

## BICULTURAL ACTIVE LIVING LIFESTYLE E-MAGAZINE

DECEMBER, 2025 | VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 11



## **Project SUPPORT**

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Project SUPPORT (Supporting Under-served through Produce Prescription, and Opportunities to Recreation-activity & Technical-assistance), is led by Asian Media Access (AMA), collaborated with Multi Cultural Community Alliance (MCCA), Project SUPPORT is a cross-cultural, cross-generational, and cross-sectoral initiative, aims to improve health, prevent chronic disease, and reduce health disparities among all members, with a special focus on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOCs) who face the highest risk, and bear the highest burden of chronic disease, named: African American/Black, Asian American and will put a special focus on young people from the two poorest but most diverse neighborhoods in MN – North Minneapolis, and Midway St. Paul.

Supported by CDC's REACH funding, AMA will leverage our extensive network of trusted community partners who provide subject matter expertise and have a history of successful engagement with the respective cultural and geographic communities. All partners have been involved in co-designing this Initiative – Project SUPPORT through below 2 culturally tailored strategies to promote Bicultural Healthy Living, especially for immigrant and refugee communities:

- Nutrition: Increase healthy cultural food access by implementing Food Service Guidelines (FSG) at area Asian Temples and Black Churches, and establishing Produce Rx at area clinics/hospitals.
- Physical Activity: Increase policies, plans and community designs through North Minneapolis Blue Line and St. Paul Sears Redevelopment to better connect residents with activity friendly routes to everyday destination to live/learn/work/play, and provide safe, culturally based places for increasing physical activities.

Please check the Project SUPPORT updates through our Bicultural Active Living Lifestyle (BALL) website, weblog, Facebook, and e-Magazine:

- BALL Facebook at <a href="https://www.facebook.com/ballequity/">https://www.facebook.com/ballequity/</a>
- BALL Monthly eMagazines: <a href="https://ballequity.amamedia.org/project-support/">https://ballequity.amamedia.org/project-support/</a>
- BALL Website: <a href="https://ballequity.amamedia.org/">https://ballequity.amamedia.org/</a>
- BALL Web Blog: <a href="https://www.behavioralhealthequityproject.org/">https://www.behavioralhealthequityproject.org/</a>

For More Information: 612-376-7715 or <a href="mailto:amamedia@amamedia.org">amamedia@amamedia.org</a>



## NUTRITION



**STRATEGY INTRO**: Increase healthy cultural food access by implementing Food Service Guidelines (FSG) at least one Asian Temple, establishing Produce Rx at three clinics/hospitals.

# ASIAN MEDIA ACCESS (AMA) EXPANDS ACCESS TO FRUIT & VEGETABLE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITIES

Asian Media Access (AMA) is partnering with the City of Minneapolis to help translate and distribute information about fruit and vegetable incentive programs, including Market Bucks, Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP/NAPS), to Asian American immigrant and refugee communities. By providing culturally and linguistically accessible materials, AMA ensures that families who might face language barriers can fully understand and take advantage of these programs, improving access to fresh, locally grown produce, supporting food security, and promoting healthier eating habits in underserved communities.

The City of Minneapolis, through its Homegrown Minneapolis program and partnerships with local farmers markets, works to increase access to healthy, locally grown food for all residents. The City coordinates and promotes incentive programs like Market Bucks, which matches SNAP/EBT spending at participating farmers markets. These programs help low-income residents stretch their food budgets, purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables, and support local farmers. Through these

efforts, Minneapolis aims to reduce barriers to nutritious food, strengthen food security, encourage healthy eating, and promote community resilience.

## FRUIT & VEGETABLE INCENTIVE PROGRAM – HUNGER VITAL SIGN SUMMARY

The Hunger Vital Sign™ is a brief screening tool that identifies households at risk for food insecurity. Families are considered at risk if they respond "often true" or "sometimes true" to either of these statements:

- "Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more."
- "Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more."

Patients identified as at risk may benefit from food access programs such as SNAP, WIC, and NAPS, and fruit and vegetable incentive programs including Market Bucks, FMNP, and SFMNP/NAPS. Participation in these programs improves access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs, supporting overall health and well-being.



