

MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope



Features:

Ichigo Tokyo Crepes
– Mia Oi

SEARS Redevelopment:
From Vacancy to Vitality

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

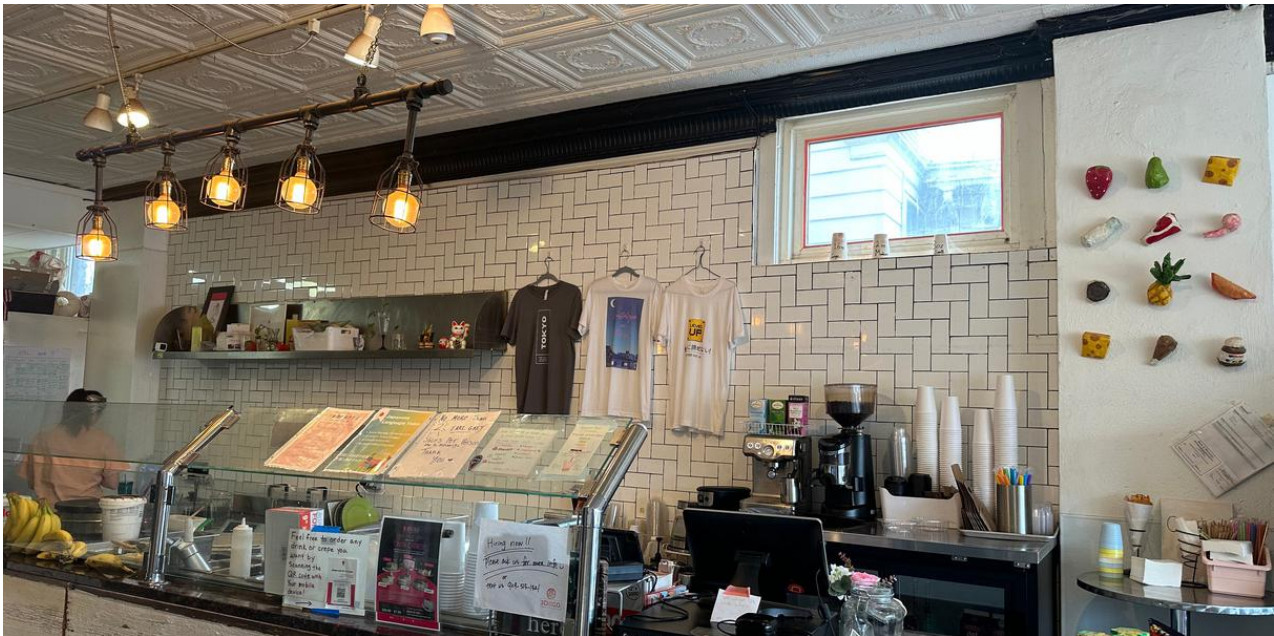
Envision a new reality that addressing historic inequities, and enhancing culturally/linguistically appropriate ways to thrive through resilience, sustainability, and inclusive growth for all members and the communities where they learn, live, play, and work.

