

# CLOSE TO HOME

THE FIELD REGINA NORTHROP NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP NEWSLETTER

March/April 2017

## Neighborhood Annual Meeting & Elections

By Chris Schommer, Chair, Communications Committee

Our neighborhood's annual meeting and elections will take place on Thursday, April 27, at McRae Park starting at 6:30 p.m. This special yearly meeting is a chance for all neighbors to meet with and hear from our local elected representatives and your neighborhood board, and to help shape the future of Field Regina Northrop.

There is one open board position and three positions up for re-election. We extend our thanks to Shannon Guernsey who served on the board for many years and spent the past few years as treasurer. The treasurer is responsible for balancing our books and tracking our finances with support from our finance committee and an outside accountant. The treasurer will also work with the City to track our various funding streams.



### FIELD REGINA NORTHROP

Join your neighbors at McRae Park for our  
**2017 Annual Neighborhood meeting**

**Thursday, April 27th**

**6:30 - 8:00 PM**

Up for reelection this year are our communications chair Chris Schommer, our greening committee co-chairs Tim Price and Lindsey Feiner, and our South Northrop representative Mike Lyon.

If you would like to add your name to

the 2017 ballot for any of these positions, please contact the FRNNG office by April 19 to get your name on the ballot. Call (612) 721-5424 or email [frnng@frnng.org](mailto:frnng@frnng.org). The neighborhood is run by volunteers who want to make our slice of the city a better place to live! ❖

## 4700 Cedar Avenue Update



By Chris Schommer

More than 30 residents attended the February 15 board meeting to hear a presentation from the developer and architect of the 4700 Cedar development.

Residents expressed concerns related to traffic flow, pedestrian access and other impacts that the proposed drive-through could create. In response to neighborhood

*Continued on page 2*

## President's Letter

Hello FRN,

Our annual elections are coming up. If you are interested in running for any of the open board of directors positions, please get in touch with our FRN office. I hope that you will consider running for one of these positions.

*Continued on page 3*

concerns, the FRNNG board passed a resolution to be sent to the Minneapolis Planning Commission encouraging them to promote better pedestrian access for the site, outlining concerns with vehicular movement through the property, a request for improved lighting and to reiterate the need for a traffic study to be performed.

At the February 21 meeting of the Minneapolis Planning Commission, the Commission approved the site plan with the ten conditions drafted by staff, and an additional condition requiring a single curb cut on Cedar Avenue rather than two. This is written inside a 10-day window during which the developer or others can

appeal the decision to the City Council, so it is not yet final as of this printing. Follow us on Social Media at [facebook.com/frnng](https://facebook.com/frnng) and [twitter.com/frnng](https://twitter.com/frnng) ❖

## Community & Safety Initiatives

By Marty Koessel, Chair, Community & Safety Committee

As we settle into 2017, the Community & Safety Committee is exploring opportunities to build communication throughout our neighborhoods. We've been working with Jennifer Neale, the Third Precinct Crime Prevention Specialist, about ways to bring block club leaders together and find new ways to support each other.

I welcome block club leaders, residents, and business people to reach out to me about issues that are of concern or joy to you. For example, have you observed a place where cars, bicycles and pedestrians seem always on the edge of interacting in very unpleasant ways? Is there a corner or property so bleak and ugly that it invites crime? I'd love to hear about such things and discuss whether FRNNG might help.

Do you know someone doing something special to make your neighborhood safer and more welcoming? I'd love to give that person a pat on the back here in *Close to Home*.

Your neighborhood group is already working on a few items of this sort:


With the support of 11th-ward Council Member John Quincy, a camera is being installed at Cedar and 47th. This is a first step in gathering information that city traffic engineers can use to evaluate possible traffic improvements near the intersection of Cedar and Minnehaha Parkway, perhaps as early as this summer.

We've met with Jon Stumbras, Director of St. Joseph's Home for Children, about neighbors' concerns about how residents of St. Joseph's conduct themselves in surrounding areas. Director Stumbras will address these concerns in an upcoming issue of *Close to Home*.