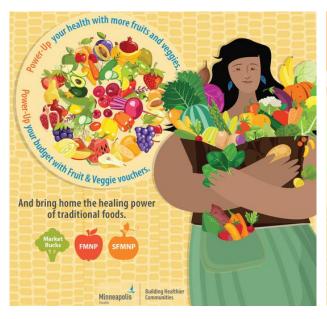
#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR FRUIT & VEGETABLE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS:**

 Market Bucks (SNAP/EBT): Eligible participants are individuals or households currently receiving SNAP benefits. Anyone with a SNAP/EBT card can apply and automatically qualifies.

- Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP/WIC): Eligible participants are households enrolled in WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Program), which targets pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under age five who are at nutritional risk.
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP/NAPS): Eligible participants are adults aged 60 or older who are enrolled in the Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS).

## **NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SENIORS (NAPS)**

The Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS) is a federally funded program in Minnesota that provides food support to older adults to improve nutrition and food security. Adults aged 60 and older receive monthly food packages containing shelf-stable groceries such as canned fruits and vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy alternatives. Seniors enrolled in NAPS are also eligible for SFMNP vouchers, which can be used to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs at participating farmers markets. NAPS helps reduce food insecurity, supports healthier eating habits, and promotes independence and well-being in later life.





## **RESOURCES & ASSISTANCE:**

MN Food HelpLine: 888-711-1151

SNAP Screening Tool: [hungersolutions.org/SNAP-screener]

Through its collaboration with the City of Minneapolis, AMA is helping bring the healing power of traditional foods to Southeast Asian immigrant and refugee households, making nutritious food more accessible, culturally relevant, and supportive of healthy, vibrant communities.

#### **Educational Article**





As the days get shorter and temperatures drop, many employees experience feelings of isolation and loneliness, especially those working remotely or in smaller teams. While these feelings are common, they can take a real toll on mental health, motivation, and overall well-being.

The U.S. Surgeon General 2023 advisory, "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation," stated that lacking social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day and that approximately half of U.S. adults report experience loneliness with the highest rates among young adults. In the U.S., <a href="Ioneliness related">Ioneliness related</a> absenteeism has an estimated annual cost of over \$154 billion.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) provides a resource to help recognize when a co-worker may be in need of help: Mental Health Struggles in the Workplace: Know the Warning Signs. Checking in with your employees shows that you see them and care about their wellbeing.

Social connection is one of the strongest predictors of happiness and resilience and an impactful social determinant of health. The good news? Even small, intentional actions can make a big difference in helping employees feel seen and supported.

Below are tips to encourage connection this season:

- 1. Create opportunities for genuine interaction. Encourage teams to add "connection time" at the start of meetings. Adding this to the agenda consistently brings opportunity to learn more about each other, share moments of gratitude, and topics of interest.
- 2. Promote wellness challenges with a social connection. Create physical activity challenges where colleagues can pair up to track and encourage movement.
- 3. Offer inclusive, low-pressure events. This could include coffee chats, volunteer opportunities, book clubs, and interest clubs.
- 4. Review and share resources available through your organization's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), insurance plans, and Employee Resource Groups (ERG) to offer support and connection.
- 5. Model connection as a leader. When coordinators and supervisors share how they are prioritizing connections by checking in with peers, taking breaks, or joining wellness activities, it encourages others to do the same.
- 6. <u>Make social connection a strategic priority</u> in the workplace for all levels. The CDC's <u>NIOSH's Worker Well-Being Questionnaire</u> (WellBQ) is an assessment focusing on worker well-being across multiple spheres as a holistic construct.
- 7. Help employees feel more connected, cared for, and supported this winter by sharing this handout.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



**STRATEGY INTRO:** Increase policies, plans and community design changes through China Garden, Minneapolis Open Streets and St. Paul Sears Redevelopment to better connect residents to everyday destination to live/work/play, and provide safe, culturally based places for increasing physical activities.

