

April 2025 | Volume 3, Issue 11

MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope



Features:

**Dancing Through Healing
and Empowerment for
Women and LGBTQ+**

**Building a Vision
Together: A Community-
Centered Redevelopment
with RiverNorth**

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



Nakita Vang wins the 2024 Yobizmo Business Pitch Competition, celebrating her standout entrepreneurial vision.

IN HER HEELS: DANCING THROUGH HEALING AND EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN AND LGBTQ+

Interviewed By Meejoo Choi

Meet Nakita Vang, founder and instructor of Heal-in-Heels—a dance space created for first-time and non-traditional dancers, ages 18 and up. Officially launched in November 2023, Heal-in-Heels is more than a dance class—it's a movement rooted in confidence, healing, connection, and community. With monthly sessions open to women and LGBTQ+ individuals, Nakita's mission is to help people break free from limiting beliefs and step boldly into their power.

From Hmong Traditions to Her Own Rhythm

Nakita grew up in Minnesota, raised by Hmong refugee parents, and spent much of her early life balancing cultural tradition with personal expression. She began dancing at the age of eight, immersed in traditional Hmong dance—a meaningful connection to her heritage and community. As she got older, her curiosity and passion for movement pushed her to explore beyond those roots. She was drawn to the energy of K-pop, which, in the culture she grew up in, felt like the closest thing to hip-hop. That connection sparked a shift in her dance journey, leading her to experiment with new styles and eventually discover her own unique voice through dance.



From Family to Community: The Rise of Heal in Heels

The idea for Nakita's business began close to home—with her mom and her mom's friends. She realized many of them had never been taught about self-love, confidence, or emotional healing. "In our culture, Hmong women are raised to be quiet, humble, and follow strict expectations," she shared. However growing up in the U.S., she learned how to be bold, expressive, and confident in herself. After watching her perform, her mom and her friends asked if she could teach them to move and carry themselves like she did. What started as small dance sessions for her family soon turned into something much bigger. She posted about her classes on Facebook, and to her surprise, they began selling out. At the time, she had no formal connections in the dance industry—only a supportive network of dance friends and her own creative style. Her prior experience running a social media content creation business, helping others with branding and online presence, gave her the tools and connection she needed to build her own. That's how Heal in Heels came to life.



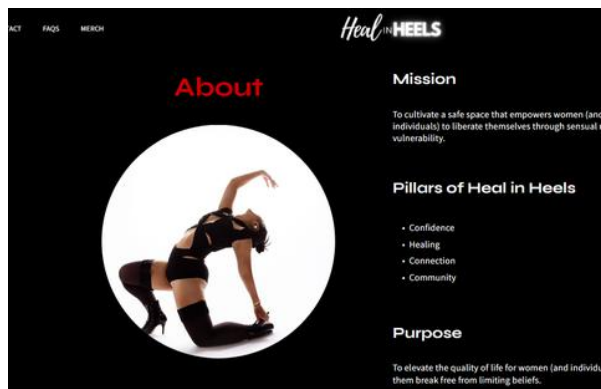
Dancing at the Crossroads of Culture

Nakita draws inspiration from multiple cultures that have shaped her identity and art. Her Hmong roots are central to her work—she's passionate about preserving and sharing the culture with younger generations, while also challenging traditional norms around gender and expression. Korean culture influences her approach to performance, especially the way K-pop blends concept, styling, and dance into a full experience. This is reflected in her Heal in Heels classes, where students explore themed sessions like "dark and mysterious" or "girly and bright," stepping into full characters—not just choreography. She also credits Black culture for its foundational impact on hip-hop, which continues to shape her style and creative voice.

Beyond the Studio Walls: Grants, Grit, and Word of Mouth

One of the biggest challenges Nakita has faced in running her business is the financial barrier—especially not having her own studio space, which limits how much she can offer. In the beginning, she wasn't aware of the many business resources

available or how to access support programs. Over time, she began learning about grants and business competitions, which became essential for growing Heal in Heels. She now actively participates in pitch competitions and applies for grants through organizations like the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC) and the Minnesota State Arts Board. Much of the information came through community connections, social media, and simply subscribing to as many arts and business newsletters as possible. “Word of mouth is powerful,” she says, crediting her community for helping her find the right opportunities at the right time.



