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MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope



Features:

Michi Barall:
Navigating the
Intersection of
Culture and
Creativity

Community
Feedback and
Insights from
the Sears Survey

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



MICHI BARALL: NAVIGATING THE INTERSECTION OF CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

Interviewed By Meejoo Choi

Growing up in Toronto, Canada, Michi Barall developed an early love for theater, spurred by her brother's influence. She was very young when they joined an after-school drama club, though she didn't initially consider acting as a professional path. Her educational journey was started by her experience at Stanford University, where she transferred into the Structured Liberal Education program during her first year. Through the program, with its dedicated tutoring and focus on in-depth literature and cultural studies, sparked her academic inspiration. While at Stanford, Michi auditioned for *Walls*, a play by Jeannie Barroga, produced by the Asian American Theatre Project (AATP), which had been founded by David Henry Hwang in 1978. Michi played the role of Maya Lin in the production, and through AATP and the experience it provided, she was able to see her path in theater. She felt fortunate to be part of the industry at a time when doors were just opening for Asian Americans, allowing diverse voices to be heard and represented.

Inspiring Through Acting, Writing, and Teaching



Michi has built a dynamic career as both an actress and a playwright, actively contributing to various productions. As an actress, she has appeared in well-known television shows such as *New Amsterdam*, *Personal Velocity*, and *Law & Order*. Alongside her acting, Michi has also made a name for herself as a playwright, with works like *Sophocles in Staten Island* and *Drawing Lessons*, which will run from October 8 to November 10, 2024, at the

Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis. Currently, she serves as an assistant professor of Theatre and Performance at Purchase College in New York, where she continues to inspire the next generation of theater professionals.



Path to Embracing Her Asian American Heritage

Michi's cultural influences are shaped by an overall environment rather than a few distinct factors. Growing up in a second-generation immigrant family with a Japanese mother and a German father, she initially identified as Canadian. However, after moving to California in the 1990s, she began to embrace her Asian American identity, influenced by the rich cultural history of Asian Americans in the U.S. Her academic journey, particularly working as a research assistant for Gary Okihiro during her Ph.D. at Columbia University, further broadened her perspective. Okihiro, a key figure in Asian American studies, focused on "Third World Studies," which connects domestic and Asian American histories to broader global phenomena. Additionally, her involvement in Asian American theater has been central to her career, allowing her to engage deeply with cross-cultural and intercultural narratives, which continue to shape both her personal and professional identity.

Making Your Own Door: Breaking into the Industry

Her professional journey began through formal education, starting with college and then pursuing an MFA program at NYU. After participating in the end-of-year showcase, she secured an agent and landed her first jobs, then it helped her build early connections, particularly with the Asian American theater community. One key connection was with the Ma-Yi Theatre Company, a space that fostered the development of new plays and provided actors with invaluable stage time. She describes Ma-Yi as her training ground, where she learned from other actors and gained confidence in exploring roles beyond acting. However, she emphasizes that

there are many ways to break into the industry, and it's crucial to "make your own door." Even without an agent, some people have found success by creating their own work, like solo shows. For those starting out, she advises building connections by immersing yourself in community spaces, attending workshops, and collaborating with peers. The relationships you form in these environments can become long-lasting and foundational to your career.

Insights on Creative Challenges and Cultural Representation

Michi faces significant challenges in her writing due to the complexities of production, particularly when her work crosses different forms, such as dance and music. Since she isn't a dancer, musician, or choreographer, she must collaborate with professionals from these fields, which can be time-consuming and require extensive coordination. When writing, she constantly thinks from the perspective of production, balancing artistic vision with practical constraints—a process she admits requires a lot of planning and collaboration with others. She describes this work as something that 'needs a village.' For example, the development of her play *Drawing Lessons* involved two years of workshops and close collaboration with her team, including an illustrator who brought the visual language of the play to life. To overcome these challenges, Michi values collaboration as key to problem-solving and wishes she had learned earlier how to better balance creative ambition with the realities of production.



