

MAY 2025 | Volume 3, Issue 12

MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope



Features:

**Gillian's Journey
Through Passion and
Performance**

Bringing Purpose to
Place: Connecting SPRE
Model to the Sears
Redevelopment Project

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

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Asian American Business Resilience Network

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

MAY IS PAN ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH



Laura Marie, Julia Ennen, Gillian Jackson Han, and Adam Jones in Children's Theatre Company's production of Disney's *Frozen* The Broadway Musical. Photo by Glen Stubbe Photography

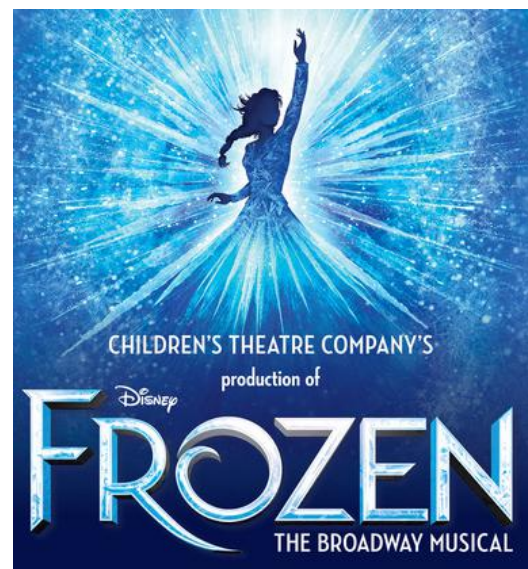
BEYOND THE SPOTLIGHT: GILLIAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH PASSION AND PERFORMANCE

Interviewed By Meejoo Choi

Gillian is a Chinese-American actor and musician based in New York City, originally from the DC Metro area. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Theatre from Baldwin Wallace University and enjoys sharing her heritage through cuisine and storytelling. She is currently playing Elsa in Children's Theatre Company's production of Disney's [Frozen](#) The Broadway Musical, running through June 15.

Finding Her Voice: A Path Shaped by Passion and Performance

Gillian grew up in the heart of the DC Metro area, raised by a journalist mother and a lawyer father—neither of whom worked in the arts. Still, from a young age, it was clear she was drawn to performance. Her love for singing and storytelling emerged in preschool and never faded. With unwavering support from her parents—especially her mom, who passed down a love for musical theater—Gillian threw herself into choirs and school productions. By high school, her passion for performance had found its outlet in musical theater. She went on to study in a conservatory



program in Music Theatre in Ohio, and eventually moved to New York City to continue pursuing her artistic calling. Today, she blends music, movement, and narrative to bring characters to life on stage.



Photo Courtesy: [Children's Theatre Company](#)

Carrying Her Story Into Every Role

Performance is personal for Gillian. It's not just about learning lines or choreography—it's about bringing the fullness of her identity into every role. As the eldest daughter with a younger sister she feels closely connected to, she naturally gravitates toward characters that reflect that dynamic. Her current role as Elsa in Disney's *Frozen The Broadway Musical* has made that connection even more meaningful, allowing her to draw from her real-life experience as an older sister. Even though she doesn't frame her work around hardship, her past experiences—both the joyful and the difficult—shape how she approaches storytelling. They influence how she reacts, interprets, and connects with the emotional core of each scene. That quiet emotional depth, built over time, becomes part of the performance itself, even if the audience doesn't know the story behind.

Support, Serendipity, and Showing Up with Kindness

Gillian describes her path into the industry as one marked by both support and luck. With a family that believed in her dreams and helped her access strong mentorship and arts education, she built confidence early. She participated in several youth conservatory programs, which led to showcase opportunities in New York. Those experiences opened doors, including a chance meeting with the agent who still represents her today. As she sees it, the entertainment industry often runs on relationships, and genuine kindness can leave a lasting impression. She carries that lesson with her—treating everyone with respect and remaining authentic in every interaction. At the same time, she avoids falling into the trap of comparison. Everyone's path looks different, and timelines never match. What matters most is staying grounded and trusting in her own journey.

