



BICULTURAL ACTIVE LIVING LIFESTYLE E-MAGAZINE

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Features:

**How Plant-Based
Nutrition and Produce
Prescription Programs
Transform Lives**



Project SUPPORT

Table of Contents

| | |
|-------|---|
| 02~03 | Introduction |
| 04~08 | Nutrition |
| 09~13 | Physical Activity |
| 14~17 | Tobacco Control |
| 18~21 | Vaccination for Adults |
| 22~27 | Project SUPPORT Events |
| 28~30 | Understanding and Stopping Anti-Asian Hate |
| 31~33 | Upcoming Events |
| 34 | Contact |

INTRODUCTION



Project SUPPORT (**S**upporting **U**nder-served through **P**roduce/**P**ark **P**rescription, and **O**pportunities to **R**ecreation-activity & **T**obacco-control), 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 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 (Supporting Under-served through Produce/Park Prescription, and Opportunities to Recreation-activity & Tobacco-control), through below 4 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.
- **Tobacco Control:** Support a Media Campaign to educate BIPOC communities about the potential statewide tobacco flavor ban, and work with area sports teams to find out what people/youth know and feel about flavored tobacco products. Focus groups and media message testing will be done to determine what the community needs to know and what messages related to flavored tobacco would appeal to which cultural groups. We will focus on young athletes from pan-Asian and pan-African communities, and a media campaign featured the young athletes based on what the message testing reveals.
- **Vaccination for Adults:** Increase education, demand for, and access to flu, COVID-19, and other adult vaccinations via pop-up community clinics at the places that cultural groups feel comfortable and connected, and increase regularity of vaccine promotion in priority communities; and increase the percentage of pan-Asian and pan-African seniors who are up-to-date with recommended adult vaccinations.

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

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

For More Information: 612-376-7715 or amamedia@amamedia.org



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.

BREAKING FREE FROM FOOD ADDICTION: HOW PLANT-BASED NUTRITION AND PRODUCE PRESCRIPTION PROGRAMS TRANSFORM LIVES



Chuck Carroll, known as "The Weight Loss Champion" and host of The Exam Room Podcast produced by the Physicians Committee, delivered a deeply personal and transformative presentation to our recovery community this week as part of Asian Media Access and Rochester Clinic's expanded Produce Prescription Program.

At just 5 feet 6 inches tall, Chuck once weighed 420 pounds with a 66-inch waist, earning his champion title from an NFL player after losing an incredible 275 pounds. His candid discussion about food addiction struck a powerful chord with attendees, many of whom found themselves nodding in recognition as Chuck described his own struggles with compulsive eating.

THE REALITY OF FOOD ADDICTION

Chuck didn't hold back in describing the depths of his food addiction. At his heaviest,

he was consuming meals that could include over 5,000 calories and 15,000 milligrams of sodium in a single sitting. These numbers represented a life spiraling out of control, where food had become both comfort and prison. Chuck painted a vivid picture of his daily reality: the shame of hiding his eating, the physical discomfort of carrying 275 extra pounds on his 5'6" frame, the constant cycle of failed diet attempts followed by even more weight gain. He described how food addiction had stolen his energy, his confidence, and nearly his life. At just 27 years old, he didn't believe he would live to see 30. Out of desperation, he turned to weight loss surgery in 2009, convinced it would fail like all his previous attempts.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE STRUGGLE

What made Chuck's presentation particularly impactful was his ability to explain the science behind food addiction in accessible terms. Drawing from his work with the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, he helped attendees understand why certain foods create such powerful cravings.

Chuck shared compelling research about food addiction rates, contrasting highly processed foods with whole plant foods. The data was eye-opening: McDonald's Double Quarter Pounder with Cheese scored a 73 on the addiction scale, while Pizza Hut Meat Lovers rated 62, and Snickers came in at 58. In stark contrast, whole plant foods showed dramatically different patterns—strawberries and broccoli both scored 0, while apples, sweet potatoes, blueberries, and corn all rated just 5.

This stark contrast illustrated exactly why some foods trap us in cycles of compulsive eating while others naturally support our health and wellbeing.

| Which Foods Are Addictive? | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|-------------|--------|
| | Sugar (g) | Fat (g) | Sodium (mg) | Rating |
| Pizza Hut Pepperoni (1 slice) | 1 | 9 | 420 | 52 |
| Pizza Hut P. Lovers (1 slice) | 1 | 12 | 530 | 62 |
| McD's Cheeseburger | 7 | 14 | 800 | 52 |
| McD's Double QP with Cheese | 7 | 24 | 1120 | 73 |
| Oreos (3 cookies) | 14 | 7 | 135 | 52 |
| Snickers | 46 | 24 | 189 | 58 |

| Which Foods Aren't Addictive? | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|-------------|--------|
| | Sugar (g) | Fat (g) | Sodium (mg) | Rating |
| Apple | 10 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Sweet Potato | 4 | 0 | 55 | 5 |
| Broccoli | 2 | 0 | 33 | 0 |
| Blueberries | 10 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Corn | 5 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| Strawberries | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

THE POWER OF PLANT-BASED NUTRITION: 90% OF THE SOLUTION

Chuck's 275-pound weight loss and his ability to maintain that loss through a plant-based diet served as living proof that recovery is possible. What made his story particularly compelling was his honesty about the role of his 2009 weight loss surgery—while it was the catalyst that saved his life, Chuck credits only 10 percent of his long-term success to the procedure. The remaining 90 percent came from

adopting a plant-based lifestyle. Chuck's enthusiasm for his new lifestyle was infectious as he shared the profound changes beyond just weight loss. By adopting a plant-based diet, he no longer fears regaining weight as he had so many times before. He expressed excitement about lowering his risk of heart attacks, which run rampant in his family. The confidence he gained from the weight loss enabled him to pursue his dream of becoming a reporter, covering sports and news for CBS and later NBC News Radio. He was also featured in PCRM's Teaming Up 4 Health campaign, where he had the opportunity to speak on Capitol Hill and share his remarkable journey.

