

# MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope



## Features:

K-Town Macaron –  
Jolynn Wilkinson

Events and Surveys  
Shaping the Sears  
Redevelopment

**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



**K-TOWN MACARON**  
**JOLYNN WILKINSON**

*Interviewed By Meejoo Choi*



**From Korean Heritage to Macaron Innovation: Jolynn Wilkinson’s Unique Flavor Journey**

Jolynn Wilkinson, founder of K-Town Macaron, has a unique background that blends her Korean heritage with a dynamic corporate career. Born in Busan, Korea, she was adopted as a baby and raised in Minnesota. Later, she moved to New York City, where she spent 14 years and graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology. She built her career at prestigious companies like Saks Fifth Avenue and Amazon, gaining valuable corporate experience and honing her entrepreneurial skills. In 2017, she returned to the Twin Cities. Her love for macarons—one of the most challenging desserts to master—began as a hobby but quickly grew into a passion. She started selling them on the side to support this passion, which eventually blossomed into a full-fledged business, leading to the founding of K-Town Macaron in 2021.

**Infusing Her Cultural Roots: Blends Korean Flavors with Classic Macarons**



Jolynn’s business, K-Town Macaron, is deeply influenced by her Korean roots, which have shaped both her creative process and the flavors she offers. About ten years ago, as a Korean adoptee, she began exploring her heritage more deeply. When she fell in love with macarons and watched countless online tutorials, she came across the 'fatcaron,' a Korean version of macarons known for their double or triple fillings and dynamic flavors, which has gained immense popularity in Korea. While logistical challenges

have made it difficult for her to sell 'fatcarons,' she was inspired to infuse her macarons with elements of Korean culture. She began experimenting with unique fillings and flavors, incorporating Asian fruits, sweet corn, and hotteok, a popular Korean dessert. She also focused on keeping the macarons beautifully shaped while embracing the subtler sweetness typical of Asian desserts. By crafting macarons that are less sweet than their traditional counterparts, she successfully introduced a distinct Korean influence into her creations.



### **Leveraging Local Resources: How Jolynn Built Her Business from the Ground Up**

When Jolynn first started her business, there was a lot she didn't know, including many responsibilities she hadn't anticipated. One of the first hurdles she faced was establishing her website. Figuring out how to build it, create content, and manage everything herself was a process of self-teaching and self-learning. She also participated in small pop-up events at the Linden Hills Farmers Market, gradually raising awareness about her brand and building her market presence. Participating in these pop-up events provided her with valuable opportunities to connect with other vendors, allowing her to exchange tips, resources, and industry knowledge. These interactions not only helped her gain practical insights about running a small business but also introduced her to a supportive community where vendors shared advice on marketing, sourcing materials, and navigating local regulations.

She actively sought out resources to support her journey. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Cottage Foods website was a crucial tool, guiding her through the necessary steps, providing essential knowledge to build a strong foundation, and answering her questions. Another key resource was the Minnesota Cottage Food Producers Association, which provided a supportive community through its Facebook group, where members shared opportunities, resources, and advice. Additionally, she found valuable information by scrolling through social media, conducting online research, and engaging with the vendor community—each contributing to her business knowledge and connections.

## Starting Smart: Practical Advice for Cottage Food Entrepreneurs

Jolynn offers valuable advice for aspiring entrepreneurs in the food industry. First and foremost, she stresses the importance of understanding and adhering to all regulations and laws. For cottage bakers working from home kitchens, overcoming any stigma by strictly following health and safety standards is essential. Since her business operates from her own kitchen, she ensures compliance with every regulation, demonstrating her commitment to quality and safety. This dedication not only protects her business but also builds trust with her customers.

She also advises having a clear vision for the business from the start. Deciding whether it will be a part-time venture or a full-time commitment helps guide decisions as the business grows. As new opportunities and challenges arise, staying focused on the initial vision ensures that the journey remains aligned with personal goals. She emphasizes the importance of stepping out of one's comfort zone, taking on diverse tasks such as managing administrative duties, attending events, and ordering supplies. Connecting with other vendors is also crucial, as their support can significantly impact a business's success.

