

# MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope

A portrait of artist Suyao Tian, a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored shirt with paint splatters. She is holding a paintbrush. The background shows a gallery space with various colorful artworks on the wall.

## Features:

**Suyao Tian's  
Artistic Dream  
in the Land of  
Possibilities**

A Vision for  
Inclusive and  
Sustainable  
Development

**This monthly E-Magazine is published by the Asian American Business Resilience Network to highlight Asian American small businesses' accomplishments.**

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## VISION

Envision a new reality that addressing historic inequities, and enhancing culturally/linguistically appropriate ways to thrive through resilience, sustainability, and inclusive growth for all members and the communities where they learn, live, play, and work.

## MISSION

AABRN radically accelerates the pace of change by disrupting the status quo; providing resources, training, and support; building bridges across diverse ecosystems; and bringing together public health and business networks, in order to achieve sustainable growth along with an equitable future.

## PROGRAMS

- Community Engagement and Translation Assistance, especially public health in nature
- Navigate local, state and national resources
- Access digital tools in advancing members' wellbeing
- Provide training to retain a healthy workforce
- Provide technical assistance in business operation and IT needs





## A STEADY JOURNEY: SUYAO TIAN'S ARTISTIC DREAM IN THE LAND OF POSSIBILITIES

*Interviewed By Meejoo Choi*



Suyao Tian, a professional artist based in the Twin Cities, MN, moved to the US by herself in 2011 from China to pursue her artistic dream. She is an adjunct faculty member at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where she teaches Water-Based Media studio classes. Suyao is the founder and owner of Viewpoint Gallery, an Executive Board member of Art Buddies, and a board member of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA). She earned her BA from the University of Central Arkansas and her MFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. As an independent curator and water-based media abstract painter, she is represented by Claire

Oliver Gallery in NYC, and her work has been showcased in numerous national and international exhibitions. Her paintings, currently featured in a solo exhibition at MSP International Terminals, are part of permanent collections at esteemed institutions, including the North Dakota Museum of Art and the University of Minnesota.

### **From Artist's Dream to the Creation of Viewpoint Gallery**

Suyao's journey to becoming a professional artist is one of perseverance and

passion. When she was in China, she majored in music education and taught music at the university, but her lifelong dream of becoming an artist led her to make a bold decision to change her path, despite her late start in the art world and societal and familial pressure to stay in a stable career. In 2011, she moved to the United States, starting over in a new country with a new language, a new major, and a renewed commitment. In 2022, driven by her vision, she founded Viewpoint Gallery, inspired by her desire to bring art to her neighborhood community. Viewing it as her responsibility as an artist, she created a community-focused gallery to connect with and enrich her friendly and supportive neighborhood. For Suyao, Viewpoint Gallery is not only a reflection of her professional success but also a way to give back to the community she calls second home.



### Being an Artist: A Journey of Passion, Practice, and Self-Reliance

One thing she wanted people to know about the journey of a professional artist is that it's both the easiest and hardest career. It's easy because if you're creative, you can make art anywhere—even at home with just a pen and pencil. But it's also one of the hardest because it takes a lot of practice, passion, and dedication. Being a professional artist is a lifelong journey that could take forever, and it's a gamble with no guarantees. Professional artists spend most of their time working on their art or thinking about it, even when they're not painting.

The life of a professional artist is often misunderstood. While it may seem easy or idyllic from the outside, it is actually a highly demanding and entrepreneurial path. Professional artists are creators, business people, and marketers, all rolled into one.

The process is time-intensive, with long hours of practice, exploration, and experimentation. A professional artist's journey is marked by continual reinvention—always striving to develop a distinctive style, and often going through cycles of



growth, self-doubt, and breakthrough. Balancing humility with confidence can also be difficult, as artists must remain open to criticism and growth while believing in their own work.

Creating art is not just about technical skill, but also about emotional, mental, and spiritual investment. The process of creating is deeply personal, yet it requires the artist to stay connected to the world, communicate their unique vision, and sometimes face challenges like financial instability or isolation. But despite these challenges, it is also a profoundly rewarding journey. The act of making something new, expressing a thought or emotion through the medium, and having that work resonate with others can provide immense fulfillment and purpose.