# ASIAN MEDIA ACCESS CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE ST. PAUL SEARS SITE AS A CULTURAL MOBILITY HUB

Asian Media Access (AMA) has continued advancing a bold vision for the St. Paul Sears Site—transforming it into a vibrant mobility hub that strengthens connections to the Green Line Light Rail, Rice Street Rapid Bus, protected bike lanes, and regional bike/walk trail networks. At the heart of this transformation is creative placemaking, where arts, culture, and active transportation work hand-in-hand to bring people into the space, increase foot traffic, and drive equitable community and economic development.

This reimagined Sears site becomes a cultural enterprise zone, where walking trails, cycling routes, outdoor fitness stations, and ADA-accessible pathways are woven together with public art installations, cultural programming, and community festivals. Together, these features signal a new model of how movement, wellness, and cultural identity fuel revitalization.



SEARS Bike Route Discussion

## COMMUNITY AUDITS LINKING CULTURE, WELLNESS, AND MOBILITY

After completing two walk audits with Safe Routes to School, AMA and partners - including the Asian American Business Resilience Network and the Frogtown/Rondo Black Church Alliance - worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to conduct a comprehensive Bike Audit on September 17th. The process convened community members, planners (Terra Soma, LLC and subconsultant partners - Alta and HDR) design to identify barriers to bikeability and opportunities for multi-modal connections.

Design priorities emerging from these audits include:

- First/last-mile mobility solutions that connect residents to regional systems
- Safe, accessible routes to playgrounds, community gardens, and cultural activity zones
- **Flexible outdoor spaces** for yoga, tai chi, dance, and heritage-based movement practices from African American, Hmong, and other cultural traditions
- Placemaking features, such as murals and cultural wayfinding, that make walking and biking more inviting

These audits ensure that residents—especially seniors, people with disabilities, and families with young children—shape the spaces intended for their wellbeing.

## Planning Assistance Overview

Who is on your Local Planning Team?

NAME	TITLE/ROLE
John Yang	Executive Director, AABRN
Ange Hwang	Executive Director, Asian Media Access
Tony Johnson	Senior City Planner, City of Saint Paul
Anna Potter	Principal Planner, City of Saint Paul
Peter Musty	Principal Planner & Zoning Administrator at CAAPB
Donnell Bratton	President, Frogtown/Rondo Black Church Alliance
Dave Cowan	Consulting and Program Support Director at Safe Routes Partnership
Hayden Shim	Senior Associate, PDI Design and Civil Engineering

NAME	TITLE/ROLE
Jonessa Wisniewski	Ramsey County Health OPUS Coalition
Foung Hawj	Minnesota State Senator
Jay Xiong	Minnesota State Representative
Wesley Smith	Station Manager, Twin Cities Radio Network
Nou Lee	Project Manager, Elluminance Era
Steve Johnston	Élan Design Lab, Project Manager
Adam Wangsness	Élan Design Lab
Jeff Menimen	Damon Farber
Matt Pacyna	Transportation Collaborative & Consultants



#### HEALING PAST HARMS THROUGH ACCESSIBLE ACTIVE LIVING

The Mobility Hub plan directly confronts the generational impact of Interstate 94's construction, which displaced thousands of Rondo residents and created long-standing barriers to recreation, healthcare, and opportunity. By embedding accessibility and active transportation into every aspect of the design, the Sears Site becomes a place for healing, reconnection, and movement.

AMA's engagement strategies -door knocking, culturally specific festivals/outreach,

and community-led route testing - ensure that long-time residents drive decision-making. This inclusion sets a new standard for future infrastructure projects that prioritize health equity and restorative community development.

## **DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS AND YEAR-ROUND ACTIVE SPACES**

In collaboration with MnDOT and Terra Soma, LLC, AMA is advancing a comprehensive planning process that includes:

- Audit Report, including both Walk and Bike audit results.
- Action-planning forums to potentially develop a few Demo Projects
- · Culturally tailored community engagement
- Demonstration projects that test new mobility and placemaking features in the public right-of-way

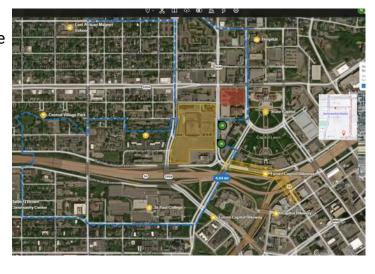
Indoor and outdoor activity zones are connected by accessible walking and cycling routes, with winterized, climate-controlled spaces and improved lighting for safe evening use. These coordinated elements show how creative placemaking and active transportation can operate seamlessly—making movement easy, joyful, and culturally meaningful throughout all seasons.