Rising to the Challenge—With Grace and Grounding

As Gillian takes on new roles, she finds each one more challenging—not because the roles themselves are harder, but because her standards continue to rise. With every project, she expects more of herself, which means more time, more effort, and greater emotional investment. Her current role has been especially demanding, requiring a level of vocal stamina she’s never experienced before. On top of that, working in television for the first time meant learning to navigate a completely different medium. Each project brings its own set of challenges, but one of the biggest hurdles is learning not to be too hard on herself. To manage the pressure, she prioritizes small things that help her feel human—getting outside, exercising, enjoying good food, and staying connected with family and friends. These routines remind her that a full, healthy life offstage is essential to thriving on it.



Photo Courtesy: [Children's Theatre Company](#).

Advice from the Heart: Kindness, Courage, and Your Own Pace

Gillian’s advice to aspiring actors is simple but powerful: be kind, be open, and be brave. She encourages others to seek out spaces that stretch them, even if it feels a little uncomfortable. Growth, she believes, often happens in those uncertain moments. It’s also important to stay mindful of the mental toll that comes with a visible, competitive industry. She often reminds herself—and others—that “everyone’s journey looks different.” It’s a grounding belief that helps her resist comparison and stay focused on her own path. Social media can be especially deceptive, showing only the highlight reel while hiding the struggle. Her advice is to disconnect when needed, and focus on living life at your own pace.

Holding Onto Purpose in an Unpredictable Industry

Staying motivated in the entertainment industry isn’t always easy. Gillian has days when doubt creeps in—moments when she questions whether the effort is truly worth it. But beneath the uncertainty lies something steady: a deep love for storytelling. It fuels everything she does and reminds her why she chose this path in the first place. She sees this work not just as a career, but as a calling—something necessary, powerful, and worth pursuing. Choosing to show up even on the hard days makes that choice all the more meaningful. In the end, doing what she loves is enough—and that alone gives her something worth fighting for.



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 #16

BRINGING PURPOSE TO PLACE: CONNECTING SPRE MODEL TO THE SEARS REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Earlier last month, AMA attended a virtual webinar hosted by the Community Spaces Network (CSN) on the topic of Social Purpose Real Estate (SPRE). Titled *Exploring Social Purpose Real Estate: Shaping Communities for a Better Future*, the conversation was rooted in community stories and lessons that feel especially relevant to the work happening right now around the Sears Redevelopment Project in Saint Paul.

Cultivating a Successful Nonprofit Shared Space

At the core of the presentation was the idea of **nonprofit shared space**—a physical site where “two or more mission-driven organizations intentionally share space for mutual benefit.” These spaces are more than mere co-working setups; they’re designed to foster cost savings,

Shared spaces as Social Purpose Real Estate (SPRE)



collaboration, and stronger community impact. As CSN described it, shared spaces function to reduce costs, insure higher quality of shared services and amenities, and to centralize essential human services/ hubs of intentional collaboration. Striving together with a goal of not only building trust & community but also scaling social impacts beyond individual organizational limitations.

The session walked through how these kinds of spaces are developed and sustained —emphasizing that “it takes a network” to bring them to life. The process isn’t easy. Developing a nonprofit center often takes several years, and requires clear organizational mission alignment, risk tolerance, access to capital, and buy-in from multiple stakeholders. Importantly, factors of organizational capacity, staff and board capacity, and financial capacity must be considered.

One concept that stood out was the way presenters framed developing shared spaces through three “ownership lenses”: **as an asset, as a workplace, and as a program**. This approach encourages organizations to think about real estate not just as something to own, but as something that supports staff well-being, enhances tenant services, and advances the organization’s broader mission. “The building,” the presentation noted, “is a program in itself—offering shared amenities, tenant collaboration, and public services.”



Aligning Sears Redevelopment with SPRE

It’s easy to draw a connection between these key takeaways and the Sears Redevelopment Project, led locally by Asian Media Access (AMA), AABRN, and other community partners. Like the SPRE models discussed in the webinar, the Sears site is being envisioned not just as a building or business venture—but as a hub for health, culture, and opportunity.

Highlighting the Voices within the Community

One of the key themes from the CSN webinar was that successful shared space begins with community demand and agreement. AMA’s early outreach echoes this approach—gathering feedback from neighbors, cultural groups, and service providers

to understand what people want from the space. From multicultural health clinics to creative studios and youth programs, the community has expressed a strong desire for shared access and co-located services that reflect local needs.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS: IS THERE DEMAND AND AGREEMENT

- Are there nonprofits looking for space?
- Are they interested in shared space?
- Understand affordability
- Alignment of location
- Build the vision with community!