Patricia Jones and the business committee plan to deter crime by working with businesses along Chicago Avenue to improve coverage by security cameras.

We want to see this list of activities grow. Our goal is to support every corner of Field, Regina and Northrop in keeping our neighborhoods fun and safe. The most effective way to do this is to have a block club leader on every block. To learn more about that, contact our crime prevention specialist Jennifer Neale at (612) 673-2839. [Jennifer.neale@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Jennifer.neale@minneapolismn.gov)

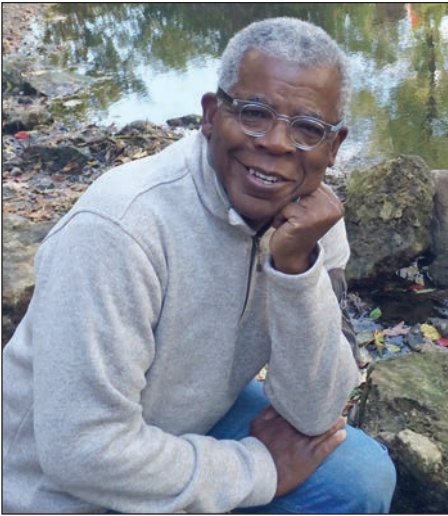
And please join us at the Community & Safety Committee meeting at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at McRae Park, or contact me at [community&safety@frnng.org](mailto:community&safety@frnng.org) Don't be shy in letting us know what's on your mind! ❖

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**Save the date!**  
**Neighborhood Celebration**  
**Saturday, May 20**

This year we will enjoy our 52nd Neighborhood Celebration. The event starts at 11 a.m. and runs until 2:30 p.m. Activities include a variety of musical entertainers, games of chance, balloon artists, face painting, kids games, and of course, ice cream and fabulous food! Come on out and enjoy *your* park and celebrate with your neighbors. ❖

Provided photo



Willie Bridges, President, Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group (FRNNG)

President's letter, continued from page 1

From our FRN, I would like to have five students who would be willing to write about their experiences for our newsletter about being a freshman, sophomore, junior and senior in high school these days. I would like for any eighth grader to write about their feelings also, about going into high school.

FRN, please have your students submit these writings to: communication@frnng.org or frnng@frnng.org I would like these articles for our fall newsletter. Please have them submit their articles by the end of June 2017. FRN, please encourage your son or daughter to share their experiences with other students.

FRN, if you see trash on the street in your block, please pick it up. This is how we keep our community clean. Also, if you're walking your dog, please make sure you always pick up your dog's droppings.

Be safe FRN. I know I say this all the time. Try to always be aware of your surroundings. Don't forget to always lock your garage and car doors.

Spring break is coming up soon. Watch out for kids running around.

FRN Community, remember to tell the people that you love that you love them. Tell them now, rather than later. ❖

# A non-profit resource for home enhancements

By Stearline Rucker, Program Director Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group (FRNNG) has discovered an exciting opportunity to enhance the living quality of qualified low-income homeowners in our neighborhood. We will collaborate with Rebuilding Together Twin Cities (RTTC), a non-profit, volunteer-based home-repair and construction organization that has been dedicated to preserving and revitalizing homes and communities in the seven-county metro area since 1997.

Within RTTC's accessibility-services capacity, their Safe at Home Program

works with older adults and those living with a disability. Modifications made by RTTC's trained volunteers and RTTC employees enable people to live safely and independently through the installation of ramps, grab bars and railings. RTTC's Access for Always Program provides larger, contractor-delivered home modifications such as doorway widening and kitchen or bathroom renovations that allow for aging-in-place and single-level living.

Related to livability services, RTTC's Home Repair Program creates healthier, more livable homes by providing volunteer-delivered repairs including weatheriz-

ing, cleaning, flooring installation, patching and painting, siding, landscaping, and almost anything that restores the homeowners' independence, safety and security. The Essential Systems Repair Program provides timely contractor-delivered repair or replacement of essential systems such as HVAC, electrical, plumbing, outer envelope and roofs that are critical to healthy, livable homes.