#### ARTS AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING AS ECONOMIC DRIVERS

The Sears Site demonstrates that cultural placemaking is not simply about beautification—it is an engine for economic revitalization. By integrating arts and active mobility, the site supports:

- Job creation in wellness, cultural programming, and management
- Business incubators for creative entrepreneurs
- Increased foot traffic driven by festivals, public art, and cultural events
- Heritage tourism that honors the Rondo community's legacy
- Wellness tourism linked to bike trails and walking loops

These strategies attract residents and visitors alike, generating revenue while preserving cultural identity. Partnerships with the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, MnDOT, the Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board, cultural institutions, and healthcare systems strengthen the site's role as a regional destination for sustainable transportation and cultural commerce.









## SYSTEMS CHANGE: WHERE CULTURE, MOBILITY, AND EQUITY MEET

The Sears Site Mobility Hub illustrates a powerful shift in how cities can rebuild: walkability, bikeability, and cultural expression cannot be separated from prosperity or health equity.

- Trails become corridors for cultural learning
- Outdoor fitness stations double as intergenerational gathering spaces
- Plazas host dance, performance, and wellness programming
- Accessible pathways connect residents to the economic and social life of their neighborhood

This model offers replicable principles for cities everywhere: integrate active transportation with cultural heritage, use community-led audits to shape design, and recognize movement itself as a core economic strategy.

#### A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURE AND COMMERCE

Our transformation of the St. Paul Sears Site demonstrates the vision behind BUILDING BRIDGES: Connecting Communities through Culture and Commerce. Creative placemaking, when combined with active transportation and inclusive mobility planning, becomes a force for community resilience and economic opportunity.

By centering arts, accessibility, and wellness, AMA and its partners show how a repurposed urban landmark – St. Paul Sears Site can evolve into a cultural enterprise anchor—supporting foot traffic, stimulating local economies, and fostering a healthier and more connected transportation future for Frogtown and Rondo residents.

# ASIAN MEDIA ACCESS SUPPORTS THE BLUE LINE EXTENSION (BLE) TO ADVANCE THE MOBILITY AND CULTURAL PLACEKEEPING IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS

The METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) is more than just a light rail project—it is a transformative initiative that connects communities, strengthens mobility, and preserves the cultural identity of neighborhoods across North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park. With 13 planned stations spanning from Target Field in downtown Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park, the BLE is designed to enhance first-mile and last-mile connections, integrate multimodal transit, and create inclusive, culturally resonant public spaces.

#### **ENGINEERING FOR CONNECTIVITY**

Station engineering reports emphasize robust connectivity features to ensure safe and accessible travel for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders alike. Planned improvements include:

- Protected bike lanes, linking neighborhoods to BLE Stations and existing city bikeways.
- Enhanced pedestrian crossings at critical intersections connecting to the Stations, incorporating curb extensions, and upgraded lighting.
- Transit-supportive Station Designs, including expanded platforms, ADA-compliant access, and secure bike parking to encourage multimodal travel.
- Integration with planned trail expansions, such as the Bottineau Trail improvements, ensures continuous and safe routes connecting parks, schools, and cultural sites.

These engineering measures are paired with long-term planning to foster neighborhoods that are not only accessible but actively encourage walking, biking, and public transit use.







Cultural Placekeeping

#### CULTURAL PLACEKEEPING: ART AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Cultural placekeeping reports highlight the BLE's commitment to reflecting North Minneapolis' rich cultural heritage within station design. In collaboration with the Cultural Placekeeping Design Group, four artists—Adrian Lowe, Marlissa Karpeh, Philli Irvin, and Costanza Carballo—are creating immersive, site-specific artwork that celebrates local history, community pride, and cultural diversity. Key themes emerging from community feedback include:

- Growth, renewal, and connection, using the "earth, seed, and bloom" motif to symbolize nurturing and intergenerational continuity.
- Representation of everyday residents, landmarks, and cultural narratives, highlighting Southeast Asian, African, and Indigenous influences.
- Inclusive and interactive experiences, with interpretive signage and digital storytelling to educate riders about neighborhood history and identity.
- Stations in North Minneapolis, including West Broadway, Lyndale Avenue, and James Avenue, incorporate vibrant visuals, dynamic organic forms, and symbolic imagery such as hands and trees, reinforcing the BLE as a community-centered corridor rather than a purely transit-focused route.

