

WEST SIDE community organization

Dear Neighbors,

This month, our newsletter comes to you as a **love letter to the West Side** – a celebration of our shared home, our neighbors, and the future we continue to build together.

Every event, announcement, recap, and story below is a testament to the love that moves us: love for justice, for belonging, for the people who make this community shine.

As our city turns a new page following the November 4th elections, we send heartfelt thanks to Mayor Melvin Carter for his years of service to Saint Paul, and warm congratulations to Kaohly Her – our city's first woman and Hmong mayor! We also honor Senator Sandy Pappas, who retires after 42 years of public service, leaving a legacy of advocacy that will continue to inspire. And to our educators and families: **Minnesota voters approved millions in school funding** this election – a powerful love letter to our children and the future of learning in our state.

If you're ready to see how YOU can show up with love for the West Side, keep reading!

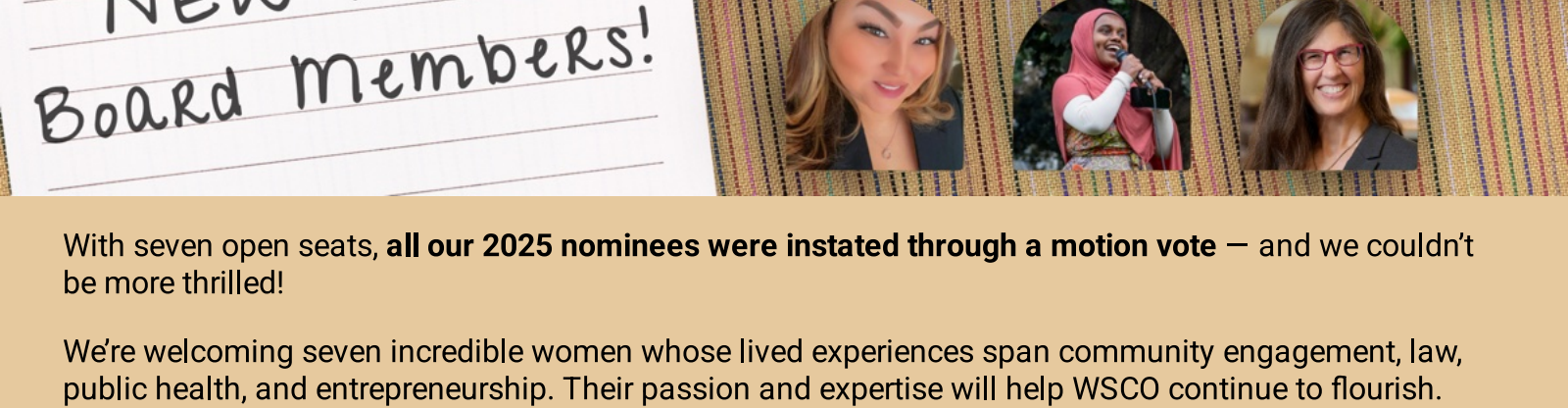


Our Hearts Are Full!

WSCO's Annual Meeting was a success! We had a room packed full of community members who showed up with love for their neighbors, community, and the place we call home. Together, we reflected on all we've built this year and the love that continues to move our work forward.

From the volunteers and staff who made the day possible, to every person who sang, donated, shared stories, or simply showed up with an open heart: **you are what makes the West Side the best side.**