For more information, please visit their website at <https://ktownmacaron.com/> or their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ktownmacaron>.





**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 #9**

## **STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY: EVENTS AND SURVEYS SHAPING THE SEARS REDEVELOPMENT**

Asian American Business Resilience Network (AABRN) and Asian Media Access (AMA) have been actively collaborating with partners on the Sears Redevelopment Project. This article highlights the community engagement processes that have been part of the project since June 2023, and shares overall of the neighborhood concerns. The Sears Redevelopment Project is supported by an impressive network of over 30+ partners. A full list of partners can be found on the Sears Redevelopment website - <https://searsstpaul.info/>

Together, these partners are making significant strides in fostering community collaboration and development.

### **Engaging the Community Through Outreach Activities**

Since June 2023, AABRN, AMA, and partners have collaborated and demonstrated an

impressive community outreach and engagement events and continuously work on interacting with diverse communities. These events can be grouped into five main activities: 1) neighborhood meetings, 2) door knocking, 3) survey distribution, 4) summer multicultural events, and 5) community center visits. Over the past months, more than a hundred meetings were held, including virtual weekly Zoom sessions and in-person gatherings. These meetings provided an opportunity for community members to come together, learn about the project, and share their opinions. In addition, several open houses with concept drawings were hosted to support area African Americans/Blacks, Asian Americans, and Somali American residents. The project remains committed to working with BIPOC communities and ensuring their voices are reflected in the planning process.

To broaden up the engagement effort, AMA and AABRN organized visits to the area Black Churches, Hmong Senior Centers and the Vietnamese Community of Minnesota etc., as well as door-knocking campaigns in Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods. Door-knocking is an ongoing effort with the help of volunteers, along with other engagement activities. The project also actively participated in multicultural summer events like the Asian Street Food Festival, Juneteenth, Fortune Tales Music Festival, National Night Out, and Imagine Rondo, where the team shared project updates, connected with residents, and gathered feedback.

## Community Engagement Milestones



Key milestones include:

- **Door knocking:** To ensure direct engagement with the community, a comprehensive door-knocking campaign was launched, reaching over 180 community members to pledge their support to keep the Sears building. This face-to-face approach allowed for personal interactions, enabling project representatives to hear firsthand the concerns, aspirations, and suggestions of



residents. These conversations provided valuable insights into community needs, ensuring that the project remains aligned with local priorities. During these efforts, staff members from AMA, AABRN, and their partners walked through neighborhood blocks, meeting residents, sharing information about the project, and collecting support pledges. Their on-the-ground presence not only facilitated a deeper understanding of local issues but also encouraged participation in the project, fostering trust and collaboration between the organizations and the community.

- **Community Surveys:** A critical element of the engagement strategy was the deployment of a survey aimed at gathering feedback on transforming the Sears site into a World Cultural Heritage Hub. Surveys are a powerful tool for capturing diverse perspectives, allowing every voice in the community to be heard and ensuring that the project reflects the collective vision and needs of its residents. The survey was mostly collected during door-knocking efforts and community meetings, ensuring direct and personal engagement with participants. More than 200 community members participated, selecting their top five preferred features that would best serve their needs. Among the options presented, the “Center for Wellness Technology with Holistic Care” and the “Community Service Center”—offering Business Training, Social Services, and IT Training—were the most popular choices, reflecting a strong community interest in health, well-being, and access to support services.



- **Physical Activity Survey:** Recognizing the importance of promoting a healthier lifestyle within the community, a Physical Activity Survey was conducted, gathering responses from over 250 participants. The survey was administered during multicultural summer events, where staff engaged directly with community members in attendance. It was designed to identify barriers to physical activity and collect input on what resources and facilities would most effectively encourage active living around the Sears Redevelopment. The results highlighted key challenges, such as a lack of accessible spaces and the high cost of

programs, providing valuable insights to guide the planning of future health and wellness initiatives within the redevelopment project.