Modeling an Ideal Mission Driven Space

SPRE also highlighted the importance of creating “mission-driven space”—real estate that doesn’t just house programs, but actually supports the goals and values of its community. At Sears, this principle is visible in how the space is being envisioned not simply as a material building, but as a center for wellness, workforce development, cultural preservation, and civic life.

Striving for a Perfect Balance

One final quote from the session that felt particularly relevant: “Successful projects balance affordability with realistic operations costs that don’t rely on ongoing subsidy.” This idea reinforces the importance of sustainable planning from day one—something AMA and its allies are deeply focused on as they work through design, funding, and future use plans for the Sears site.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR OPERATIONS

1. Sustainability is hard

- Balance affordability with realistic operations costs that don’t rely on on-going subsidy (subsidize in development to reduce debt)

2. Biggest levers are property tax exemption and shared space

- Different impacts depending on location, understand tax exemption early on

3. Staff for the program of the building

- Secret sauce



Looking to a bright future

In many ways, the Sears Redevelopment Project represents SPRE in action—tailored to the unique history, demographic, and dreams of the North Minneapolis and St. Paul communities. It’s a reminder that place-based change doesn’t start with a blueprint. It starts with listening, envisioning, and committing to building something together.

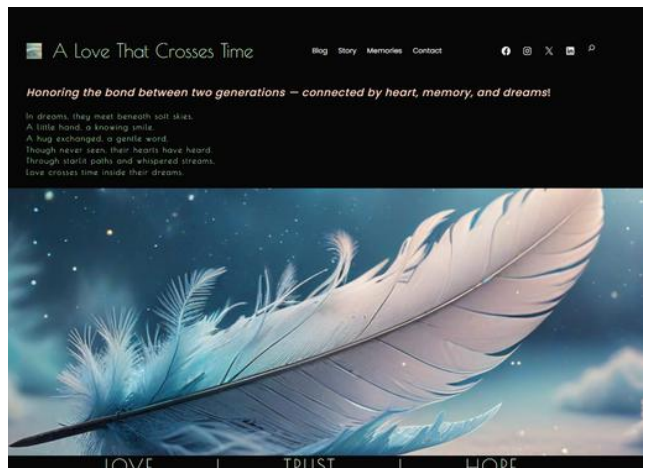
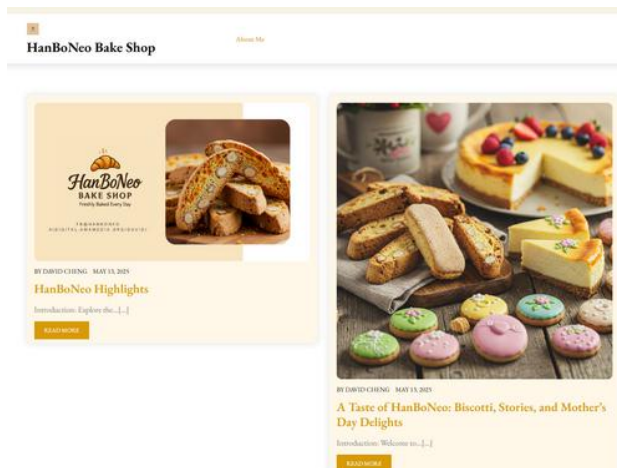
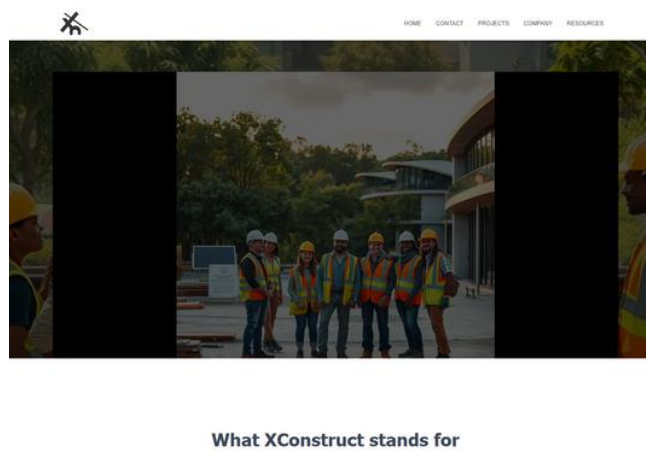
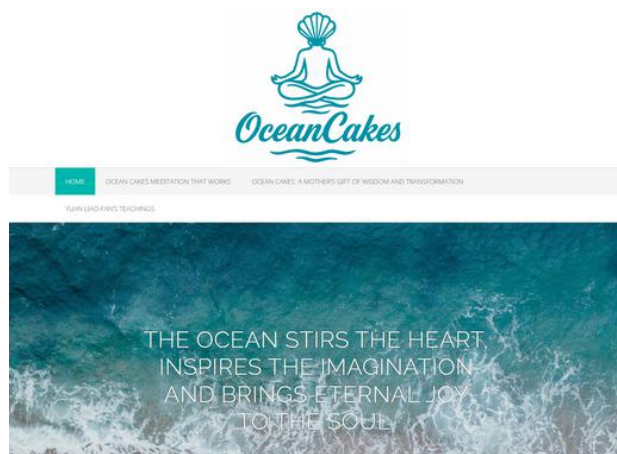
In the end, the CSN webinar served as both a learning opportunity and a validation of the work happening locally. Social Purpose Real Estate is more than a model—it’s a mindset. One that says real estate should serve people first, and it’s that same mindset guiding the vision for the Sears Redevelopment Project: to turn a vacant space into a vibrant community space. If you would like to learn more about the Sears redevelopment project, check out our website: <https://searsstpaul.info/> as well as our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages for the latest updates, upcoming events, and ways to get involved.