"Now I know why fiber fills me up," commented one participant, expressing gratitude for finally understanding the biological mechanisms behind satiety. This insight proved to be a lightbulb moment for many in the room who had long struggled with understanding their obesity and chronic disease patterns. Chuck's ability to translate complex nutritional science into practical, actionable information proved invaluable for those seeking concrete tools for their own recovery journeys.



A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND CLARITY

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of Chuck's presentation was the hope it provided. His transformation from someone consuming thousands of calories daily to becoming a respected voice in plant-based nutrition demonstrated that even the most severe food addictions can be overcome. "Clearer food, clearer health," became an unofficial motto among attendees following Chuck's talk. This simple phrase encapsulated the connection between dietary choices and overall wellbeing that Chuck so effectively communicated.

Chuck's visit reminded our Produce Prescription program participants that addiction takes many forms, and that the path to healing often requires understanding the science behind the struggles. His combination of personal vulnerability, scientific knowledge, and practical solutions provided exactly what many attendees needed to hear.

The timing of his presentation was particularly meaningful as our participants have recently joined Rochester Clinic's expanded Produce Prescription program, designed to help everyone include more vegetables and whole foods in their diets to combat obesity and chronic disease.

As participants learned about the stark differences between addictive processed foods and naturally satisfying whole plant foods, they could see how the Produce Prescription program provides a concrete pathway to implement these insights, offering the practical tools and resources to begin their own transformative journeys toward optimal health.



Educational Article

CDC'S HEALTHY HABITS: FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TO MANAGE WEIGHT



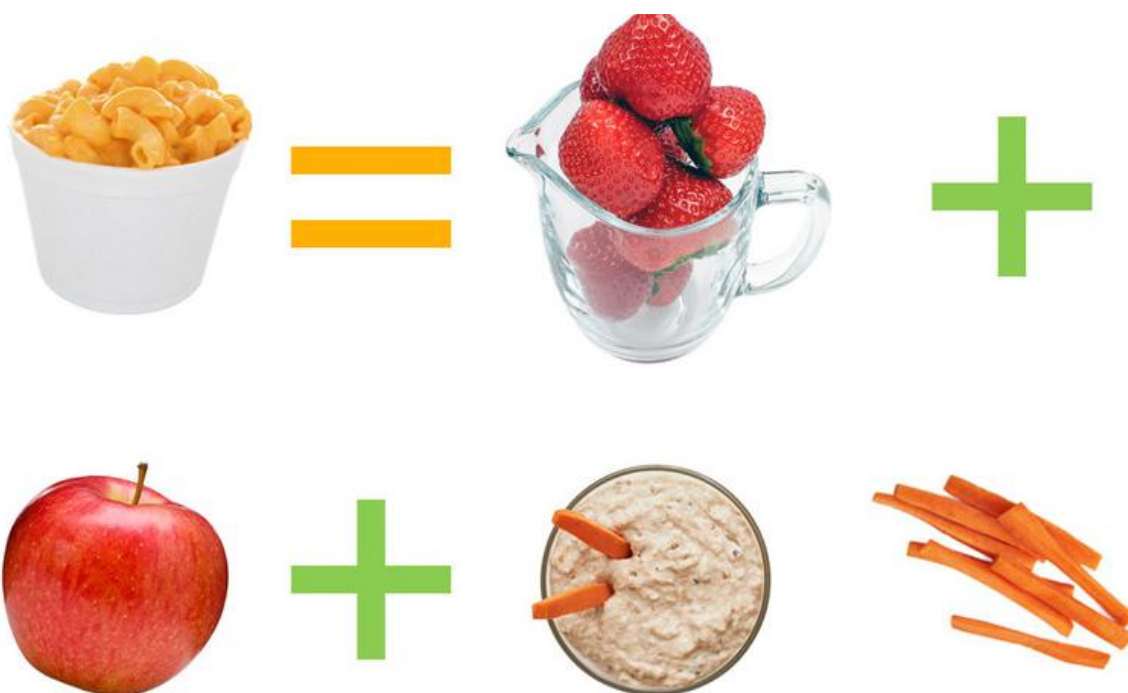
Check out the full article at: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/healthy-eating/fruits-vegetables.html>

Eat fruits and vegetables uncooked or with fat-free or low-fat cooking techniques. Try steaming your vegetables, using low-calorie or low-fat dressings, and using herbs and spices to add flavor. Some cooking techniques, such as breading and frying, or using high-fat dressings or sauces will greatly increase the calories and fat in the dish. Also, eating raw fruit lets you enjoy its natural sweetness.

Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables are also good options. Frozen or canned fruits and vegetables can be just as nutritious as the fresh varieties. However, be careful to choose those without added sugar, syrup, cream sauces, or other ingredients that will add calories.