- **Interactive 3D Model Discussion:** During the summer multicultural events, the project team collaborated with Juxtaposition to create an interactive 3D model of the Sears site. Community members engaged with the model, easily visualizing how the site looks, and expressed their hopes for the redevelopment by rearranging various design elements. For example, they were able to adjust the design by placing model elements such as housing, roads, and libraries. This interactive activity fostered greater community involvement, raised awareness of the project, and ensured residents' input was included in the development process. The activity saw an impressive turnout of just over 100 participants, who were diverse in age, race, gender, and background. During this activity, community members also participated in the Sears Development Survey, which focused on the current ways people access the site, what improvements would encourage walking, biking, or using public transportation, and what features or services they would like to see provided at the site.



### Historical Perspectives on the Impacts of I-94

Our Sears Redevelopment project not only addresses current community needs but also acknowledges the traumatic effects of Highway 94's construction through the historic Rondo neighborhood in the 1960s. This construction resulted in the demolition of 700 homes and the closure or destruction of 300 businesses, displacing over 500 families. Since the former Sears building was built during this era and is located adjacent to I-94, our team has partnered with Elluminance Era and the Frogtown/Rondo Black Church Alliance to document neighborhood stories through audio and video recordings. These insights will deepen our understanding of

residents' experiences and position the Sears building as a historical landmark and memorial, reflecting the significant impacts of transportation development on neighborhood prosperity and connectivity, and how the Sears Redevelopment not contribute to further gentrification.


**Building Community Foundations and Trust**

Our engagement efforts have generated impressive levels of participation and have significantly shaped the project’s direction, ensuring that the redevelopment aligns with the diverse needs and aspirations of the community. Through these interactions, we have established a strong foundation of trust and collaboration, fostering a sense of shared ownership over the future of the Sears site. This feedback highlights the critical need to create environments and opportunities that promote a connected, healthier, more active community. AABRN and AMA will incorporate this input into the Sears Redevelopment Master Plan, focusing on Active Living and Everyday Destinations to transform the site into a vibrant World Cultural Heritage Corridor.

# RONDO


## JOIN THE PRESERVATION

## UNTOLD STORIES



**Who Remembers?**




We are looking for anyone who can remember the Rondo day's before I-94 was built. We need the untold stories of the cause and effect of the I-94 build.



**We Need Help With:**

- Collecting Stories about Rondo
- Finding data on I-94
- How I-94 affected the Rondo area?

Gift Card Will Be given out to the story that we pick for an interview

651-329-3857

<https://searsstpaul.info/>

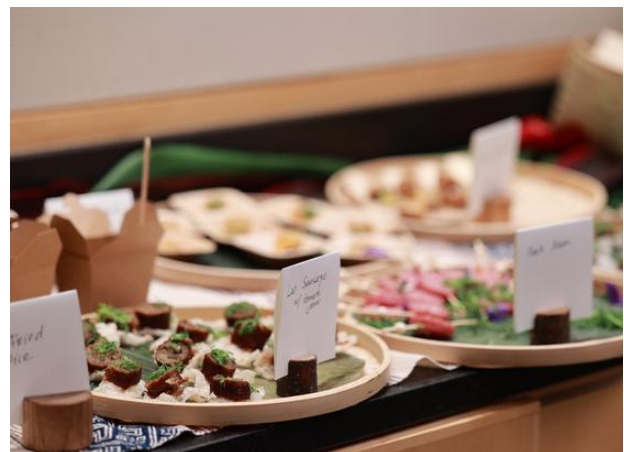
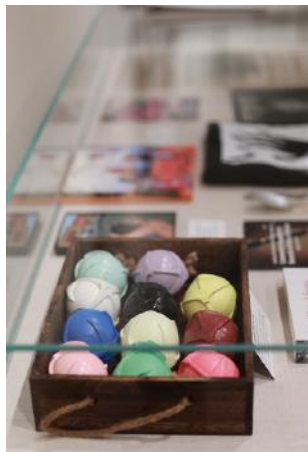
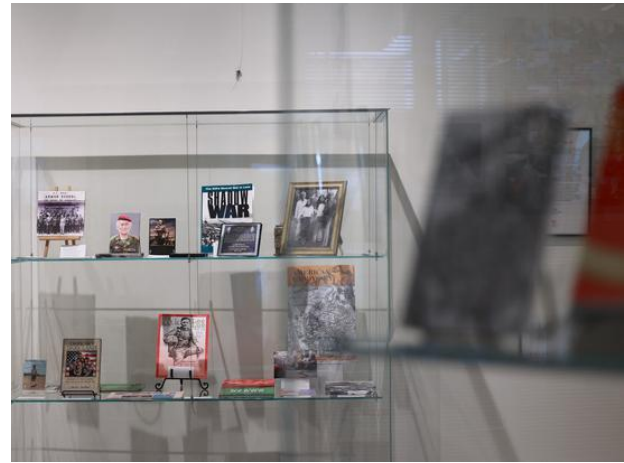
[elluminance.era@gmail.com](mailto:elluminance.era@gmail.com)

