Housing is a human right. But too many of our neighbors in St. Paul and across Minnesota are struggling to afford their rent, pay their mortgage or even find stable housing. We can fix Minnesota’s housing shortage, but it will take a series of innovative solutions to make progress.

I have led on the issue of housing during my tenure at the Senate, helping to secure $300 million in residency support in housing infrastructure bonds and $16 million for public housing rehabilitation in 2020 alone. I was also pleased to support the Catholic Charities’ Dorothy Day building downtown, now known as Higher Ground Saint Paul, with state funding approved by the legislature. Additionally, I supported the use of the former Bethesda Hospital in Downtown St. Paul to house those who were without shelter last winter. But these short-term fixes must be paired with long-term solutions to fully address the housing shortage and affordability crisis that we are experiencing in Minnesota.

In the five years that followed the 2008 recession, the U.S. lost 50% of all new residential home building companies, leading to a sharp decline in the number of new homes that were built over the past decade. As the number of new units plummeted, the cost of existing units rose sharply, prompting, leading to the issue we’re dealing with today. Over 100,000 Minnesotans are sleeping on the street on any given night, and over half a million Minnesotans are cost-burdened, meaning they are paying more than 30% of their household income on housing. Many renters and homeowners are experiencing this cost burden because their incomes have remained stagnant or decreased relative to the increasing cost of their homes. According to the Minnesota Housing Partnership, the median renter’s income increased by just 1% between 2000 and 2019, but their median gross rent increased by 40%.

The housing crisis is complex, and it will take a multitude of creative solutions such as an increase in production of manufactured homes, increased availability of tiny houses, and a surge in federal investment in section 8 housing to adequately address the size and scope of the problem. There is so much that the government can do to improve housing affordability, and every level of government must act. The federal government can pass the Build Back Better Act, which would allocate $15 billion to the Housing Trust fund, $2.5 billion for rental assistance, and $65 billion to build and maintain public housing as it stands today. The state government can make space for sweeping investments in affordable housing through the passage of millions of dollars in housing bonds. The federal government can also do more to support homeless juveniles, domestic violence survivors and formerly incarcerated individuals by meeting their unique housing needs to provide stable shelters during periods of instability. Local governments can expand multifamily housing, allowing homeowners and landlords to construct additional units where there was previously only a single unit.

BY CASEY EK

Community Reporter

Investing in creative solutions to Minnesota’s housing shortage

A collection of West 7th area businesses and property owners has sued the City of St. Paul and the Listening House, the organization that runs the Freedom House, over issues they believe are linked to the homeless day shelter located at 296 West 7th St.

The suit filed by Tom Reid’s and the Art Farm, among other property owners, alleges that Freedom House and city staff did not adequately respond to over 100 disturbances listed in the suit. Included are instances of littering, open drug use, assault and trespassing, among others. The lawsuit further argues that an upsurge in crime in the West 7th neighborhood is higher than the city averages on映 of the shelter.

“Freedom House guests are invited there by Freedom House and are permitted to cause disruption, damage and safety threats to neighbors and businesses without intervention by Freedom House or the City, including remaining overnight in an area that is not zoned (even temporarily) as an overnight shelter,” the lawsuit states.

In November 2020, the city passed an emergency ordinance that allowed for the Freedom House to occupy its current location. The so-called “Freedom House Ordinance” was passed in response to complaints from neighbors who said people who had staked out camps around the city as winter began taking its hold. Now, after a year a year after the original ordinance was passed, winter is again returning, and Freedom staff are working to avoid up too many guests.

The lawsuit argues that the shelter, which is covered on the front page of the February 2020 issue of the Community Reporter, cannot house 100 people at a time as it is meant to be a “day shelter” for homeless people. The lawsuit further argues that facilities 7000 square feet or larger must obtain a conditional use permit. The Freedom House falls within that category, and Jalsa added that the Freedom House will not be providing services for a long as possible, stating that the newly adopted ordinance will help usher in more options for the city’s unhoused.

A horse-drawn hearse at Nick Mancini’s funeral

Editor’s Note: In the latest issue of the Community Reporter, Margaret Kinney gave us a look at the first five years of our new century. Today, we focus on just three major stories that the Community Reporter covered in the latter part of that decade.

