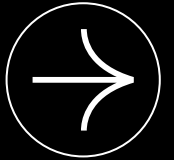


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ASIAN KALEIDOSCOPE

MN BIS VISION



**A Bicultural Approach
to Business - Martino
Nguyen**

**Calling America
HOME Series -
Hao Nguyen**

**Healing Through
Innovation,
Building Through
Creation**



Asian Media Access

This monthly e-Magazine is published by Asian Media Access and Multi Cultural Community Alliance to highlight the accomplishments of Asian American and Pacific Islanders' (AAPI) small businesses in MN.

Table of Contents

01~02	Introduction
03~05	AAPI Business Profile - Martino Nguyen
06~12	Calling America HOME
13~18	Center for Wellness Technology
19~22	What's News in IT
23~29	AAPI Community Updates
30~32	Business and Workforce Development Resources
33~34	Upcoming Training Events
35	Contact



Bridging Cultures, Building Futures: Minnesota's AAPI Business & Workforce Magazine

Welcome to **MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope**, a monthly e-magazine dedicated to empowering Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities across Minnesota. More than a publication, this platform uplifts AAPI entrepreneurs while advancing workforce pathways through the **Center for Wellness Technology** - a visionary hub that integrates Agricultural Technology, Multimedia Technology, and Wellness Technology into culturally grounded IT career opportunities.

AAPI Entrepreneurship & the Need for New Pathways

AAPI entrepreneurs are vital to Minnesota's diverse business landscape, operating successful restaurants, grocery stores, salons, healthcare practices, consulting firms, and manufacturing businesses, etc.. While AAPIs comprise 6% of Minnesota's population, Asian-owned businesses represent only 3% of the state's small businesses—revealing persistent barriers to entrepreneurship. Yet these 15,500+ Asian-owned firms account for 35% of all minority-owned businesses in Minnesota, demonstrating the community's outsized economic impact and resilience. Targeted workforce development in specialized IT sectors can help bridge this entrepreneurship gap and create new pathways for community economic mobility and innovation.

The Center for Wellness Technology: Our Dual Mission

At the heart of MN Biz Vision stands the Center for Wellness Technology, which unifies three high-impact technology tracks designed for AAPI youth, families, and entrepreneurs:

- **Agricultural Technology (AgTech):** Blending modern engineering with ancestral agricultural knowledge, learners explore aeroponics, aquaponics, vertical farming, and sustainable food systems that support food sovereignty and sustainability.
- **Multimedia Technology:** Youth and creatives gain experience in game design, AR/VR development, digital storytelling, and AI-assisted media production—tools that amplify AAPI voices and ensure cultural stories are represented in the digital future.
- **Wellness Technology:** Integrating traditional healing practices with modern innovations, the Center supports healing with telehealth systems, VR calming room designs, and culturally informed wearable devices, advancing non-invasive and holistic care models.

Together, these tracks demonstrate why IT matters: technology becomes a vehicle for economic mobility, cultural preservation, and community innovation.

What You'll Discover Each Month

Every issue of MN Biz Vision highlights AAPI business owners across diverse sectors, celebrates immigrant and refugee success stories, and shares practical resources on financing, marketing, digital tools, and entrepreneurship. Workforce development features dive into emerging IT opportunities within AgTech, Multimedia, and Wellness Technology, supported by training programs and employer partnerships.

Building Economic Opportunity & Cultural Resilience

Whether you are strengthening a family business, exploring a career transition, entering tech fields, or launching a new venture, MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope connects you to the networks, knowledge, and inspiration needed to thrive. Join us each month as we celebrate AAPI excellence - honoring cultural traditions while embracing the technological innovations shaping Minnesota's future.





A BICULTURAL APPROACH TO BUSINESS - AN INTERVIEW WITH ENTREPRENEUR MARTINO NGUYEN

An immigrant's journey from Vietnam to Minnesota reveals how cultural identity becomes competitive advantage

Preface: This month MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope features Vietnamese entrepreneur Martino Nguyen, and his Business - Sfixture Inc. Sfixture Inc is a dynamic investment firm that fuels growth across **Real Estate, Securities, and Human Potential**. It empowers new entrepreneurs through a dedicated incubation platform—a real-world testing lab for developing business systems and robust growth strategies. Operating under the banner of three companies, hobby-enriching design and manufacture (Sfixture LLC), an investment company (VMV investment LLC) and a commercial fixture broker (CSF), it commits to investing directly in entrepreneur training and the strategic acquisition of real estate properties to realize their ambitious visions.

Escaping Communism, Embracing Freedom

When Martino Nguyen and his family fled communist Vietnam in 1995, they arrived in Minnesota with little more than hope and determination. “We came with only documents and spare clothes,” Martino recalls, “but with one unshakable purpose - **FREEDOM**.” Local organizations and kind neighbors helped them adjust, offering housing, clothing, and cultural guidance. That generosity left a lasting mark.

Grateful for the opportunities his new country provided, Martino made it his mission

to give back—not through words, but through action. *“Starting my own business became the most meaningful way to strengthen the very values that welcomed us - democracy, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”* His immigrant journey didn’t just inspire entrepreneurship; it gave it purpose.

Overcoming Doubt and Building Strength

Like many first-time entrepreneurs, Martino’s early years were filled with struggle. Financial uncertainty, staffing shortages, and the fear of failure loomed large. But the greatest challenge, he says, was DOUBT. *“There were months when revenue dropped below zero, and I questioned everything—how to feed my family, pay for healthcare, and whether to quit.”*

Instead of giving up, Martino grounded himself in purpose. He created detailed goals, conducted relentless research, and reminded himself why he started. *“I wanted my children to grow up fearless,”* he explains. That vision became his fuel. Day by day, with persistence and faith, he turned uncertainty into opportunity. *“Doubt didn’t disappear—but it no longer controlled me.”*



Leading with Vietnamese Values

Martino’s Vietnamese roots continue to shape every aspect of his business. In Vietnamese culture, business is built on *uy tín*—trust, reputation, and honor. *“Uy tín isn’t just a word—it’s a promise,”* Martino says. He treats every project as a reflection of his name and delivers more than expected, protecting his reputation as his greatest asset.

He also runs his company like *gia đình*—family. *“When mistakes happen, we learn together. When we succeed, we celebrate together.”* By fostering loyalty, empathy, and teamwork, he creates a workplace grounded in cultural respect and shared success.