Founder & Instructor:
Nakita Vang



Tips for Turning Your Vision into a Business

For those looking to start a business in the dance or creative wellness space, Nakita emphasizes the importance of taking grants seriously. “Apply to as many as you can,” she advises, noting that funding can open doors you didn’t know existed. Equally important is believing in your vision—even if others don’t immediately understand it. “If the idea came to you, it’s because you’re the one meant to bring it to life,” she says. Her advice: seek out resources, find mentors who align with your goals, and don’t give up on your dream just because others can’t see it yet.

“The most rewarding part is how rewarding it is,” Nakita said, reflecting on the deep connections she’s built with her students through Heal in Heels. She is continually moved by the messages and stories shared by women and LGBTQ+ individuals who say her classes have helped them accept and love themselves. What began as a local class has now grown beyond state lines—with workshop requests coming in from across the country. As she takes Heal in Heels on tour to places like Wisconsin and North Carolina, Nakita is proud to continue spreading empowerment, one step at a time. Through dance, she’s not just building a business—she’s creating a space where identity becomes celebration, and movement becomes freedom.

Learn more about Heal-in-Heels at: <https://www.heal-in-heels.com/>



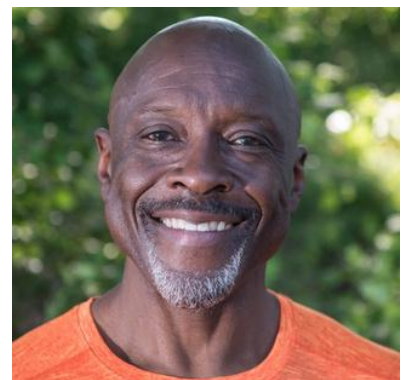
Preface: The Asian American Business Resilience Network has teamed up with Asian Media Access to co-develop the St. Paul Sears Site, we will publicize a series of articles to highlight our progress.

Series of SEARS Redevelopment - Article #15

BUILDING A VISION TOGETHER: A COMMUNITY-CENTERED REDEVELOPMENT WITH RIVERNORTH

Sears Redevelopment Project is proud to announce a major milestone in the Sears Redevelopment Project—our official partnership with RiverNorth Development Partners as the project’s master developer. This exciting collaboration signals a new chapter in the Sears redevelopment process.

In this article, we highlight insights from a recent interview with Anthony Taylor, managing partners at RiverNorth, to learn more about the company’s mission and community-centered approach. Based in North Minneapolis, RiverNorth is a real estate development firm committed to ethical practices and measurable social impact. Their work prioritizes the people and culture of the community, aiming to create developments that truly enhance quality of life for local residents.



Anthony Taylor, RiverNorth

A Partnership Rooted in Community-Driven Development

Anthony's connection to the Sears Redevelopment project grew organically through years of experience in community-driven initiatives across the Twin Cities. He previously collaborated on the ReConnect Rondo project in Saint Paul, a transformative effort focused on restoring and reconnecting historically disrupted communities through equitable development. His work also extended to Frogtown and the University Avenue corridor, where he concentrated on improving mobility and access through walkable, bike-friendly infrastructure. It was during this time that he first met Ange Hwang, Executive Director of Asian Media Access, through shared work in North Minneapolis. Their paths crossed over a mutual commitment to uplifting communities through thoughtful, inclusive development. When he learned about the Sears site, he was immediately interested. "These are organizations rooted in human development," he reflected. With a deep belief in culturally responsive and community-led planning, he saw the partnership as a powerful alignment—focused not just on buildings, but on building well-being, opportunity, and long-term impact for the people who call North Minneapolis home.



Anthony, second from the right, joins Minneapolis Mayor Rybak at the announcement of Ion Corp's new manufacturing facility in North Minneapolis, through the RiverNorth Development effort.

