

June 2011

Building Bridges

"Reconnecting Communities Divided by Race, Time, and 35W"

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Building Bridges:

Reconnecting Communities Divided by Race, Time, and 35W

Building Bridges is a project led by neighbors from South Minneapolis neighborhoods East and West of 35W, including Central, Bryant, Kingfield, Regina and Northrop. These neighbors believe that race-based dialogue about a dog park proposed in Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park highlighted a racial divide that still exists within our community and our need to build stronger relationships and understandings between neighbors of diverse race, culture, and age.

The mission of **Building Bridges** is to understand how race and racism impact our communities and to build the future of our neighborhoods together. The goal of the Core Team is to reconnect our communities divided by race, time, and 35W. A number of projects are being initiated by the Building Bridges Core Team, and your involvement is welcomed. **Building Bridges** also supports and encourages participation in projects organized by others that serve the goal of building bridges between our communities and highlighting our neighborhood history in the context of race, some of which are mentioned in this newsletter.

Building Bridges posts regular updates, photos, and news at Facebook at www.facebook.com/buildingbridgesmpls. Please join us on Facebook to stay connected with **Building Bridges**.

One recent event to strengthen connections between our neighborhoods, featured in the photograph above, was the **public art project (Yarn Bomb!) on the 40th Street Pedestrian Bridge across I-35W**, funded and sponsored by the Kingfield neighborhood. This project was completed on June 11, as part of the Grand Opening of the River Lake Greenway Bicycle Boulevard which connects many of our neighborhoods in East and West of 35W. Artists and dozens of volunteers covered the top of the bridge with yarn in colors to symbolize a river; traveling across the bridge felt like traveling underwater. To see more photographs of the 40th Street Pedestrian Bridge art project, go to: <http://kingfield.org/building-bridges-to-better-connect-neighborhoods/>.

Thank you to each of you who work every to build bridges between our communities!

Elizabeth

Community Read of *The Grace of Silence* by Michele Norris

Based on the inspiration of **Building Bridges**, the City of Minneapolis is sponsoring a city-wide community read of *The Grace of Silence* by Michele Norris in October 2011. *The Grace of Silence* is a memoir of Ms. Norris, who grew up in the Field Neighborhood, and describes the revealing of painful race-based secrets withheld from her by her parents. You can read more about her book at www.michele-norris.com.

Interested in helping plan an October event relating to the community read of *The Grace of Silence* by Michele Norris? A planning meeting for an October event will be held **July 11, 8 am, at Anodyne Coffeehouse, 4301 Nicollet**. RSVP your attendance or your interest in being involved in future conversations to Sarah Linnes-Robinson of KFNA, at sarah@kingfield.org or 612.823.5980.

KFNA's Project to Enhance the 40th Street Pedestrian Bridge

Kingfield Neighborhood (KFNA) is directing grant funding they received to enhance the Kingfield side of the 40th Street Pedestrian Bridge, including in Rev Dr Martin Luther King Park. This project will enhance the area as a gateway between the Kingfield and Bryant neighborhoods. The project will include murals and enhanced maintenance of greenspace.

Interested in updates and helping to review project plans and perform community outreach? **Please contact Sarah Linnes-Robinson of KFNA, at sarah@kingfield.org or 612.823.5980.**

Community Scrapbook Event

One of Building Bridges' action steps is the collection and preservation of stories with the goal to learn about our community's history within the context of race. We plan to host a **Community Scrapbook Event**, where people can share photographs, memorabilia, and stories of our neighborhoods' past. We will share the Community Scrapbook event, and other stories and reflections

on race in our community, on an interactive website for **Building Bridges**.

An initial planning meeting for a **Community Scrapbook event** has been set for **Thursday, July 14, 3:30, at Currans, 4201 Nicollet**. RSVP your attendance or your interest in being involved in future conversations to Sarah Linnes-Robinson of KFNA, at sarah@kingfield.org or 612.823.5980.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park Legacy Advisory Council Meeting

The Minneapolis Park and Rec Board hosted its first meeting on June 22nd of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park Legacy Advisory Council. Community members met for months to make recommendations on how to best honor Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr at the park named in his honor, which have been approved by the Park Board. The Legacy Advisory Committee will provide ongoing help in implementing improvements and programs that honor Dr King at the park. All are welcome to be involved!

To get details on future Legacy Advisory Council meetings, please contact Jennifer Ringold, Minneapolis Park Board, at 612-230-6464 or iringold@minneapolisparcs.org.

A Time to Remember: The Lee Family Commemorative Event

In July 1931, Arthur and Edith Lee and their daughter Mary became the first African-American family in the Field neighborhood when they moved into their new house at 4600 Columbus Ave. Immediately, the family was pressured to sell the house and leave the neighborhood. They stood their ground, including against a riotous mob of thousands who gathered to threaten the Lees.

Eighty years later, we want to honor the Lee family, their friends, and their attorney, Lena Olive Smith, whose courage inspires us. Please join neighbors, event organizers, and FRNNG, on **Saturday, July 16, 6:30 - 8 pm**, at Field School, 4645 4th Ave S. Come walk 46th Street, hear the story of the Lee Family, see the house, and pledge to unite in peace with all our neighbors.