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



ICHIGO TOKYO-CREPE

MIA OI

Interviewed By Meejoo Choi

Embracing Minneapolis: Journey with Ichigo Tokyo-Crepe

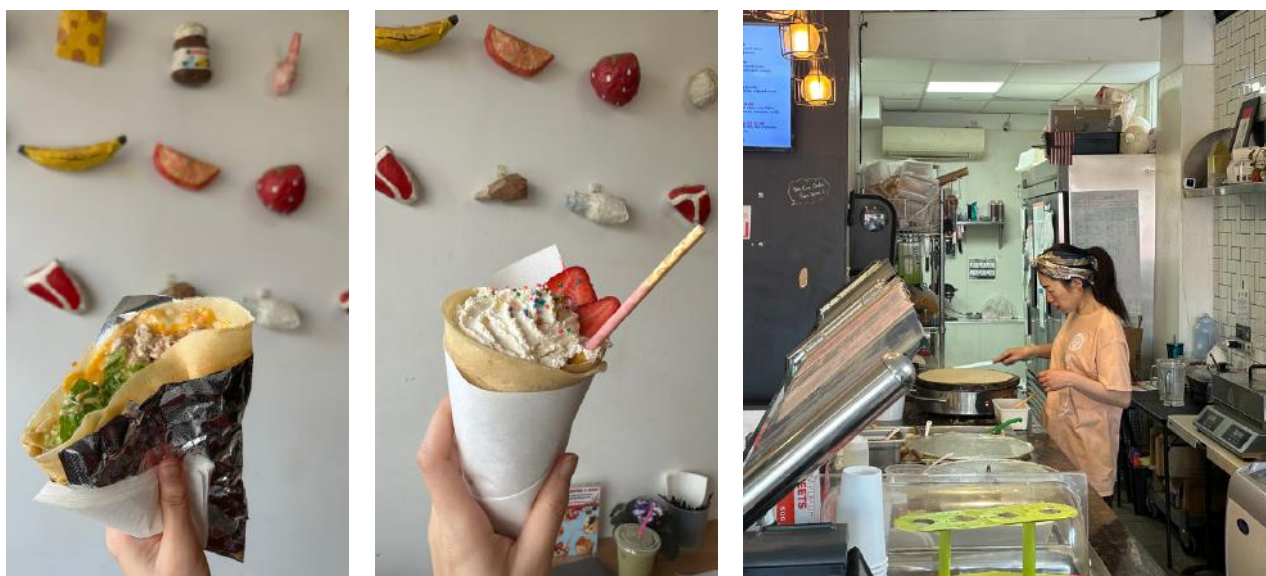
Meet Mia Oi, the entrepreneurial force behind Ichigo Tokyo-Crepe, nestled in the heart of Minneapolis since 2019. Mia's journey began as an international student, driven by a passion for business, leading her to pursue her MBA at Saint Mary. Before her Tokyo-Crepe venture, she worked in the corporate world at Fortune 500 companies like Wells Fargo and Medtronic. However, she yearned for more meaningful engagement, both personally and within her community. Her decision to establish Ichigo Tokyo-Crepe was fueled by a desire to give back to the community that had embraced her. Drawn to the warmth and support of Minnesota, Mia found inspiration in the local culture, resulting in the creation of a unique culinary experience: Japanese-style crepes. With each delicate fold and flavorful creation, Mia brings a taste of Japan to the vibrant MN community, embodying the spirit of entrepreneurship and community stewardship.

From Tokyo to Minneapolis: Bringing Japanese Culture to Minneapolis Through Ichigo Tokyo-Crepe

In her high school days back in Tokyo, Mia would often find herself at a cozy crepe shop with her closest friends after the final bell rang. Together, they'd meander through the bustling streets, peeking into different shops, and sharing unforgettable moments. When Mia brought her dreams to Minnesota, she brought along these cherished memories, eager to share the richness of Japanese culture with her new community and recreate the warmth of those carefree afternoons. Inspired by the fondness of those shared moments, Mia's vision for her business took shape—a place where every guest is welcomed with open arms, where sweet treats are savored, and where the essence of Japanese culture is lovingly shared, leaving hearts brimming with nostalgia and gratitude.

The Evolution of Ichigo Tokyo-Crepe: From Pop-up to Store

Mia's entrepreneurial journey began humbly with a small pop-up nestled within a Corner Coffee in north Minneapolis. Operating for just a few hours during weekends over a span of three months, Mia's presence quickly caught the attention of locals, leaving them yearning for more. Their support paved the way for a significant opportunity when Five Watt Coffee reached out an invitation to collaborate, providing Mia with a larger platform for her culinary creations for four months. However, fate had even grander plans in store. Thanks to the vision of one of her investors, Mia seized the chance to take over a vacant space adjacent to a beloved Japanese ramen establishment. With each transition, Mia's dedication to her craft and her unwavering commitment to delivering a taste of Japan to the community only grew stronger, solidifying her presence as a cherished fixture in Minneapolis's vibrant culinary scene.