**JOIN US!**

Aug 1 ~ Sep 30

## LAOMERICA 50 – DEMOCRACY AND DIASPORA

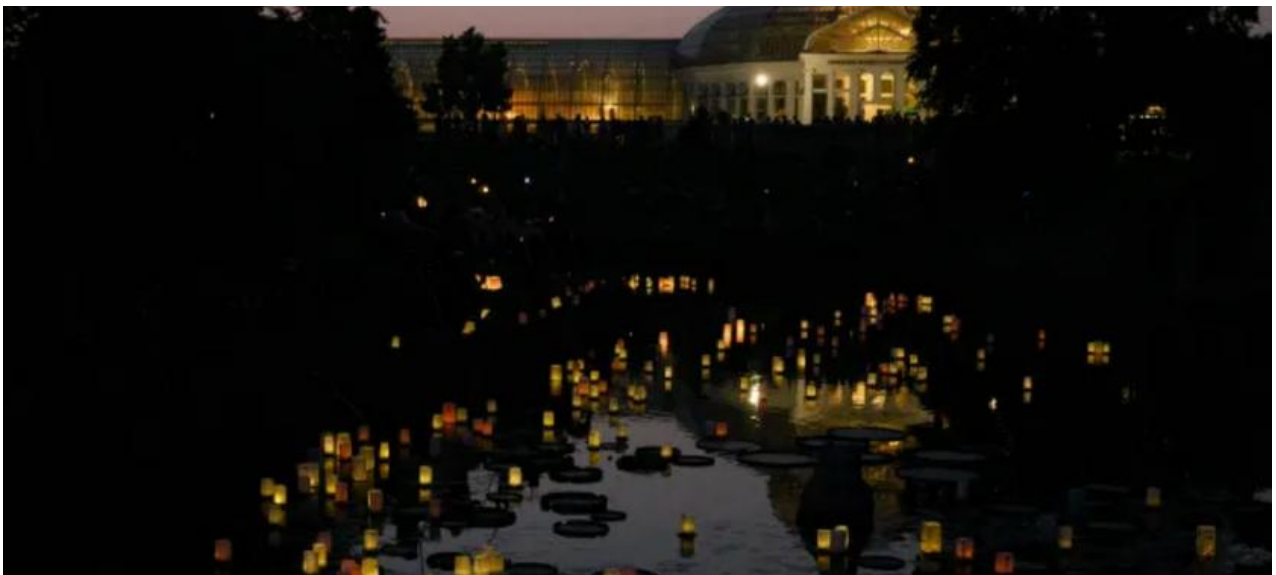
We have participated in Laomerica 50 – Democracy and Diaspora hosted by Hennepin County Library. This exhibit, in partnership with the Lao Center of Minnesota and SEALIT Center, celebrates Lao American Artist Heritage Month. It highlights 50 years of Laotian refugee experiences in Minnesota through art, cultural objects, and traditions, reflecting their memories.



Aug 18

## OBON FESTIVAL

We participated in the Japanese OBON Festival. During this day it is said that ancestral spirits revisit their family for three days. Many people will return home to pay their respects at graves-sites, and often small paper lanterns are lit and floated down the river to guide ancestors' spirits. The event also features the Bon Odori, or folk dance, in which all are invited to join in the circle and dance. Photo Courtesy: St. Paul Pioneer Press.