To learn more, you may contact Jacob Ames at RTTC: 651-776-4273, or Stearline Rucker at FRNNG: 612-721-5424. ❖

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# 311 On Your Smartphone

By Chris Schommer, Chair, Communications Committee

The city of Minneapolis encourages residents to call 311 to report a wide range of problems. Graffiti on street signs, abandoned vehicles, potholes and many more issues can all be reported through 311 and the City will track these reports and send them to the appropriate departments for a response or repair.

The 311 app for smartphones makes this process even easier. To begin, simply download the free app for iOS or Android and create an account with 311. If you wish to report a streetlight that is out in your neighborhood for example, open the app and choose "Report." From there you can take a photo of the problem, use the

GPS on your phone to pinpoint the exact location, choose a category for your problem and provide a written description. You can either submit your complaint anonymously or have 311 include your account in the complaint. After you submit your issue, you can also use the app to follow the progress of the issue.

While the City of Minneapolis does repair problems without citizen complaints, reporting problems through 311 can speed up this process from many months to days. For many problems, 311 is one of the only ways the City becomes aware of issues. So do yourself and your neighbors a favor and download the 311 app to bring city attention to our neighborhood! ❖



# Open Mic Blowout Sunday, April 23

By Alison Thorson, Green Team Student Leader

Washburn High School's Green Team, led by Alison Thorson and advisor Nicky Sunde, wants to save 90 trees per year. That's in addition to introducing sustainable practices and preserving natural resources. The team's current goal is to raise \$12,000 to be applied toward energy-efficient Dyson Airblade hand dryers. An Open Mic Blowout will take place at Pepitos Parkway Theater on Sunday, April 23, from 1 until 5 p.m. In addition to lively performances, a silent auction of donations from local merchants and individuals will raise extra funds. Refreshments will be available. Pepitos is donating the use of their theater.

Ticket prices are \$12 for adults and people older than 12, \$10 for Washburn

students with current IDs, and \$8 for children younger than 12. For more information, or to donate talent or money, go to this website:

[washburn.mpls.k12.mn.us/green\\_team](http://washburn.mpls.k12.mn.us/green_team) or email Green Team advisor, Nicky Sunde: [nicky.sunde@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:nicky.sunde@mpls.k12.mn.us)

During the past couple of years, the Green Team has led initiatives to bring eco-friendly processes to Washburn and raise environmental consciousness throughout the community. Team members recently put in place a new recycling and composting program in order to put Washburn's waste to better use. ❖

**The Spring Housing Market is Here!**

Prices in Field Regina Northrop reached an ALL TIME high in 2016.

**What's your home worth?**

[www.sellingwithkids.com/homevalue](http://www.sellingwithkids.com/homevalue)



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# Consider becoming a block club leader

By Jennifer Neale, Crime Prevention Specialist (CPS)

Someone made the analogy that a neighborhood that has organized block clubs is a like a quilt covering a bed. Both cover something: the quilt covers a bed while block club leaders “cover” their block. The quilt that is missing a patch or the block that is missing a block club leader are both vulnerable.

For a block club leader to cover their block, they must be willing to be a positive partner with the Minneapolis Police Department, maintain an open line of communication with me, the precinct’s crime prevention specialist (CPS), and become a conduit through whom information and questions flow to and from their neighbors and the CPS. When a block has a block club leader – or co-leaders – in place, neighbors have contact information for each other and are willing to act on each others’ behalf. When neighbors

know each other and share information, they feel more secure and less fearful than when they are not acquainted.

A block usually is one city block that includes houses that face each other across a street or across an alley. Apartment clubs also function in the same manner as a block club: to encourage neighbors to work together and be willing to watch out for each other’s personal safety and property, to solve problems, to call 911 when they see crimes in progress or suspicious activity, and to partner with the police department to prevent crimes and solve crimes.

If you are interested in having your block and neighborhood become safer and friendlier, and if you’d like to learn more about being a block club leader, I welcome your call or email. (612)673-2839. [Jennifer.neale@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Jennifer.neale@minneapolismn.gov) ❖

## Spring into home improvements

By Nate Lansing, Co-chair, Housing Committee

Thinking about a kitchen remodel? Need new windows or central air conditioning? Spring has arrived and now is the time to get those home-improvement projects started. The Field Regina Northrop neighborhood is partnering with the Lending Center at the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) to provide low-interest financing for your home-improvement projects.