Ongoing Challenges for Younger Generation

Another ongoing challenge Michi highlighted is the representation of Asian Americans in the industry. She strives to portray stories that are culturally accurate while ensuring they resonate with both Asian American and broader audiences. This balance can be difficult to navigate, but her advice is to trust your voice and build strong relationships within your community. She believes that trusting those connections will guide and support you in your creative journey, helping overcome the hurdles of representation.

Michi Barall's Advice for Aspiring Artists

Michi offers valuable advice to those interested in pursuing a career in the industry, emphasizing the importance of approaching it with a beginner's mindset. She often sees students in higher education who fear failure or feel like they have little to offer, but she encourages them to recognize the value in their unique perspectives and not be afraid to contribute. Starting small is key—she points out that even in a theater scene with limited funding and small audiences, there's freedom in creating your own work. With just a bit of support from friends and minimal resources, you can express your voice without constraints.

She also highlights the importance of staying open to new experiences and opportunities. She believes that becoming an artist is not about immediate success, but about commitment to growth and continual learning. The path can be difficult, but her message is clear: stick with it and persevere, even when breaking into the industry feels tough.

For information about Drawing Lessons, please visit the Children's Theatre Company website at: <https://childrenstheatre.org/whats-on/drawing-lessons/>





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 #10

SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND INSIGHTS FROM THE SEARS SURVEY

Introduction

Welcome to the 10th installment of our series, where we dive into a comprehensive analysis of the physical activity survey conducted to gather community feedback and voices. In this edition, we will highlight our ongoing efforts to listen to the community and incorporate their insights into the Sears Redevelopment project.

The Power of Surveying: Capturing Perspectives

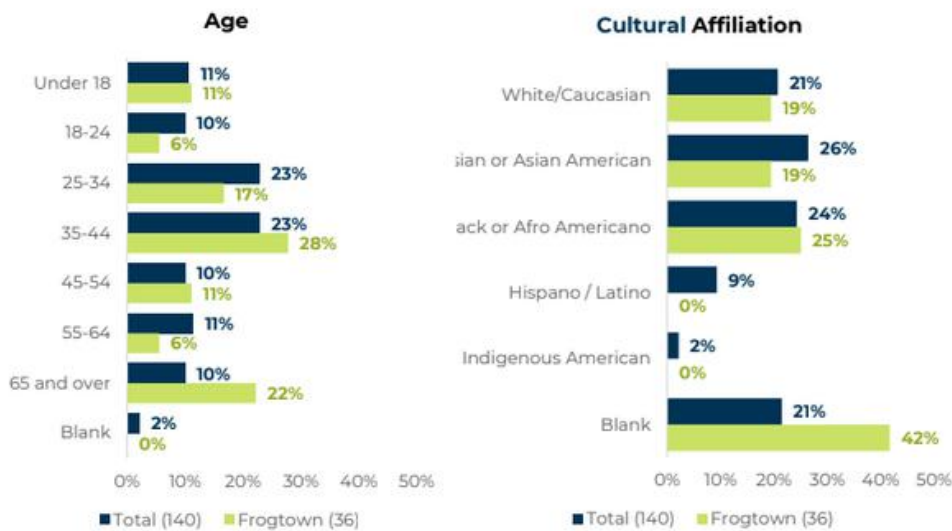
Asian Media Access is conducting several surveys, including feedback on the Sears facility, the Sears redevelopment, and a physical activity survey. In this article, it will share the results of the physical activity survey and provide an analysis on how this input can inform the Sears redevelopment project.

Asian Media Access (AMA) and the Asian American Business Resilience Network

(AABRN) are conducting this survey to ensure that every voice in the community is heard and that the project reflects the collective vision and needs of its residents. Surveys are a powerful tool for capturing diverse perspectives, offering an opportunity for all community members to share their thoughts, regardless of their background or position. By allowing for anonymous responses, we also create a safe space for individuals to express their true opinions without fear of judgment. This approach ensures inclusive participation and helps shape a project that genuinely addresses the needs of everyone involved.