### **Connections Aren't Everything: the Importance of Creating Own Artistic Language**

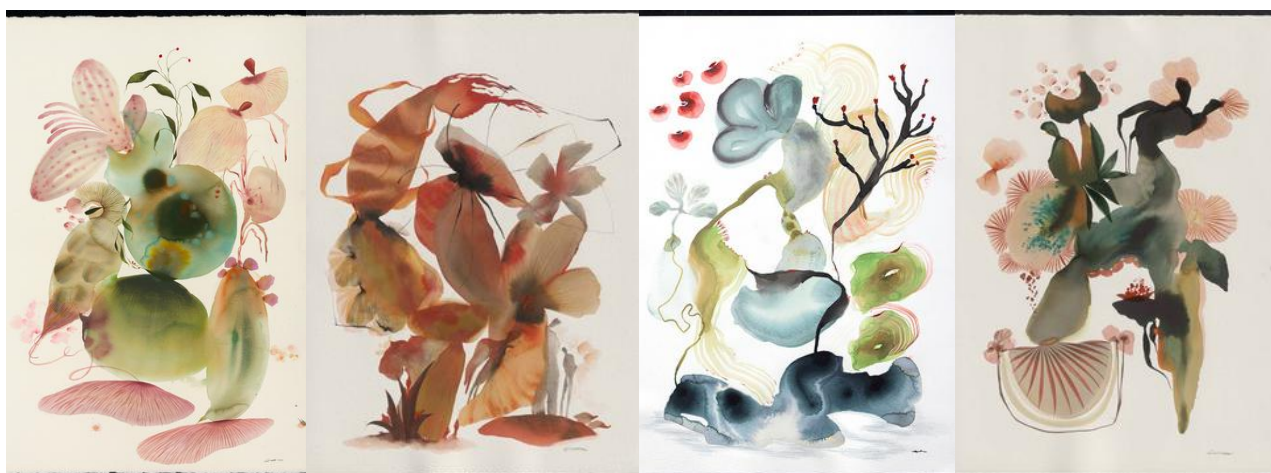
She shared her experience of starting from the ground with nothing—no connections and limited English when she first arrived in the United States. Through this journey, she creates each step on her own—learning new languages, pursuing academic studies, developing her artistic skills, building connections, and more. Every aspect of her growth is self-driven, from refining her craft to establishing relationships that support her career. This ongoing process requires dedication, self-direction, and resilience as she shapes her own path in the art world.

While connections can help, she realized that good work takes time, practice, and dedication, and once a unique style is developed, the connections will naturally follow.



## Overcoming Challenges in Art and Life

One of the biggest challenges she faced on her journey as an artist and educator was learning to balance the many demands of her personal and professional life. As a professional artist, owner of a gallery, teacher, board member of multiple organizations, and mother to a four-year-old, managing time effectively has been a constant struggle. She shared how difficult it is to remain consistent—Working in her studio every day, even on days when she doesn't feel inspired. responsibilities now include overseeing projects, programs, and commissions, which leave her with less time for personal life. She also spoke about the challenge of stepping out of her comfort zone and constantly pushing herself to try new things in her practice. Artists, she explained, can become too comfortable in their routines, which can stifle growth. While her work is now gaining national recognition and she is represented by a gallery in New York, she finds that with every new stage of success comes more projects, tighter deadlines, and new challenges to navigate. She has realized that managing time effectively is more important and challenging than ever.



## Suyao Tian's Advice for Aspiring Artists

Her advice to those pursuing a career in the arts is to focus on creating a language that is truly your own—something unique and authentic to you. She emphasized the importance of building your career from the ground up, staying true to your passion, and avoiding the temptation to follow trends. Chasing trends, she explained, can lead to losing your identity and passion, leaving you questioning your purpose as an artist. She also stressed the need to stay open-minded and find a balance between working on your creative practice and staying connected with the art world. Social media, she said, just choose one that fits you the best and that can be a powerful tool for artists to build connections with galleries, other artists, and audiences worldwide. She also encouraged artists to step out of their studios to visit galleries and museums, learn from others, and draw inspiration from the art community. Staying open to new experiences and opportunities, she believes, is just as important as developing your art works.