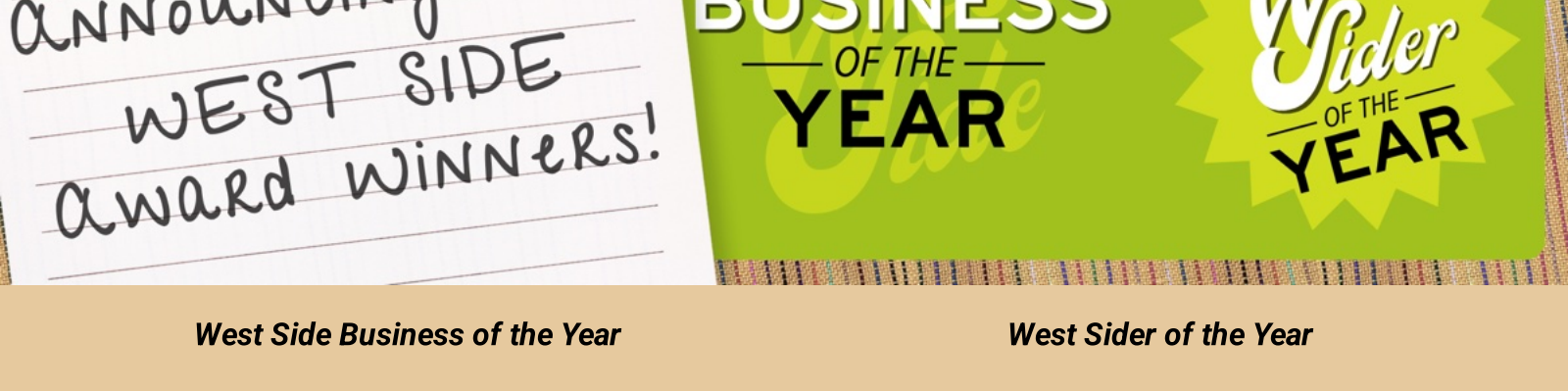
If you couldn't make it, here are some exciting updates announced at the Annual Meeting:



With seven open seats, all our 2025 nominees were instated through a motion vote – and we couldn't be more thrilled!

We're welcoming seven incredible women whose lived experiences span community engagement, law, public health, and entrepreneurship. Their passion and expertise will help WSCO continue to flourish.

[Read their bios](#)



West Side Business of the Year

Crasqui Restaurant

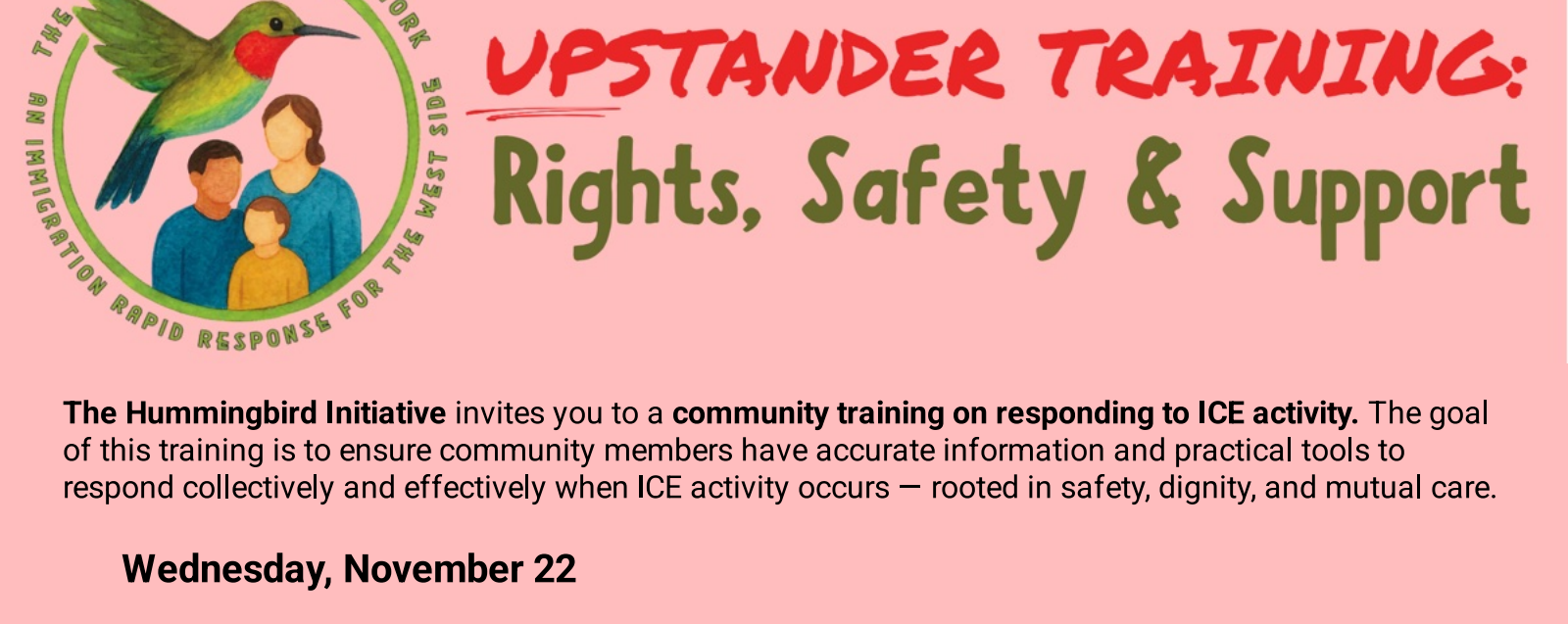
Crasqui is more than a restaurant – it's a gathering place, a cultural bridge, and a beacon of community pride. Chef Soleil Ramirez has created a space that celebrates Venezuelan heritage through extraordinary food, while using her platform to uplift the Latin community across the West Side. Throughout 2025, Crasqui has raised funds for local nonprofits, hosted collaborations that spark dialogue around immigration, and provided a safe, welcoming space for neighbors, leaders, and friends to connect.