Reviving the Sears Site: Where History and Community Intersect

At the heart of RiverNorth's approach is a commitment to ethical development and measurable social impact—values that align seamlessly with the mission for the Sears Redevelopment. He emphasized that partnering with community-based organizations like AMA and AABRN allows RiverNorth to design projects that prioritize the well-being of residents while also building economic resilience and long-term success. For him, the Sears site represents more than just a physical space—it's layered with historical, cultural, and civic significance. "The Sears site is special because it's the site of historical damage done by the highway system and it is currently the intersection of multiple cultural communities," he said. He also noted that the location uniquely sits at a crossroads between government and the people—a place where public institutions and community life come together. This convergence, he believes, makes the redevelopment both a responsibility and a rare opportunity to design with intention, reconnect what was once divided, and invest in a future shaped by community-led values.

Guiding the Process: RiverNorth's Work Behind the Scenes

The Sears Redevelopment is currently in the pre-development stage, with RiverNorth working closely alongside the project team to lay the groundwork for what's to come. The development plan is ambitious and intentional: it outlines a future that combines

youth, adult, and family development with economic opportunity, integrates intergenerational programming, and weaves together commercial, educational, and housing elements. As the project moves forward, RiverNorth will continue playing a central role across many aspects of planning and execution—including ensuring financial feasibility, designing for walkability and livability, and coordinating with city and county partners. Their work also emphasizes sustainability, with a focus on creating an energy-efficient and environmentally conscious development, as well as economic sustainability, by supporting long-term opportunities that allow the community to thrive. Most importantly, there is a clear commitment to creating community investment opportunities, allowing residents to directly benefit from the growth happening in their neighborhood.



Upcoming Community Walk Audit to Explore the Sears Site

RiverNorth and the project are already thinking creatively about how to engage the community in the coming months. One exciting initiative planned for summer 2025 is community-led walk tours - unique events designed to help residents explore how the Sears site connects to key neighborhoods including State Capitol, Cathedral Hill, the East Side, Downtown, Frogtown, and the Rondo community. More than just a Walk Audit, the event will celebrate the cultural and geographic significance of the location. With local artists, music, food, and storytelling, the goal is to create an immersive experience centered on art, culture, and shared vision. The event plans to be a joyful, community-focused gathering—a meaningful step in building connection and momentum before redevelopment begins.

Looking Ahead: Stay Connected with the Sears Redevelopment

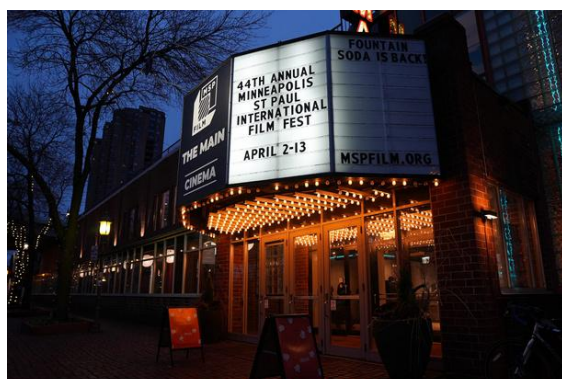
Anthony mentioned that the most exciting part of this project is the chance to support a culturally grounded, community-led organization like AMA and AABRN in leading a development that directly serves the people who live there.

Stay tuned as the Sears Redevelopment continues to take shape—follow [Sears Redevelopment Project](#) website, as well as our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages for the latest updates, upcoming events, and ways to get involved.

April 02~13

44TH MINNEAPOLIS ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

From April 2–13, MSPIFF lit up The Main Cinema and other Twin Cities venues with over 200 international films, engaging panels, and special guests. A standout moment was Director Ang Lee's visit, featuring a conversation on his filmmaking journey and special screenings of *Brokeback Mountain* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* in celebration of the 20th anniversary of *Brokeback Mountain*. Photo Courtesy: MSP Firm



April 04

JACKSON MIDDLE SCHOOL MULTICULTURAL NIGHT

We attended the Multicultural Night at Jackson Middle School, a family-friendly event that brought together Monroe families and the local community for an evening of celebration. The night featured lively performances, a colorful fashion show, a variety of vendors, and more.



