



VENTURA VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD

AUGUST '22 NEWS

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The “Why” Behind our Medical Respite Shelter

By: La’Quadra Neal and Robin Stramp, Our Saviour’s Community Services

This year the Our Saviour’s Emergency Shelter has been piloting a medical respite model. While we continue to offer our traditional shelter services to 11 individuals experiencing homelessness each day, we are also doing something new: providing 24/7 shelter for 10 patients who are being discharged from the hospital, who need monitoring, and who would otherwise be exiting to the streets or to a shelter that may not have 24/7 operations. Our staff has a direct connection to a hospital system to improve care coordination, and we are planning to build out additional supports and services in the months ahead.

A question we often hear is, why medical respite? The pandemic, and the way our community responded to it, showed us there was a need for a specialized, medical respite shelter and our space could accommodate it. At the beginning of the pandemic, Hennepin County moved the oldest and most medically vulnerable folks experiencing homelessness into a hotel setting in an effort to provide protection from COVID-19. Eventually, our shelter residents all relocated to a hotel setting, too. When our shelter operations transitioned back to our Chicago Avenue location in the spring of 2021, we felt a spark of inspiration. We didn’t want to see the same people back on the streets with COVID-19 because they had lost access to those protective spaces. Plus, we feel that specialty shelters provide a better experience for our residents because our case managers can hone in as experts in more specific types of resources.

Now, why should the medical respite model matter to you? There are so many reasons! First of all, it’s a matter of medical and racial justice. Healthcare and housing stability form a vicious cycle, and that cycle disproportionately affects Black and Indigenous members of our community. In the United States, the average life expectancy of a person experiencing homelessness is about 50 years. In Minnesota, about 80% of folks experiencing homelessness report one or more chronic medical conditions. Experiencing homelessness produces barriers to medical care, and experiencing medical barriers makes it more difficult to maintain stable housing. Medical respite programs like ours give people a chance to rest, break that cycle, and focus on their physical recovery.

As another point, one of the goals of medical respite is to reduce hospital readmissions and to free up hospital beds for people with the most acute needs – homeless or housed. By supporting medical respite, you might be ensuring that someone else is healthy enough to not need a hospital bed when a more critical case comes in. Our model prevents log jams in the emergency room, and in beds for admitted patients. This allows the hospital to take care of their most vulnerable patients, for Our Saviour’s to take care of their vulnerable clients, and for everyone to get the level of care they need when they need it.

We just completed the pilot phase of our medical respite program, and our funding has been extended for twelve months. After just a few months of this initiative, we can’t tell you whether we are helping our residents live longer lives. We can tell you, though, that this initiative is helping people stabilize, physically and holistically, and meet their medical needs that have not been met in a traditional shelter model. We are seeing young people in their 30s, 40s, and 50s in these medical respite beds. They have a lot left to do, to live, and to contribute to our community.

We hope you will learn more about our shelter and ways to contribute at oscs-mn.org.

Minneapolis American Indian Center Capital Project Update

By: Mary LaGarde, Executive Director of Minneapolis American Indian Center

The Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC) is getting ready for groundbreaking for the renovation and expansion of the existing building, expected to start this fall. The organization has been raising funds for this 30M project since 2017, and is nearing its fundraising goal. Opened in its current location



on the intersection of Bloomington and Franklin Avenues in 1975, the MAIC has provided a variety of services to the urban American Indian community including health and wellness, education and workforce development, arts and culture, support and resources, and has often been the site for large community gatherings. In recent years, the Gatherings Café was opened by the MAIC and offers healthy Indigenous foods.

The renovation and expansion of the MAIC will enact a shared stakeholder vision for the Center, as a place to gather, participate in cultural activities and build community. We plan to add space for new social enterprise programs, including an enhanced cafe, a fitness center, and rental, meeting, and co-working space. We will expand and better utilize our existing office, programming, and meeting spaces. We are incorporating sustainable design and energy efficiency, including solar, and will be updating the 1970’s era electrical, communications, and accessibility infrastructure. Construction will be completed in the spring of 2024.