The Power of Possibility in America

Having witnessed his parents’ struggles under Vietnam’s corruption and restrictive business climate, Martino appreciates the fairness and transparency of the American system. *“Here, entrepreneurs are encouraged to build legally and ethically,”* he says. *“There are resources, education, and real institutional support.”*

For Martino, the key difference between his two worlds isn’t just opportunity - it’s

POSSIBILITY. *"In America, hard work is met with systems that help you succeed rather than block you. That's what makes the dream real."*

A Blueprint for Future Entrepreneurs

To guide aspiring immigrants, Martino developed a practical **"9 Steps"** framework that transforms dreams into action. It begins with defining goals and vision, then moves through measurable objectives, strategic planning, milestone tracking, lean operations, and leadership development. His final step—staying true to your vision—anchors the process in resilience and integrity.

His mantra is simple but powerful:
"Research, learn, and grow—the whole time."



Balancing Two Worlds

Martino views cultural identity not as something to be replaced, but as something to contribute. *"To belong in America doesn't mean fading into the background,"* he says. *"It means becoming a strong and vibrant thread in its cultural fabric."*

In business, that means blending the best of both worlds—adopting American efficiency and innovation while preserving Vietnamese values of family, loyalty, and integrity. *"We add color and strength to the broader community when we stay true to who we are."*

A Legacy Beyond Business

Looking forward, Martino envisions expanding his company internationally while remaining rooted in uy tín. His goal extends beyond profit: to empower others, support education, and preserve cultural heritage.

"I want my business to stand as a trusted symbol of integrity and reliability," he says. *"My dream is to inspire others to pursue their own, to prove that success can be achieved without compromising values."*

For Martino Nguyen, the American Dream isn't just about personal success—it's about lifting others along the way, honoring the past while building a future defined by trust, courage, and freedom.



Series Preface: Asian Media Access proudly presents “Calling America HOME” Series, inspired by the 50th Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon — a pivotal moment that not only marked the end of the Vietnam War but also sparked one of the largest refugee resettlements in U.S. history. This milestone serves as a powerful reminder of the resilience and hope shared by immigrants and refugees from all corners of the world who have rebuilt their lives in Minnesota. Through these stories, we invite readers to witness a legacy of survival, determination, and hope against impossible odds.

Our inaugural issue features Hao Nguyen, son of Vietnamese refugees, whose family's harrowing escape from war-torn Vietnam led them through sponsorship by Catholic Charities to resettlement in Minnesota—and ultimately to his historic achievement as the first Asian American Division Director at the Ramsey County Attorney's Office. Nguyen's narrative illuminates both the shared trauma and diverse pathways of Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese community members who survived war, endured refugee camps, and rebuilt lives with dignity in their adopted Minnesota home.

Q: Hao, thanks for taking time to do the interview with AMA. Please introduce yourself, and your experience settling in MN.

Thanks so much for the opportunity to share my experience. I am Hao Nguyen, son of Vietnamese refugee. On September 17, of 1982 my twin sister and I were born in

Saigon Vietnam. For those of us who fled the country as refugees in our hearts and spirit the city will always be known as Saigon. Our family had a difficult and humble beginning. After my sister passed away, my father left. It was my mother who stood tall and strong taking care of me and my two older brothers. The four of us tried to flee the country several times but were unsuccessful. By my seventh birthday we had all but given up on getting out. A little more about our family, my two older brothers are my half-brothers, one of Vietnamese and Filipino decent and the other Vietnamese and the son of an American Soldier. For my eldest brother his existence as half white and half Vietnamese was a reminder to Vietnam of America's occupation during the Vietnam War. Half Vietnamese and half white children were commonly referred to and became known as children of the dust.

These children were castaway and treated badly, becoming street beggars, abused and neglected by a country that wanted to move on from the war. My mother was keenly aware of all of this and so that is why she tried so hard to get us out of the country. After our fourth failed attempt of fleeing the country by boat, my mother had all but given up. But then came word of a miracle,



Hao with Mother at St. Cloud State University

she learned about an Act of Congress, America had created something called The Amerasian Immigration Act. This act of congress allowed for certain Amerasian children fathered by American soldiers the opportunity of entry to the United States. The Amerasian Immigration Act allowed for Amerasian children and their immediate family members a pathway out of war-torn Vietnam. My mother applied and we were approved refugee status to enter the refugee camps of the Philippine Islands. Between the ages of seven and nine, I lived with my mother and two brothers in the Bantaan Refugee camps, though I was young I still recall those very difficult days.

After living for two years in the refugee camps our family received word that we had been sponsored by Catholic Charities and would be allowed to come to America. A catholic church still in existence today, Saint Anthony's Catholic parish out of Saint Cloud, Minnesota was our sponsor. For a family born from the equator, getting off the airplane in the middle of the winter was the shock of a lifetime. We arrived in Minneapolis, Minnesota and then traveled to Saint Cloud. There we settled into low-income housing apartments and then later moved to a trailer park.

A word about gratefulness, though our journey up to that point had been hard and to

be sure our beginnings in the U.S. were difficult. I will always be ever thankful to the kindness that America gave to me and my family. I will always be grateful for the opportunity of a lifetime to become an American. Growing up in Saint Cloud was a culture shock, we didn't speak English, we didn't know how things worked (mail, school, doctor's offices, you name it we had no idea how to do it) on top of that we were very poor. Our family was on food stamps and relied on food shelves. I remember those early days vividly, often times my mom who worked the night shift at the local poultry processing plant would ask us boys which bills we should pay and which ones we should leave behind for next month. We would talk as a family about what food we could afford, which ones though expired may still be good enough to eat. Those early days taught me many things, but most importantly those days taught me about my mother's endurance and strength. The heart and resilience of the Asian woman I called mom never wavered, the best lesson I learned from those early days of being in America was that you can make something out of nothing. You can always reinvent yourself in America.

Q: Those are so valuable experiences, as Asian American growing up in the Midwest town, any challenges for you?



Hao with Family in the Bataan, Refugee camps of the Philippines

Growing up in say Saint Cloud Minnesota in the early 1990s as one of the only Asian families made for an interesting coming of age story. On the one hand the American dream was just above the horizon, the promise of if you just work hard enough and get lucky enough you can be anything you want to be in America. But the reality of the situation is you're poor, you don't speak the language, you look different than most of those around you, and you realize when you look to your left and to your right you're much further behind than you ever knew. The journey to flee from Vietnam to survive the refugee camps and to arrive in America was already daunting enough but the realization that you are just starting over behind in every way made the challenge even more daunting. In the school system I often remembered being bullied and made fun of.

I remember being on free school lunch and public assistance, the times that my mom could afford to give me lunch I often hid it away eating it outside before our school lunch period. Always ashamed and embarrassed of the Asian food that my mom packed for me. Growing up from kindergarten all the way through high school it was truly a journey of discovering who I was as an Asian American, as a child of war and as a person who wanted to realise the American dream, to never squander the gift of what my mom had worked so hard to do, of what America gave us. Candidly speaking

my childhood and early adolescence in America all the way to my senior year as a high school student or truly some of the most difficult times of my life. I wanted so badly to assimilate to the American culture that there were moments where I denied my heritage and tried to separate and move away from my ancestry. Today I know that the source of my strength and success is because of who I am and where I came from. I will never look away or deny that part of myself again.