Aug 21

## TSO SIAB ADULT DAYCARE CENTER IT TRAINING

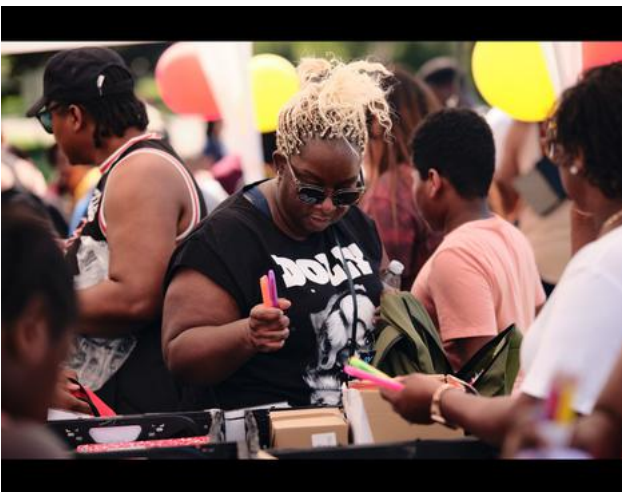
We provided IT assistance to the participants, and covered topics, such as 911 Auto call set-up in the Cell Phone, online translation services, Computer & Smartphone setup, etc... with Hmong seniors at Tso Siab Adult Daycare Center.



Aug 24

## BACK TO SCHOOL VACCINATION EVENT

We have collaborated with Task Force Inc, Restoration for All and Odam Medical group, Project SUPPORT hosted the COVID vaccination clinic during the event.



Aug 24 ~ 25

## KAREN TRADITIONAL WRIST-TYING CEREMONY

We participated in the Ceremony where the Karen people tie threads around their wrists as a way to protect themselves from illness and preserve their cultural heritage. Festivities such as a feast and traditional dancing usually follow the ceremony. Photo Courtesy: Karen Culture Organization of Minnesota.







Sep 1

## AAPI NETWORKING AND DINNER

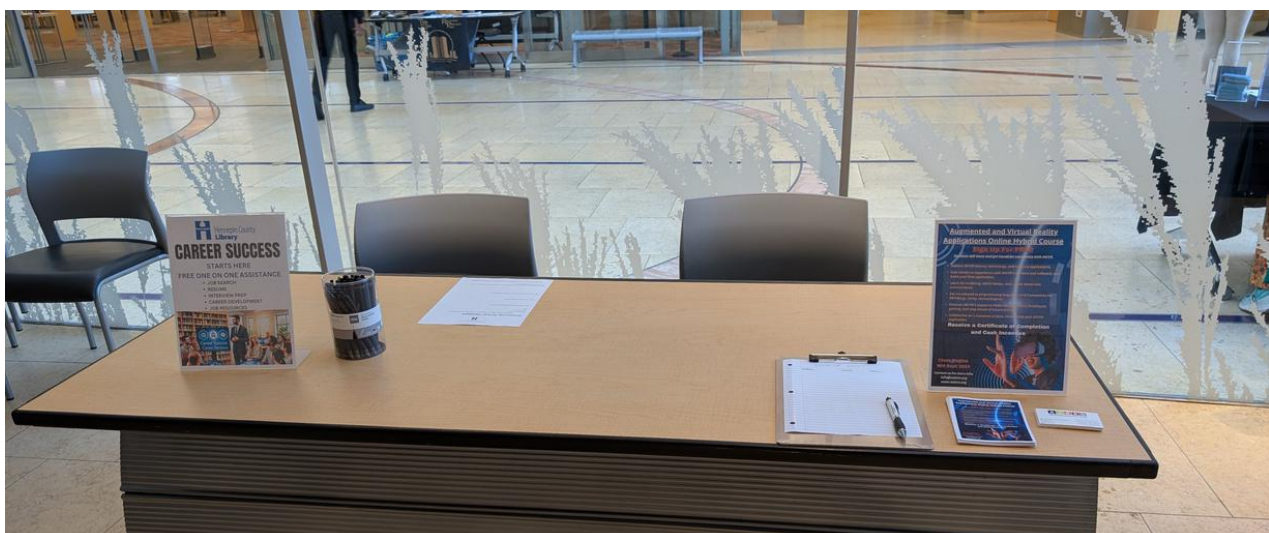
Led by the Hmong Committee of 100, we joined the AAPI networking and dinner at King Thai Cuisine to connect with other community leaders.