Understanding the Diverse Demographics

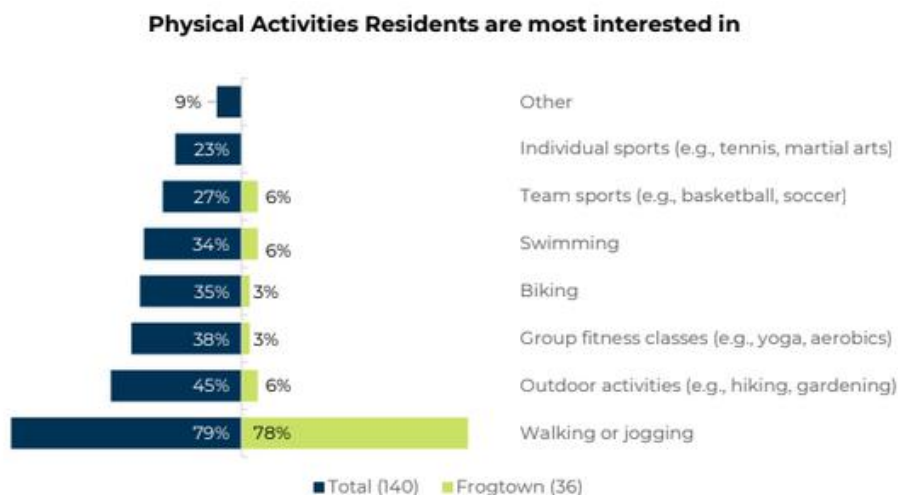
The physical activity survey had 140 participants, including 36 residents from the Frogtown neighborhood. During community events such as the Asian Street Food Festival, Sears Juneteenth event, and the Fortune Tales Music Festival, staff from Asian Media Access (AMA) and Juxtaposition Arts interviewed attendees, ensuring a wide range of voices were heard, regardless of race, age, or background. The largest age group represented in the survey was 25-44 years old, making up 56% of participants, with the 35-44 age range being the most common among Frogtown residents (28%). In terms of cultural affiliation, 26% of participants identified as Asian or Asian American (19% from Frogtown), 24% as Black or African American (25% from Frogtown), and 21% as White/Caucasian (19% from Frogtown).



Basic Yet Vital: Addressing Community Needs for Physical Activity

When asked about the most challenging barriers to engaging in physical activity, participants identified lack of time and motivation as the primary obstacles. Additionally, 18% of all participants (14% of Frogtown residents) noted the absence of nearby facilities as a significant barrier. Despite these challenges, about 80% of both the total participants and Frogtown residents expressed a strong interest in walking or jogging as their preferred activities, with other popular options including outdoor

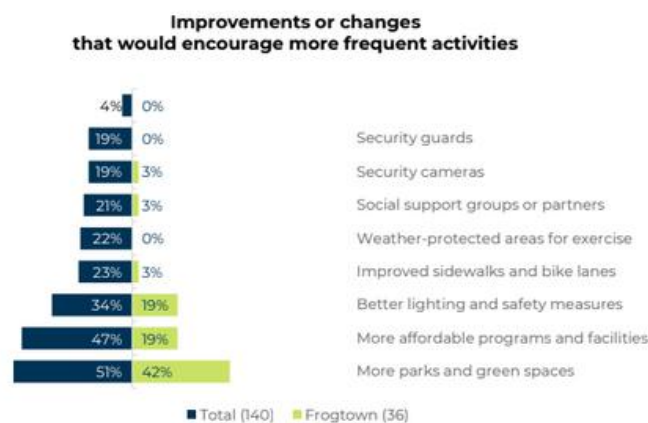
activities, group fitness classes, biking, and swimming. These findings suggest that the community’s needs are quite simple—residents want more opportunities and space to engage in walking and jogging. Addressing this basic desire could significantly improve access to physical activity for the community, potentially by creating or enhancing local spaces for these activities.