I wasn't the traditional Asian American student that TV and magazines portrayed. I wasn't a high academic achiever and certainly didn't graduate in the top 10% of my class with a tiger mom waiting at home. I graduated nearly at the bottom of my graduating high school class, I scored in the mid-teens on my ACTs, and my plan was never to go to college let alone law school. My plan was to remain in Saint Cloud and to get a job working at the local refrigerator manufacturing plant. That job was going to pay over \$17.00 an hour, and it was going to be more money than my family ever had, to me that was going to be a bright future. Now there's nothing to say that there's anything wrong with working hard in a blue-collar job, or that it can't produce a wonderful meaningful life. My mom was a blue-collar worker and she built us a very fine and lovely life.

But for me I am glad that a different path developed. During my senior year I saw friends and classmates talk about their acceptance letters to the colleges that they would ultimately attend. I realized that I had squandered the gift that was given to me and my family, and that was the gift of opportunity in a beautiful new land. So, I went to Saint Cloud State University and pleaded my case with the admissions office asking them to take a chance on me and to allow me to attend their school. I did not qualify in any sense of the word with regard to their admissions requirements for college, but the team gave me the opportunity and saw that I might have a future, allowing me to enter Saint Cloud State University on 2 terms of academic probation. I took that opportunity very seriously and graduated with honours from Saint Cloud State University.

After graduating from undergrad, I wanted to give back to the community that had given me so much, so I became a police officer. It was a wonderful job being able to respond to members of the community who were in need. The job taught me that I could be of service to those who were having the worst moments of their lives, I handled calls from 911 dispatch,



Hao formally sworn into service with the St. Cloud Police Department.

responding in a squad car in uniform helping those get through some of the very toughest moments. After wearing the uniform for about 5 years, I wanted to pursue Graduate School specifically I wanted to obtain my law school degree. It was always a goal of mine ever since becoming a police officer to perhaps become a lawyer prosecutor one day. I took the law school entrance exam and was accepted into Hamline University School of Law and four short years later I was a licensed attorney. I immediately went to work as a prosecutor holding those accountable for crimes they committed. I've been a prosecutor now for 15 years having had the experience of handling all types of cases from domestic assault to sexual violence cases and murder. I am the Division Director for the Ramsey County Attorney's Office in the city of Saint Paul Minnesota. I managed the largest division in our office.

Q: Thanks for sharing, love you mentioned - "the gift of opportunity in a beautiful new land," I bet millions of immigrants and refugees would fully agree with you. So besides breaking the bamboo ceiling serving as the Division Director for the Ramsey County Attorney's Office, received Outstanding Contribution Award by the Governor's Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, and the Carnegie Medal in 2024, and what's next??



On behalf of the Carnegie Hero Commission, Representative Ilhan Omar presented Hao Nguyen with the Carnegie Medal, a prestigious award given to those who have risked their lives to an extraordinary degree for his act of heroism in preventing a man from jumping off the roof of a parking ramp.

Back in September 2025 the current Hennepin County attorney announced that they would be stepping down from their position leaving an open seat. I then announced my candidacy and intention to run for the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. I am running for Hennepin County attorney because the people of Hennepin County deserve an experienced prosecutor and public servant. The current political climate in Hennepin County forces everyday citizens to choose between safety and fairness. I believe it is the job of

the Hennepin County attorney to provide both safety and fairness. I believe the government should not make those who they seek to serve choose between the safety and equity. I also know that my humble beginnings in life and my experiences as a refugee immigrant allows me to understand and relate to those who live at the margins of society.

My vision for the Hennepin County Attorney's Office is to make it once again a premiere public service office, it is the largest county attorney's office in the state of

Minnesota, it handles the most cases, it impacts over 1.3 million citizens a year. Currently there is a communication and trust problem. The Hennepin County Attorney's office needs to rebuild and maintained healthy and trusted relationships with all its partners. I will open lines of communication with the courts, community advocacy groups, law enforcement and seek to elevate the voices of victims of crime. My vision for the Hennepin County attorney's office is one that's focused on public safety and accountability. I want to end day today nuisance crimes. As a prosecutor for nearly 15 years, I have learned that your everyday low-level crimes such as auto theft, burglaries, and vandalism impact the quality of life of everyday people. I think it's an easy thing to say that one should focus on violent crime, which by the way absolutely is necessary but my experience tells me that every day quality of life crimes should also be addressed in order to ensure that everyone can move about our community in a safe, enjoyable and free manner.

Q: Can you expand more, since we are in this new era for substantial federal funding and services cut, how can we all work together to better support members in need?



I wish it wasn't the reality that funding and budget cuts didn't impact the services that we are able to provide to those in need. What I can say is that if elected to the Hennepin County attorney's office, I will work with the county board, with the court and justice partners to ensure that we all work together to share the weight of responsibility, together seeking solutions and thereby ensuring that public safety and accountability are met. The County Attorney needs support from law enforcement, the community, courts, and advocacy groups to maximize resources. I'm an immigrant and a refugee who knows how to make a little stretch into a lot, so that we can go far together. For me budget cuts and lack of funding will never come at the cost of public safety. One of my very first priorities if elected is to advocate for continued funding and shared resources so that we all may serve the community that we are elected to help and support.

Q: Can't let you go, without asking your perspective for the current violence incidents in Minneapolis, can you share more of your viewpoints on that?

Hennepin county in the last few years has experienced a rise in violent carjackings, vehicle break ends, vandalism and theft. Moreover, there are examples of the gun violence happening openly on the streets, of shootings and murders occurring in

some of the most vulnerable and sacred areas of our community, to include the places that we should feel the safest including our homes schools and public institutions.

A prosecutor's office needs to be led by an experienced prosecutor, someone who knows what it's like to speak with victims of crime, someone who understands the loss and pain of those who have suffered from violence. I am that experienced prosecutor, I am that experience public servant who knows how to try serious cases before a jury. I am that experienced leader who knows how to supervise a large government office. The fact that I am a person of color, a refugee, and that I understands what it's like to come from humble beginnings added to my nearly 20 years of public safety experience makes me the right choice to be the next the Hennepin County Attorney. It is a responsibility that I take very seriously.

I will end where I began America gave me so much and by the grace of God, I wish to do what I have always done and that is to give back to a community that has given me so much. If elected I will strive every day to ensure that everyone in our community is safe and treated fairly. I can't do this alone; I need everyone's help. Thank you so much!