NEON: A Beacon of Support in Mia's Entrepreneurial Endeavors

In the journey of building her business, Mia reached out to numerous organizations dedicated to supporting aspiring entrepreneurs. Despite encountering skepticism from many quarters regarding her business concept, Mia persevered. It was her encounter with Ahn from NEON (Northside Economic Opportunity Network) that proved to be a pivotal moment. Ahn not only embraced Mia's idea but also offered invaluable guidance, connecting her with essential information and classes tailored to her needs. The assistance and resources provided by NEON laid a strong foundation for Mia's business, empowering her to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship with confidence and determination.

Sailing through Unexpected Challenges

Mia faced numerous challenges while running her business, starting in November 2019. When COVID-19 hit in early 2020, she struggled to find a way forward. With people less active, restricted business hours, and no dine-in options, everything felt unexpected, and she felt lost. To keep customers coming for her crepes, she launched her own delivery service. Buying new packaging and personally delivering orders herself, Mia worked hard

to adapt. Even now, her store continues to receive many to-go orders.

COVID-19 wasn't the only unexpected challenge Mia faced. She hadn't fully grasped the growth of social media in recent years. Realizing its significant role in marketing, she saw the potential to raise awareness for her business. However, she was not familiar with social media at all. Now, with the assistance of her employee, she's leveraging social media effectively, posting pictures, and creating videos to promote the store.

Mia's Thoughtful Advice: Trusting Yourself and Staying Flexible

"Believe in yourself!" When she embarked on her entrepreneurial journey, Mia was a novice in the realm of business startups. Despite her lack of knowledge, she delved into extensive research and sought guidance from non-profit organizations dedicated to aiding entrepreneurs. Encountering skepticism from some who doubted the viability of her business idea left her disheartened. Nevertheless, she remained steadfast in her self-belief and persisted in steering her business forward. Today, her perseverance has paid off, and she continues to lead her business successfully. Reflecting on her experiences, Mia emphasizes the importance of self-belief to others. She advocates for the flexibility to pivot one's idea or business direction based on feedback and circumstances, all while maintaining unwavering dedication.

Ichigo Tokyo-Crepe is located at 5 W 34th St Minneapolis, MN 55408. For more information, view their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ichigotokyocrepes>