Choose whole fruits over fruit drinks and juices. Fruit juices have lost fiber from the fruit. It is better to eat the whole fruit because it contains the added fiber that helps you feel full.

Whole fruit gives you a bigger snack than dried fruit. For example, a small box of raisins (1/4 cup) is about 100 calories. For the same number of calories, you can eat 1 cup of grapes and feel more full.



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.

YOUTH VOICES SHAPE BLUE LINE EXTENSION PLANNING

Neighborhood youth leverage community mapping and street interviews to influence transit-oriented development for the Blue Line

Asian Media Access has worked with METRO Blue Line Extension that connects downtown Minneapolis, North Minneapolis, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Brooklyn Park through approximately 13.4 miles of new track with twelve new stations. The project's stated goals of connecting residents to education, workers to jobs, patients to healthcare, and families to resources while stimulating economic development for small businesses.

As Minneapolis prepares for the transformative METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE), a groundbreaking Asian Media Access' youth-led Community Assessment is providing crucial data to ensure that new transit infrastructure actively promotes community health rather than perpetuating existing disparities. The Assessment directly complements the youth participants' advocacy for improved healthy food retail options and enhanced physical activity infrastructure.

Through an innovative Youth Media Force program combining community

neighborhood mapping with Juneteenth street video interviews, Minneapolis youth have created a comprehensive analysis of North Minneapolis' food security, produce needs, and physical activity landscape that directly informs upcoming BLE station area planning.

YOUTH-LED COMMUNITY MAPPING REVEALS CRITICAL INSIGHTS

The neighborhood youth participants employed a sophisticated multi-phase methodology that demonstrates the power of peer-to-peer community assessment. Working in four specialized groups, they systematically mapped nine critical infrastructure domains including educational institutions, food environment, transportation networks, and public safety/cultural/historic entities, etc.. Their findings paint a detailed picture of a community with significant assets alongside serious health environment challenges.

The Community Mapping revealed a troubling concentration of fast food establishments including McDonald's, Wendy's, and liquor stores throughout the West Broadway area, creating what participants identified as a primary barrier to Neighborhood Wellbeing. Simultaneously, they documented severely limited access to green spaces and recreational facilities, constraining opportunities for safe physical activity. Safety



Identify limited green space, but many fast food stores, like: McDonald, Wendy's and Taco Bell

concerns emerged as a dominant theme, with inadequate street lighting and concerning levels of illegal activity in certain areas creating additional barriers to outdoor exercise and active transportation.

However, the youth assessment also identified crucial protective factors that provide a foundation for positive development. Community gardens emerged as particularly important assets, serving dual purposes by improving produce access while creating venues for meaningful physical activity. Cultural and arts institutions were recognized as vital community anchors that contribute to social cohesion and provide alternative spaces for youth engagement.

JUNETEENTH STREET INTERVIEWS ADD COMMUNITY VOICE

Building upon their community mapping work, the youth participants expanded their methodology to include direct community engagement through street video interviews conducted during Juneteenth celebration at North Minneapolis. These

conversations provided invaluable firsthand perspectives from Northside residents about their daily experiences navigating food security, produce consumptions and physical activity challenges.


Community members shared sophisticated strategies they have developed for combining resources from multiple food sources, including community gardens, food shelves, and corner stores, to meet their families' nutritional needs despite systemic barriers. The interviews revealed how seasonal challenges compound existing problems, with winter months creating additional barriers to accessing fresh produce while simultaneously limiting outdoor physical activity opportunities.

Regarding physical activity, residents provided detailed insights about informal exercise practices and community spaces that might not be visible through traditional assessment approaches. They described walking groups, informal sports activities (ex. Asian volleyball group at the Hmong International Academy for example), and creative community exercise practices while also explaining how safety concerns, weather patterns, and infrastructure limitations influence their daily decisions about physical activity as well as limitations to active transportation.



STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT WITH REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL INITIATIVES

The timing of this youth-led assessment creates unprecedented opportunities for meaningful community inputs into multiple major infrastructure and cultural development initiatives. The Minneapolis City Council's support for the Blue Line Extension in 2024 and the planned Station Area Planning beginning in 2025 provide direct pathways for integrating youth findings into transit-oriented development decisions, while Hennepin County's Cultural Place-keeping efforts also offer additional frameworks for community-driven development that celebrates neighborhood identity and assets.



Additionally, AMA youth has incorporated the Hennepin County's Cultural Place-keeping initiative to provide an essential framework for ensuring that Blue Line development preserves and enhances the Cultural/Historical Entities that youth participants identified as a crucial protective factor in their community assessment. AMA youth have suggested to use Augmented Reality (AR) to mark these Cultural/Historical Entities and Community Gardens along the Blue Line, offer proven models for how community mapping data can inform place-based cultural and health interventions that complement major transit investments with concrete direction for transit-oriented development that prioritizes both community health outcomes and cultural place-keeping principles.

FUTURE IMMERSIVE AR/VR EXHIBITION FOR FOOD ACCESSIBILITY AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

AMA has decided to incorporate the youth's innovative combination of systematic mapping and community storytelling by developing a groundbreaking AR/VR exhibitions specifically focused on enhancing food accessibility, produce availability and active transportation in North Minneapolis. This immersive technology project represents a cutting-edge approach to community advocacy that could significantly amplify the impact of youth voices in Blue Line Extension planning and Hennepin County's Cultural Place-keeping initiatives.