## **ENHANCING EVERYDAY AND CULTURAL CONNECTIVITY**

The BLE stations are designed to connect residents not only to work, schools, grocery stores, and parks, but also to cultural landmarks such as community centers, public murals, heritage sites, and local gathering spaces. Upgraded sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and transit-supportive crossings ensure safe access to these destinations,

while station design and public art highlight the neighborhood's history and cultural identity. By linking mobility infrastructure to both daily life and cultural assets, the BLE fosters active transportation, social interaction, and a stronger sense of place, making each station a hub of both movement and community pride.

### ARTS AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING AS ECONOMIC DRIVERS

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## LINKING ENGINEERING AND CULTURE

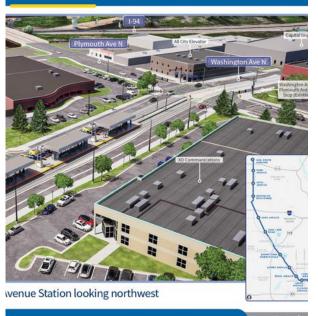
The BLE demonstrates that transit infrastructure and cultural storytelling can work hand-in-hand. Safe, accessible station design promotes mobility while artistic and culturally grounded interventions strengthen community cohesion, pride, and identity. By centering anti-displacement principles, public engagement ensures that long-term residents shape the evolution of their neighborhoods, keeping both mobility and culture at the forefront.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

With engineering plans moving forward alongside cultural placekeeping strategies, Asian Media Access continues to help Northside neighbors to redefine what transit infrastructure can achieve: not only efficient, connected travel but also a celebration

of the people, history, and identity that make North Minneapolis vibrant. Residents, planners, and transit riders alike can anticipate a corridor that connects communities physically, socially, and culturally—setting a model for future transit projects nationwide.

## RAL PLACEKEEPING OUTH AVE STATION



## PROJECT SUPPORT EVENTS

October ~ November 2025

# SEARS REDEVELOPMENT – "HIGHWAY 94 IMPACTS ON THE RONDO NEIGHBORHOOD" VR EXHIBITION

Asian Media Access and the Frogtown/Rondo Black Church Alliance co-hosted a 10-minute VR exhibition, "Highway 94 Impacts on the Rondo Neighborhood," at the Hallie Q. Brown Center (Oct-Nov 2025) to illustrate the historic displacement caused by I-94 and gather community input for the Sears Redevelopment. The immersive experience helped residents reflect on past transportation trauma while shaping a more equitable, community-driven vision for the site's future.







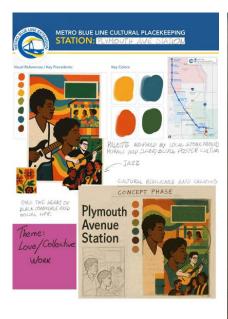




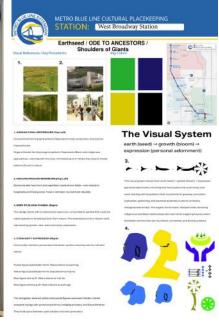
## October 22 & November 19, 2025

## BLUE LINE EXTENSION CULTURAL PLACEKEEPING PUBLIC EVENTS

Asian Media Access collaborated with Hennepin County, and the Metropolitan Council to engage communities in the Blue Line Extension Cultural Placekeeping project by inviting residents to preview and provide feedback on artists' creative designs for the new station. Two Public sessions on October 22 and November 19, 2025, at Elim Lutheran Church, showcased the artists' work, fostering community input, cultural reflection, and inclusive design for the BLE station area.