**Preface:** The Asian American Business Resilience Network has teamed up with Asian Media Access to co-develop the St. Paul Sears Site, we will publicize a series of articles to highlight our progress.

**Series of SEARS Redevelopment - Article #12**

## **TRANSFORMING THE SEARS SITE: A VISION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

This article, continuing from last month's discussion, introduces Module 4 of the CDC's Active Communities Tool (ACT), analyzes the current Sears Redevelopment project, and highlights the project's vision and ongoing partnership efforts with local organizations and community members. The redevelopment of the historic Sears site at 425 Rice Street in St. Paul represents a transformative opportunity for the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods.

### **Background of Module 4**

Module 4 of the CDC's Active Communities Tool (ACT) focuses on 'Everyday Destinations,' emphasizing mixed-use development to meet community needs, such as housing, schools, and workplaces. This module helps communities assess their plans, policies, and resources to guide future land use and development. By examining formal plans like Land Use and Growth Management Plans, as well as zoning policies, Module 4 ensures that development supports walkability,

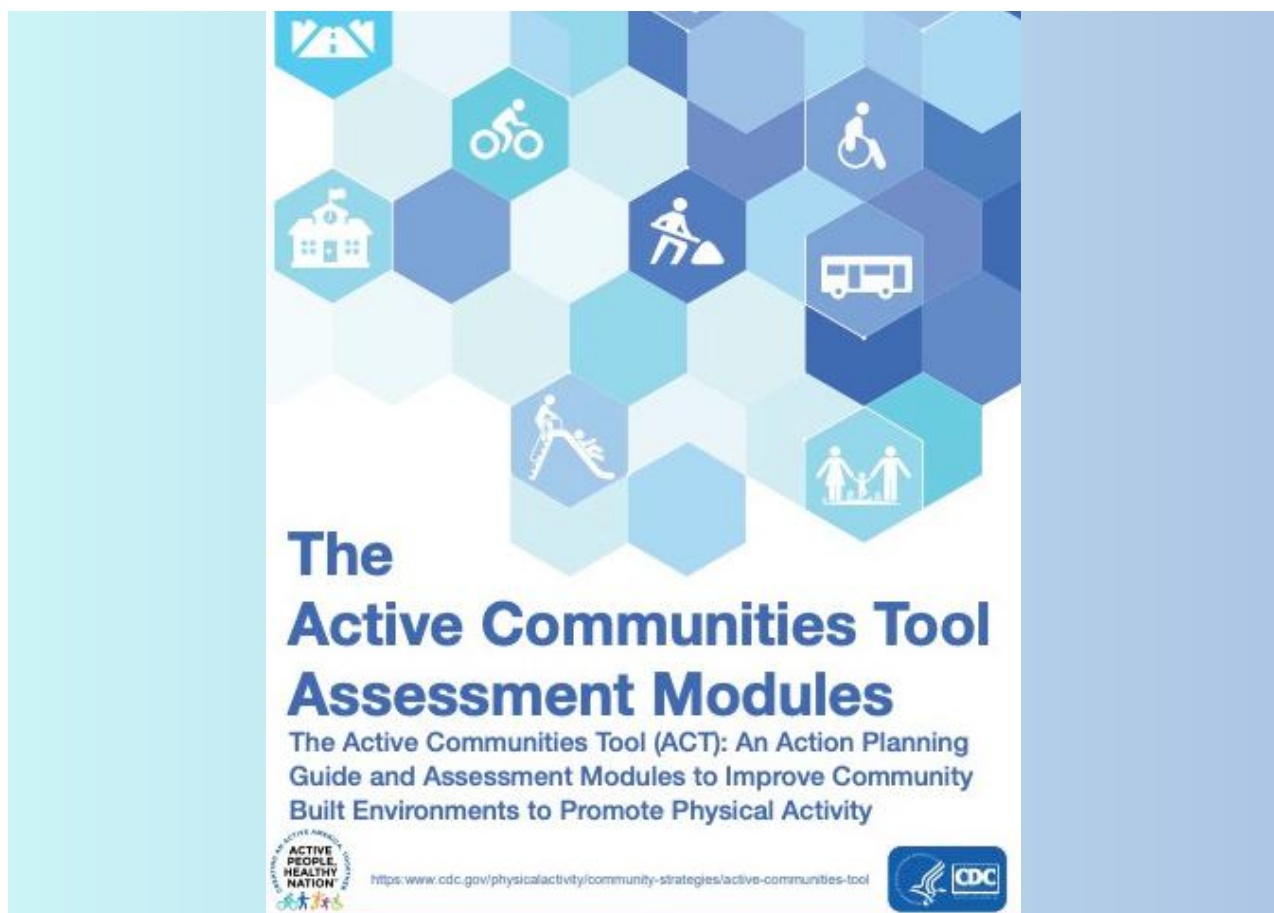


accessibility, and a better quality of life for residents.