BY PAUL BARD

The Cost of War

The cost of war hit home in our neighborhood on January 9, 2007, when National Guard Sgt. James M. Wosika, age 24, was killed by a bomb while on foot patrol in Falujah, Iraq. Nearly 2000 people attended his funeral at the Cathedral, which was covered on the front page of the February 2007 issue of the Community Reporter. Attendees included Gov. Tim Pawlenty, Mayor Chris Coleman, Rep. Betty McCollum, and numerous classmates from Wosika’s Highland Park Senior High class. Archbishop Harry Flynn presided at the funeral mass.

Jim Wosika was remembered as a hero by the men under his command on the day he was killed. One of them, Sgt Jon Goldstein, wrote, “The only reason I am here today to write this is because of your heroic actions on that particular day.” Wosika leading a patrol when he became suspicious of a vehicle on the side of the road and ordered his men to stay back. As he approached the vehicle, a bomb went off. Sgt Goldstein continued, “I would gladly change places with you in a heartbeat!”

A plaque honoring Wosika is installed at the base of the Flagpole at Palace Community Center.

Passing of a Neighborhood Icon

Restauranteur Nick Mancini was a larger-than-life figure in the West 7th neighborhood and his funeral on June 5, 2007, was a grand affair that he no doubt would have enjoyed. He was known for being a hero to me. Your leadership, your strong will and your genuine caring for your men. I will miss you and think of you all my days.”

The headline of the July 2007 issue of the Community Reporter read “A Fond Farewell” and the accompanying story recounted his funeral at the Church of the Assumption. A picture showed the horse-parade that followed his casket, which rode in an antique hearse “pulled by six beautiful charcoal grey Percheron horses,” the story read.

The story included a timeline of Nick’s life, where readers learned that the man who came to be known as “Mr. Hospitality” was born in St. Paul’s Little Italy on the Upper Leger in 1948. He later moved with his family to a house at 165 McBoal St., which still stands. (Editor’s note: The restoration of 165 McBoal was featured in the October 2019 issue of the Community Reporter).

Nick attended Monroe High School, served in the Army at the end of World War II and founded the restaurant that bears his name in 1948.
**BAD TO WORSE**

By Jonathan Dickman, MD

At the end of October, my family lost our mother. She was my grandmother. My grandmother would have been the first to tell you that she never had any ground-breaking accomplishments in life. And yet, physicians, lawyers, teachers and scholars kept coming to mourn the loss of Miriam Dickman, in witness of this outpouring of support.

I started to ask: What could make this unassuming person so cherished? In this reflection, I discovered that she had many important lessons to teach us that seem basic but are essential to living a healthy life.

# Lesson 1: Care for Others

My grandmother supported a homeless shelter. When younger, she raised a family, made donations to help her at home. When older, she cared for her husband when he was sick. Later in her 90s, she was still preparing food for her guests, making sure they were nourished and entertained. Beyond her family, she welcomed people from the community whenever they felt like stopping by her house. After her passing, no one forgot how special it was to visit her house.

# Lesson 2: Listen

We would never find your grandmother distracted by a smartphone during conversations. When she conversed, her focus was on you. She made you feel important. Despite her difficulties with hearing, she listened, she asked follow-up questions, and would be honestly interested in your life. She would sit on her couch and the conversation would never end. She did not want to talk about herself. Now that technology and social media is everywhere, it seems that we find ourselves searching for someone like her to truly listen to us without distraction. Now that she is gone, my family realizes how rare it is to have someone want us completely. Her ability to listen was a reason why many people felt connected to her.

# Lesson 3: Be supportive

My grandmother supported the self-care and dreams of her friends and family. She would help her friends to pursue their dreams. Perhaps more powerfully, she would expressly express her support during conversations. Her support never hinged on success or winning. Even if you failed, she was the first to support you. She inspired others to reach for the stars and be OK with landing on the moon... or earth for that matter. What is their best special is that she would always stand in our corner. Thus, although she would never claim to have any significant accomplishments in her own life, she left a profound and indirectly responsible for the success of others around her.

I think my grandmother understood something that can take others a lifetime to realize - that a fulfilling life is not about individual achievements, but rather about what we can accomplish together as a community. As physicians, we are humbled when we interpose ourselves between the health of our patients is much smaller than the influence of the surrounding community. Thanks to the community building she did in her life, my grandmother lived a life more vibrant. When we care for others and support our family, friends, and neighbors, we build a community that enhances the health of everyone involved in our own. To keep her in my memory, I plan to tear a photo from our family album, because I want to know how I interact with others. Through this effort, I hope to make my grandmother proud. I hope to live a life, and sometimes those who live ordinary lives can leave the most extraordinary impression.