West Sider of the Year

Toni Molinar

A lifelong neighbor, organizer, and mentor, Toni Molinar is the driving force behind so many West Side traditions – from Cinco de Mayo to Dia de los Muertos and West Side Boosters games. She shows up for her neighbors, especially the youth – making sure kids feel supported, protected, and proud of where they come from. She leads with heart, courage, and love, using her voice to speak up for what's right and encouraging others to do the same.

[Meet all the 2025 West Side Award Nominees](#)



The Hummingbird Initiative invites you to a **community training on responding to ICE activity**. The goal of this training is to ensure community members have accurate information and practical tools to respond collectively and effectively when ICE activity occurs – rooted in safety, dignity, and mutual care.

Wednesday, November 22

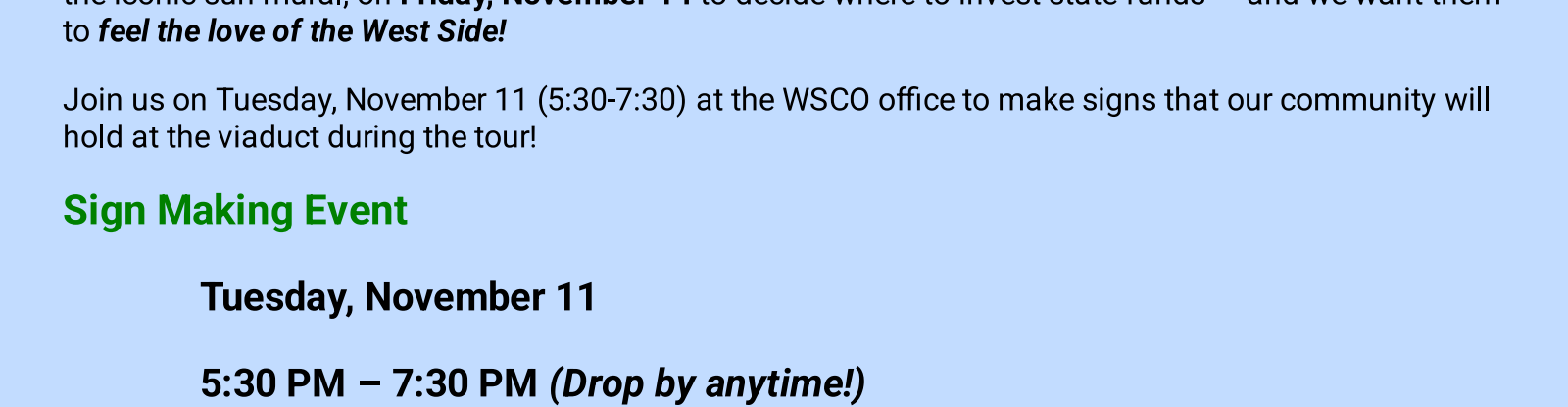
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

West Side, St. Paul*

*Exact address will be shared with confirmed participants for security reasons

[Register Here](#)

The Hummingbird Initiative is a community safety network coordinated by the West Side Community Organization (WSCO), supporting residents with rapid response, training, and resource connections. For more information, contact diego@wSCO.org or thn@wSCO.org.