Sep 4

## WORKFORCE WEDNESDAY

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



Sep 9

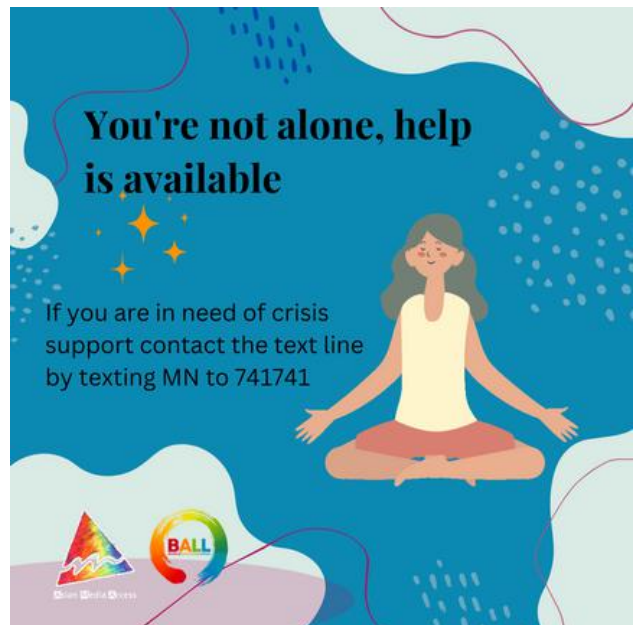
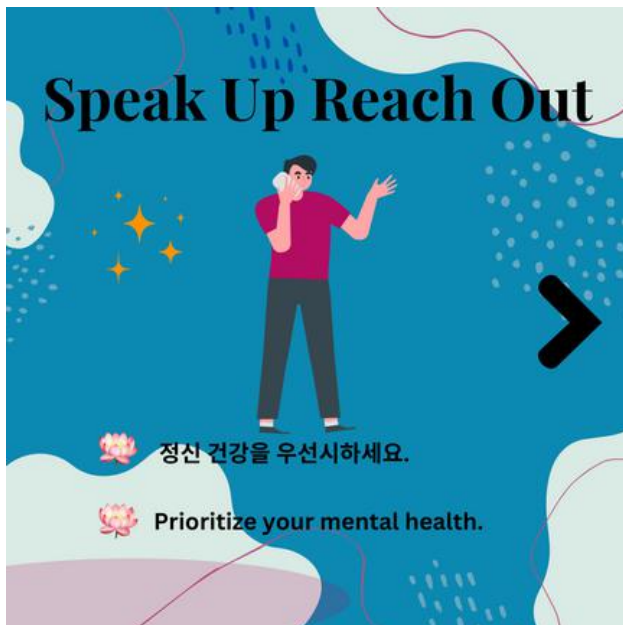
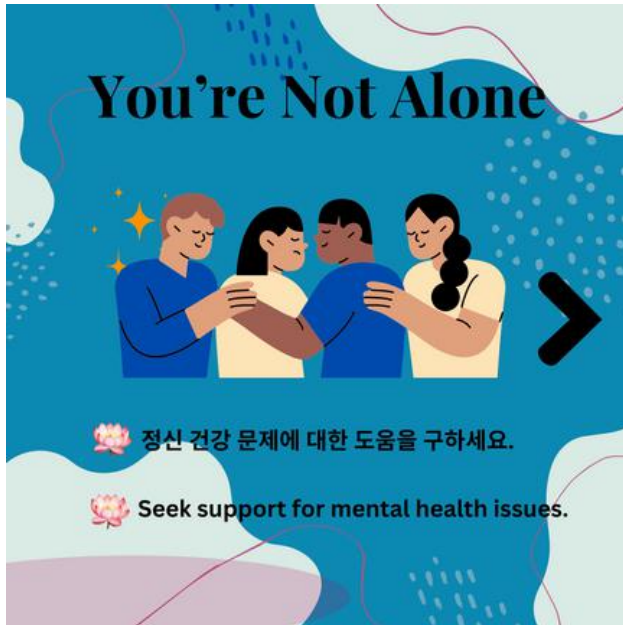
## KASHIA ADULT DAYCARE CENTER IT TRAINING