Ventura Village Neighborhood News

- There will be no membership meeting in August. Our next meeting will be September 14th.
- National Night Out will be Tuesday, August 2nd.
- The Four Sisters Market will be open every Thursday 11 AM to 3 PM.
- ICCM is having their 'Hip Hop Jam on the Ave Street Party' in August
 - 7pm Aug 18th @ 18th and Park across from the Life Center
 - 7pm Aug 19th @ Peavey Park

KRSM Youth Media Summer Program

By: Emmet Bostic, KRSM Intern

KRSM Youth Media Internship is back with a new and much bigger group of youth ready to learn about radio. We also have three new mentors, Yonci, Joseph, and Toby who are excited to be working with us this year as well as KJ who is returning as a youth mentor this year. In the first week, students explored what radio is, what it means to them, and what they want to do in radio. Later, students got to look at the radio booth and think about what role they want to have within a show. At the end of the first week, the cohort got to visit KFAI radio as well as Public Functionary art studios to get some inspiration and learn about these awesome local creative spaces.

We are very excited to be working with this new group of students and mentors, we cannot wait to see what this cohort brings to the table this summer! The KRSM Youth Internship show will be back on the air this summer showcasing student shows. Feel free to come to the Pillsbury United Communities youth showcase to see what KRSM did as well as other internships projects! The event will be held at Brian Coyle on August 4th.

Timely Reminder

By: Kali Pliego, Crime Prevention Specialist

I am a Crime Prevention Specialist for the City of Minneapolis. I work closely with the Police Department, and City residents to address suspicious and criminal activity at the neighborhood level. I am working in collaboration with Council Members, MPD 3rd Precinct leadership and officers, block clubs and other residents, and City staff from other departments.

If you witness crimes or other emergencies occurring, please call 911 to report it. If you need assistance from an interpreter, you can ask for one by the language that you need. When reporting a crime, it is helpful to say what behaviors you notice that are suspicious. If you see a weapon, or any kind of violence, report it. Then, describe the suspect(s) and any vehicles involved in the activity. A good suspect description includes their physical characteristics (race, gender, height, hair color and style, tattoos, etc) and clothing (color, distinctive designs, hat, shoes); vehicle descriptions include the color, make, model, how many doors, and how many occupants—and the license plate if possible.

You can be anonymous. If you want to report a crime, but don’t want to interact with police, you have several options. You can refuse to give your name to the 911 operator. You can also give your name and number but tell the operator you do not want to speak with an officer. No one will know you called.

My contact information is:

Kali Pliego

Crime Prevention Specialist

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Keeping a Busy Food Shelf Staffed

By: Ethan Neal, Director of Waite House Food Shelf

A headline to a recent Star Tribune article was "TOO MANY JOBS, TOO FEW WORKERS". We asked Ethan Neal, the director of Waite House's busy food shelf how they have handled this situation. He replied, the Waite House food shelf and community cafe located in the Phillips Community Center has been serving the Phillips community and beyond for more than decade. Providing free groceries and a free lunch Monday-Thursday. To help provide those services Pillsbury United Communities has been able to collaborate with other organizations, schools, neighbors, and interns to help cook meals, stock food, and distribute food. We have been able to partner with the WEX program, a Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe worker experience program that is focused on providing paid work training for Minnesota tribal members. This program has been a great success is helping find staffing solutions in both programs.

We also do internships with the WIOA youth program within Pillsbury United Communities. This program is focused on teaching and developing young people aged 18-24 who are not currently enrolled in school. Outside of paid internships, we also rely a lot on volunteers who are looking to help support their local communities. If you are interested in volunteering with our food shelf or community meals program, please contact LuzF@pillsburyunited.org or call 612-721-1681.