The planned **AR application** will overlay youth-generated advocacy messages and Cultural/Historical Entity data directly onto real-world neighborhood map with locations, allowing Blue Line planners, county officials, and community stakeholders to experience the community through participants' analytical lens while physically present in the spaces being assessed. Users will be able to point their devices at food establishments to see youth documentation of food environment challenges, or at area Cultural Mosque to visualize its cultural significances and link to active transportation infrastructure.

The planned **VR exhibition** component will create immersive experiences incorporating both visual mapping data and community interview footage, transporting viewers into North Minneapolis to experience the neighborhood through multiple resident perspectives. These virtual environments will demonstrate how thoughtful Blue Line station area development, combined with Cultural Place-keeping investments, could transform the neighborhood's capacity to support healthy, active living while preserving cultural identity.

Specifically designed to address active transportation and food accessibility, the AR/VR exhibition will feature interactive elements that allow users to virtually

navigate the neighborhood's current food landscape along with youth-envisioned improvements including diverse grocery options, expanded community gardens, and culturally appropriate food retailers. The active transportation component will showcase how improved lighting, safe walking paths, bicycle infrastructure, and transit connections could create seamless networks that support both daily mobility needs and recreational physical activity.

This technological innovation serves multiple advocacy purposes simultaneously. For Blue Line Extension planners, the exhibition provides experiential understanding of how transit infrastructure decisions impact daily food access and physical activity patterns. For Hennepin County Cultural Place-keeping initiative, it demonstrates how comprehensive development can enhance rather than diminish community cultural assets. For residents and community organizations, it creates accessible tools for engaging with complex planning processes and advocating for specific active transportation improvements.

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY FOR ONGOING ADVOCACY

Perhaps most significantly, such community engagement effort demonstrates how young people can serve as powerful advocates for positive change when given appropriate tools, support, and pathways to influence decision-making processes that affect their daily lives. The participants developed sophisticated analytical skills while creating compelling advocacy materials including Neighborhood Mapping, testimonies paired with photographic evidence and video testimony.

Their work moves beyond traditional community assessment by building lasting advocacy capacity within the Northside. The combination of systematic mapping, direct community engagement, and media production creates a replicable model for ongoing community organizing that can continue to influence Blue Line development decisions and broader active transportation improvement efforts.

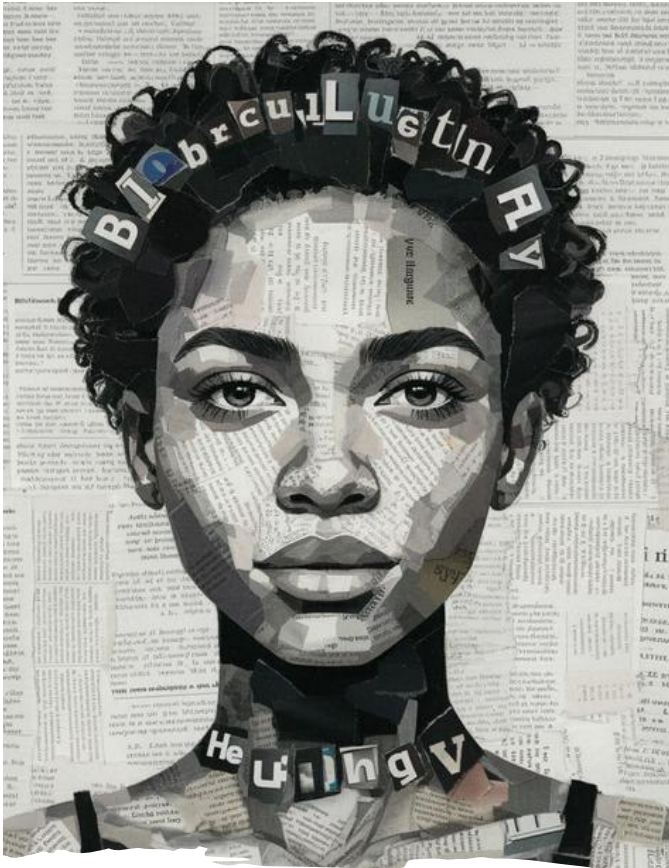


East End of North Minneapolis



Identified tobacco shop with many customers

TOBACCO CONTROL



STRATEGY INTRO: Support a Media Campaign to educate BIPOC communities about the proposed statewide tobacco flavor ban, and work with area sports teams to find out what people/youth know and feel about flavored tobacco products. Focus groups and media message testing will be done to determine what the community needs to know and what messages related to flavor bans would appeal to which cultural groups. We will focus on young athletes from pan-Asian and pan-African communities, and a media campaign featured the young athletes based on what the message testing reveals.

A REVIEW OF THE PAST 2 YEARS' PARTNERSHIP WITH MINNESOTANS FOR A SMOKE-FREE GENERATION (MSFG) COALITION AND RACIAL AND HEALTH EQUITY COMMITTEE (RHE)

Asian Media Access has demonstrated a significant community leadership and partnership development through active engagement with the Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG) coalition and its Racial and Health Equity Committee (RHE), making presentations to area partners to establish a comprehensive Buddy System that addresses commercial tobacco prevention within Pan African and Pan Asian communities.

The Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG) coalition is an organization of over 60 organizations working together to reduce commercial tobacco use in MN and the harms that it causes in BIPOC communities, especially



in those most targeted by the tobacco industry. MSFG supports policies that reduce youth smoking and will help end the death and disease associated with tobacco use for good. Over years, MSFC has successfully advocated for state legislation that:

- invests in commercial tobacco prevention throughout the state;
- ensured that all workplaces are smoke-free through the Freedom to Breathe Act;
- increased the commercial tobacco tax which has been particularly effective in keeping kids from starting to use tobacco; and
- raised the age of sale of tobacco from 18 to 21.

Since each year in Minnesota tobacco use is responsible for more than 6,300 deaths and more than \$3 billion in preventable health care costs, with 95 percent of adult smokers starting before age 21, recognizing there are more works needed, AMA has positioned ourselves as a critical bridge between mainstream public health initiatives and culturally specific community needs. We know the tobacco industry has, and continues to, target certain communities including communities of color, people who identify as LGBTQ+, as well as youth. The MSFG coalition also supports local actions, like ours, to pass ordinances that restrict the sale of flavored and menthol tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, which are disproportionately marketed to and used by youth, and menthol products, which are disproportionately marketed to and used by Black Minnesotans.

Our collaborative approach exemplifies how community-based organizations can effectively engage in policy advocacy while maintaining cultural responsiveness and community ownership of health promotion initiatives. Through presentations to community partners and outreach at cultural festivals, AMA has advocated for MSFG coalition's mission to advance justice by striving toward a future where every person is free from commercial tobacco's harms and can reach their full health potential, while specifically addressing how tobacco industry targeting affects Pan African and Pan Asian immigrant/refugee communities who face unique cultural and linguistic barriers to accessing cessation services and prevention education.



The Buddy System initiative championed by Asian Media Access' Project Manager Donnell Bratton to leverage the coalition's successful advocacy history, which includes state legislation investing in commercial tobacco prevention, ensuring smoke-free workplaces through the Freedom to Breathe Act, increasing commercial tobacco taxes, and raising the tobacco sale age to 21. The "Buddy System" creates an inclusive environment for new members through structured outreach tracked in our spreadsheet. We remind new members about meetings and follow up afterward. Presentation is made and welcomes new members with questions or needs, connecting them to meaningful participation. By engaging area partners in this Buddy System approach, AMA has created pathways for community organizations to support local actions, like ours - "We Win the Game, Choosing Sports, Not Tobacco" Social Media Campaign.

For the past 2 years, AMA has committed to the coalition's current legislative priorities have demonstrated sophisticated understanding of policy advocacy and community organizing principles. Through Buddy System partnerships, AMA has facilitated community engagement around ending the sale of all flavored commercial tobacco products including menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, e-cigarettes, hookah, and smokeless tobacco to prevent youth addiction and advance racial and health equity. Our Partners' (mostly Pan African and Pan Asian sports teams) presentations have highlighted how choosing sports not tobacco can better support community well-beings, along with diverse tobacco control policies, ex. flavor ban and increasing cigarette prices serves as effective policies in supporting youth.



Exciting parents and Family Members cheering the athletes success
Photo Courtesy: KaRen Football Association

The coming years' AMA and MSFG legislative priorities may include:

- **Flavors:** Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation supports ending the sale of all flavored commercial tobacco products – including menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, e-cigarettes, hookah, and smokeless tobacco – to prevent youth addiction, advance racial and health equity, and create a healthier future for everyone.
- **Price:** Increasing the price of cigarettes is the number one way to prevent kids from ever trying tobacco products.
- **Tobacco Cessation and Treatment:** Greater access to tobacco cessation medications and treatment will save money and lives
- **Prevention and Treatment Funding:** Statewide prevention programs are effective in ensuring that future generations of kids don't become addicted to commercial tobacco products. In addition, it's critical to provide cessation and treatment support to all Minnesotans, especially those targeted by the tobacco industry.

Asian Media Access will continue to mobilize area Pan African and Pan Asian partners to ensure future generations don't become addicted to commercial tobacco products, while providing culturally responsive messages especially for communities targeted by the tobacco industry.



VACCINATION FOR ADULTS



STRATEGY INTRO: Increase demand for, and access to flu, COVID-19, and other adult vaccinations via 40 pop-up community clinics at the places that cultural groups feel comfortable and connected, and increase regularity of vaccine promotion in priority communities; and increase the percentage of pan-Asian and pan-African seniors who are up-to-date with recommended adult vaccinations.

PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES: WHY RSV VACCINATION MATTERS FOR BIPOC FAMILIES IN MINNESOTA FOR THE COMING FALL

As Minnesota's fall approaches, families across our diverse communities are preparing for seasonal health challenges. This year, there's a powerful new tool available to protect our most vulnerable loved ones: RSV vaccination. For Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in Minnesota, understanding and accessing RSV vaccines could be a critical step in safeguarding family health.

UNDERSTANDING RSV: MORE THAN JUST A COLD

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) might sound like just another seasonal illness, but for many families in our communities, it represents a serious health threat. RSV causes symptoms similar to a common cold in healthy adults, but it can lead to severe breathing problems, hospitalization, and **even life-**



threatening complications in infants, older adults, and people with underlying health conditions.