Through this partnership, residents have access to financing at rates as low

as 2.99%. With flexible terms, monthly payments will be affordable. Most interior and exterior home-improvement projects are eligible including kitchen and bath remodels, windows and doors, heating and cooling systems, solar and more.

To get started, or for more information, visit [mnlendingcenter.org/frn](http://mnlendingcenter.org/frn) or call 612-335-5884. The Lending Center at CEE is a Minnesota nonprofit that has been helping homeowners for more than 35 years. ❖

## Close to Home

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[frnng.org](http://frnng.org)

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Ian Campbell & Nate Lansing

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# Introducing Hiawatha Academies – Northrop Campus

By Adam Webster, Communications Committee

After purchasing property in 2013 from Minneapolis Public Schools that includes the old Northrop Elementary School, Hiawatha Academies has invested in extensive renovations at the site. As these renovations wind down, *Close to Home* sat down for a conversation with Sean Elder (Chief Operating Officer) and Ambar Hanson (Senior Director of Community Engagement) to learn more about recent developments with the Hiawatha Academies-Northrop campus.

## The Northrop Campus

The Northrop campus combines two different schools within the Hiawatha Academies (HA) family of schools, a public, non-profit charter school network with a footprint across south Minneapolis. Renovation work on the old Northrop School (1611 East 46th Street) began almost immediately, in order to create a permanent home for Hiawatha Leadership Academy-Northrop, a K-4 school. Local residents with recollections of the original Northrop School will be happy to learn that the renovation work sought a balance between old and new. Necessary updates, including the new add-on structure on the south end of the original building, preserve the flow of the original space while also providing administrative space for the entire Hiawatha Academies network. Exterior brickwork and lighting and the interior detailing and layout all nod toward the structure's 1920s-era heritage.

This renovation expanded in mid-2015 to encompass construction of a new building. This structure (4640 17th Avenue South) will house Hiawatha College Prep-Northrop, a grades 5-8 middle school, starting in the 2018-2019 school year. The new building provides a full range of middle school programming spaces, including 21 classrooms, science labs, art, music,



Photos: Sue Filbin

A view down a hallway in the renovated Northrop Elementary School.

gymnasium, and administrative spaces. At present, however, this newest building provides temporary space for ninth- and tenth-grade students at Hiawatha Collegiate High School, who await completion of their own high school campus at an alternative site in south Minneapolis, slated to open in August 2018.

Altogether, the Northrop campus is designed to accommodate a population of 726 students and 84 staff. While neighbors can anticipate some increased demand for nearby street parking by day, HA did expand onsite parking to accommodate 49 staff and visitor vehicles.

## The Mission

The mission of the Hiawatha Academies

network relates to an issue raised by state-wide educational data. The high school graduation rate gap between students of color and their white peers in Minnesota is the nation's worst, and more than twice the national average. In Minneapolis in particular, white students are more than 1.4 times more likely to graduate high school on time than students of color, and less than 10% of black and Latino students attend college. While these issues command attention from both city and state officials and remains a critical area of focus for Minneapolis Public Schools, HA was chartered in 2007 to address this challenge.

As the HA network has grown during the past decade, it *Continued on page 7*



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continues to work directly with historically underserved populations via an open-enrollment policy. Currently, 98% of the students in the HA network are students of color, 90% are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (i.e. come from low-income households) and 89% speak a language other than English at home. In changing the educational fortunes of these audiences through sustained, tailored curricula and programming, HA seeks to serve as a model for other educational institutions that work with similar audiences.

These challenges inform every facet of the operation in the Hiawatha Academies network, which Hanson calls “truly mission-driven.” Any effort that stands to improve education outcomes for historically underserved student populations is reviewed and, when appropriate, implemented. Today, students in the Hiawatha Academies network engage in a rigorous, interdisciplinary college-prep curriculum from their earliest years. Extended school days mean these students have 25% more class time in a given year than other public school peers.