April 05

CAMBODIAN AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP'S 1ST ANNUAL CULTURAL GALA NIGHT

We were honored to attend CAPMN's first annual fundraising gala, held last Saturday at U Garden Restaurant. It was a memorable evening filled with vibrant cultural presentations, community connections, and inspiring moments that highlighted the strength and spirit of the Cambodian American community. It was a memorable celebration, and we're grateful to have been part of it.



April 06

LAO NEW YEAR CELEBRATION 2025

The 2025 Lao New Year Celebration at Minnetonka Community Center was a joyful and meaningful day filled with culture, tradition, and community. Hosted by USLAA in collaboration with the Lao Center and Siengkane Lao MN, the event honored the 50th Anniversary of Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement with vibrant performances, traditional ceremonies, fun activities, and delicious food.



REGISTER NOW!

LAO NEW YEAR Celebration

Minnetonka Community Center
14600 Minnetonka Blvd
Minnetonka, MN 55345

Sunday APRIL 6 2025
10:00AM - 9:30PM

Join us for the celebration of our Lao New Year (ປີໃໝ່ລາວ) and to commemorate our 50th Anniversary of Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement.

This year USLAA is hosting the LNY in collaboration with Siengkane Lao MN and The Lao Center (LACM). It will be a captivating and eventful day for the guest and community.

There will be a religious ceremony, giving alms, scented water, Baci/su kwan and traditional Lao dance performances by our SKLM Dance Troupes & the LSA group from the U of M.

This is a free event. Lunch will be provided. We will have fun activities for the kids, trivia quizzes, prizes to give away & wrap up with our Lao lum vong ("circle" dancing engagement) in celebration of our Lao New Year.

SPONSORS

This collaboration is made possible by the Arts and Culture Heritage Fund through the sale of Memorabilia on November 8, 2023

REGISTER NOW

Event Page Link

Dress Code:
Casual/Tradition Custom
Wear (Sinh/Pabeng)

DAY PROGRAM
9:30AM DOOR OPENS

10:00AM
OPENING SPEECH

10:30AM
Religious Ceremony
Giving Alms

10:45AM Thuk Baht

11:30AM 1st Performances

12:00PM
LUNCH BUFFET STYLE

12:45PM
Dancers Parade
50th Anniversary of SE Asian
Refugee Resettlement
Commemoration

1:00PM
Scented Water/Som Ma

1:30PM
Baci/Su Kwan

2:00pm-2:30PM
2nd Performances

4:30PM
LUM VONG

EVENING PROGRAM
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
6:30pm - 9:30pm

"LUM VONG" DANCE FLOOR

April 11

MY SOUL OF GOLD

My Soul of Gold was a powerful exhibition that celebrated Cambodian heritage through art, dance, and memory. My Soul of Gold is the debut curatorial exhibition by Cambodian-American artist and educator Sara Gregor, presented at XIA Gallery & Cafe, it featured visual works, artifacts, and performances that honored love, resilience, and ancestral legacy across generations. Photo Courtesy: XIA Gallery & Café and Sophia Neou



April 12

NEPALI NEW YEAR 2082

The Nepali New Year 2082 celebration at the St. Paul Student Center brought the community together for an evening filled with cultural traditions and shared connection. The event featured the Pancha Kanya ceremony, Khada ceremonies, vibrant performances, and authentic Nepali cuisine. Photo Courtesy: Association of Nepal in Minnesota - ANMN



April 14

THAI SONGKRAN FESTIVAL 2025

Wishing everyone a joyful Thai New Year! Songkran Festival, hosted by the Thai Cultural Council of MN, was a beautiful celebration of renewal, community, and tradition. May the spirit of this new year continue to bring happiness, love, and fresh beginnings. Photo Courtesy: Thai Cultural Council of MN



April 16~19

20TH HMONG NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The 20th Hmong National Development Conference brought together over 1,500 community members, leaders, and partners in Minneapolis to celebrate 50 years of Hmong presence in the U.S. This special milestone was filled with workshops, performances, networking, and powerful conversations focused on leadership, advocacy, education, health, and more. Photo Courtesy: Hmong National Development, Inc.