## **November 8, 2025**

## **OUTREACH AT THE AAPI MILITARY BALL**

Asian American Business Resilience Network and Asian Media Access jointly hosted an outreach table at the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Military Ball, promoting nutrition, physical activity, and overall wellness to support the health and well-being of AAPI veterans.











## **November 8th - 30th, 2025**

# OUTREACH AT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION EXHIBITION OF THE VIETNAM WAR

The Vietnamese Community of Minnesota and Asian Media Access jointly hosted an outreach table during the exhibition, offering resources that support healing, cultural resilience, and overall wellness for Vietnamese American refugees impacted by the war's legacy.











## **December 6, 2025**

## **OUTREACH AT MINNESOTAN HAN FESTIVAL**

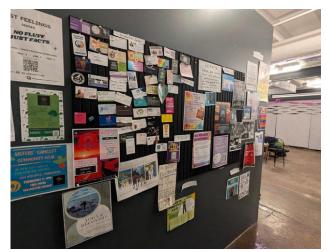
Asian Media Access joined the Minnesotan Han Festival on Saturday, December 6, 2025, together with artists Su Hwang, Naomi Ko, Sun Yung Shin, and May Lee-Yang to celebrate the Korean diasporic community in Minnesota. The event featured new artwork from Heather Kim and traditional Korean drumming by JangmiArts, hosted at Queermunity, 3036 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis. Queermunity is a unique co-working and creative space, and we encourage everyone to check it out.











## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

## **WEEKLY FOOD DRIVES**

DATE/TIME: Every Sunday, November-

December, 9:00am-5:00pm

PLACE: Minneapolis American Indian

Center Rotunda: 1530 E Franklin Avenue,

Minneapolis.

Volunteer sign up:

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C04 4DAFA723A5F4C25-60030852-volunteer#/





## **HMONG NEW YEAR 2025- 2026**

DATES: December 13-14, 2025

PLACE: Milwaukee, WI

DATES: December 26-29, 2025

PLACE: Fresno, CA

## MN SKILLS-BASED HIRING ACCELERATOR WORKSHOP: DECEMBER

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, December 16, 2025,

9:00am-1:00pm

PLACE: CareerForce in Minneapolis North -Second Floor 800 W Broadway Minneapolis MN

55411, register:

https://business.mplschamber.com/events/register/16868

The Minnesota Skills-Based Hiring Accelerator provides half-day workshops, offered monthly around the Twin Cities metro area, that will help your company or organization jump start your skills-based practices. Accelerator participants receive training and tools to allow employers to: Rebuild their hiring process with a skills and competency-based approach by focusing on candidates' capabilities rather than credentials





## HOLIDAY HEALTH HUB

DATE/TIME: Saturday, December 20, 2025, 12:00pm-4:00pm
PLACE: Nellie Stone Johnson
Elementary, 807 N 27th Ave
Minneapolis, MN, 55411, register
<a href="https://forms.gle/e7zKWBmKPXDBs3N">https://forms.gle/e7zKWBmKPXDBs3N</a>
69

- Food
- Giftcards
- Resources
- Toys
- Coats



## THE TALE OF THE PEACOCK

DATE/TIME: Saturday, January 17, 2026, 7:00pm Sunday, January 18, 2026, 2:00pm PLACE: O'Shaughnessy Auditorium, 2004 Randolph Ave, St Paul, MN 55105

This year's show, The Tale of the Peacock inspired by Dai ethnic folklore, follows the theme of "love and the cycle of life." Through the tale of the peacock's incarnation, it portrays the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. With graceful physical expression, the entire dance drama conveys humanity's purest emotions — love, faith, rebirth, and eternity. We will have performance

## 50TH VIETNAMESE NEW YEAR IN MINNESOTA

DATE/TIME: Saturday, January 24, 2026, 11:00am-8:00pm and Sunday, January 25,

2025, 11:00am-6:00pm

PLACE: 11178 Burnsville Center,

Burnsville, MN 553306

This year marks the 50th Vietnamese New Year in Minnesota, a significant milestone for our community and our shared journey in the United States. We invite all Minnesotans to join us in celebrating this historic occasion.





## Contact Us

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## Partnering with



