The statistics are sobering: RSV is the leading cause of hospitalization among infants in the United States, responsible for between 58,000 and 80,000 hospitalizations of young children and between 60,000 and 160,000 hospitalizations of seniors nationwide in an average year. In Minnesota, our state has become a leader in RSV surveillance and research, actively tracking hospitalized patients with RSV across all counties as of the 2023-2024 season, with particularly detailed monitoring in the 7-county metropolitan area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties).

What's particularly concerning is that BIPOC children and adults often face higher rates of severe RSV outcomes due to a combination of factors including healthcare access barriers, underlying health conditions, and social determinants of health.



WHY BIPOC COMMUNITIES FACE HIGHER RSV RISKS

Research consistently shows that structural inequities contribute to disproportionate health outcomes in our communities. Several factors make BIPOC families in Minnesota particularly vulnerable to severe RSV:

- **Healthcare Access Challenges:** Many families face barriers to timely medical care, including lack of insurance, transportation difficulties, or limited availability of culturally competent healthcare providers. This can mean delayed treatment when RSV symptoms develop.
- **Higher Rates of Underlying Conditions:** BIPOC communities experience higher rates of asthma, diabetes, and heart disease – conditions that can make RSV infections more severe and dangerous.
- **Social and Economic Factors:** Families living in crowded housing, working in essential jobs without sick leave, or facing food insecurity may have limited ability to isolate when illness strikes, increasing transmission risk.
- **Historical Medical Mistrust:** Generations of medical discrimination have understandably created hesitancy about new medical interventions in many of our communities.

NEW HOPE: RSV VACCINES ARE HERE

The good news is that for the first time, we have safe and effective vaccines to prevent RSV. The FDA has approved RSV vaccines for adults 75 and older (and those 50-74 at increased risk), pregnant people (to protect their newborns), and infants have a new preventive monoclonal antibody treatment called nirsevimab.

These vaccines have undergone rigorous testing and have been shown to significantly reduce severe RSV disease. Clinical trials included diverse participants, and the results show strong protection across racial and ethnic groups.

Encouragingly, early national data from the 2024-25 respiratory virus season shows that infant hospitalization rates for RSV were 28% to 43% lower than previous years, marking the first season with broad availability of maternal RSV vaccines and preventive treatments for infants. While Minnesota participates in this national surveillance, these reductions reflect nationwide trends.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS: MAKING VACCINATION ACCESSIBLE

Minnesota's health departments and community organizations are working to ensure RSV vaccines reach all communities equitably. Here's what you need to know:



- **Insurance Coverage:** Most insurance plans, including Medicaid and Medicare, cover RSV vaccines. If you're uninsured, ask about sliding-scale fees or assistance programs.
- **Where to Get Vaccinated:** RSV vaccines are available at pharmacies, community health centers, tribal health facilities, and healthcare provider offices throughout Minnesota. Many locations offer extended hours and multilingual services.
- **Cultural Intelligence:** Seek out healthcare providers who understand your community's experiences and can answer questions in a way that respects your cultural background and concerns.
- **Community Support:** Connect with trusted community leaders, faith organizations, and local health advocates who can provide accurate information and support your decision-making process.

ADDRESSING COMMON CONCERNS

Protecting our communities from RSV isn't just about individual decisions – it's about collective action. When more people in our neighborhoods are vaccinated, we create layers of protection that benefit everyone, especially those who are most vulnerable. It's natural to have questions about a new vaccine. Here are some common concerns

and evidence-based responses:

- **"Is it safe?"** - RSV vaccines have undergone the same rigorous safety testing as all vaccines. Side effects are typically mild, such as soreness at the injection site or mild fatigue.
- **"Do I really need it?"** - If you're pregnant, over 60, or have young children or grandchildren, RSV vaccination can provide significant protection for you and your family.
- **"Can I trust the research?"** - The vaccine trials included participants from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and ongoing monitoring continues to confirm safety and effectiveness across all groups.

MAKING THE DECISION THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILY

Deciding whether to get vaccinated is a personal choice that should be made in consultation with healthcare providers you trust. Don't wait, consider having conversations with:

- Your primary care provider or your children's pediatrician
- Minnesota Department of Health's Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention and Control Division at 651-201-5414
- Community health workers who understand your family's specific cultural/linguistic circumstances
- Trusted friends and family members who have researched the issue
- Faith leaders or community elders whose judgment you value

Remember, getting accurate information from trusted sources is the first step in making the best decision for your family's health. This fall, let's work together to protect our communities from RSV and build a healthier future for all Minnesotans.

The health and wellbeing of BIPOC communities in Minnesota depends on our collective action and informed decision-making. RSV vaccination represents an important opportunity to protect our most vulnerable family members and strengthen our communities' resilience against preventable disease.



PROJECT SUPPORT EVENTS

June 01~30

HINDU TEMPLE VISITS

As part of our second-year initiative, Asian Media Access and Rochester Clinic visited three Hindu temples across Minnesota in June to observe cultural nutrition practices. Each of the four site visits offered a chance to connect with community members and learn how food, tradition, and community come together in temple settings. Highlights included the Brahmotsavam festival at the Hindu Temple of Minnesota and regular lunches at SV Temple and the Sikh Society.



June 26 & July 10

SEARS WALK AUDIT

In partnership with REACH, AABRN, FRBCA, and other local organizations, Asian Media Access participated in its Walk Audits to evaluate neighborhood walkability. Volunteers assessed sidewalks, crossings, bike routes, and transit access, while community members shared their perspectives through photos, videos, and surveys. These insights will help shape future efforts toward safer, more connected streets.