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 #4

FROM VACANCY TO VITALITY: NAVIGATING GROWTH AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS IN ST. PAUL

Written By Meejoo Choi

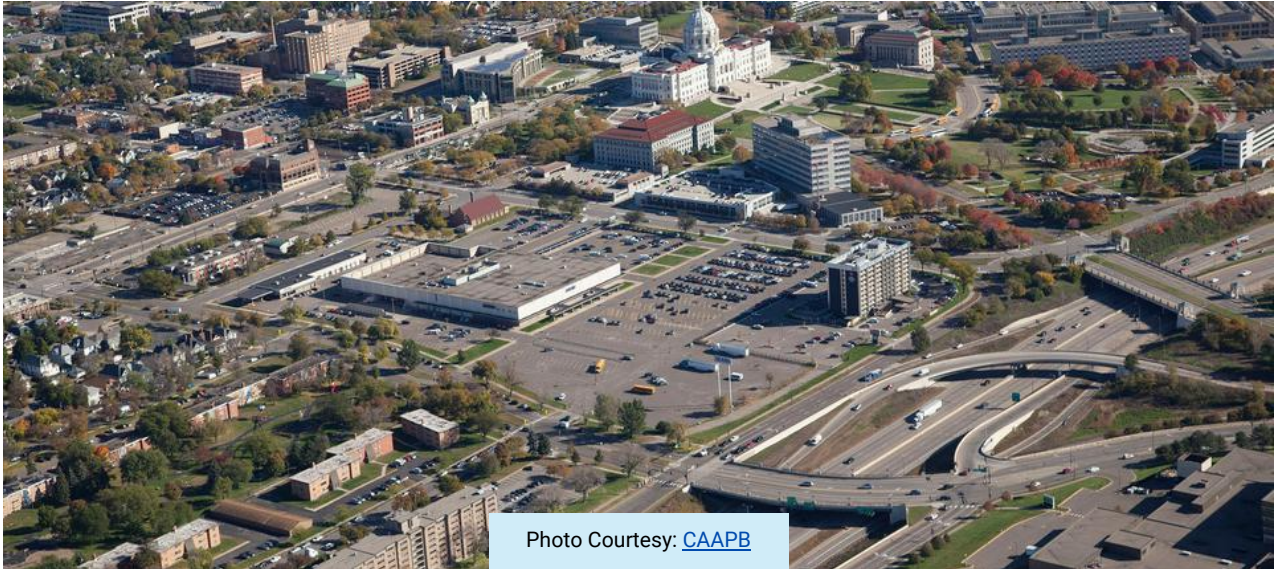
Introduction

Welcome to the fourth installment of the series, delving into the history of Sears, addressing potential concerns from the community, and exploring potential solutions to those concerns. AMA and AABRN's adaptive approach and continuous openness to community input are integral to ensuring that the Sears redevelopment project aligns with the evolving needs and aspirations of the community.

From Retail Giant to Vacant Building: The Legacy of Sears in St. Paul

Sears, once the world's largest retailer by the 1960s, established a large store and parking lot, pioneering the concept of "big box" retail in the 1960s. According to a CBS News article, titled "Sears Got Its Start In Minneapolis, Grew To Be The World's

Biggest Retailer”, the company once had around 350,000 employees. At its peak in 2012, it had 4,000 stores. However, despite its historical significance, the Sears building has remained vacant since 2019. Formerly a bustling shopping center for all, it was a cherished community hub where people enjoyed spending quality time with their families and friends. St. Paul resident Mary Ann Burns articulated her frustration to CBS News on October 16, 2018, stating, "I'm very, very upset. I've shopped here since I was a little girl. My mother brought me. My mother is 92 years old, and I'm 70. I think this is terrible."



Balancing Growth and Community Concerns

Currently, the Sears building is empty, surrounded by large parking lots. It used to be bustling inside, but now it's quiet, and there are many empty parking spaces, about 500 of them. The area it covers is huge, about 17 acres, and it has the potential to be changed and improved. However, there are concerns that some people might have. If the redevelopment project starts, some could be worried about increased traffic, which might cause problems for the neighborhood. So, as this project progresses and improves the area, careful traffic management and addressing any arising issues are planned. It's essential to strike the right balance between enhancing things and addressing challenges for the redevelopment to be successful.

AMA and AABRN's Adaptive Site Plan Approach

The current site plan reflects AMA and AABRN's commitment to continuous development and community engagement. It not only includes provisions for landscaped areas that integrate natural landscapes and restorative habitats wherever possible but also underscores their dedication to addressing community concerns and evolving the plan to best meet the needs of the community.

Green Development: Vision for Nature-Inspired Community Spaces

AMA is currently paving the way for green development, envisioning an interconnected network of parks, plazas, pathways, and streets adorned with lush, sustainably cultivated greenery. The ongoing site plan is dedicated to reintroducing nature into the area, with

the goal of creating vibrant public spaces that enhance community livability, health, wellness, and recreational opportunities. The plans involve integrating multi-use paths and walking trails to seamlessly connect with the regional trail network. AMA remains steadfast in its commitment to ecological enhancement, prioritizing the inclusion of natural landscapes and restorative habitats wherever possible.

Exploring Temporary Solutions: Site for Community-Focused Amenities

Another temporary plan being considered involves subdividing the expansive surface parking area into smaller blocks. AMA aims to divide the Sears site into nine smaller lots, each designated to accommodate amenities tailored to meet the needs of the community. These amenities may include a diverse array of options such as residential mixed-use developments, various housing alternatives, parking ramps, hotels, retail or office spaces, as well as parks or amphitheaters, and even soccer fields. While these possibilities have been discussed, they remain part of ongoing planning efforts and are subject to further refinement and adjustment as the project progresses.

Promoting Transit-Oriented Development and Parking Solutions

The current site plan is dedicated to creating transit-oriented development and planning to create parking space that can accommodate the needs of visitors and residents. Transit-oriented development aims to create sustainable, vibrant, and inclusive communities where people can live, work, and play without relying heavily on private automobiles. To support this vision, we are implementing thoughtful parking solutions. Initially, our plan includes the provision of surface parking lots, and we are considering the possibility of introducing parking structures, potentially multi-level, in the future. These parking options are being strategically considered to ensure convenient access to the site's various amenities, with the aim of enabling community members to park once and explore the area on foot.