Jonathan Dickman, MD, PhD is a family medicine doctor at Alina Health Unified Family Physicians, 233 Grand Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55102-6502 Phone: 651-241-5200

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**WEST END HEALTHLINE**

**Health Lessons from a Matriarch**

By Casey Ek

*Fort Road Federation*

We’re collecting recipes of West 7th, Riverview Corridor, and surrounding areas. If you’re interested in preparing food for your guests, making sure they have an extraordinary impression on others.**

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The 2000s, PG 2

The story also noted that the restaurant was the Community Reporter’s first advertiser, a tradition that Mancini’s Char House carries on to this day.

Nick Mancini was well known for giving back to the neighborhood and the story noted that “Rob Pat and John have taken to heart their father’s tradition of hospitality by serving dinners to thousands of National Guard troops serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.” We like to think that Jim Woolkia might have enjoyed one of those dinners from home before that fateful day in July.

2008 RNC Comes to the Xcel Center

Anyone’s political preferences aside, it was a very big deal when St. Paul’s Xcel Energy Center was chosen as the location of the Republican National Convention in the summer of 2008. Restaurants and bars downtown and along West 7th prepared for crowds of delegates as well as visitors from around the world. Their hopes were disappointed, however, by a heavy security presence and by the fact that most conventioneers were housed to their hotels in Minneapolis immediately after each day’s business was concluded. “West 7th Business ‘A Disaster’ During the RNC” read the headline in the October 2008 Community Reporter. “Many restaurants had added staff, bought extra goods, and extended hours for nothing,” said the front-page story. “A handful of businesses did well. ‘Law enforcement wanted to be prepared,’ said an employee from the Caribou Coffee on Shepard Road. Yet most shared the experience of Pat Mancini, who said, ‘It was a disaster for businesses. We embraied it for the city [but] West Seventh was turned into a security zone.’

That heavy security presence also produced some truly frightening tales of people running from tear gas fired by police in an apparent overreaction to a generally peaceful protest near the Xcel Center. “No one was hurt, no windows smashed,” wrote contributing editor Maxine McCormick. “But at the end of the march, the police launched tear gas to disperse a few hundred of the lingering crowd.”

McCormick vividly described her own experience. “The smoke stung my eyes and I could barely see. I walked on. Bang, another tear gas canister landed three feet from me, my eyes began to flood with tears.”

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St. Paul’s Jewish Family Service a $10,000 grant from Old National Bank, as this investment will ensure more Latino small businesses and entrepreneurs receive the support they need to successfully grow their business.

The American Swedish Institute Solstice

The American Swedish Institute will host a winter solstice celebration at their 2000 Park Ave., Minneapolis, location. The Institute celebrates this powerful seasonal junction with fun, festivities and performance. This year, North Malow will be singing his unique s’tores and cocoa to enjoy by the fire and, back by popular demand, northern lights will make another appearance in the courtyard. Tickets are $15 for ASI members, $10 for the public and $5 for children under 18.

Planet of the Apes at the Science Museum

Join U of M anthropologist Kieran McNulty and author Freeman Ng on a unique journey, a great gift for young readers this holiday season. The event will take place Nov. 28 from 2-4 p.m. at Magers & Quinn Booksellers, 3038 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis.

Booksellers, 3038 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis. The event will feature the 2022 St. Paul Winter Carnival button reveal, photo ops and a showing of the movie Eff.

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Claddagh coffee reaches 10-year milestone

BY CASEY EK

Mary Hogan-Bard was known among her friends to make a mean cup of coffee—your overs were her specialty. They would often tease her, asking when she might open a storefront of her own. The former special education teacher, who then spent 17 years as a stay-at-home mom, wanted to try her hand at her own venture and began seeking advice from successful St. Paul coffee shop owners to see if her idea for a shop of her own might stick. The rest, as they say, is history.

On Oct. 30, Mary, who sits at the helm of neighborhood staple Claddagh Coffee, located at 409 West 7th St., celebrated the business’s 10th anniversary with a crowd of supporters, new and legacy. Among the tables set out at the celebration sat poster boards plastered with photographs throughout the years. Many photos were of former staff who have gone on to have acting and musical careers. One photo shows a pair of sisters who have tattooed the shop’s logo on the backs of their necks. Another photo depicts a quiet moment of a patron reading a newspaper.