The MN State Capital Investment Committee will be touring the **Robert Street Viaduct**, the bridge with the iconic sun mural, on **Friday, November 14** to decide where to invest state funds – and we want them to **feel the love of the West Side!**

Join us on Tuesday, November 11 (5:30-7:30) at the WSCO office to make signs that our community will hold at the viaduct during the tour!

Sign Making Event

Tuesday, November 11

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM (Drop by anytime!)

209 Page St W

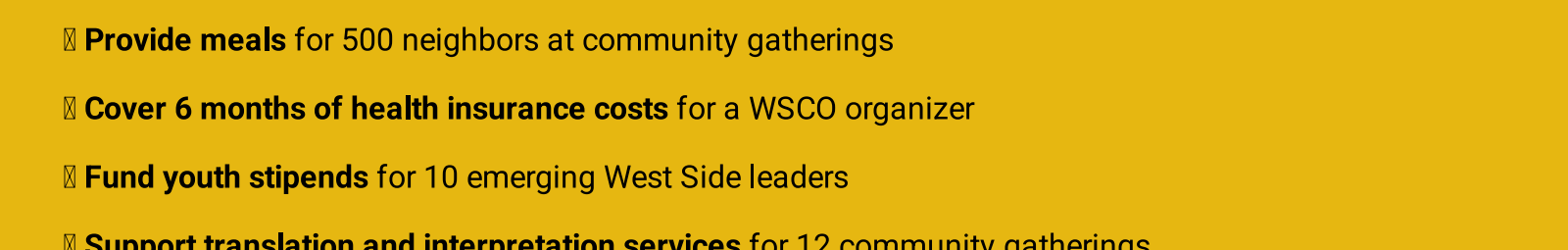
Rally at the Viaduct

Friday, November 14

Bus arrival window: 9:45 AM-10:15 AM

Robert St. and Cesar Chavez St.

[Register Here for More Details](#)



Give to the Max Day is November 20, but you can start giving now! Your donation allows us to keep writing this love story to the West Side.

What could \$5,000 do for WSCO?

- Provide meals for 500 neighbors at community gatherings
- Cover 6 months of health insurance costs for a WSCO organizer
- Fund youth stipends for 10 emerging West Side leaders
- Support translation and interpretation services for 12 community gatherings
- Partner with a local artist to create a vibrant mural or public art installation celebrating the spirit of the West Side

Give today and WSCO could win an extra \$500! Each day during Early Giving, one donation will be randomly selected to receive a \$500 bonus prize – your gift could be the lucky one!

[Donate Here](#)

