayor who long ago abandoned the Phillips West Neighborhood, and a City Councilmember who was aligned with the hospital before the neighbors were even aware of the hospital's plans. Though it was difficult to find a neighbor in Phillips West

**Heritage Award**  
see page 3

# the Alley NEWSPAPER



## wins Heritage award



photo by Julie Miller

## Classic Organizing

Seven people representing the Phillips Community Save Block 5 coalition were trapped between floors in a lift elevator at International Market Square on their way to receive a Mpls. Heritage Preservation Award. It was impossible to see the miniscule 750 lb limit sign.

Although somewhat embarrassing, in classic community organizing style, residents stuck together and followed their chosen leader.

This photo was taken after 5 of the people had climbed out of the lift leaving only long time Phillips activists Vi DeMars and Harvey Winje, both of whom were helped by fellow resident to jump down to the floor below after this photo was taken.

*"We must hang together, else we shall hang separately." ....Benjamin Franklin 1706-1790.*

## St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church condemns the May 19 raids in South Minneapolis

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church wants to make clear that we support the local police in the lawful pursuit of their mission; in fact, we have been a leader in the community fight against crime, through Phillips Weed and Seed and the 15th Ave. Block Club. We have worked diligently with the police to combat prostitution, drug sales and other crimes, and will continue to do so. We have no problem with the police arresting persons suspected of crime.

St. Paul's condemns the unauthorized use of its property by agents of the Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) to stage a raid in the south

Minneapolis community on Saturday, May 19, 2007. At approximately 10:30 AM, five vehicles with police officers of ICE and one or more officers of the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) parked in our parking lot, disembarked from their vehicles, donned their bullet proof vests, and adjusted their weapons, in plain sight of the community. Pr. Patrick Cabello Hansel repeatedly told the police officers that they were not allowed to use church property and asked them to leave. They refused his request on numerous occasions. These officers later were involved in several raids throughout the

community.

We strongly object to the involvement of Immigration Police in the use of church property as a staging area for any raid. The effectiveness of our ministry in the community depends on building an atmosphere of trust. St. Paul's mission<sup>1</sup>, as well as the overall unity of the community, is adversely affected by actions that create fear and mistrust in the very people that we are trying to serve. Minneapolis police officials that we work with have made it clear that such actions diminish rather than enhance the effectiveness of community policing. Residents are afraid to report crimes or testi-

fy, a situation that damages community security.

We support the democratic process in Congress as it debates a comprehensive immigration reform. We ask that the ICE suspend the raids on our community until such a reform bill has passed.

*Passed Unanimously by the council of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2742 15th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407, 612-724-3862, May 20, 2007. Contact: Rev. Patrick Cabello Hansel @612-296-2231 or phcreate@aol.com. Rev. Luisa Cabello Hansel at 612-275-2914 or luisacreate@aol.com*

## "...And there was no one left..."

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a communist;

Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist;

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist;

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew;

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak out for me. Rev. Martin Niemöller 1892-1984 Church leader in Nazi Germany

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