Feb 17 ~ May 13

E-MAGINE INITIATIVE

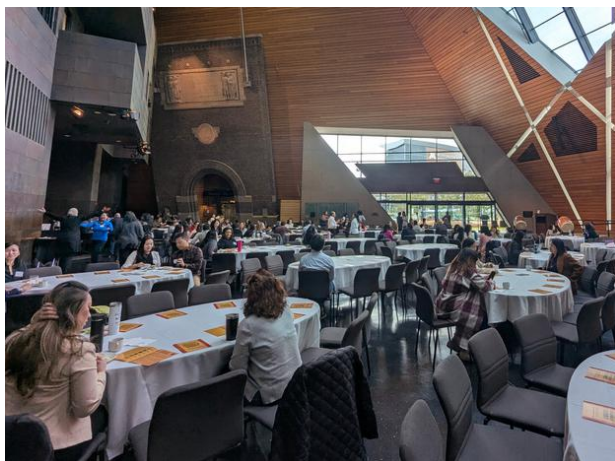
With support from the City of Minneapolis, we launched our first Generative AI and Digital Marketing Training/Internship Program. This 13-week online program equipped participants with in-demand tech skills, hands-on experience, and provided stipends for 25 qualified learners, empowering them for IT careers and freelancing opportunities.



April 21

CAPI - AAPI RISING SUMMIT

We have participated in the AAPI RISING: Identity, Resilience, and Leadership Summit and it was a day full of powerful storytelling, reflection, and connection. Together, the partners explored the intersectionality of the identities, honored histories of resilience, and strengthened collective leadership across Minnesota.



April 26~27

VAJHUAM SIB CUAG SUMMIT

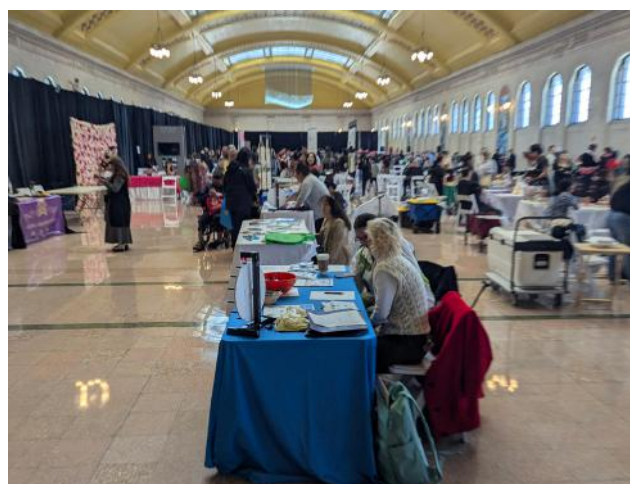
The Building Community Capacity Across Generations summit brought together Hmong educators, youth, elders, and allies for two powerful days of learning, connection, and healing in St. Paul. Through workshops, community circles, and deep conversations, participants reflected on identity, unity, and the importance of intergenerational knowledge. Photo Courtesy: Hmong Women Today