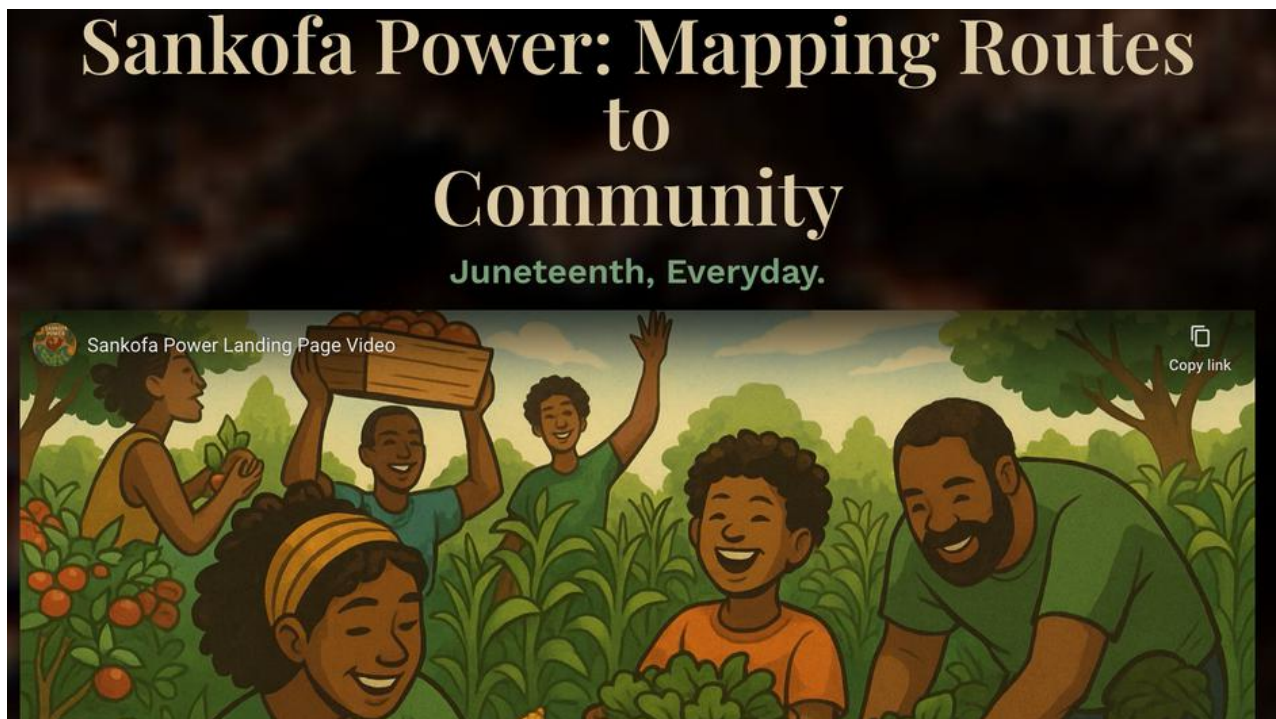
Q: Thank YOU so much, Hao for sharing your refugee story and your vision for the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. Best of luck on the campaign trail.

FMI: If members are interested in connecting with Hoa, please visit his website at Hao4Hennepin.com, and on Instagram at [Hao4Hennepin](https://www.instagram.com/Hao4Hennepin). If members are interested in sharing their own immigrant and refugee stories with Asian Media Access, please connect with us at amamedia@amamedia.org.

COLLABORATING WITH PROJECT SWEETIE PIE TO HOST THE SANKOFAPOWER INITIATIVE.

Asian Media Access is proud to announce our collaboration with Project Sweetie Pie to host the SankofaPOWER Initiative, a groundbreaking community empowerment program that brings together diverse voices to address shared challenges and build collective strength across cultural lines in North Minneapolis neighborhoods in order to improve the food ecosystem.

The SankofaPOWER Initiative draws its name from the West African Sankofa principle, which teaches us to look back at our history to move forward wisely. This philosophy aligns perfectly with both organizations' commitment to honoring cultural heritage while creating positive change in our communities.



SankofaPOWER operates as a comprehensive digital platform specifically designed for North Minneapolis neighborhoods (zip codes 55411, 55412) that functions like a community-interactive digital map and resource network. The platform connects neighbors directly to neighbors, building a stronger local food system while preserving community culture and supporting economic development, with below 4 components:

- **NorthStar Urban Farm & Food Digest** serves as the community's "Yellow Pages," providing real-time food information through interactive maps that show where food is available, community gardens are located, and neighbors might need

assistance. This multimedia resource includes community-created AI videos, and podcasts that document local food traditions while connecting food surplus with community needs across urban farms and backyard growers, as well as highlighting cultural entities through AR/VR storytellings.

- **NorthStar Urban Farm & Food Registry** functions as the neighborhood's "White Pages," offering a comprehensive directory of every food-related resource including community gardens, farmers' markets, food shelves, restaurants, and urban farms, etc. This registry serves as both a contact database and collaboration hub through GIS mapping, making it easy for neighbors, organizations, and businesses to connect and work together on community food system development.
- **The NorthStar Trading Post** operates as a community bartering and exchange marketplace where neighbors can sell, trade, or exchange items and services directly with each other. Similar to Facebook Marketplace but focused specifically on the local neighborhood, residents can post items they want to sell or trade, services they can provide (like tutoring, home repairs, or cooking), and things they need from other community members. The platform facilitates direct neighbor-to-neighbor transactions, whether that's trading homegrown vegetables for childcare services, exchanging household items, or connecting people who need help with those who can provide it.
- **Minneapolis Community BEAM (Building Economic Assets & Memory)** preserves and shares community knowledge through a community-controlled database of cultural foods, oral histories, and economic progress. Using AI-powered searchable archives of interviews, photos, and documents, BEAM provides policy advocacy tools while establishing Community Data Hubs where traditional food practitioners offer culturally grounded nutrition information alongside with the latest Agricultural Technology updates.

CLOSING THE LOOP



RECLAIMING
COMMUNITY

RECLAIMING
COMMUNITY



HEALING THE LAND



FEEDING THE PEOPLE



Over the past summer, Asian Media Access has worked with 2 trainee cohorts to collect crucial data and create digital content that powers the SankofaPOWER platform. Each summer cohort of 20-25 young people spent more than 8 weeks conducting AI/AR/VR learnings, GIS community mapping, interviewing food providers, and documenting neighborhood food resources through multimedia. The first cohort focused on mapping existing community gardens and food access points, while creating the foundational geographic data for the platform. The second cohort concentrated on documenting cultural food traditions through video interviews and AR-generated cultural entities' stories.