July 19

HMONG COMMUNITY EXPLORE YOUR PARKS

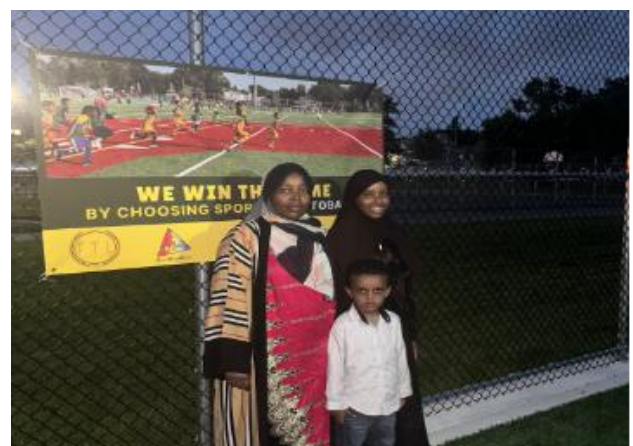
Asian Media Access was thrilled to be part of Explore Your Parks at Centennial Park in Brooklyn Center! This fun-filled event welcomed the Hmong community to enjoy traditional games, music, dance, archery, art, story strolls, and more. We also had a mobile vaccine clinic at the event to provide participants with vaccinations and testing kits.



July 26 & 27

PAN AFRICAN IN-PERSON EVENT FOR THE "WE WIN THE GAME: CHOOSING SPORTS, NOT TOBACCO" CAMPAIGN

Pan African Event brought together BIPOC youth from across communities for two days of Soccer, Volleyball, Healthy Lifestyles Promotion at Victoria Park in St. Paul. Hosted by Ten Thousand Lakes Foundation, the event empowered youth with healthy behaviors, and promoted the message "We Win the Game: Choosing Sports, not Tobacco."



August 2

PRODUCE PRESCRIPTION AT FREEDOMWORKS

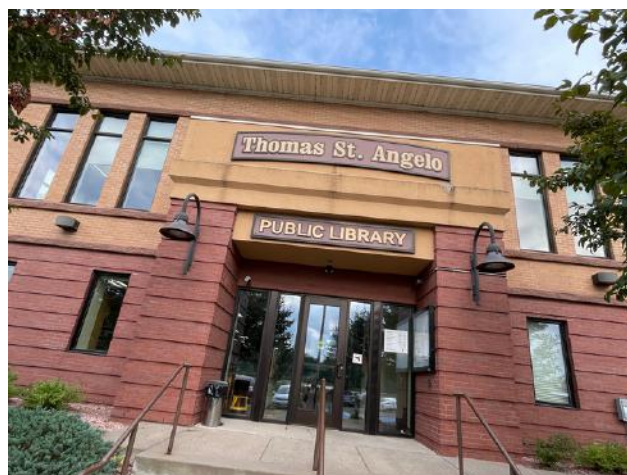
Asian Media Access, in collaboration with Rochester Clinic and FreedomWorks, hosted another successful Produce Prescription meal, bringing participants together to enjoy a nutritious, plant-based menu and learn about healthy eating. Guests shared a vibrant spread of fresh vegetables, grains, and flavorful dishes, showcasing how accessible and enjoyable healthy food can be.



August 8

LIB OUTREACH WITH VACCINATION INFORMATION

Asian Media Access partnered with the Pan Asian Arts Alliance for a vibrant Community Outreach event at the Thomas St. Angelo Public Library. Attendees enjoyed captivating cultural performances, while learning about the Vaccination Information.



Understanding and Stopping Anti-Asian Hate



PREFACE

Anti-Asian hate is a serious problem that needs to be resolved quickly. Our Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, families, and individuals have tragically been victims of targeted hate crimes. AAPI communities should not have to worry about safety, safety is a human right. More needs to be done in combating anti-Asian hate so that our communities are safer, this starts with education and communication. With the surge of hate towards AAPI individuals after the Covid-19 pandemic, we can clearly see what issues need to be addressed when it comes to ending hate.

In early 2020 Asian Media Access (AMA) engaged the community by raising awareness on anti-Asian hate and racism. In 2021, AMA taught the youth how to make anti-Asian hate postcards, which were also shared on social media to raise awareness. AMA delivered a poem by Taiwanese poet, Xi Murong which expresses the "sentiment of immigration and displacement." Later, AMA led the forces with the community for a rally at the Minnesota state capitol to commemorate the victims of the Atlanta Georgia shooting.

Since then, AMA has published an on-going series of "Stop Anti-Asian Hate" educational materials, and joined the 2023 online commemoration of the 40 year anniversary of the Murder of Vincent Chin. On June 1st of 2023 AMA presented the dance drama "Between the Water and Cloud", this was a Multidisciplinary Arts Showcase which strived to share Chinese culture and arts with an environmental justice message. It is crucial we continually make our voices heard so that change can be made.

In celebrating the new year of 2024, AMA will publicize a series of articles that will highlight issues that need to be discussed, shed light on historical systematic racism, and create an opportunity to share the perspectives of those impacted by anti-Asian hate. As editor of this series "Understanding and Stop the Anti-Asian Hate," I hope that our works can encourage readers to join forces, embody love, promote and protect culture, and be a vehicle for justice and equity for AAPIs. Let's stand in solidarity with AAPI communities.