Unlocking Wellness: The Importance of Green Space and Safe Facilities

During the survey, we asked community members what improvements or changes would motivate them to engage in more frequent physical activity. Among Frogtown residents, 42% identified the need for more parks and green spaces as the top priority, followed by more affordable programs, facilities, and better lighting and safety measures. Additionally, a majority of participants—83% overall and 85% of Frogtown participants—considered parks and green spaces to be the most essential facilities for physical activity. Walking and biking trails, along with community centers, were also highlighted as important spaces for encouraging regular physical activity. These findings underscore the community’s desire for more accessible and safe recreational areas to support their wellness goals.

These findings highlight the community's clear preference for accessible, well-maintained parks and green spaces, along with safe and affordable facilities, as key motivators for increased physical activity. Addressing these needs through thoughtful urban planning and improved infrastructure could significantly boost community engagement in active lifestyles.



Continuing the Conversation

In addition to identifying key areas for improvement, the survey has provided valuable insights and voices from community members. We will incorporate these perspectives into our planning, which may include proposing more accessible facilities, green area for community to walk/ jog around, and improving environment for physical activity. The survey is still ongoing, so if you are interested in sharing your vision, insights, or feedback, or if you want to learn more about the project, please visit our website at <https://searsstpaul.info/>. Your input is crucial as we work together to build a healthier, more active community.





HUNDREDS PARTICIPATE IN "I BELONG HERE" MURAL AT STATE FAIR

Hundreds of State Fair Visitors placed their mark of belonging on the Circle of Belonging mural at the Cultural Destination Boutique, Education Building.

“Every space has a story. We had people from all walks of lives and cultures say “I Belong Here” in the colors and words they placed on the mural” said lead artist, Reta. “So many people shared how much they appreciated this Circle of Belonging.”

“The Circle of Belonging is part of the theme of the Cultural Destinations Boutique featuring 30+ countries and cultures and 40+ local businesses,” said, Dr. Bruce Corrie, economist and cultural entrepreneur. “We have created a new destination at the Minnesota State Fair where people enjoy culture – through sharing of gifts to loved ones, listening to music of the world, participating in the mural, Culture is Cool Fashion Show, author readings, and guest artists like Peewee Dread who also makes Rasta Tease Creole sauces featured here.”

Mural 2 min video - https://youtu.be/_7XENEWSS1o

Meet our entrepreneurs and products: <https://youtu.be/oN6YLj9mgRw>

Culture is Cool Fashion Show: <https://youtu.be/qXzjrYZtv5k>

Daily Program: <https://www.culturaldestinations.org/statefair24>

September 14 & 15

MINNESOTHAI

We took part in MinnesoThai, an event that highlighted authentic Thai street food, Thai beer gardens, live musical performances, local vendors, and various games.



September 14

AUTUMN MOON FESTIVAL AT MALL OF AMERICA

We joined the Alliance of Minnesota Chinese Organizations and other local ethnic communities at Mall of America for the Autumn Moon Festival! The afternoon was filled with cultural performances from local Chinese, Hmong, Laotian + Vietnamese communities.



September 15

MID AUTUMN FESTIVAL AT ASIA MALL

We participated in the Mid-Autumn Festival at Asia Mall, where we enjoyed a vibrant event featuring festive papercutting, origami, and calligraphy bookmarks. The highlights of the celebration included a spectacular lion dance, a graceful Taiqi show, and a mesmerizing Guzheng performance.



September 18

WORKFORCE WEDNESDAY

We participated in the Workforce Wednesday to promote our upcoming Augmented and virtual reality online hybrid course with an informational booth.



September 20

AVIVO RESOURCE FAIR & DRESS FOR SUCCESS EXPRESS

We hosted a booth at the fair to share information about our upcoming programs, connecting program participants and community members with valuable resources.



September 21

BROADWAY OPEN STREET - ASIAN SENIORS PERFORMANCE

We cohosted an hour-long, age-friendly show with our Asian seniors, sharing their Chinese culture. We also successfully engaged with neighbors on vaccines, voter registration, the Blue Line Displacement Survey, and gaming addiction prevention.



September 21

AMAZING THAILAND BLOCK PARTY

The Amazing Thailand Block Party is a Thai and Lao street food festival celebrating Southeast Asian culture. It features traditional dance and vocal performances, authentic Thai and Lao street food, as well as souvenirs, art, and crafts.