April 27

QEEJ FESTIVAL

We had an amazing time at the Minnesota Qeej and Hmong Arts Festival. From Qeej dance and poetry to games, food, and family activities, it was a day full of culture, fun, and community. With outstanding performances and a record crowd, we're feeling incredibly grateful and inspired.



April 30

COALITION OF ASIAN AMERICAN LEADERS' ASIAN MINNESOTAN DAY

Coalition of Asian American Leaders' Asian Minnesotan Day at the Capitol was a powerful gathering of community, culture, and civic engagement. Governor Tim Walz joined as a speaker, adding to a day filled with inspiring voices, performances, legislative meetings, and a shared community lunch. The event launched AAPI Heritage Month with unity and purpose. Photo Courtesy: Coalition of Asian American Leaders



May 3

12TH ANNUAL NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The 12th Annual New Year Celebration at Bloomington Event Center was a vibrant gathering filled with cultural pride and community spirit. Hosted by Lao Culture Dance Fashion MN, and the attendees enjoyed live performances by talented youth, three professional singers, and lively music, creating a joyful atmosphere to honor tradition and unity. Photo Courtesy: Lao Culture Dance Fashion MN and Chinese Community Center



May 10~11

4TH ANNUAL MINNESOTA SONGKRAN FESTIVAL 2025

The 4th Annual Minnesota Songkran Festival 2025 at the Minnesota State Capitol was a vibrant celebration of Thai New Year, filled with cultural pride, community spirit, and joyful festivities. Hosted by the Thai Cultural Council of MN, the event featured traditional performances, delicious street food, temple blessings, and fun activities for all ages.



May 17

AAPI MONTH FESTIVAL 2025

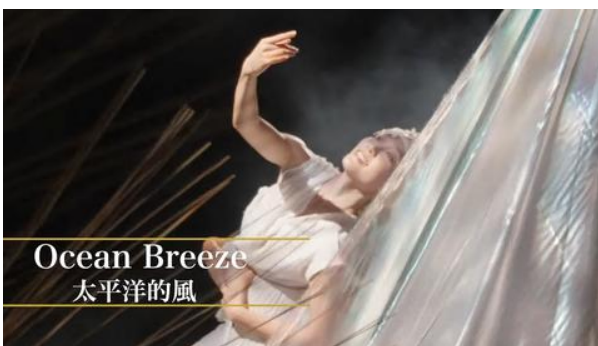
Hosted by the Edina Asian American Alliance, the AAPI Month Festival 2025 was a vibrant and heartwarming celebration of culture, community, and connection. The Chinese Community Center also on site providing educational materials on long COVID and free COVID-19 testing kits. Photo Courtesy: Chinese Community Center and Edina Asian American Alliance



May 18

AMAZING TAIWAN PERFORMANCE

Led by the Dance Department of the National Taiwan University of Sport, the young dancers presented a spectacular dance performance in celebration of the 2025 Taiwan American Heritage Week. This year marks the 26th anniversary of the first proclamation of Taiwanese American Heritage Week (TAHW) signed by President Bill Clinton in 1999. Since then, Taiwanese Americans have annually joined hands to reach out to the general American public to share their heritage. Photo Courtesy: Wei-Seng Chen



HANDWASHING SAVES LIVES

Check out this helpful guide from All American Medical Group on steps to wash your hands properly to help prevent illness!

Handwashing Saves Lives!