By analyzing project using the principles of Module 4 from the CDC's Active Communities Tool (ACT), the project focuses on land use planning to create vibrant, mixed-use spaces that support residents' needs to live, learn, work, and play. By prioritizing health, equity, and sustainability, the Sears Redevelopment Master Plan aims to address critical challenges such as housing shortages, lack of connectivity, and limited access to community amenities.

The Sears Redevelopment Master Plan demonstrates how urban planning can address community needs while promoting sustainability and equity. By focusing on affordable housing, mixed-use spaces, and infill development, the project prevents displacement, fosters inclusivity, and creates a vibrant, walkable neighborhood. For example, key objectives include:

- **Transit-Oriented Development:** Reducing car dependency by leveraging proximity to public transit.
- **Walkability and Bikeability:** Encouraging active transportation with bike lanes and pedestrian pathways.
- **Green Spaces:** Enhancing environmental quality and providing gathering spots through parks and recreational areas.



## Plans for a Mixed-Use Future

The Sears Redevelopment Master Plan aligns with the community's Land Use and Comprehensive Plan, prioritizing mixed-use development, affordable housing, and a balanced job-housing ratio. By focusing on sustainable growth, the plan emphasizes infill development and the use of existing infrastructure, avoiding urban sprawl while preserving the site's historical significance. The Sears site will retain its current structure and be transformed into a vibrant mixed-use hub, blending residential, commercial, and community spaces. This approach not only maximizes land efficiency but also fosters a sense of continuity with the area's heritage.

A key goal of the plan is to address the housing crisis in Frogtown and Rondo by offering diverse housing options that cater to a wide range of income levels. Affordable housing will be central to the redevelopment, ensuring long-term residents are not displaced as the area grows. The inclusion of multi-family units, live-work spaces, and micro-homes promotes inclusivity and accessibility, creating a neighborhood where essential services such as grocery stores, schools, and healthcare facilities are within walking distance. Additionally, the integration of commercial spaces aims to generate jobs, support local businesses, and stimulate economic growth, aligning with the Growth Management Plan's goal of balancing housing supply with employment opportunities. This redevelopment serves as a model for sustainable urban development, meeting the evolving needs of Frogtown and Rondo residents.



## Policies Supporting Walkability and Sustainability

The Sears redevelopment highly encourages mixed-use, transit-oriented development (TOD) and dense urban growth. The site's existing mixed-use zoning designation streamlines the redevelopment process, allowing for a seamless transition into creating spaces that integrate residential, commercial, and recreational functions. This zoning framework eliminates the need for rezoning, saving time and resources while ensuring the project aligns with community goals.

Transit-oriented development is a cornerstone of the Sears Redevelopment Master Plan. By leveraging the site's proximity to public transit options, such as bus routes and light rail stations, the plan aims to reduce car dependency and promote active transportation. Streetscapes will be designed to encourage walking and cycling, with dedicated bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and enhanced public spaces. These features not only improve mobility but also contribute to healthier lifestyles and a cleaner environment.

Green spaces are another critical component of the redevelopment plan. Policies encouraging the inclusion of parks, recreational amenities, and community gathering spots will ensure that residents have access to nature and open spaces. These areas will enhance environmental sustainability, improve air quality, and provide opportunities for physical activity and social interaction.



## Connecting Past and Future

The Sears redevelopment prioritizes community needs by promoting proximity to essential destinations like green spaces, parks, community centers, and retail areas, fostering a walkable neighborhood that reduces long commutes. The plan emphasizes cultural preservation and community engagement, celebrating the rich heritage of Frogtown and Rondo through design elements such as murals, cultural spaces, and inclusive gathering areas.