Engaging with the Community

AMA and AABRN remain in the planning phase and are actively listening to the voices of the community. This involves hosting community meetings and carefully reviewing survey feedback. To learn more about the St. Paul Sears Redevelopment project and stay updated on developments, individuals are encouraged to visit <https://searsstpaul.info/news/>. Furthermore, the survey on the project is still open on our website, providing an opportunity for everyone to participate and voice their opinions. Your input is invaluable as we continue to shape the future of this project in collaboration with the community.



TIME IS RIPE FOR WORKING TOGETHER TO ADVOCATE ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO ASIANS

Written By Angela Anand, President of AAUC

It's an ideal time to recognize the influence of Asia and the diaspora Asian voter communities dispersed throughout the nation. Long ago, theorists and research scientists characterized the 21st century as the Asian century due to the rising economic strength of the Asian continent. The number of Asians who have legally migrated from the Asian continent is steadily increasing, and they are generally more educated and younger voters.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the Asian American voter turnout jumped from 49% to 59% between 2016 and 2020. This increase is the largest among any racial or ethnic group. This November, an estimated 15.0 million Asian Americans will be eligible to vote, making up only 6.1% of all eligible voters, according to Pew Research Center projections. We at the Asian American Unity Coalition represent these Asian communities who are voters and can influence national elections. The mass media has recognized that both political parties are investing heavily in attracting Asian voters. Consequently, Asians are being counted and are representing votes at the margin that can swing election results.

Now is also a fitting time for all Asian communities to collaborate in identifying issues that are important to them. Topics like discrimination, economic opportunity fairness, social justice, and identity politics need open discussion. The misconception that immigrants are taking jobs away from Americans warrants exploration, as new cultures bring innovation opportunities, fresh talents and perspectives, and generate demand for products from their home countries, thus creating more trade opportunities. Diversity is America's strength, and equal treatment for all races is guaranteed by the American Constitution. Let's work together and earn our rightful place in this country we call home.

April 17

ELEVATE HENNEPIN DIGITAL SOLUTION ONLINE WORKSHOP

We hosted a Small Business Digital Solution Workshop beginning on April 17th. This workshop aims to assist small business owners with expert IT training and support in leveraging technology to expand their market share.

SMALL BUSINESS DIGITAL SOLUTION C

How to do Market Research and Build Your Digital Strategy

ChatGPT

PRESENTER:
JOHN B YANG – FOUNDER & CEO OF DIGITAL SYNERGY
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AABRN

MODERATOR:
JIANG ZHU – WEB DEVELOPER & SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

ELEVATE Hennepin | AABRN | DIGITAL SYNERGY | Asian Media Access

ELEVATE Hennepin

TECH ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP SERIES
SMALL BUSINESS DIGITAL SOLUTION
 Take Your Business To The Next Level

Webinar will be via Zoom from 6pm to 8pm CST

1) 4/10/24 - MARKET RESEARCH AND BUILDING A DIGITAL STRATEGY
 2) 4/17/24 - WEBSITE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT WITH WORDPRESS
 3) 4/24/24 - SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION FOR GOOGLE AND BING
 4) 5/1/24 - SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT
 5) 5/8/24 - ONLINE ADVERTISING AND PAY PER CLICK ON GOOGLE
 6) 5/15/24 - EMAIL MARKETING ESSENTIALS
 7) 5/22/24 - LEVERAGING CHATGPT AND AI TOOLS
 8) 5/29/24 - WEBSITE TRAFFIC ANALYTICS, MEASURING SUCCESS

Register at: <https://bit.ly/HCTechEssentials>
 Contact: info@elevatehennepin.org

Incentive for Eligible Hennepin County Business Owners:
 1) Reimbursement to cover 75 percent of eligible hardware and software investments, up to \$1,500
 2) Free WordPress Website Development

Asian Media Access | AABRN | DIGITAL SYNERGY | Hennepin

1. DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES:

- BUSINESS GOALS: IDENTIFY WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE THROUGH YOUR DIGITAL CHANNELS
- SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: CHATGPT