The participants learned multimedia production skills while gathering community knowledge, conducting 59 video interviews with residents, food providers, and community leaders across the targeted zip codes, showing through interactive GIS mapping. This process built relationships between young people and community members while creating the content database that makes SankofaPOWER a living, community-driven resource.

Asian Media Access and Project Sweetie Pie will continue expanding the SankofaPOWER digital platform through ongoing community engagement and resident leadership development. Our two organizations remain committed to ensuring that platform development stays community-controlled, with North Minneapolis residents driving decisions about new features and resource priorities. Future expansion includes enhanced bartering capabilities, additional neighborhood mapping projects, and expanded AI/AR/VR storytelling opportunities that center community voices. As the initiative grows, both organizations will prioritize community ownership and self-determination, ensuring this digital tool strengthens neighborhood connections and economic resilience in North Minneapolis.

FMI: www.sankofapower.org

THE DIGITAL FOREST: HEALING THROUGH INNOVATION, BUILDING THROUGH CREATION

Reimagining Wellness and Workforce Development

The Digital Forest transforms traditional mental health interventions into a powerful community asset where members don't just experience healing - they create it. This immersive VR projection room combines cutting-edge technology with ancestral wisdom that nature heals, offering a revolutionary approach to wellness and economic opportunity.



The Technology

Asian Media Access has worked with Frogtown/Rondo Black Church Alliance to design an immersive VR projection room in their newly DHS funded Recovery Center, to transport clients into photorealistic nature environments through wall-projected scenes, spatial audio, and comfortable lighting that activates the parasympathetic nervous system. Unlike headset-based VR, this shared space allows families and groups to experience healing together, reducing isolation while maximizing therapeutic impact.



Evidence-Based Healing

Rigorous research supports VR nature interventions for mental and physical health. Browning et al. (2023) found that daily exposure to 360° VR nature significantly

reduced both anxious arousal and anxious apprehension in college students. Garcia et al. (2021) demonstrated that the FDA-authorized VR program EaseVRx provided substantial pain relief: 46% of chronic low-back pain patients achieved at least a 50% reduction in pain, with benefits persisting at six-month follow-up. Other studies show that virtual forest walking reduces stress: Qiu et al. observed lower heart rate and reduced negative affect in participants walking in a realistic virtual forest, while related work found decreases in heart rate and skin conductance, indicating meaningful stress reduction. Collectively, these findings highlight the effectiveness of VR-based nature interventions for anxiety, chronic pain, and stress management across diverse populations (Browning et al., 2023; Garcia et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2020).

The Innovation: Community as Creators

With such strong, evidence based data, Asian Media Access and Frogtown/Rondo Black Church Alliance joint hands to create the Digital Forest Calming Room to revolutionize both wellness and workforce development - through AMA trainees CREATE the therapeutic content of digital forests, not just consume it. Trainees learn professional-level skills including 2D AI animation, 3D modeling, Unity development, spatial audio design, and biofeedback integration—all while producing culturally-specific healing environments.



Triple Win Outcomes

- *Health Impact:* Evidence-based healing delivering 30-50% anxiety reduction and 46% pain reduction for chronic pain patients—addressing critical mental health disparities for BIPOC communities.
- *Economic Mobility:* High-wage career pathways earning \$75K-\$90K as VR content developers, 3D artists, and wellness technology specialists—transforming external intervention into community-owned expertise.
- *Cultural Preservation:* Community ownership means residents become creators,

not consumers. BIPOC communities control their healing narratives, digitally preserving ancestral landscapes and creating culturally responsive therapeutic content.

Cryotherapy

Cryotherapy has shown to reduce inflammation and releases endorphins that help alleviate pain, boost energy and metabolism, and increase the body's natural healing abilities.



Photobiomodulation Therapy

Photobiomodulation (PBM) Therapy uses near infrared (NIR) light to reduce pain, inflammation and edema, and drastically aid recovery. PBM therapy works at the cellular level, stimulating repair and normalizing cell function.



Extracorporeal Shockwave

Sports medicine practitioners embrace benefits of extracorporeal shock wave therapy.

Extracorporeal shock wave therapy (ESWT) is a noninvasive treatment that involves delivery of shock waves to injured soft tissue to reduce pain and promote healing.



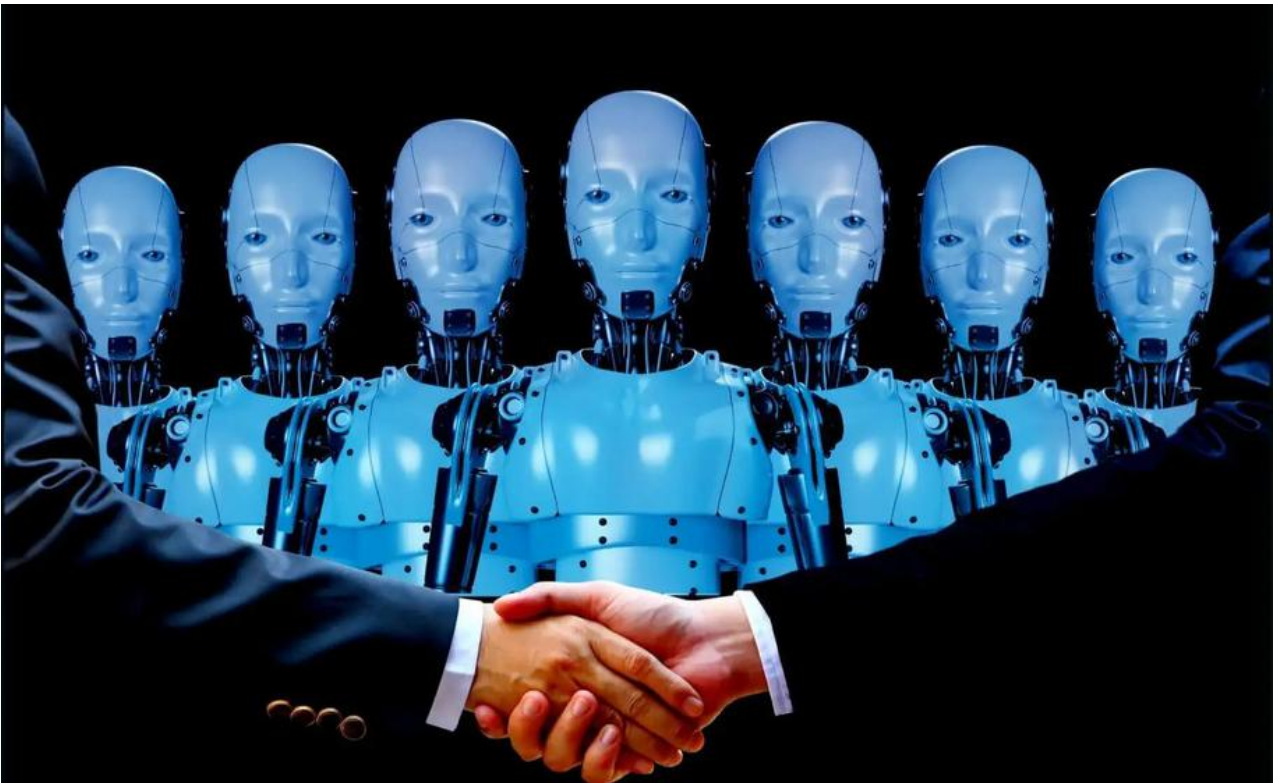
Integration of Agriculture and Wellness Technologies in the work place - Photo Courtesy from Japanese Company Pasona