By focusing on mixed-use development, sustainable design, and cultural preservation, the project aims to create a connected and equitable community while honoring the area's history. Thoughtful planning and collaboration will ensure the site becomes an accessible space that fosters economic growth, inclusivity, and active living. To learn more about the Sears Redevelopment Master Plan, visit <https://searsstpaul.info/>.



September ~ December

## AR/VR APPLICATION TRAINING COURSE

Our AR/VR Training Cohort enabled participants to explore AR/VR history, technology, and industry applications, gain practical experience with hardware and software, and build valuable skills in 3D modeling, UX/UI design, and programming languages such as Unity and Unreal Engine, among other areas.

### Augmented and Virtual Reality Applications Online Hybrid Course

**Sign Up For FREE**

*Students will learn and get hands on experience with AR/VR.*

- Explore AR/VR history, technology, and industry applications.
- Gain hands-on experience with AR/VR hardware and software, and build your first application.
- Learn 3D modeling, UX/UI design, and create immersive environments.
- Get introduced to programming languages and frameworks for AR/VR (e.g., Unity, Unreal Engine).
- Discover AR/VR's impact in fields like education, healthcare, gaming, and stay ahead of future trends.
- Collaborate on a capstone project, showcasing your AR/VR application.

**Receive a Certificate of Completion  
and Cash Incentive**

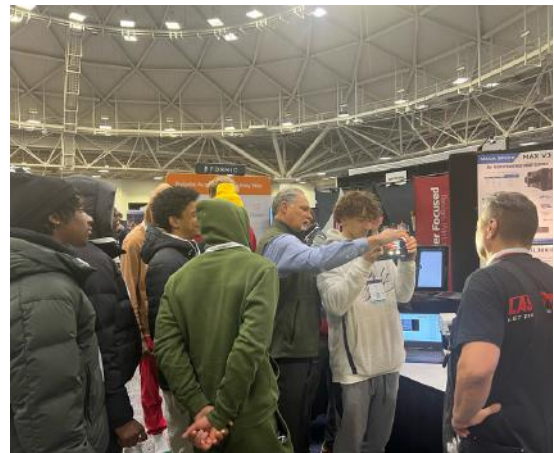
**Class Begins  
Mid Sept 2024**

Contact us for more info:  
[info@aabrn.org](mailto:info@aabrn.org)  
[www.aabrn.org](http://www.aabrn.org)

Sign up with QR Code





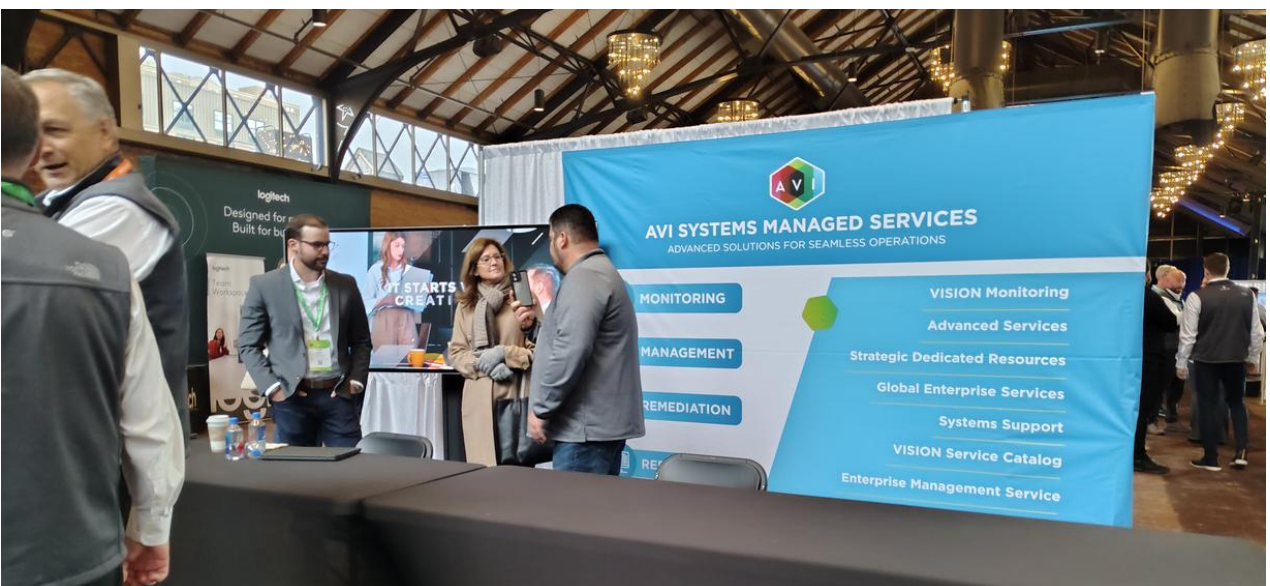
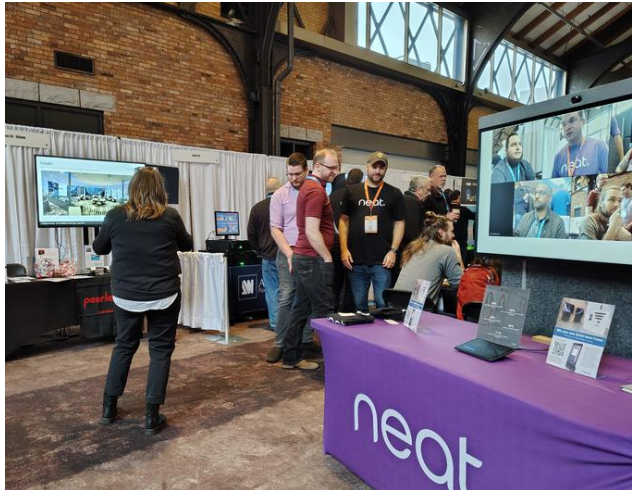