Research & Analysis

Programming

10 Digital Strategy Steps

Building a digital strategy involves a structured approach to understanding your business goals, analyzing your market, identifying the right digital channels, and implementing tools and tactics effectively. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to build a digital strategy:

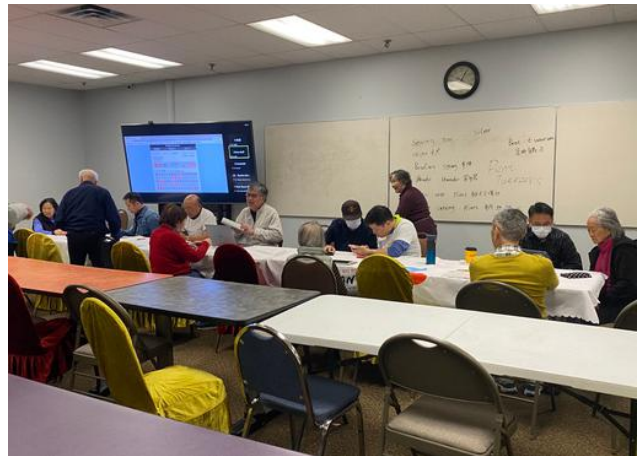
- 1. Define Your Objectives:**
 - Business Goals: Identify what you want to achieve through your digital channels—increased sales, brand awareness, customer engagement, etc.
 - Specific Objectives: Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals that align with your overall business objectives.
- 2. Understand Your Audience:**
 - Target Audience: Define who your customers are. Create detailed buyer personas representing your ideal customers based on demographic data, behavior patterns, motivations, and goals.
 - Customer Journey: Map out the customer journey to understand how your audience interacts with your brand from initial contact through to conversion.
- 3. Conduct a Digital Audit:**
 - Review current digital assets (website, social media, emails, etc.) and performance metrics.
 - Assess the effectiveness of existing digital initiatives and identify areas for improvement.
- 4. Competitive Analysis:**
 - Analyze your competitors' digital strategies to understand their strengths and weaknesses.
 - Identify gaps in the market that you can exploit and differentiate your approach.



April 18

LEGACY CHINESE SENIOR TECH ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP

We were thrilled to support our Chinese seniors during a 2-day Digital Inclusion Workshop at Legacy Adult Daycare on April 18th and 19th. We provided IT assistance to the participants, and covered topics, such as 911 Auto call set-up in the Cell Phone, Assist ACP application, Computer & Smartphone setup, etc...



April 20

YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR MONEY CONFERENCE

We were honored to be invited and to have the opportunity to cohost a workshop to make valuable connections with local business owners. It was an excellent conference to explore ways to grow small businesses and build wealth for Asian Minnesotans.



April 26&27

DINNER WITH ERIKA L. MORITSUGU

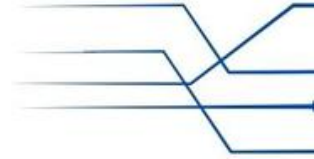
Big shoutout to HAP and our amazing partners for organizing a dinner with Erika Moritsugu! It was nice to meet Erika - AANHPI deputy assistant to President Biden, Lt. Governor Flanagan and connect with state and community leaders in Minnesota at the event.



April 27

CAR SHOW AT SEARS





TECH ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP SERIES SMALL BUSINESS DIGITAL SOLUTION

Take Your Business To The Next Level



John B Yang
CEO of Digital Synergy



Ellie Mariyo
Founder Ellie Mariyo Media



Ceci Dadisman
President of Cardinal + Company

Webinar will be via Zoom from 6pm to 8pm CST

- 1) 4/17/24 - MARKET RESEARCH AND BUILDING A DIGITAL STRATEGY
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- 2) Free WordPress Website Development



ELEVATE HENNEPIN TECH ESSENTIALS COHORTS

Asian American Business Resilience Network in collaboration with Asian Media Access, and Digital Synergy, presents the Hennepin County's Tech Essentials Program. The aim is to empower small businesses and residents in Hennepin County

by providing expert IT training to help them leverage technology and expand their market share.