We provided IT assistance to the participants, and covered topics, such as 911 Auto call set-up in the Cell Phone, online translation services, Computer & Smartphone setup, etc... with Hmong seniors at Kashia Adult Daycare Center.



## 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.



## Augmented and Virtual Reality Applications Online Hybrid Course

### Sign Up For FREE

*Students will learn and get hands on experience with AR/VR.*

- Explore AR/VR history, technology, and industry applications.
- Gain hands-on experience with AR/VR hardware and software, and build your first application.
- Learn 3D modeling, UX/UI design, and create immersive environments.
- Get introduced to programming languages and frameworks for AR/VR(e.g., Unity, Unreal Engine).
- Discover AR/VR's impact in fields like education, healthcare, gaming, and stay ahead of future trends.
- Collaborate on a capstone project, showcasing your AR/VR application.

**Receive a Certificate of Completion  
and Cash Incentive**

**Class Begins  
Mid Sept 2024**

Contact us for more info:  
[info@aabrn.org](mailto:info@aabrn.org)  
[www.aabrn.org](http://www.aabrn.org)



## **AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY APPLICATIONS ONLINE HYBRID COURSE**

New Vision Foundation will be offering specialized curricula designed to engage students with relevant, real-world topics, often focusing on emerging technologies like Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR). This course is typically structured to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, blending theory with practical applications. The instructor for this course will be Hodan Roble, their most experienced instructor, who is also the Manager of Training & Operations at NVF.

For more information, contact: [info@aabrn.org](mailto:info@aabrn.org).