Playground equipment is available for neighbors to enjoy during non-school hours.

Specialized curricular programming permits space for students to explore topics of personal interest. Collectively, students are surrounded by an academic culture that is, “warm, challenging and engaging,” Hanson says. This extends to the ways that faculty and staff talk about their work. Both Elder and Hanson employ a vocabulary that centers the promise of their mission. Students are known as “scholars” in the

Hiawatha Academies system. HA educators refer to the discrepancy between white and non-white student populations as an “opportunity gap” rather than the term “achievement gap,” which is more common elsewhere. Keeping the focus on opportunities that are possible – rather than achievements that were not met – opens up space for students and staff to invent and seize opportunities to better educational



This entrance to the new school at 4640-17th Avenue South will welcome Hiawatha College Prep-Northrop scholars in grades 5-8, starting with the 2018-2019 school year.

outcomes. “Ultimately,” says Elder, “we’re aiming for a 100% high-school graduation rate, and we want every one of our scholars

to be college-ready and have the choice to pursue college if they want to.”

### A Good Neighbor

While much attention centered on getting the Northrop campus up and running, HA has not forgotten its neighbors. KaBOOM! and Delta Air Lines volunteers teamed up to install brand new playground equipment adjacent to the lower

school, which remains an open resource to neighbors during non-school hours. Acknowledging its location in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, work on the athletic field also included improved drainage infrastructure. Additionally, the Northrop campus hosted a community gathering in its new gymnasium space last October.

HA continues to seek ways to engage with neighborhood groups, and maintains an open-door policy with residents. Those who want to inspect changes to the old Northrop School or see the new middle school can do so by contacting the main office. Some may simply enjoy the stroll down memory lane. Others might identify ways they can get involved. HA does welcome volunteers, and has an ongoing need for reading and math tutors.

Of course, the best service HA can provide the neighborhood is an exceptional educational program for its students. That effort is already bearing fruit. The Minnesota Department of Education has recognized HA schools as consistently outperforming expectations, based on the relative poverty rate of the student body. The *StarTribune* calls this “Beating the Odds,” and has lauded HA schools for these returns. With a track record of success, the Northrop Campus is well positioned to be a strong, successful addition to the fabric of our community. ❖

[hiawathaacademies.org](http://hiawathaacademies.org) • 612-455-4004

# 11th-Ward Update

Council Member John Quincy



Council Member John Quincy

Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for the opportunity to keep you updated on what is happening at City Hall.

## Restoration of NRP funding

I sponsored legislation to restore full funding to all the neighborhood organizations that lost a portion of their allocated Neighborhood Revitalization Program funding in December of 2010. The funding was lost due to unanticipated cuts in State aid funds to the City. Continuation of the NRP funding would have led to

double-digit property tax increases. This restoration is possible due to the revenue from the specially approved Tax Increment Financing District which has been higher than expected. It is anticipated that the revenue will be higher until the district expires in 2020. FRNNG will receive an additional \$288,113.46 to complete their NRP Phase II plan. You can find the full staff report and payment schedules at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCM-SP-193147>.

## Residents give city high marks in 2016 Resident Survey

Minneapolis residents overall continue to rank the city as a good place to live according to the results of the 2016 Minneapolis Resident Survey; 92 percent of Minneapolis residents rate the city as a very good or good place to live. The 2016 Minneapolis Resident Survey was conducted by phone, mail and web and included surveys of 2,320 people over seven weeks ending in September 2016.

The City of Minneapolis regularly conducts these surveys to measure residents' opinions about their quality of life,

understand residents' overall satisfaction with the City's services and amenities, and determine residents' need for new City services. The survey also gives residents the opportunity to provide feedback to government on what is working well and what areas need improvement, and to share their priorities for community planning and resource allocation.

The survey included a few questions from the 2012 survey for comparison but was mostly new to assess the City's progress toward achieving its goals. The survey was redesigned from previous versions to better engage residents who are typically underrepresented in survey research.