September 21

ST. PAUL PHALEN LAKE MOON FESTIVAL

The Phalen Lake Moon Festival offers artistic performances, photography, mooncake tasting, cultural booths, fashion displays, and a poetry contest, celebrating creativity and culture.



September 22

INDIAN TEMPLE CELEBRATION

The Hindu Society of Minnesota hosted the Onam celebration, a vibrant harvest festival, at the Temple. The event was filled with rich traditions, a strong sense of community, and a delicious sadhya feast.



September 28

KIMCHI FESTIVAL

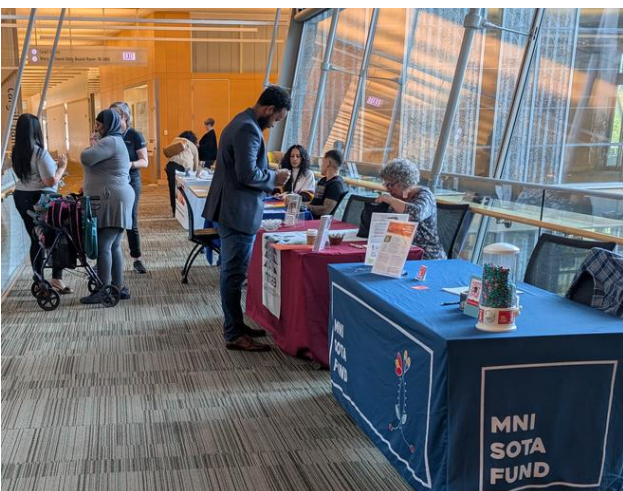
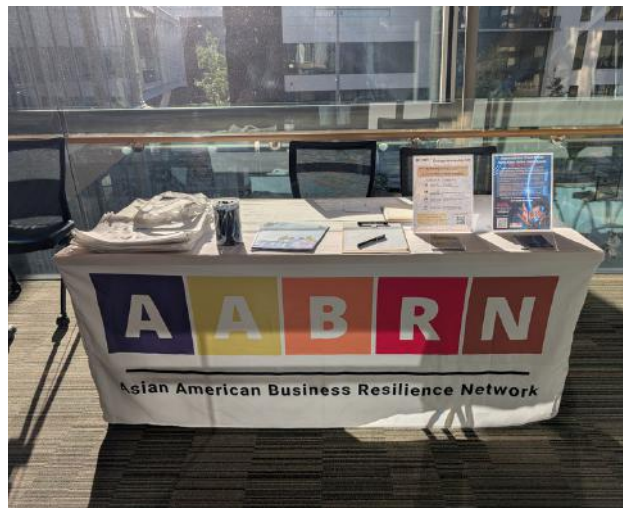
This event aimed to foster community while offering opportunities for cultural connection and learning. It featured a full lineup of performers and food trucks for attendees to enjoy. Attendees also had the opportunity to learn how to make kimchi and taste 10 different varieties of it.



October 05

ENTREPRENEUR EXPO

The Entrepreneur Expo connects micro-entrepreneurs and new business owners with organizations dedicated to supporting their success. We set up a booth to promote our upcoming events and network with participants.



October 17

MINNEAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER AR/VR SHOW

The AABRN AR/VR Training Cohort recently attended the AR/VR Show held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. This event provided an exciting opportunity for participants to explore the latest advancements in augmented and virtual reality technologies.



October 18

2024 APM LEADERSHIP AWARDS DINNER

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans hosted its semi-annual Asian Pacific Leadership Awards Dinner, honoring individuals who made significant contributions to the state and nation, advancing the community in meaningful ways.