Proper Handwashing Steps



1
Wet hands with water



2
Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces



3
Rub hands palm to palm



4
Palm over back of hand with interlaced fingers, then switch hands



5
Palm to palm with fingers interlaced



6
Back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



7
Rotational rubbing of thumb clasped in palm, then switch hands



8
Rub tips of fingers on opposite hand, then switch hands



9
Rub both wrists



10
Rinse hands with water



11
Dry hands with towel. Turn off tap with towel or elbow.



12
Hands are now clean!

Key Times to Wash Hands

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet

- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

Wash your hands for 20 seconds! Grab the door handle with a paper towel to open the restroom door. If soap and water are unavailable, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



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Reviewed: 10/2018. NIOS National Services, Scotland. Chemsouth County Public Health Bureau.

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洗手可以挽救生命!

正確的洗手步驟



1
用水濕手



2
塗抹足夠的肥皂以覆蓋所有手部表面



3
雙手掌心相對搓動



4
手掌放在手背上，手指交叉，然後換手



5
掌心相對，手指交叉



6
手指背對對方的手掌，十指交叉



7
用拇指在手掌中旋轉搓揉，然後換手



8
用另一隻手的指尖摩擦，然後換手



9
搓揉雙腕



10
用水沖洗雙手



11
用毛巾擦乾雙手。用毛巾或手肘關閉水龍頭。



12
手現在乾淨了!

洗手的關鍵時間

- 準備食物之前、期間和之後
- 進食前後
- 在家照顧嘔吐或腹瀉患者前後
- 治療割傷或傷口前後
- 上完廁所後

- 換尿布或清理上完廁所的孩子後
- 擤鼻涕、咳嗽或打噴嚏後
- 接觸動物、動物飼料或動物糞便後
- 處理寵物食品或寵物零食後
- 接觸垃圾後

洗手20秒! 利用紙巾包住門把手打開洗手間的門。如果沒有肥皂和水，可使用含60%酒精的搓手液。



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Reviewed: 10/2018. NIOS National Services, Scotland. Chemsouth County Public Health Bureau.

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- **On-the-job training**
- **Paid \$16.50 per hour**

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in earnings!**

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The State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) funded (or funded in part) this training through a grant. The grant recipient created this training. DEED does not endorse this publicity or training or make guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability or ownership of the information herein or elsewhere.

AI/AR/VR TRAINING PROGRAM

Join this FREE 9-week training starting June 23, 2025. Learn AI, AR, and VR technologies, get hands-on experience, and earn up to \$2,970. Classes are 4-8pm, 20 hours per week, with on-the-job training. [Sign up here.](#)



We can help you find your focus

Building a budget that actually works.
Growing your network organically.
Mastering work/life balance. All this and more with Digital Ready. What will your focus be?

Check it out



BUDGETING TIPS AND NETWORKING KNOW-HOW

Struggling with budgeting, networking, or work-life balance? Digital Ready can help you find your focus and achieve your goals. Discover expert insights and practical tools to streamline your success at:

https://link.digitalready.verizonwireless.com/OTk2LUtXQy0zNzcAAAGZKn5A0-kz96GrTzwrOAAOnZ_2TNNWrU_BQXIGWbjvQHw_pjs1hSTgctExNiFQleIF4R3PHE=

Find the event that fits your goals:

<https://digitalready.verizonwireless.com/category/events>



Event • Ask the Expert

Identifying & addressing customer objections

May 22, 1:30 pm-3:30 pm



Event • Ask the Expert

AI storytelling techniques: Crafting compelling narratives...