April 18

NUJ NPLHAIB THIAB NTXAWM SHOWCASE

Artistry of Hmong Dance held its showcase featuring the timeless tale of Nuj Nplhaib & Ntxawm. Through powerful dance, music, and storytelling, the performance shared a beautiful story of love, resilience, and destiny at the CMU Theater. Photo Courtesy: Artistry of Hmong Dance and TxiabNeeb Vaj



April 19

KAREN CULTURE ORGANIZATION OF MINNESOTA (KCO) SHOWCASE 2025

The 2025 KCO Showcase, hosted by the Karen Culture Organization of Minnesota, was a vibrant celebration of the culture, youth talent, and community spirit. From traditional performances to moments of connection, the event highlighted the beauty and resilience of the community. Photo Courtesy: Karen Culture Organization of Minnesota



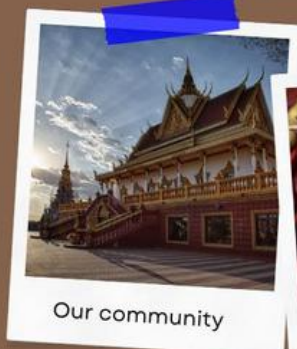
April 18 ~ 20

KHMER NEW YEAR 2025

The Cambodian New Year celebration at Watt Munisotaram was filled with tradition, blessings, and community spirit. Over three days, participants enjoyed alms offerings, cultural dances, delicious food, and time to honor ancestors and welcome the new year with hope. Photo Courtesy: Watt Munisotaram



WELCOME! KHMER NEW YEAR 2025



Watt Munisotaram

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP

Check out this helpful guide from All American Medical Group on how to improve your sleep with simple tips and healthy habits for better rest and overall well-being.

How to Improve Your Sleep

Why is Sleep Important?

Sleep is a vital indicator of overall health and well-being. We spend up to one-third of our lives asleep, and our sleep health remains an essential question throughout our lifespan. A healthy sleep habit is one of the essential factors of high quality of life.




Are You Getting Enough Sleep?

Age	Hours Needed
Teenager (14-17)	8-10
Younger Adults (18-25)	7-9
Adult (26-64)	7-9
Older Adults (65+)	7-8

Health Benefits of Sleep

 Improved mood

 Healthy heart

 Regulated blood sugar

 Improved mental function


 Restore immune system

 Stress relief


 Athletic performance


 Maintaining healthy weight

Things to DO to Improve Sleep

-  Go to bed at the same time daily
-  Get regular exercise each day (recommended 30 minutes)
-  Get regular exposure to outdoor or bright lights
-  Keep the temperature in your bedroom comfortable (recommended 60-67° F)
-  Keep naps short (20-30 minutes max)

Things to NOT DO to Improve Sleep

-  Avoid caffeinated drinks after dinner
-  Avoid heavy or spicy foods in the evening
-  Avoid exercising before bedtime
-  Avoid using technological devices before bed (e.g. smartphone, tablet or laptop)
-  Avoid drinking too many liquids 1-2 hours before bed



To learn more about our doctor's group, call Member Relations: (415) 590-7418

Source: National Library of Medicine, Medical Library, University of California

San Francisco Office
823 Jackson St.
San Francisco, CA 94103

Daly City Office
355 Geary Blvd., Ste. 200
Daly City, CA 94015

aamdoctors.com



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如何改善您的睡眠

為什麼睡眠很重要?

睡眠是整體健康和幸福的重要指標。我們最多有三分之一的時間處於睡眠狀態，而“睡眠健康”的總體狀況仍然是我們整個生命週期中必不可少的问题。



您睡得足夠嗎?