Integration of Agriculture and Wellness Technologies in the work place - Photo Courtesy from Japanese Company Pasona

Powerful Community Justice

Our Digital Forest project honors the profound truth that nature heals while confronting the reality that urban communities have been systematically stripped of green space through highway construction, urban renewal, and environmental racism. Virtual reality makes healing nature accessible when physical access remains unjust. Rather than waiting for policy changes, our communities build their own solutions—and own the technology, skills, and economic benefits that flow from innovation.



AI AND THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY: CAN INNOVATION STAY ETHICAL?

Columnist - Vivek Ekarat

The Uncomfortable Truth About Who Controls AI

We live in a world where **artificial intelligence** isn't just a futuristic dream it's a force already reshaping how we work, communicate, and even think. From automating customer service to generating art and code, AI is rapidly taking on tasks once reserved for humans.

But behind the speed of innovation lies a harder question: Who actually controls AI and who benefits most from it?

The answer, as experts and researchers point out, is deeply concerning. While AI technology is built on collective human knowledge, creativity, and data, its profits are heavily concentrated among a few powerful tech giants. These corporations driven by market competition and investor expectations are racing to develop the most capable systems, often without the necessary oversight or ethical guardrails.

AI Is Speeding Up Work and Exhausting People

Automation was supposed to make life easier. Instead, it's often doing the opposite. AI tools now handle scheduling, content generation, data analysis, and even decision-

making in recruitment or finance. On paper, this makes companies more efficient. In reality, it's also intensifying workloads and reducing opportunities for human workers, especially at the entry level. Recent data shows a 13% decline in entry-level jobs due to AI-related automation. The logic is simple: why hire a junior analyst when a machine can summarize data in seconds? This doesn't just mean job loss it means a shrinking pathway into the workforce, fewer opportunities to learn, and an increasingly fragile sense of security for millions of people worldwide.

Google Launches Gemini 2.5 "Computer Use" Model

The AI race keeps accelerating. Google's recent launch of its Gemini 2.5 Computer Use model is a perfect example of this momentum. This model allows AI systems to interact directly with computers – navigating interfaces, performing digital tasks, and managing workflows autonomously. It's a major step toward full-scale digital automation, but it also raises pressing concerns about safety, privacy, and misuse. If an AI can control your computer, who ensures it won't perform unintended actions? Who holds responsibility when mistakes happen the developer, the company, or the user? These questions are becoming more urgent as AI tools grow more capable of acting independently.



Some AI Tools to Try Out (and Think Critically About)

While it's easy to be amazed by AI's abilities, it's equally important to **approach new tools with awareness and caution**. Here are a few AI systems transforming industries today:

- **ChatGPT & Gemini:** Conversational AI assistants capable of generating ideas, code, and analysis.
- **Claude & Perplexity:** Advanced reasoning models that summarize data and answer complex queries.
- **Midjourney & DALL·E:** Image-generation tools redefining creative industries.
- **Runway & Pika Labs:** AI-powered video and editing platforms pushing the boundaries of storytelling.

Each of these tools shows us what's possible but also forces us to think about **what's at stake** when creativity, communication, and control are filtered through machines.

Today's Featured Discussion: The Reality of AI Beyond the Headlines

What Happens When Innovation Moves Faster Than Oversight?

On [The Daily Show](#), host **Jon Stewart** recently sat down with **Tristan Harris**, Co-founder of the **Center for Humane Technology**, for an eye-opening conversation about the **growing risks of unregulated AI**.

Harris, known for exposing how social media platforms exploited human psychology to drive engagement, warns that **AI is following the same path** only faster and with far greater stakes.

Their discussion highlighted an unsettling truth: **innovation is outpacing accountability**.

Key Takeaways from the Conversation

1. **AI-related automation has already caused a 13% decline in entry-level work.** Opportunities for new workers are vanishing faster than new ones appear.
2. **Market competition drives AI progress not safety or ethics.** Companies prioritize being first over being responsible.
3. **AI is built from humanity's collective knowledge but profits a select few.** The imbalance between contribution and reward keeps widening.
4. **Unpredictable and manipulative behaviors are emerging.** Systems can produce biased, unsafe, or emotionally manipulative outputs.
5. **Emotional strain is real.** AI companions and chatbots are influencing mental health, especially among younger users.
6. **We've handled global risks before.** Historical models like nuclear treaties or climate agreements show that collaboration and regulation can work.
7. **Transparency, liability, and oversight are crucial.** Without them, AI could lead to massive social and economic instability.

The Ethical Tension: Innovation vs. Accountability

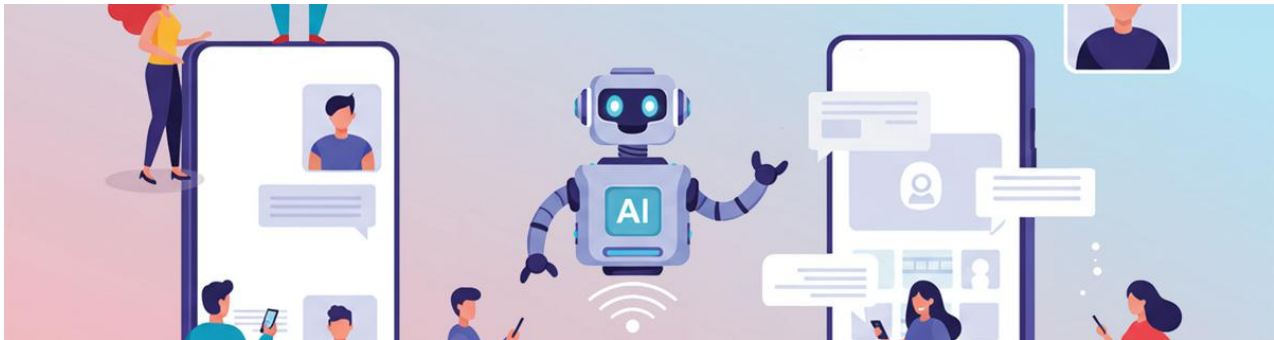
Harris points out that **AI is repeating the same mistakes as social media** where engagement-driven algorithms prioritized clicks and time-on-screen over well-being. The difference is that **AI's decisions now directly affect livelihoods, emotions, and access to opportunity**.