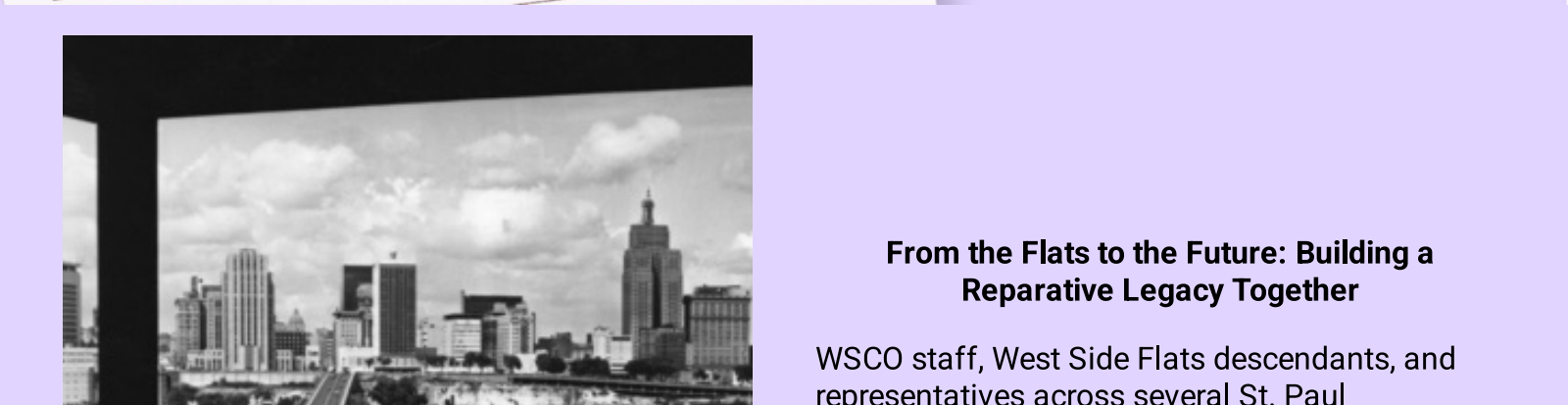


IT'S OFFICIAL!

The St. Paul City Council has formally adopted the **Robert Street Memorandum of Understanding** – ensuring our community's input and needs remain centered in every step of the reconstruction.

This victory was made possible by a number of West Siders, volunteers, neighbors, business owners, representatives, and organizational partners – all of whom stood together to make sure our love for this neighborhood shows up in its design.

[Learn More](#)



From the Flats to the Future: Building a Reporative Legacy Together

WSCO staff, West Side Flats descendants, and representatives across several St. Paul departments joined us at our office to discuss community-led visions for belonging and repair. This was a big first step towards memorialization of the Flats and establishing a reparative legacy. WSCO looks forward to advancing this meaningful work in the new year – partnering with the City, community organizations, and descendants every step of the way to ensure their voices and visions lead the path ahead.



Immigration Raid Response Training with MIRAC

Our immigration raid response training, co-hosted with MIRAC, was a powerful display of solidarity and care. Well over 70 Minnesotans came together to learn how to protect and stand with our immigrant community, gaining the knowledge and tools needed to respond safely and effectively. A heartfelt thank-you to MIRAC for empowering the West Side with action and awareness.

[We'll see you at our next training this month!](#)



Riverfront Issues Townhall

Nearly 140 community members joined Mayor Carter for the Riverfront Issues Townhall – a powerful conversation about protecting our river and ensuring a strong, community-driven ordinance. Neighbors asked tough questions and demanded transparency. While some answers were clearer than others, the dialogue marked a meaningful step toward accountability. This gathering strengthened WSCO's partnerships among key organizations – including FMR, St. Paul Bird Alliance, Highland District Council, and the West 7th/Fort Road Federation – showing that while our work may sometimes feel siloed, together we hold greater power to identify patterns, take action, and protect what we love.



Southport Neighbors Organizing for Change

The Southport Planning Committee has been deeply engaged this past month. In late September, they hosted a community air monitoring meeting to discuss local environmental data and lived experiences around air quality. Southport residents also had meetings with Rep. Maria Isa Pérez-Vega and Council President Rebecca Noecker to share their health concerns and present data highlighting links between air quality and daily life on the West Side. They've continued connecting with neighbors through door-knocking and community gatherings, including a joyful and successful cookout that strengthened bonds and fueled their movement for a healthier, safer neighborhood.

The West Side on TPT!

TPT recently premiered the first episode of its anthology *You Are Here: Stories of People, Place & the Past*, featuring the West Side! The episode beautifully captures the history of Mexican Americans in St. Paul's West Side – a story of resilience, grassroots activism, and the powerful local institutions that continue to sustain our community today. [Watch the West Side segment.](#)

A Healthy Agitation

Learn about WSCO's organizational history in *A Healthy Agitation*, co-written by WSCO founders Judy and Ralph Brown. A free PDF of the book, as well as book signing and distribution event information, is available at healthyagitation.com.

Want to get involved with grassroots community organizing in our neighborhood, but not sure where to start?

Come to a Land Use Meeting!

These meetings are a space where neighbors come together to shape the future of our community – from advocating for affordable housing and protecting our environment to planning for more vibrant, inclusive development. Whether you're new to organizing or looking to deepen your involvement, your voice is needed.

When: Wed, Nov 26, 6:00–7:30pm
Where: 209 Page St W

[Learn More](#)