Full results of the survey are available at: <https://tinyurl.com/MPLSresident-survey2016>

I am always available to answer your questions at 673-2211. If you would like to receive the bi-weekly email Ward 11 Community Connections Newsletter, please contact me: [John.Quincy@MinneapolisMN.gov](mailto:John.Quincy@MinneapolisMN.gov) or visit the website: [www.MinneapolisMN.gov/ward11](http://www.MinneapolisMN.gov/ward11) ❖

*Nelson Inz, Director, Minneapolis Board of Education, is a Regina resident*

## Introducing Nelson Inz

By Terry Mazig, Chair, Education Committee  
In January, Mr. Nelson Inz shared budget information with the FRNNG Education Committee. Nelson graciously accepted the invitation to write about MPS budgeting for our newsletter to help us understand the process.

Nelson Inz, Director, Minneapolis Board of Education, began his career as an educator by volunteering at Washburn High School before becoming a substitute

teacher and coach in Minneapolis. His goals include more equitable outcomes for students, timely and detailed communication with families and a renewed commitment to holistic education. Nelson lives in the Regina neighborhood with his wife Emily and twin toddler boys, Gus and George.

This is a link to a video on the budget process and how people can get involved with Minneapolis public schools: [http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/mps\\_budget](http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/mps_budget)



Nelson Inz

Read an article written by Nelson Inz about school financing on the next page. ❖



# School Financing and Your Local Schools

By Nelson Inz, Director, Minneapolis School Board

Minneapolis Public Schools exist to ensure that all children learn and school finances play a central role in how we serve our students in their education. It is a complicated topic with specific rules and regulations that determine how we make decisions. We hope to shed some light on the topic.

The primary source of funding for Minnesota schools comes from a per-pupil allocation from the state. At a current rate of \$6,067 per student, this is one of the only unrestricted funding sources for schools, the majority of which is spent on teachers and other school staff. This school allocation is given to every student in Minnesota, and because it is such a major source of funding, advocating for increases to adjust for inflation is a central part of our district's, and our state school board association's, legislative priority. In the past fifteen years, we have seen the amount that we receive from the state from basic student allocation decline about \$100 million. This despite roughly the same number of students. Here is a pie chart illustrating where all our funding comes from:

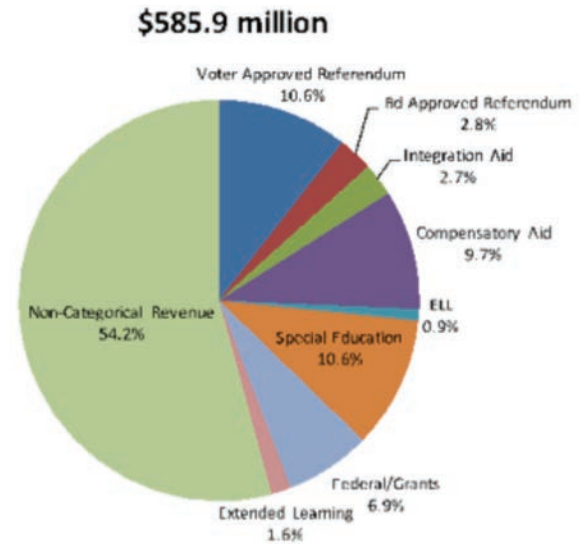
Minnesota has a long tradition of recognizing that not all students have the same needs and therefore, make different resources available for schools. This funding is broken down into different categories that include money for English Language Learners, special education students, gifted/talented services and an income-designated category for students receiving free or reduced lunch called compensatory funds. This money needs to be spent in specific ways. Additionally, Minnesota has a special funding source called "Integration" that is given specifically to Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth to both decrease racial segregation in our schools and close the achievement gap.

While these categorical resources are an important source of funding that helps us serve all our students, the resources are generally less than what we spend to offer the quality services our students deserve. Last year we subsidized special education and ELL services by over sixty-million dollars. This is far and away the most of any district in the state. Sadly, because the federal government and state government don't properly fund special education and ELL, the additional money comes from our own general revenue.