“Who knew I would do this long,” Mary said. “For me it’s been very humbling.”

Mary likened the six months it took to get the establishment off the ground to carrying her fifth child. Between trying as many cups as possible of artisan coffee in St. Paul and practicing her own coffee-making technique, she had her hands full.

Mary settled on an unlikely location for her store: a former adult bookstore. But the space was perfect. Leading up to opening Claddagh, Mary had visualized everything from how the space would be laid out architecturally, down to the conversations her patrons might have. All she needed was a name.

After struggling to come up with anything that captured the essence of her vision, Mary’s son Liam finally said, “Mom, how about ‘Claddagh.’” The name was so obvious that it eluded her.

The term “Claddagh,” in addition to being the name of an Irish Village, is the name of the Irish symbol of folded hands holding a crowned heart that signifies friendship, loyalty and love.

“Those values have been on display on countless occasions over the last 10 years. One of the primary questions Mary asks new hires is what they think customer service means. Many customers have held bachelorette parties at the establishment. One family even held a funeral there. Some customers trust Mary with dating advice, and the store owner held a funeral there. Some customers trust Mary with their life outside the coffee industry, and if it didn’t work out, I could at least say I tried.”

Mary Hogan-Bard stands among dozens of photographs documenting Claddagh Coffee over the last 10 years. The photos were taken at the coffee shop’s 10th year celebration. (Filippos Gekas)
In the Community

Keystone Responds to pandemic with creativity

BY JERRY ROTHSTEIN

Keystone Community Services is one of the organizations with which our community is blessed — devoted to looking for areas of challenge and creating programs to help meet the needs involved. In its decades of service, staff and board members have engaged in an ongoing assessment, leading to the complex planning, fundraising, and executive activities necessary to provide responsive and effective solutions.

In many ways, Keystone and its people represent a group that has long recognized the critical situations that many in our community live with every day, and the stresses that come with constant pressure to put a roof over one’s head, food on the table, clothing for the family, health care and good education for the children. These represent the baseline of Maslow’s insightful “hierarchy of needs,” without which such goals as self-actualization and transcendence are not possible.

With the pandemic and measures taken to deal with it, now almost everyone sees that the crisis we are in now on a global scale is an expanded version of those critical situations Keystone and other agencies have been dealing with for years.

“Even while we felt fragile, we used our strengths — some familiar to us and some new — to help us through the challenges,” McKeown said.

Keystone’s core strength begins with the genuine desire to look at and to reflect on real-world situations. Looking away may be momentarily easier, but it’s a luxury we can’t afford. Mary added, “Depending on its core values of building relationships and being with for years.

The drive-up food service, and monthly free grocery delivery program, join Meals on Wheels and have reached new clients. To take advantage of this, new infrastructure was developed. A new community food site will take advantage of this, new infrastructure was developed. A new community food site will be developed. A new community food site will be developed. A new community food site will be developed.

Food support is critical. Linking with the food rescue movement, Keystone has increased its distributed food to include more than 50% of rescued food, up from 10%. To take advantage of this, new infrastructure was developed. A new community food site will add capacity for food that needs preservation. The drive-up food service, and monthly free grocery delivery program, join Meals on Wheels and have reached new clients.

The low-income population is a remarkable and somewhat unknown asset to society. Qualities of creativity, resiliency, networks of mutual support, ability to use limited resources effectively, can be enhanced when an agency like Keystone pays attention. Keystone offers a range of programs. Current openings include

*Make a difference in your community by joining one of Keystone’s essential programs. Current openings include Grocery Delivery, Food Shelf and Food-mobile Staff. Visit keystoneservices.org or call 651-645-0349*

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In the Community
Mary Cutrufello to Lead Federation

BY JERRY ROTHSTEIN

Mary Cutrufello, the former director of Youth Enrichment at the Twin Cities Mystic Lake YMCA, which offers programs in a wide variety of sports on its campus, has been selected as the new executive director of the Federation of St. Paul Area Labor Unions, which has represented workers in the St. Paul area for the last 100 years. Cutrufello was previously the director of Community Development at the Federation, and she will assume her new role on January 1, 2023.

“It seemed like it was the right time to make a change. I’ve been here at the Federation for 10 years, and I’ve seen the organization grow and evolve,” Cutrufello said. “I’m excited to continue that growth in my new role.”