October 19 & 20

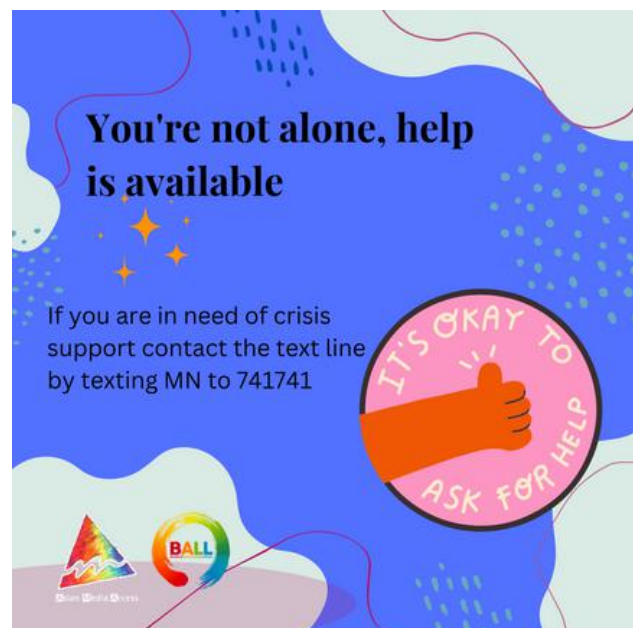
TASTE OF ASIA

We participated in the Taste of Asia event, celebrating the rich customs and traditions of art, music, philosophy, and cuisine, highlighting the vibrant diversity of local Asian ethnic communities in Minnesota.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS FLYERS

Asian Media Access has created a set of mental health heritage story cards. If you are in need of crisis support contact the text line by texting MN to 741741.





For more than 60 years, the SBA has celebrated National Small Business Week, highlighting the vital contributions of America's entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Nominate a small business owner today!



SCAN the QR Code or visit sba.gov/nsbw to download nomination forms and guidelines.

DEADLINE: December 5, 2024 | 4 pm EST

District Office Information:

Local District Office: Minnesota District Office

Office website: <https://sba.gov/mn>

Contact: minnesota@sba.gov



U.S. Small Business Administration

SBA 2025 NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK AWARDS

For more than 60 years, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has celebrated National Small Business Week (NSBW), which acknowledges the critical contributions of America's entrepreneurs and small business owners. National Small Business Week 2025 will take place May 4-10, and SBA will officially recognize their hard work, ingenuity, and dedication, including their contributions to the economy.

[Click here to get details and submit your nominations by Dec. 5th.](#)