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](https://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](mailto: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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- ✓ Fee-free financial wellness tools
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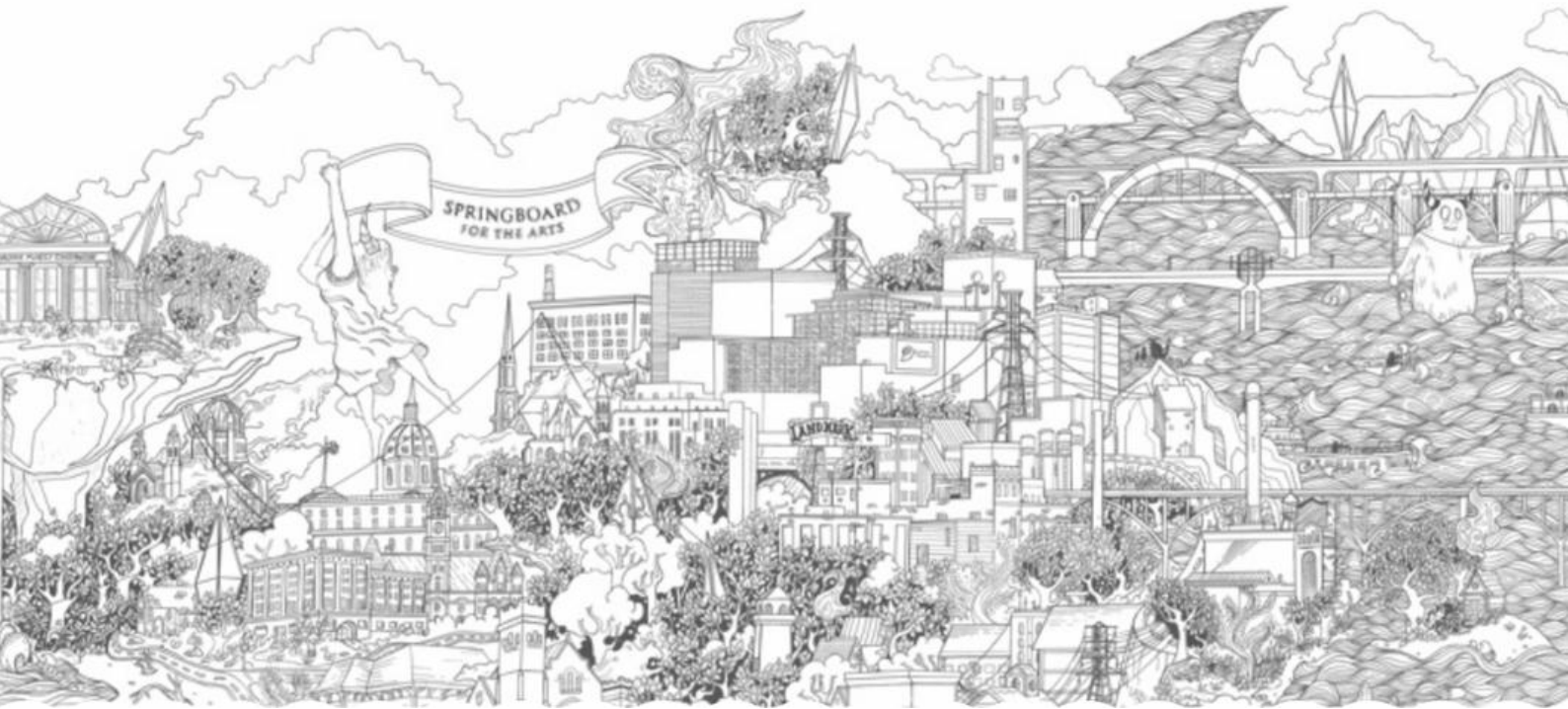
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<sup>1</sup>Active is defined as monthly account activity such as deposits, withdrawals, transfers, etc. <sup>2</sup>Stearns Bank will donate \$1,000 to each nonprofit organization that maintains one or more active Nonprofit Banking Solutions accounts for a full 12 months, with recurring donations following each active 12-month period. Subject to change at any time. <sup>3</sup>Account 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. <sup>4</sup>APY 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. <sup>5</sup>Earn 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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Stearns Bank empowers change by offering nonprofits more ways to access capital. Stearns Bank understand that funding has the potential to amplify your influence, which is why they are deliver creative lending options and guidance throughout the entire process.

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



## Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- September 21, 2024 10:00 am to 2:00 pm - Basic Income Week: Family Day
- September 21, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Work of Art: Time Management
- September 22, 2024 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Photographing Your Artwork
- September 24, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm - Art-Train Agency/Organization Training
- September 25, 2024 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - e-Commerce 2: Running Your Online Store
- September 26, 2024 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm - Heartland, Heartwork Book Tour: Battle Lake
- September 28, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Work of Art: Portfolio Kit
- September 29, 2024 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm - Photographing Your Artwork
- October 2, 2024 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - e-Commerce 3: Intermediate Sales and Marketing
- October 4, 2024 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Special Topics: Digital Organization

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](#)





SEP  
**25**

12pm~1pm

## Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center Immersive Program Information Session

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

SEP  
**26**

2pm~3pm

## The Power of People-Driven Leadership

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

OCT  
**1**

11am~12pm

## AI Technology for Stakeholder Engagement

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

OCT  
**2**

12pm~1pm

## Building Resilience for Entrepreneurial Leaders

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



OCT  
**7**  
1pm~2pm

## Cultural Intelligence: A Success Tool for Business Growth

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

OCT  
**8**  
1pm~2pm

## Reconnect with Yourself: Fueling Innovation and Achieving Goals

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

OCT  
**10**  
10am~1130am

## Record Keeping for Small Business

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

OCT  
**17**  
11am~12pm

## Your Next-Level Business: Building a Foundation that Lasts

Business Webinar

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Asian American Business Resilience Network