The Federation was founded in 1923 by labor leaders who were concerned with the working conditions of their members. Over the years, the Federation has grown and evolved, and it now represents workers in a variety of industries, including manufacturing, retail, and professional services.

“I’m looking forward to working with Mary and the Federation staff to continue the organization’s mission of improving the lives of workers,” said outgoing Federation President Frank Moloney.

Mary Cutrufello grew up in Connecticut and earned her undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Connecticut. She went on to earn a Master’s degree in Community Development at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

“Mary has a wealth of experience and skills in community development, and she will be a great asset to the Federation,” said Federation Board Chair Betty Lueck.

In addition to her work at the Federation, Cutrufello is also involved in community service. She is a member of the Minnesota State Education Association and the Minnesota Academy of Sciences, and she volunteers at local food banks and shelters.

“I’m looking forward to working with Mary and the Federation staff to continue the organization’s mission of improving the lives of workers,” said outgoing Federation President Frank Moloney.

Mary Cutrufello will begin her new role on January 1, 2023.
HOLIDAYS ON THE HILL
From now until Dec. 31, Discover the Christmas traditions of the turn-of-the-century Hill family and servants at the James J. Hill House with Holidays on the Hill. Admission includes self-guided access to holiday-themed exhibits and a 15-minute guided tour. Tickets are available at mnhs.org/hillhouse/activities/calendar?id=4292.

DRUM CENTER DJEMBE CLASS
The Women’s Drum Center is offering a beginning hand drum class on Wednesday, Dec. 8, 3:30pm to 4:30pm. Jambrely Woods, class member, teaches play andPRI to explore pulse and rhythms. Easy, energizing exercises will be utilized to build skills. Join the drum center for the opportunity to explore an enriching musical experience. The focus will be on having fun. Instructor: Jambrely Woods. Prerequisite: None. Materials are required. The event is $10 per participant. Register at www.womensoflondrumcenter.org.

FASHIONED HOLIDAY BAZAAR
Landmark Center will open its doors for the 43rd annual Landmark Center Old-Fashioned Holiday Bazaar featuring 60 booths from local artists who offer handmade jewelry, decor, paintings, woven and wearable art, handmade letters and50 more. The event will run from Dec. 2-4 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 3 and 4. Landmark Center is located at 75 W. St., St. Paul.

SATURDAY AT LANDMARK: SANITAS WORKSHOP
Stop by Landmark Center for a free photo with Santa Claus and find games, gift making and IB Eckert reading classic children’s Christmas stories in the process. The event will take place Dec. 19, 1-3 p.m.

FARE FOR ALL
Fare for All will be back at the West 7th Community Center on Dec 10 from 10 a.m. to noon. Stock up on low-cost holiday food packages for all your parties and family gatherings. This event will be indoors in the West 7th Community Center gym, and masks will be required.

Hiking into the Night
Visit the Belwin Conservancy, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, for an exploration into the other half of day, when darkness envelops our world. The hike will begin inside with a brief overview of winter night life at Belwin and then head out to witness the beauty of the dark. Hikers will end the evening with light refreshments around a fire. Visit belwin.org for events for more details and to RSVP $10 per family. RSVP required. Open to ages 12 and above. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

TALES OF THE TWINS
Join author, winner Tom Weber, and Local Historian Bill Indekeu for a conversation centering on the wynds and haunts of the relationship between St. Paul and Minneapolis. The free event will take place at the Minneapolis History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul, from 2-3 p.m., Dec. 11.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR MANUFACTURER REMINDS PUBLIC TO CHECK DEVICES
First Alert, one of the most prominent manufacturers of carbon monoxide detectors is reminding the public that the devices do not last forever. In 2007, Minnesota put forward regulations that required the installation of the devices in newly constructed single-family homes and multi-family dwellings, but alarms only last five to seven years, so alarms install seven years ago are now likely to expire.

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CAMERON MONOXIDE DETECTOR MANUFACTURER REMINDS PUBLIC TO CHECK DEVICES
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OUTDOOR PAINTERS EXHIBIT
From now until Jan 4, the Frameworks Gallery, 202A Ford Parkway, St. Paul, is hosting the Outdoor Painters of Minnesota Exhibition. Stop by in person or online at frameworksgallery.com. Artworks can be picked up at the gallery or shipped to your door. Stop into the gallery to view items in person from Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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