Through cohort-based training, entrepreneurs will learn:

- Enhancing entrepreneur ability to adopt and integrate technology into their business;
- Raising awareness of, and identifying technology tools that will enhance business delivery; and
- Training and supporting business owners in evaluating and integrating technology into their business.

The program is funded by Elevate Hennepin and offers four cohorts covering essential IT skills, including Digital Marketing, Web Development, and Social Media Management. The class schedule is listed below:

- Cohort #1: July – August., 2023 – [Digital Marketing](#)
- Cohort #2: Sept. – Dec. 2023 - [Web Development](#)
- Cohort #3: Jan – Feb. 2024 - [Social Media Management](#)
- Cohort #4: April – May 2024 – Digital Solutions

Participants who complete a cohort will be eligible for a one-time reimbursement of up to \$1,500, covering 75 percent of eligible hardware and software expenses. For example, if a business owner spends \$1,000 on hardware, they would be eligible for a reimbursement of \$750. Terms and Conditions applied.

Reserve a spot in the Tech Essentials Program today by signing up through the registration link provided by the Asian American Business Resilience Network (bit.ly/HCTechEssentials)



ELEVATE
HennepinSM

**FREE ONLINE
TECH ESSENTIALS COHORTS**



WHAT IS THE MN PROMISE ACT?

The Providing Resources & Opportunity & Maximizing Investments in Striving Entrepreneurs (PROMISE) Act is a new small business revitalization program that will provide grants and loans to disadvantaged businesses located in certain areas of Minneapolis, Saint Paul and greater-Minnesota.

PROMISE ACT - GRANT PROGRAM

Budget

A total of \$86,480,000 million dollars will be awarded to eligible applicants for business repositioning or growth.

Eligible Use

Grant funds can be used for working capital to expenses that occur in the regular course of business such as payroll expenses, rent or mortgage payments, utility bills, equipment other similar expenses.

PROMISE ACT - LOAN PROGRAM

Budget

A total of \$28,080,000 million dollars will be awarded to eligible applicants for approved business projects.

Eligible Use

Eligible project includes but is not limited to construction of buildings, infrastructure, related site amenities, landscaping, and street-scaping. Loans may not be used to refinance or pay off existing debt, pay off delinquent debt, inventory purchases, working capital and employment needs.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