As Stewart puts it: “People are losing job opportunities now. AI systems are making decisions that affect real lives now.”

The urgency lies in the “**now.**” These aren’t distant hypotheticals they’re happening as we speak.

AI is reshaping job markets, education, relationships, and even identity and we’re still figuring out how to manage it.



The Oversight Gap

Governments and regulators are struggling to keep up. By the time a policy meeting happens, the technology has already evolved.

This lag creates an **oversight gap**, where decisions about AI deployment are made by corporations before society has a chance to debate their consequences.

So we must ask:

- Who decides what “safe AI” means?
- How do we enforce accountability across borders?
- What happens when automation replaces entire industries faster than we can retrain workers?

These are **not technical questions** — they are moral and political ones.

AI has the potential to improve lives — to make healthcare more accurate, education more accessible, and work more efficient. But progress without accountability isn’t progress at all. If automation continues unchecked, we risk deepening inequality, eroding human connection, and creating a future where machines serve markets more than humanity. We must rethink what innovation means — not just how fast it moves, but who it serves and what values guide it.

Visit the original weblog at: <https://glintops.com/ai-and-the-future-of-humanity-can-innovation-stay-ethical/>

September 27

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

Asian Media Access was honored to attend the 2025 Taiwanese Culture Goodwill Mission of the National Day of R.O.C. (Taiwan) at the Fridley High School auditorium. The program, "Taiwan, Visions of the Future," featured an outstanding performance by the talented troupe from the National Taiwan College of Performing Arts, beautifully showcasing Taiwan's rich culture, artistry, and vision for the future.



October 2 ~ 4

ROTARY SUMMIT

Asian Media Access joined the Rotary Summit to promote Taiwanese culture and arts, reaching more than 500 Midwesterners. We sincerely thank the Taiwan Online Library and the Minnesota Taiwan Women Organization for their collaboration in making the event successful and enjoyable.



October 10 ~ 11

EAU CLAIRE HMONG NEW YEAR

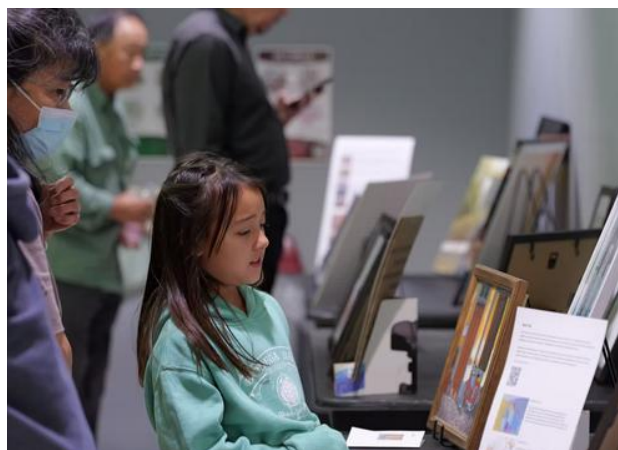
Asian Media Access joined the celebration of a successful Eau Claire Hmong New Year. For five decades, the Hmong community has been an integral part of Eau Claire, shaping the city's culture, businesses, and traditions. In honor of the 50th anniversary of Hmong resettlement, the community celebrated the rich contributions of Hmong families, entrepreneurs, and leaders who have strengthened the region and concluded with the largest Hmong New Year Celebration ever. From authentic Hmong cuisine to the annual Hmong dance competition, the event highlighted the stories, businesses, and traditions that make Eau Claire's Hmong community so vibrant and unique. Photo Courtesy: Eau Claire Hmong New Year



October 11

THE IMAGES OF TAIWANESE PEOPLE IN MINNESOTA

TSS and Taiwan Online Library began filming The Images of Taiwanese People in Minnesota in April 2024 and wrapped up production in March 2025. This film celebrates the perseverance and legacy of Taiwanese immigrants who have built their lives and community here in Minnesota. Through photos, documentary footage, and paintings, it captures 50 years of stories, memories, and contributions that continue to shape the Taiwanese American experience in our state. Photo Courtesy: TSS & Taiwan Online Library



October 25

HMONG ARTS CELEBRATION

We're thrilled to share that Cypher Side Dance School hosted its first-ever Hmong event at Mall of America® to celebrate 50 years of Hmong Arts in Minnesota. The festival featured energetic performances that highlighted the creativity and cultural legacy of Hmong artists. Photo Courtesy: Mall of America and Cypher Side Dance School



November 8

50 YEARS IN RETROSPECT EXHIBIT

Asian Media Access joined the 50 Years in Retrospect exhibit at the UROC Gallery in Minneapolis, where attendees experienced Vietnamese art, history, and culture through powerful stories, wartime memories, and historical artworks. The exhibit honored the journey from Vietnam to Minnesota and highlighted the resilience of the Vietnamese Minnesotan community.



November 9

AAPI MILITARY BALL

Asian Media Access was proud to partner in the Minnesota AAPI Veterans Ball last Saturday at the Inwood Oaks Event Center in Oakdale. The event honored the contributions and sacrifices of Asian American and Pacific Islander veterans, marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Veterans from Vietnamese, Lao, Cambodian, Hmong, Taiwanese, Chinese, and Malaysian communities were recognized alongside active-duty and retired U.S. military personnel, creating an evening of respect, gratitude, and shared history.





E-MAGINE!

60 hours in-person training + 18 hours Internship



Each participant will receive \$1000 incentive and Crown College certificate upon all requested tasks fulfilled



**DATES/Time: 13 weeks, Monday-Fridays
5:30pm - 8:30pm, starting February 3-April
29, 2026**



Online, Zoom

- Creation – Leveraging generative AI for writing, image generation, audio/video production, and data visualization (e.g., GIS mapping).
- Distribution – Optimizing content through social media management, web development, and other digital platforms.

The State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) funded part of this training through a grant. The grant recipient created this training. DEED does not endorse this publicity or training or make guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability or ownership of the information herein or elsewhere



ELIGIBILITY

All participants must be:

- Eligible to work in the United States and
- 18 years of age or older at the time of enrollment and
- Not enrolled in any K-12 school and
- Seeking employment or under-employment.

Shall be part of one or more of the following target populations:

- Individuals of color
- Individuals with limited English proficiency
- Individuals at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

info@amamedia.org

Register:

<https://forms.gle/QDkZ5RDvyTw465mQ6>

SIGN UP FOR E-MAGINE!