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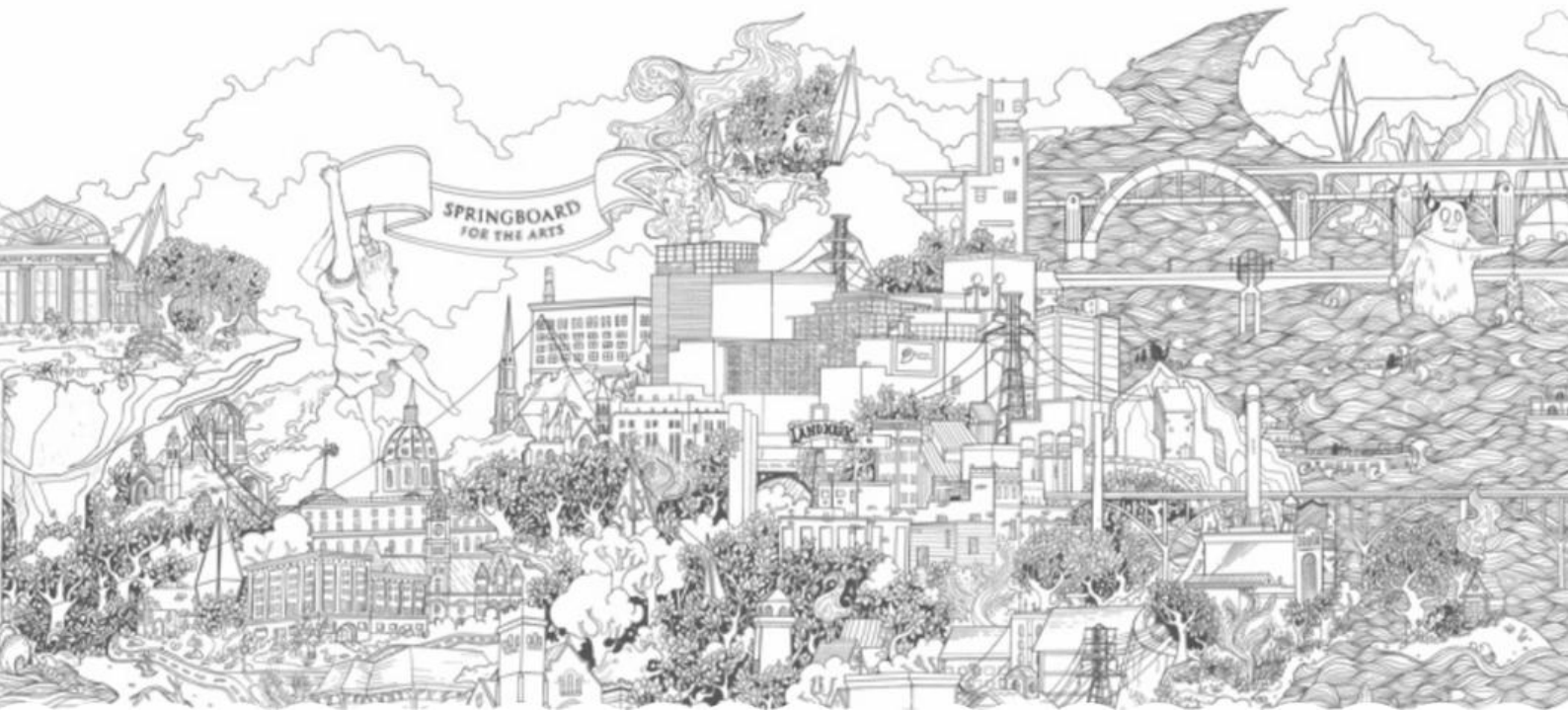
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¹Active is defined as monthly account activity such as deposits, withdrawals, transfers, etc. ²Stearns Bank will donate \$1,000 to each nonprofit organization that maintains one or more active Nonprofit Banking Solutions accounts for a full 12 months, with recurring donations following each active 12-month period. Subject to change at any time. ³Account will be charged the \$40 international wire fee for each international wire request, and upon monthly statement date, account will automatically receive a refund for up to 5 international wire fees charged during statement period. ⁴APY is annual percentage yield. Rates are accurate as of 03/04/2024 and subject to change at any time, including after account opening. Fees may reduce earnings. ⁵Earn up to \$500 per month. Pending and preauthorized debit card transactions do not earn cash rewards until the final transaction posts to the account. Cash rewards rate effective 03/04/2024 and subject to change at any time.

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Learn More at: <https://www.stearnsbank.com/nonprofitbankingsolutions>



Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- October 23, 2024 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm - Collaborating with Galleries, Museums, and Curators to Showcase Your Art
- October 24, 2024 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm - Heartland, Heartwork Book Tour: Grand Marais
- October 26, 2024 10:00 am to 4:30 pm - Work of Art Retreat – Ely Folk School
- October 26, 2024 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Carbon Sound Music Makers Workshop
- October 29, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm - Art-Train Agency/Organization Training
- November 1, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Special Topics: Introduction to Adobe Lightroom
- November 3, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Work of Art: Funding
- November 9, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Work of Art: Funding
- November 13, 2024 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Artist Statements
- November 16, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Work of Art: Grant Writing

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](#)



OCT
23

12pm~4pm

SBA Cybersecurity Summit

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

OCT
23

11am~12pm

Practical AI Strategies

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

NOV
1

12pm~1pm

Impact Investing for Everyone

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

NOV
5

2pm~3pm

The Power of Grassroots Marketing

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



NOV

6

12pm~1pm

Sales Strategy for B2B Startups

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

NOV

8

8am~430pm

Boots to Business Reboot for Veterans and Spouses

In-Person Business Event

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

NOV

13

8am~430pm

Boots to Business Reboot for Veterans and Spouses

In-Person Business Event

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

NOV

13

12pm~1pm

Revitalizing Innovation

Business Webinar

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