Asian Media Access
Jarrelle Barton
He\him



Understanding and Stopping Anti-Asian Hate: Article #20

UNDERSTANDING AND STOPPING ANTI-ASIAN HATE: THE FUTURE OF ASIAN AMERICANS

Janie Ye - Wayzata High School

As the final piece of the series Understanding and Stopping Anti-Asian Hate, this article will contain some of my thoughts and opinions about the whole project. I also want to express my hopes for the future of Asian Americans.

I decided to research and write about this topic because it is something I am passionate about. As an Asian American, my experiences in America have been different from others, and I have encountered both positive and negative situations in my community. I want my audience to reflect on their own lives and how they are impacted by racism and violence, because that is what many Asian Americans face. I tried my best to be impartial, but some of the articles are more opinionated than others. I picked the title of the series to be what it is because I wanted it to be clear what I was writing about, so whenever I added an article I was sure it related to my overarching theme. Overall, I would like for it to be a tool for spreading awareness on the challenges that Asian Americans face due to racism.

While writing this series, I learned a lot of new things about the past and present experiences of different Asian groups in the United States. I learned more about the ideals of America and how they can change with time. Even though racism is a large problem, history has proven that that can be changed for the better with people who are willing to initiate reforms and work towards diversity.

I hope that this series can represent a step towards bridging the gap between Asian Americans and other communities in America. I want it to be a catalyst for change and improvement; I want people who read this to change their mindsets and perhaps take action in their communities. I would also like to continue to work towards equality and stopping racism.

I think that the future for Asian Americans looks bright (at least brighter than previous years). Different organizations are working to improve the lives and conditions of different Asian American groups, and individuals are starting to realize the problem and find solutions. Anti-Asian racism and hate is no longer ignored; rather, it is called out and condemned. There have definitely been improvements, but we just have to work harder to continue spreading awareness. Further steps could be taken in educational institutions to improve knowledge on the effects of racism on different groups and Asian American history in the United States. There could also be more efforts to educate employees in the workplace to prevent discrimination and promote diversity. Of course, all of these ideas would need approval and funding. What we can do right now is respect others and acknowledge that everyone has different perspectives. Civic action cannot be taken before the problem is understood and well-known. Perhaps in the future we could improve the lives of Asian Americans through legislation and government action, but for now we should focus on changing our own mindsets to be more open towards different beliefs and cultures.



UPCOMING EVENTS

INDIA FEST

DATE/TIME: Saturday, August 16, 2025,
11:00am-9:00pm

PLACE: Minnesota State Capitol, 75 Rev Dr
Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard., St Paul,
MN 55155

There is a cultural stage that showcases
an array of cultural performances from the
community groups and professional dance
schools through the day.

event website

<https://iamn.org/event/indiafest-2025/>



MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

DATE/TIME: August 21-September 1, 2025

PLACE: Minnesota State Fairgrounds, Hoyt Ave W Falcon Heights, MN 55108

A cherished end-of-summer tradition, the Great Minnesota Get-Together welcomes 1.8 million guests annually. A world-class showcase of agriculture, entertainment, food, art and industry, the Minnesota State Fair is a whole lot of fun! Perennially popular are the 500 food items (more than 70 on-a-stick); 900 free entertainment shows; Minnesota craft brews and wines; livestock competitions; the Mighty Midway and Kidway; horse shows; CHS Miracle of Birth Center; baking, fine arts, talent, 4-H and FFA contests; 1,000 vendors; hundreds of how-to demonstrations and exhibits for kids and adults; a fireworks show each evening; and more! Photo Courtesy: Minnesota State Fair

ICE CREAM SOCIAL & SCHOOL SUPPLY GIVEAWAY

DATE/TIME: Friday, August 22, 2025,
6:00pm-7:30pm

PLACE: Creekview Park, located at
5001 Humboldt Ave N, Minneapolis,
MN 55412

[Register Here](#)



SENIOR SOCIALS AT THE LOPPET

DATE/TIME: Fridays, September 5,
December 5, 2025, 10:00am-2:00pm

PLACE: The Trailhead, 1221 Theodore
Wirth Pkwy, Minneapolis, Minnesota,
55422

Join us for a fun-filled afternoon with
fellow seniors featuring food, bingo,
rickshaw rides and more! No registration
required – just show up ready to have
fun!



FIESTA LATINA

DATE/TIME: Saturday, September 13, 2025, 11:00am- 5:00pm

PLACE: CLUES San Pablo, 797 e 6th st Saint Paul

- Live music, Latin folk and urban dances
- Free health checks for children and adults
- Resources on finance, education and employment

ASIAN YOUTH JUSTICE SUMMIT

DATE/TIME: Saturday, September 20, 2025, 9:00am-5:00pm

PLACE: St Paul College, 235 Marshall Ave, St Paul, MN 55102,

<https://www.futureofusmn.org/asian-youth-justice-summit>

Are you a local artist, youth organizer, or service provider? This can include, but isn't limited to, youth artist showcasing work, or a youth provider offering opportunities for young people.

If interested, contact

xor@futureofusmn.org





Contact Us

Email

ball@amamedia.org

Telephone

612-376-7715

Address

2418 Plymouth Ave N
Minneapolis, MN 55411



Partnering with