November 20

## AVI CONVENTION

We participated in AVI Live, Minnesota's leading AV technology expo, which brings together AV/IT professionals from corporate enterprise, government, healthcare, and education. The event offered an excellent opportunity to network with industry leaders, collaborate, and explore the latest ProAV innovations.





November 23

# KAREN ORGANIZATION OF MINNESOTA GALA

The Karen Organization of Minnesota's 2024 Annual Gala, themed "Our Feet Will Carry Us," at the Heritage Center of Brooklyn Center, with a social hour, buffet dinner, raffle drawing, and a program presenting awards to honor individuals reflecting the organization's values. Photo Courtesy: The Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM)

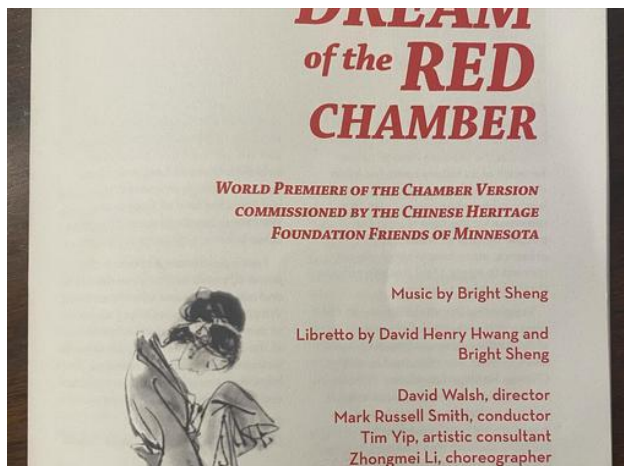




November 24

# DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER

The University of Minnesota's Opera Theatre program presented an adaption of the world-class opera Dream of the Red Chamber (紅樓夢), based on the 18th-century classic Chinese novel by Cao Xueqin in collaboration with the Twin Cities-based Chinese Heritage Foundation. Photo Courtesy: Chinese Heritage Foundation





November 30 - December 01

# MINNESOTA HMONG NEW YEAR

The 44th Annual Minnesota Hmong New Year, held at the Saint Paul RiverCentre, celebrated Hmong heritage with traditional music, dance, cultural activities, authentic food, and merchandise showcasing Hmong culture. Photo Courtesy: Saint Paul RiverCentre, The United Hmong Family, Inc, and The Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM)





December 21

## TOYS FOR TOTS AND VACCINATION EVENT

We successfully hosted another pop-up vaccination event at the University Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center. Additionally, we contributed to the Cultural Diets and Nutrition Resources Fair, highlighting the health benefits of diverse Asian cuisine and sharing information about produce prescriptions. We also supported the Toys for Tots event, providing free toys to members of our community.





## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS FLYERS

SAMHSA has created a set of mental health post flyers. If you are in need of crisis support contact the 1-800-662-4357.







## Thinking about starting your business?

Sign up today for the FREE 4 two-hour weekly online classes.

**INCENTIVE \$200**

Get \$100 on the first day and \$100 for completing the class.  
 \*Get \$1000 support when you develop a business plan.

Lead Instructor: Poh Lin Khoo, CEO, Khoo Consulting LLC

### Cohort #2 Schedule:

January 14, 2025	<u>5:30 PM - 7:30 PM</u>	Orientation with \$100 sign up bonus
January 21, 2025	<u>5:30 PM - 7:30 PM</u>	Entrepreneurship 101
January 28, 2025	<u>5:30 PM - 7:30 PM</u>	Entrepreneurship 101
February 04, 2025	<u>5:30 PM - 7:30 PM</u>	Entrepreneurship 101 with \$100 completion bonus

Future Cohort Schedules with dates TBD:

- Cohort #3 - Mar/Apr (Minneapolis location TBD)
- Cohort #4 - May/Jun (Online)
- Cohort #5 - Jul/Aug (St Paul location TBD)
- Cohort #6 - Sep/Oct (Online)

SIGN UP NOW!



https://forms.gle/jyhCTE4fXaqBESRA6

\*Visit website for details about eligibility and business plan criteria.

For more info:    [info@aabrn.org](mailto:info@aabrn.org)    [www.aabrn.org](http://www.aabrn.org)

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP 101

Sign up today for the FREE Entrepreneurship 101 classes at the Brookdale Library, consisting of four 2 hours sessions. We are currently accepting residents from the BP/BC area only.

The cohort begins on January 14th. 200 Incentive to sign up and complete the 4 weeks cohort. \$1000 in support for developing a business plan (limited to 3 participants per cohort).

Sign up today at: <https://aabrn.org/entrepreneurship-101/>





## Earn while you learn

Explore a career in a high-demand field. No prior experience necessary. Combine classroom training with real, hands-on experience while you earn a paycheck. We are here to help you get started!

## Build your:

- ✓ Knowledge
- ✓ Skills
- ✓ Relationships
- ✓ Confidence

## Build your future with apprenticeship

### Visit us

#### Apprenticeship Outreach Office

North Minneapolis CareerForce Center  
800 W Broadway, Minneapolis, MN 55411

### Schedule a one-on-one



The Apprenticeship Outreach Office is a program of Minneapolis Employment and Training in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and Department of Labor and Industry.