年齡	需要睡眠時間
青少年 (14-17)	8-10 小時
年輕的成年人 (18-25)	7-9 小時
成年人 (26-64)	7-9 小時
老年人 (65+)	7-8 小時

睡眠對健康的好處

 心情好轉

 健康的心臟

 調節血糖

 改善心理功能

 恢復免疫系統

 緩解壓力

 運動表現

 保持健康的體重

為了改善睡眠你應該做的事情

-  每天在同樣的時間上床睡覺
-  每天規律鍛煉 (建議30分鐘)
-  定期到戶外曬日光
-  保持臥室溫度適宜 (建議60-67華氏度)
-  保持短憩 (大約20-30分鐘)

為了改善睡眠不該做的事情

-  晚餐後不要喝含咖啡因的飲料
-  晚上不要吃油膩或辛辣的食物
-  避免睡前做運動
-  睡前不要使用任何電子產品 (例如智能電話, 或平板電腦)
-  睡前1-2小時避免喝太多的液體



想了解更多我們的醫生集團, 請致電會員服務部: (415) 590-7418

Source: National Library of Medicine, Medical Library, University of California

三藩市地址
823 Jackson St.
San Francisco, CA 94103

聖利市地址
355 Geary Blvd., Ste. 200
Daly City, CA 94015

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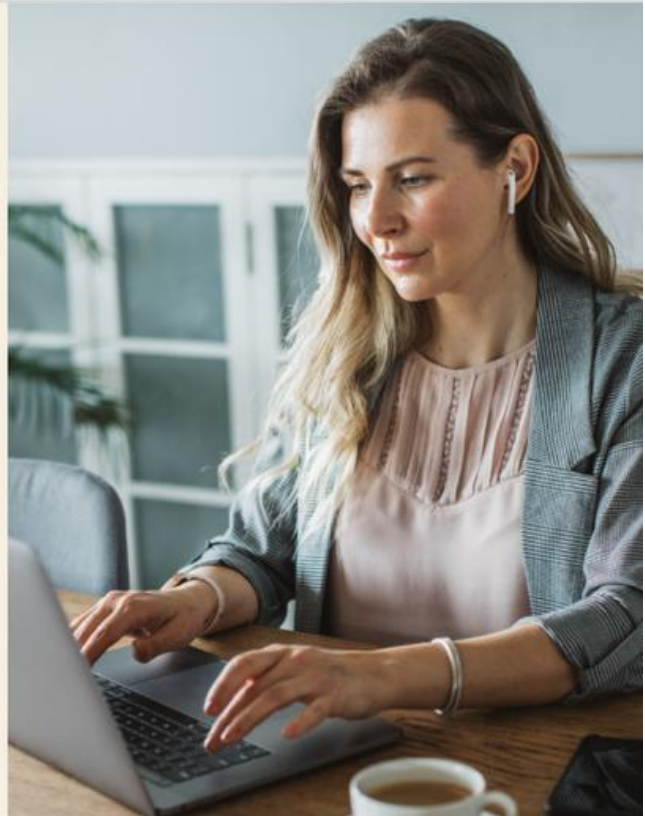
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We can help you find your focus

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

Using local resources
to grow your business

📅 Apr 24, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm



Just added

Event

Unlock the Power of AI
for Your Content
Creation!