In addition to state funding, the Federal Government allocates resources primarily through Title I funding. These monies are restricted and are tied to accountability measures. The revenue has steadily decreased over the years with significant decreases coming with sequestration. Though our school board recently passed a resolution making it clear that we welcome all students and will not act as immigration enforcers, we do not expect it to impact our federal funding. Regardless, in the current political climate, we expect these resources to continue to shrink.

To supplement our funding, school districts are allowed to generate additional operating income through local taxes. In November, Minneapolis residents overwhelmingly supported our schools by approving an operating referendum with an 84% approval rate. Our request was to renew, with inflation, our previous referendum that was due to expire at the end of the year. Minneapolis Public Schools made a commitment to focus those dollars on class size and supporting our students inside and outside of school with social workers and after-school programming.

What does this all look like for an individual school? At Hale, for example,



2017-2018 projected general-fund revenue

total allocations for 2015-16 generated about \$3.9 million for the school and the referendum dollars were about one fourth their budget with \$1.1 million. The figures are similar at Field with \$3.3 million dollars in total allocations and \$1 million referendum income. Those referendum resources are critical. Imagine one third or one fourth the staff at either of those schools!

Though our budget is large, the financial demands are high and like any household budget, choices must be made. Minneapolis Public Schools focuses the majority of our resources on teachers and school staff, and thankfully, with the support of Minneapolis residents, is able to provide critical supplemental income to our local schools.

If you are interested in advocating for increased funding for public schools at the capitol in St Paul, the Speaker of the House is Kurt Daudt and his phone number is 651-296-5364. The Senate Majority Leader is Paul Gazelka and his number is 651-296-4875. Thanks to all who support our public schools. ❖

# Planning Season for Your Yard

By Roxanne Stuhr

The weather is warming, and many of us can actually smell and taste spring. The early harbingers peeking out of the ground, the earthy air after a rain and the anticipation of growing things is tantalizing! Each season has its tools, toys and plans to help us fully experience what nature offers, and as spring arrives, many of us replace shovels, skis and snowy adventures with garden tools, plant catalogs and walkabouts in their gardens.

Regardless of one's gardening experience, each of us makes our way out into our yards dreaming of possibilities for our own slice of the earthy pie, but some may be stymied by where to begin. My recommendation is to go on a hike. Walking is one way to stimulate your creative self, affording you the benefit of seeing opportunities you may want to incorporate in your own landscape. Walk around your neighborhood. Walk in other neighborhoods. Visit the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and Como Conservatory. Travel to a favorite place either inside or outside of Minnesota. As you move about, log your thoughts in a special notebook or as a photo library. Most importantly, include all of your thoughts, even if they seem unrelated, because many new possibilities arise out of the "dirt" we may be tempted to discard as irrelevant.

Opportunities for you to consider while making your observations may include some of the following:

Experience the sun, wind and general microclimate of your favorite places

Watch where water is moving throughout your travels and on your own property

Observe the life living within a garden – or the lack of visitors (i.e., insects, birds, animals or people), noting what exists in any particular area

Notice and touch various surfaces of patios, walkways and walls to see if the materials resonate with you

Be aware of challenged areas such as deteriorating materials or struggling plants

Your responses to your observations are uniquely yours. You may or may not be able to identify all that you experience, but you will begin to articulate patterns in your own words, and this will ultimately drive the landscape you wish to create. One example may come from your observations of water movement. You may decide you want to create a series of elements to capture and move water through your yard. Another possibility may be to create a pollinator garden out of your shady backyard.


Ultimately, your goals, your space and your vision will lead to the creative outcome you desire for your outdoor space.

This planning season is short, and likely will be fun, requiring minimal effort on your part, especially if your energies involve doing what you already enjoy doing while outside. You may be a do-it-yourselfer, but recognize that certain aspects of creating your dream landscape may benefit from reading, taking a class or inviting the input of a professional landscape designer's experience and equipment. Everyone can be a gardener! Dream, design and invite partners in as needed to help you be successful! ❖

*Roxanne Stuhr, MNLACP landscape designer, is the owner of True Nature Design, LLC. [truenaturedesignonline.com](http://truenaturedesignonline.com)*



Photo: Roxanne Stuhr



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# Getting fit for spring

By Duane Whittaker

With our warmer weather and longer days, are you thinking about spring yard cleanup, gardening, and playing outdoors with your kids and grandkids? If so, can your body keep up with your thinking—and the bending, lifting, and twisting that you'll be doing?