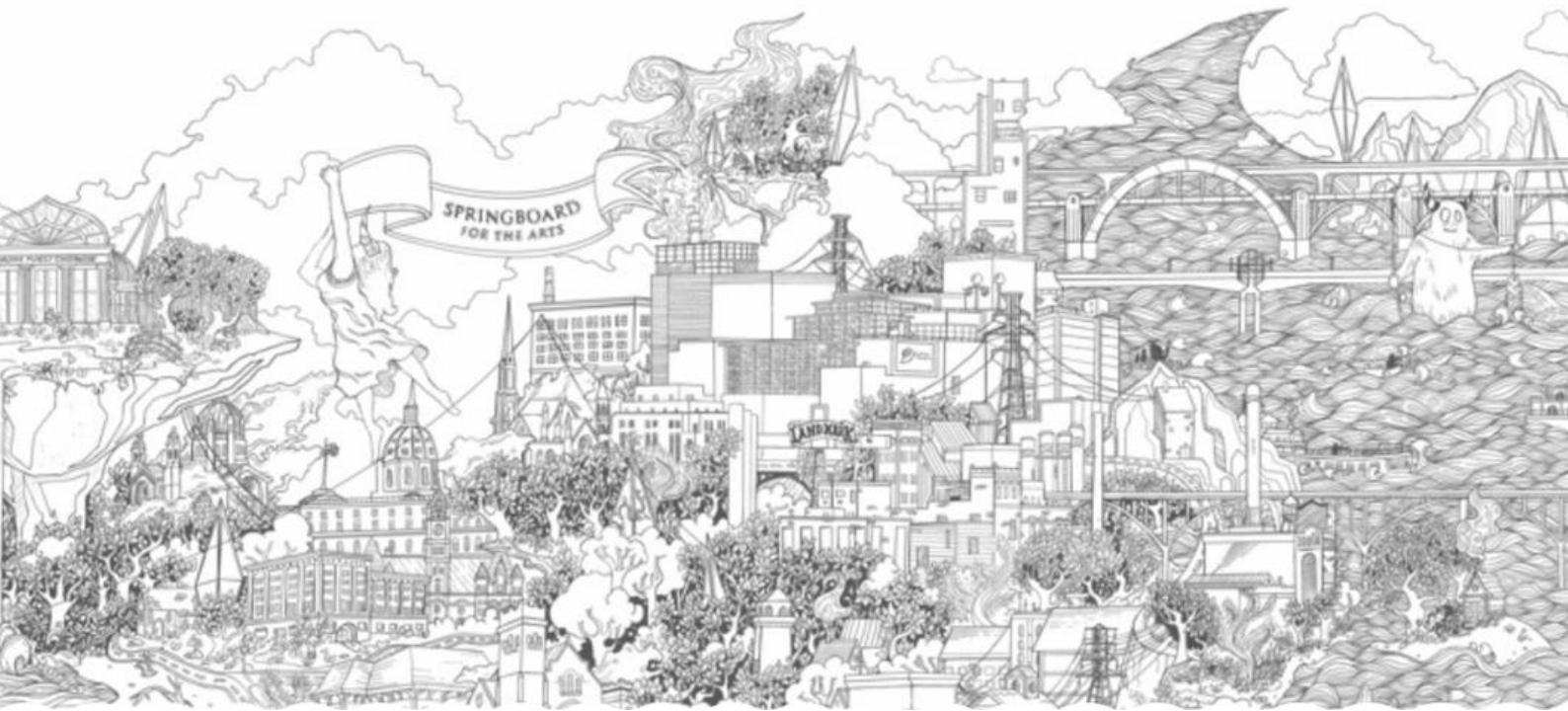
## LEARN, EARN, GROW - APPRENTICESHIP

Ready to kickstart a career in a high-demand field? With the Apprenticeship Outreach Office, you can earn while you learn—no experience needed! Get hands-on training, grow your skills, and build your future.

Learn more at:

<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/cped/economic-development/minneapolis-employment-training/apprenticeship/>





## Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- January 7, 2025 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Stitch-in with Kandace Creel Falcón
- January 21, 2025 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - EXHALE: "It's Basic" Film Screening and Discussion
- January 23, 2025 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Work of Art: Business Plan Essentials

Learn more and register at: <https://springboardforthearts.org/events/>

## Additional Resources

Get connected to Artist Career Consultants here:

<https://springboardforthearts.org/professional-growth/career-consultations/artist-career-consultants/>

Work of Art Toolkit: <https://springboardforthearts.org/woa>

Handbook for Artists Working in Community:

<https://springboardforthearts.org/artists-working-in-community/>

## Tax Tips from the IRS



- [Here's what taxpayers need to know about business related travel deductions](#)
- [Companies who promise to eliminate tax debt sometimes leave taxpayers high and dry](#)
- [Get an Identity Protection PIN.](#)
- [Tax Resources for Members of the Military](#)



JAN

7

9am~10am

## Are you up to date?

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN

7

12pm~1pm

## Healing Financial Wounds for an Abundant Future

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN

8

12pm~130pm

## Where's the Money?

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN

9

2pm~3pm

## Launch and Scale Your Business with Limited Capital

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



JAN  
**10**  
12pm~1pm

## Financial Wellness for Women Entrepreneurs

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN  
**14**  
9am~10am

## Understanding State of MN Government Contracting

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN  
**16**  
12pm~1pm

## KPI Driven Innovation

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

FEB  
**13**  
12pm~1pm

## Collaboration Powers Lasting Change

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



Visit Our Website for More Upcoming Events

[OFFICIAL WEBSITE >>](#)



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## Partnering with



Asian Media Access



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