



# West Side Community Organization

*Celebrating 50 years of community power*

Dear Julia,

As February comes to a close, we reflect on the **history that has shaped our neighborhood** and those who continue to strengthen our community. **Black History Month** reminds us of the **resilience and contributions** of Black leaders on the West Side, whose legacy is **deeply woven into our community**.

This month, we've also looked ahead—**gathering ideas for our 10-Year Plan**, **discussing the future of Robert Street**, and **standing with our immigrant neighbors**. In this newsletter, you'll find **community updates**, helpful resources, and **opportunities to share your input** that help shape the future of our neighborhood.

Honoring

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH.

REFLECTING AND UPLIFTING



As Black History Month concludes, we honor the profound contributions of our Black neighbors, whose leadership and resilience have been integral to the West Side's rich tapestry.

From trailblazers like **Clarence Wigington**, the first Black municipal architect in the U.S. who designed the Harriet Island Pavilion, to present-day leaders like **Dr. Valerie A. Littles-Butler**, principal of Humboldt High School, who is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion in education, and **Reuben Moore**, President & Executive Officer of MN Community Care, who is expanding access to affordable and equitable healthcare for more than 38,000 patients at La Clinica and several St. Paul clinic sites—**Black leaders have continuously pushed our community forward through advocacy, creativity, and perseverance**.



Our community is further enriched by the diverse experiences of African diasporic groups, such as **Somali and Oromo immigrants**, who have established vibrant businesses and cultural spaces, contributing to the cultural mosaic of the West Side. Learn more about their journeys [here](#) and [here](#).

WSCO remains committed to supporting our Black community members in their efforts toward education, housing, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. **We encourage all neighbors to actively uplift Black voices and businesses**, not just this month but every day. Together, we can build a future rooted in **justice, equity, and collective prosperity**.

## What's Missing on the West Side?

A skate park? A rooftop garden? A community art hub? A shuttle connecting key spots? More affordable housing options? **Now's your chance to share your vision!**

We're creating an ambitious **10-Year Plan to shape the future of the West Side**—tackling everything from affordable housing and local business investment to expanding green spaces and transportation choices.

Ready to help shape the next decade on the West Side? [Share Your Ideas](#).



## There's Still Time to Influence the Future of Robert Street!

Participate in our survey to share your thoughts on proposed changes and enter a raffle to **win a \$300 Visa Gift Card!**

Your input ensures that developments reflect the true needs and desires of West Siders. [Take the Survey](#).



## Welcome Our New Associate Director! Bao Chu Lee

*What drew you to WSCO?*

I was drawn to WSCO because of its deep commitment to systems change and community-driven advocacy. WSCO actively works to shift power and create long-term structural change in the West Side. The opportunity to be part of an organization that uplifts residents' voices and mobilizes for housing justice, environmental justice, and equitable development is incredibly inspiring.

*What excites you most about this role?*

What excites me most about this role is the chance to help shape and implement WSCO's vision, particularly through initiatives like **West Side Decides**, the **Flats 2 Future** campaign, and the **Tenants Union Project**. Being able to strategize, build relationships, and push for policies that genuinely reflect the needs of the community is both a challenge and a privilege. The work we're doing—whether it's **ensuring equitable land use, securing reparations for displaced families, or strengthening tenant protections**—has real, tangible impacts, and that's what keeps me motivated.

*Can you share a bit about your background and experience?*

My background includes **working on initiatives that center equity, grassroots leadership, and systemic transformation**. In previous roles, I've facilitated partnerships between community members, policymakers, and organizations to advance social and economic justice.

As the **Associate Director of WSCO**, I'm particularly focused on deepening our strategic approach—ensuring that our advocacy efforts are informed by strong community engagement, data-driven analysis, and coalition-building. I'm also committed to supporting WSCO's internal growth, strengthening our organizational capacity to sustain this work for the long haul.

# Standing Together.

## Addressing Fear in Our Immigrant Community



In light of recent national policy changes, **many in our immigrant community are experiencing heightened fears regarding deportation**. It's essential to know that the St. Paul Police Department (SPPD) *does not* have the authority to arrest or detain individuals solely based on immigration status.