Photo: Sue Filbin

Duane Whittaker

Exercises can be performed to enhance your core strength, balance, flexibility, muscle strength, and endurance to make it easier to perform your real-life activities. You can easily do these exercises while listening to music or a podcast, or watching TV.

**Core exercises:** crunches, plank variations, seated leg lifts, and yoga.

**Balance:** practice standing on one foot. Also, walk with one foot in front of the other while your hands are extended away from our sides at shoulder level, like you're walking a tightrope.

**Flexibility:** do stretches on a yoga mat, your carpet, or a towel, with or without resistance bands, to enhance the range of motion for your hamstrings, quads (the big muscles in the front and back of your legs), and your hips.

**Muscle strength:** pushups (kneeling or standard, or leaning on your wall or on stairs). If you have hand weights or dumbbells, use them. Otherwise, lift canned goods or water bottles to create resistance to build muscle strength. Start by spending 15-20 minutes per day three times a week, gradually building up to 30-45 minutes per day three times a week.

**Muscle endurance:** this is influenced by the amount of tension and the amount of weight placed on your muscles and the frequency with which you work your muscles.

Exercising will help reduce pain and stiffness. Regular exercise makes it easier for you to enjoy all the activities in your busy life. ❖

Duane Whittaker is the founder of the fitness studio *Fit For Change*. [fitforchangeonline.com/](http://fitforchangeonline.com/)

## FIELD REGINA NORTHROP



## FRNNG Meeting Information

### Full Board

3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church (LNPC) 17th Avenue and East 46th St. The full board does not meet in July or December.

### Business Committee | [business@frnng.org](mailto:business@frnng.org)

1st Tuesday of each month at 11:30 a.m., Turtle Bread Company, 48th and Chicago

### Communications Committee | [communications@frnng.org](mailto:communications@frnng.org)

2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., Sovereign Grounds, 48th and Chicago.

### Community and Safety Committee | [communityandsafety@frnng.org](mailto:communityandsafety@frnng.org)

4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., McRae Park Rec. Center

### Education Committee | [education@frnng.org](mailto:education@frnng.org)

1st Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m., McRae Park Arts & Crafts Room

### Greening Committee | [greening@frnng.org](mailto:greening@frnng.org)

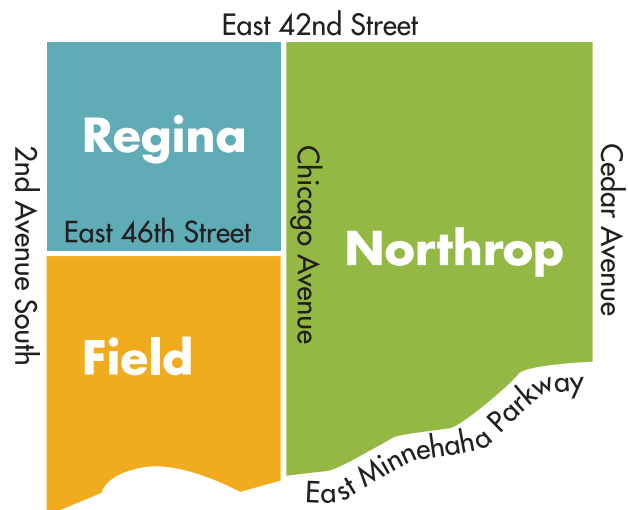
2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., Turtle Bread Company, 48th and Chicago

### Housing Committee | [housing@frnng.org](mailto:housing@frnng.org)

1st Monday of each month at 7 p.m., Town Hall Tap, 48th & Chicago

### Parks Committee | [parks@frnng.org](mailto:parks@frnng.org)

1st Monday of each month at 7 p.m., McRae Park Rec. Center



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