May 27, 11:00 am-1:00 pm



Event • Hands-on Help

Website usability review

Jun 9, 1:30 pm-Jun 30, 1:00 pm

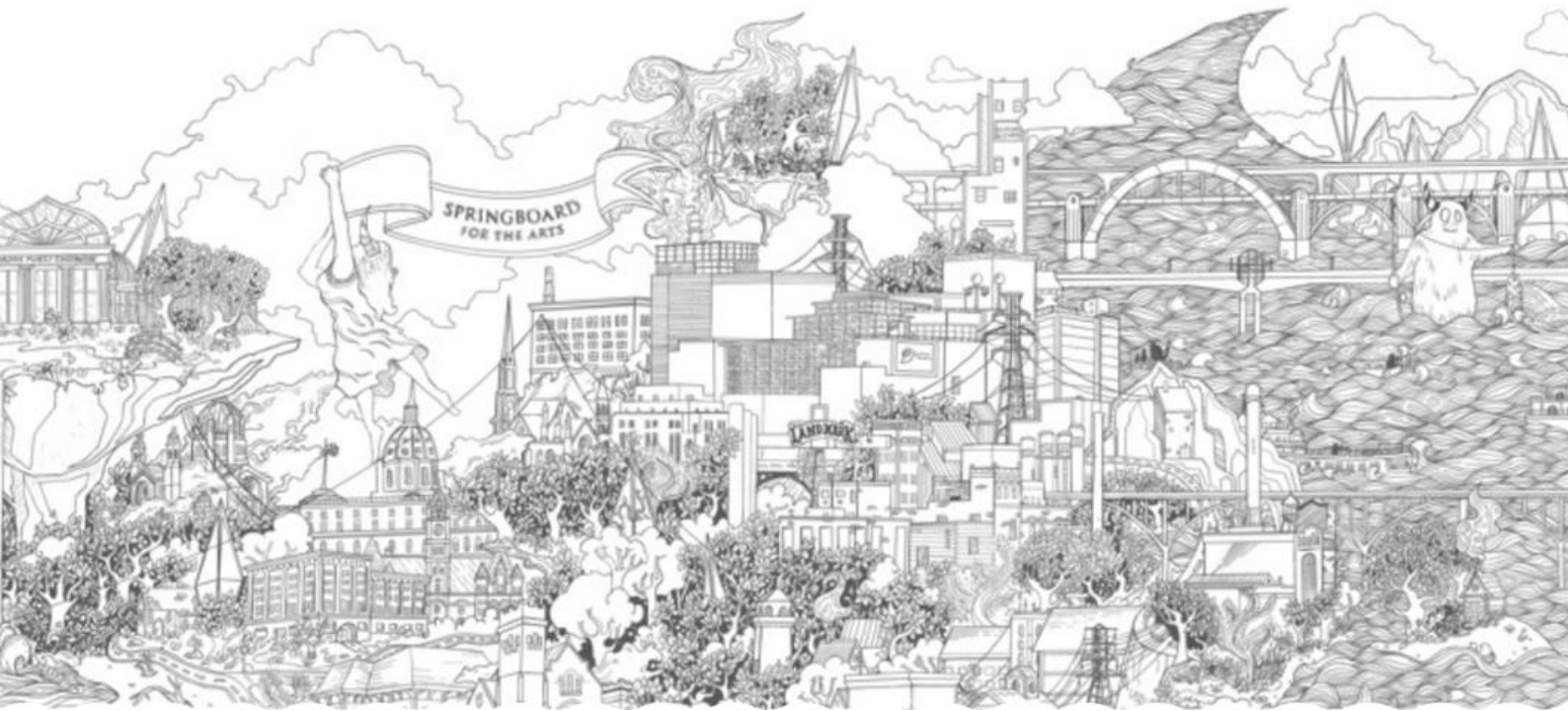


Event

Safe capital to keep your business secure

Jun 10, 11:00 am-12:00 pm





Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- May 27, 2025 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Work of Art: Legal Considerations
- June 4, 2025 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Creative Change Coalition, Technical Assistance Workshop: Building an Artist Emergency Relief Fund
- June 10, 2025 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Work of Art: Funding
- June 24, 2025 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Work of Art: Engaging Customers and Selling Your Work

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](#)



MAY
22
11am~12pm

Best Practices for Founder Equity and Cap Tables

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY
22
2pm~4pm

SBA Certifications Overview: HUBZone

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY
27
1pm~2pm

AI Agents: Your Business on Autopilot

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY
28
8am~930am

The Twin Cities Business Networking Event

In-Person Business Event

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



JUNE

3

9am~10am

What, why, and how of Capability Statements

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JUNE

5

5pm~7pm

2025 MN Cup Semifinalist Reception

In-Person Business Event

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JUNE

10

9am~4pm

10[C]hats – AI Conference 2025

In-Person Business Event

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JUNE

19

430pm~6pm

Grow Your Business Networking OPEN HOUSE

In-Person Business Event

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



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Contact Us

Email

aabrn@amamedia.org

Telephone

(612) 376-7715

Address

2418 Plymouth Ave N, Room 105,
Minneapolis, MN 55411



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