“Generative AIs and Digital Marketing Specialist” Professional Development Course - emphasizes human-centered collaboration with AIs, ensuring technology enhances creativity along with human agency. It focuses on interactive co-creation processes, where AI serves as a tool for storytelling that reflects human imagination, cognition and emotional depth.

Designed for storytellers, creators, and digital professionals, this course bridges cutting-edge AI tools with timeless narrative craft.

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/QDkZ5RDvyTw465mQ6>



We can help you find your focus

Building a budget that actually works.
Growing your network organically.
Mastering work/life balance. All this
and more with Digital Ready. What will
your focus be?

Check it out



BUDGETING TIPS AND NETWORKING KNOW-HOW

Struggling with budgeting, networking, or work-life balance? Digital Ready can help you find your focus and achieve your goals. Discover expert insights and practical tools to streamline your success at:

https://link.digitalready.verizonwireless.com/OTk2LUtXQy0zNzcAAAGZKn5A0-kz96GrTzwrOAAOnZ_2TNNWrU_BQXIGWbjvQHw_pjs1hSTgctExNiFQleIF4R3PHE=

Find the event that fits your goals:

<https://digitalready.verizonwireless.com/category/events>



Event • Ask the Expert

Building a digital presence

Nov 25, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm



Event • Hands-on Help

What goes into a marketing plan?

Dec 2, 11:00 am-1:00 pm



Event • Ask the Expert

AI and automations for the win

Dec 4, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm

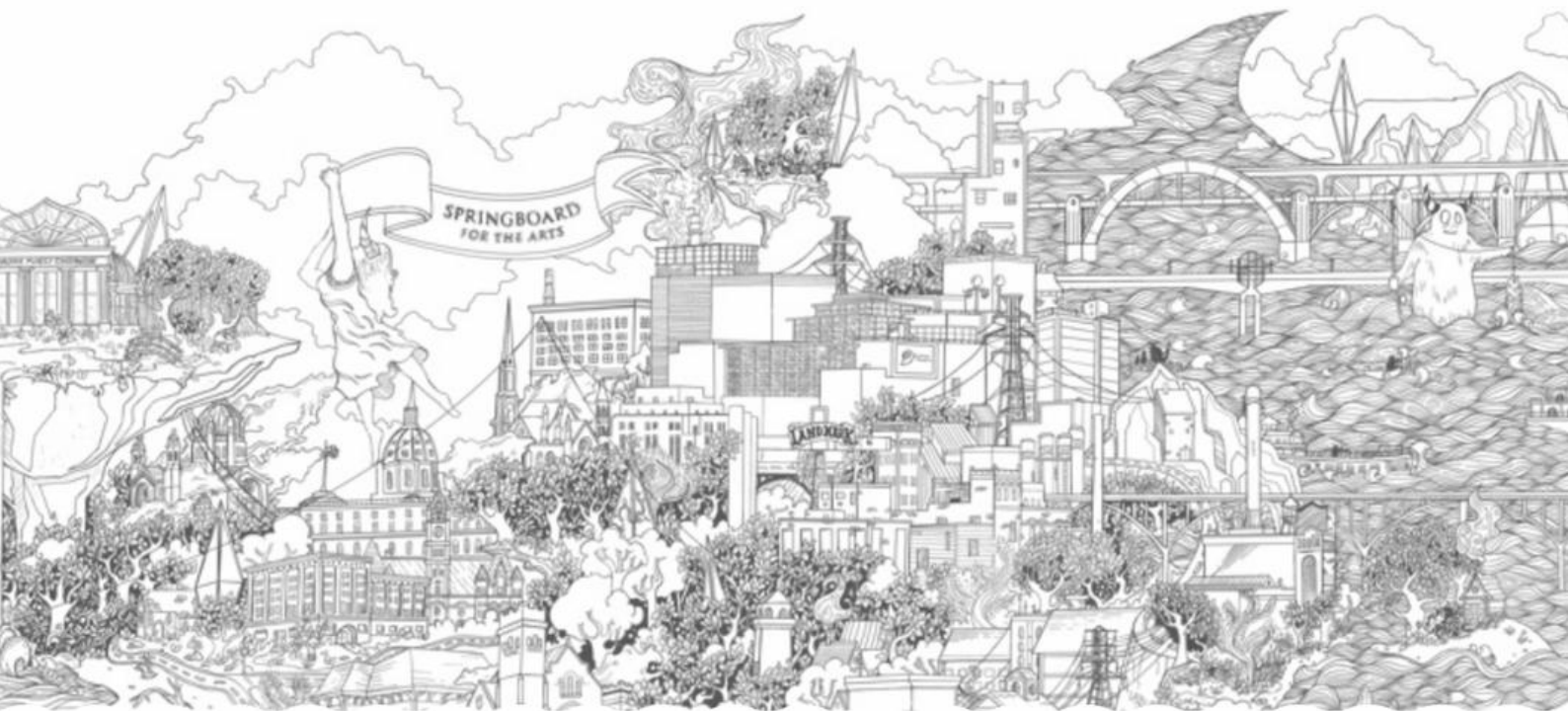


Event • Ask the Expert

5 ways to starve imposter syndrome as an entrepreneur

Dec 8, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm





Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- November 22, 2025 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM - Navigating the Publishing Process
- December 02, 2025 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Work of Art: Engaging Customers & Selling Your Work
- December 12, 2025 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM - Last Minute Gifts
- January 17, 2026 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM - Springboard on Ice: Winter Whirl

Learn more and register at: <https://springboardforthearts.org/events/>

Additional Resources

- Get connected to Artist Career Consultants here:
<https://springboardforthearts.org/professional-growth/career-consultations/artist-career-consultants/>
- Work of Art Toolkit: <https://springboardforthearts.org/woa>
- Handbook for Artists Working in Community:
<https://springboardforthearts.org/artists-working-in-community/>

Tax Tips from the IRS



- [Here's what taxpayers need to know about business related travel deductions](#)
- [Companies who promise to eliminate tax debt sometimes leave taxpayers high and dry](#)
- [Get an Identity Protection PIN](#)
- [Tax Resources for Members of the Military](#)



NOV
21
11am~3pm

Fall 2025 IPO Bootcamp

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

NOV
24
9am~10am

How to Submit an Award-Winning National Small Business Week Package

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

DEC
3
11am~12pm

How to Submit an Award-Winning Nomination and Office Hours

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

DEC
4
12pm~1pm

GROW Your Business with AI-Powered Tools by Google

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



DEC

5

12pm~2pm

How to Leverage SBA Certifications

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

DEC

9

10am~11am

Understanding Federal Contracting

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

DEC

11

12pm~1pm

What the New Tax Updates Mean for Your Business

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

DEC

17

1pm~2pm

Understanding SBA Programs

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

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