MILESTONE MAKERS SUMMER 2024 COHORT

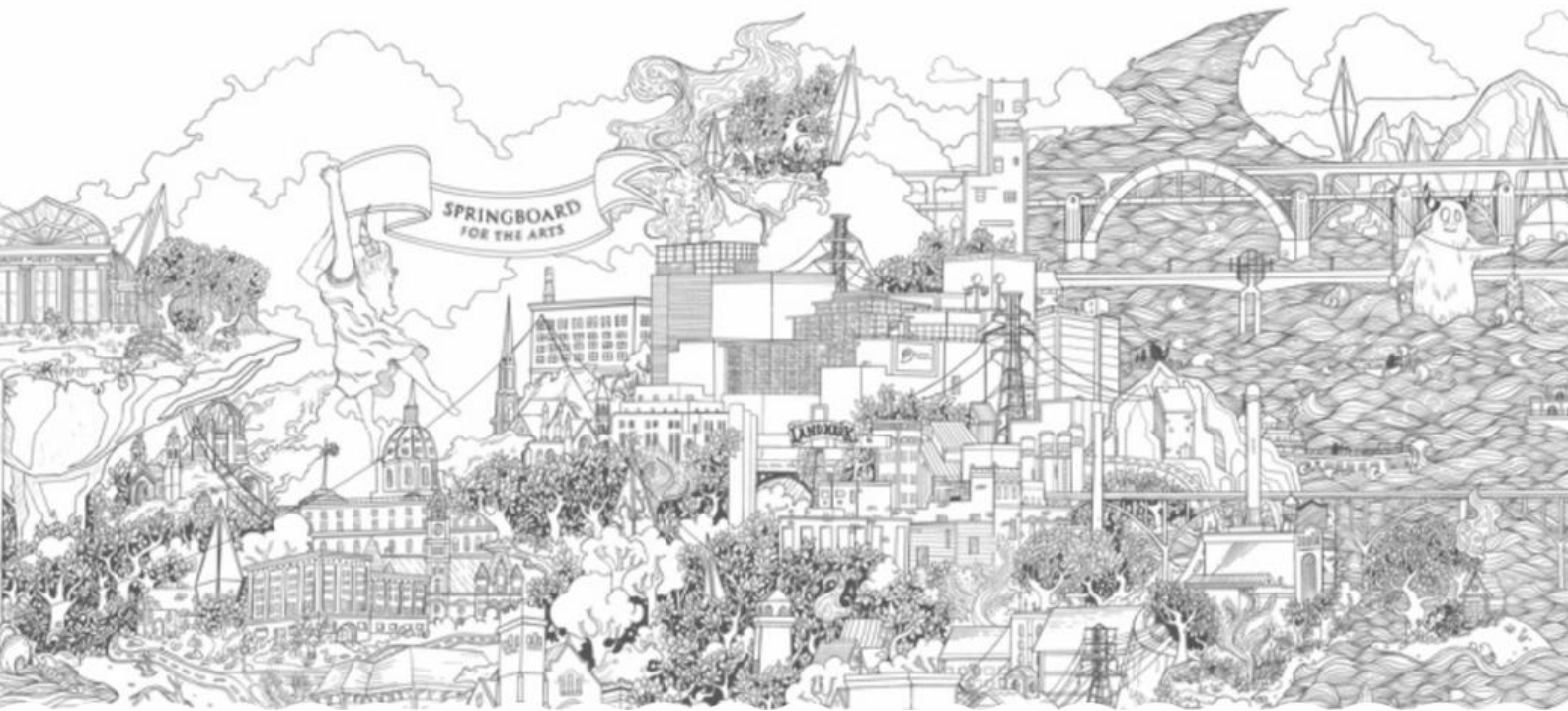
Are you an ambitious entrepreneur seeking to achieve critical business milestones to accelerate your company's growth? The Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center is excited to announce the opening of applications for the Milestone Makers Summer 2024 cohort!

Milestone Makers is a prestigious program designed to support early- to mid-stage entrepreneurs like you in hitting and celebrating important business goals. As part of the cohort, you'll receive business mentoring, executive coaching, training, and resources curated to your individual needs, aspirations, and definitions of success, all at no cost to you.



The Summer 2024 Milestone Makers cohort supports women entrepreneurs focused on any UN Sustainable Development Goal.

To apply for the Summer 2024 cohort, please [express your interest](#) as soon as possible and we will send you the application that is due by April 29th, 2024 at 11:59 pm PST.



Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- May 4, 2024 11:00 am to 4:00 pm - SpringPOP Community & Maker Market
- May 7, 2024 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Art-Train Individual Artist Training
- May 7, 2024 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm - With Us: Artists with Disabilities on Adapting Technology for Us
- May 8, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm - Virtual Legal Clinic for Creatives
- May 14, 2024 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Work of Art: Grant Writing
- May 21, 2024 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Art-Train Agency/Organization Training
- May 28, 2024 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Work of Art: Business Plan Essentials
- June 4, 2024 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Art-Train Individual Artist Training
- June 5, 2024 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Creative Change Coalition, Community of Practice: Vision & Strategy: Artists in Advocacy
- June 11, 2024 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Work of Art: Engaging Customers & Selling Your Work

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

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

2

11am~1pm

Tax Basics 101

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY

3

11am~12pm

Building Learning Superpowers Through Reflection

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY

9

12pm~1pm

Entrepreneurial Resilience: How to Prepare for the Unexpected

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY

15

12pm~1pm

From Pitch to Close

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



MAY
22
11am~12pm

Market Research: Beyond the Basics

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY
23
2pm~3pm

Trailblazers in Entrepreneurship: AAPI Leaders Share Their Stories

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY
28
9am~10am

Tracking Your Business Using Spreadsheets

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY
29
12pm~1pm

Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center Immersive Program Information Session

Business Webinar

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Visit Our Website for More Upcoming Events

[OFFICIAL WEBSITE >>](#)

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