**We urge everyone to exercise caution when sharing unverified information about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities**, as rumors can lead to unnecessary panic. For guidance on **how to be an effective ally or respond as a witness to ICE actions**, please visit our [Immigration Resources](#). Supporting immigrant-owned businesses during these times is also a powerful way to stand in solidarity. **Together, we can create a supportive and informed community.**

## Calling All Entrepreneurs: Join The West Side Business Directory!

Are you a business owner, entrepreneur, creator, or freelancer based on the West Side? **The West Side Business Coalition is compiling a comprehensive directory of local enterprises**, and we want to include you! Whether you operate from a storefront or your home, your contribution to our economy and community is invaluable.

[Please fill out this form to be considered](#)

## Leadership Milestone: Council President Rebecca Noecker

We are proud to share that our representative, **Rebecca Noecker, has been named President of the St. Paul City Council**. In her new role, President Noecker aims to foster inclusive decision-making and **address pressing issues such as affordable housing and equitable development**. This leadership position promises positive advancements for the West Side (District 3) and the broader St. Paul community. [Read More](#)

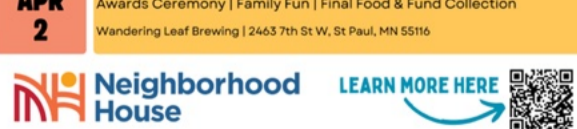
## March Food Drive EVENT SCHEDULE MARCH 1 - APRIL 6

<b>Saturday MAR 8</b>	<b>MISSISSIPPI MARKET SATURDAY   10AM - 1PM</b> Food & Fund Collection 140 E 7th St, St. Paul, MN 55106   1422 Sibley Ave, St. Paul, MN 55004   1500 7th St W, St. Paul, MN 55102
<b>Saturday MAR 15</b>	<b>STUFF THE TRUCK   1PM - 5PM</b> Food & Fund Collection   Family Activities   Live Music   Food Truck 910 Montreal Circle, St. Paul, MN 55102
<b>Saturday MAR 22</b>	<b>GROCERY STORE WEEKEND DAY 1   10AM - 2PM</b> Food & Fund Collection Newman's (on Grand)   1311 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105 Newman's (on Broadway)   1818 1/2 Broadway Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403 Lund's & Ryerson (on Grand)   2170 Ford Place, St. Paul, MN 55105 Newman's (on Grand)   1212 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105 Newman's (on Grand)   1212 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105
<b>Sunday MAR 23</b>	<b>GROCERY STORE WEEKEND DAY 2   10AM - 2PM</b> Food & Fund Collection Newman's (on Grand)   1311 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105 Newman's (on Broadway)   1818 1/2 Broadway Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403 Lund's & Ryerson (on Grand)   2170 Ford Place, St. Paul, MN 55105 Newman's (on Grand)   1212 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105 Newman's (on Grand)   1212 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105
<b>Saturday MAR 29</b>	<b>GIVE &amp; GATHER   10AM - 2PM</b> Interactive Tour   Panel Guests   Kit Packing   Food & Fund Collection The Wellstone Center   179 Robie St. E., St. Paul, MN 55107
<b>Wednesday APR 2</b>	<b>FINAL CELEBRATION   4PM - 8PM</b> Awards Ceremony   Family Fun   Final Food & Fund Collection Wandering Leaf Brewing   2463 7th St. W., St. Paul, MN 55116

## Support the March Food Drive!

Join Neighborhood House in fighting hunger with their **March Food Drive, running from March 1 to April 6**. Multiple events are planned throughout the month, including **food & fund collections, family-friendly activities, and a community celebration**.

[Get Details Here](#)



## Constance Currie Scholarship: Apply Now through March 31!

Neighborhood House is now accepting applications for the Constance Currie Scholarship for the 2025 school year! **Scholarship awards range from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and support individuals connected to the West Side pursuing post-secondary education for the first time.** [Learn More](#)

Connect with us!

[www.wSCO.org](http://www.wSCO.org)