📅 Apr 24, 5:00 pm-6:00 pm



Event • Networking Sessions

Peer to peer check-in

📅 Apr 29, 8:30 am-9:30 am

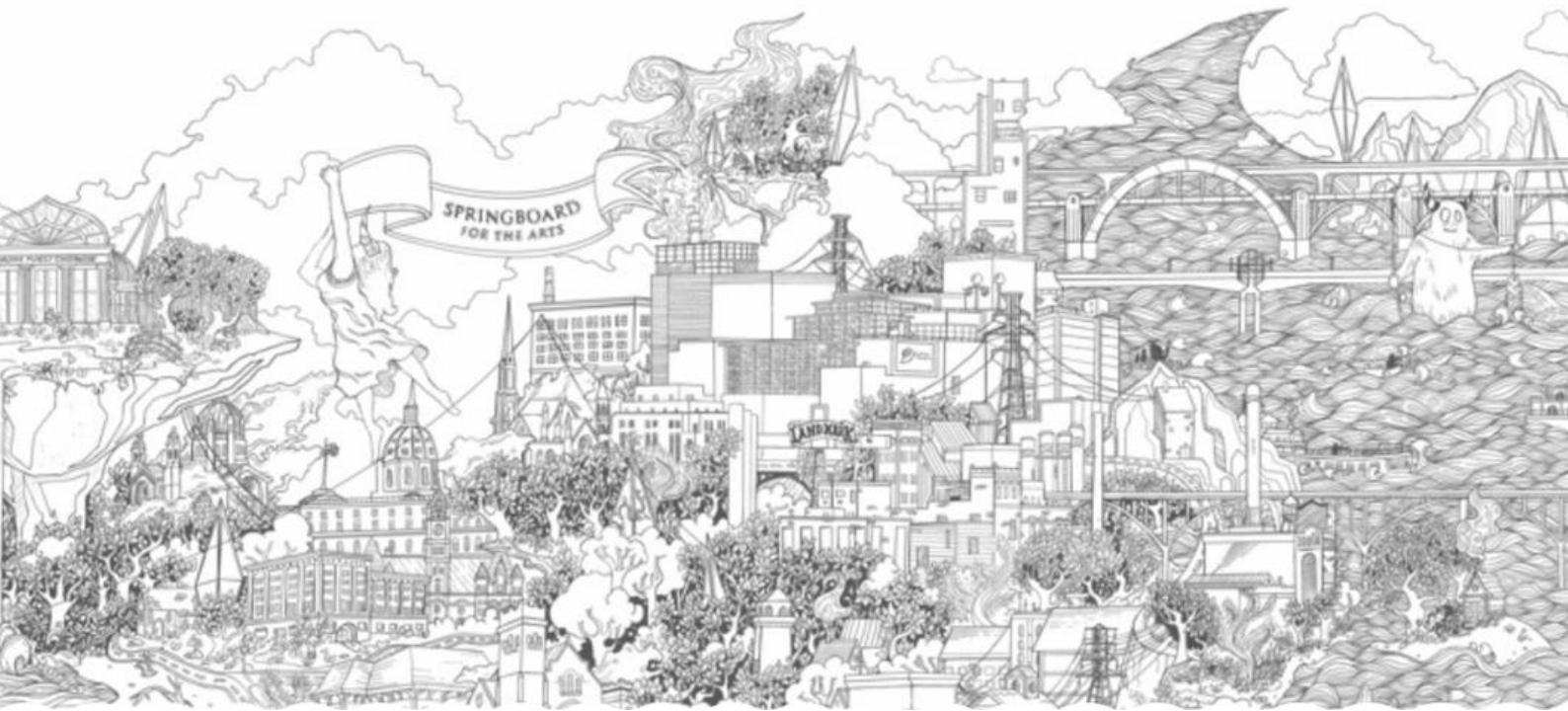


Event • Ask the Expert

Microlending

📅 Apr 29, 10:00 am-11:30 am





Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- April 24, 2025 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm - Ask Me Anything: Working with a Studio Assistant
- April 29, 2025 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm - Navigating the Publishing Process
- May 2, 2025 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Special Topics: Everyday Public Speaking Skills for Artists
- May 3, 2025 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm - Intermediate Sales and Marketing

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](#)



APR
22
5pm~6pm

Strengthen your property with SBA mitigation assistance – virtual webinar

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

APR
23
12pm~1pm

Financial Literacy for Small Businesses

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

APR
24
1pm~2pm

7 Pathways to Startup Success Create Value Through Innovation

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

APR
30
11am~3pm

IPO Bootcamp Spring 2025

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



MAY

6

12pm~130pm

Business 201

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY

7

12pm~130pm

Unlock Your Brilliance: Ignite Your Confidence and Vision

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY

8

10am~11am

Going Global

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MAY

8

11am~1pm

Tax Basics 101

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



Visit Our Website for More Upcoming Events

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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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