

redeemer center for life

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT NORTH MINNEAPOLIS



Dylan Walker, Joe Davis, Bex Klafter, at the Due North Podcast Launch Party, where interviewees, listeners and community members gathered to celebrate and enjoy a sneak peek of Episode 1.

Due North Podcast

Solomon Raymond, Episode 8



This May, RCFL was excited to roll out our first ever podcast: Due North: Stories from North Minneapolis. Due North is a 10-part series of 30 minute episodes highlighting stories from various North Minneapolis leaders. Each episode includes an interview with a community member where we ask about their story, how North Minneapolis has shaped their lives, their views of what it takes to create beloved community, and whether or not they have experienced beloved community themselves.

Since launching in early May, over 200 listeners have tuned in to hear these amazing stories from influential artists, activists, and community leaders in North Minneapolis.

You can find Due North wherever you listen to podcasts (Spotify, Apple Podcasts App, Google Play Music, etc.) and follow @DueNorthPodcast on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date on all the new episodes!

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Introducing the new ArtPlace cohort

Summer at RCFL: Youth N' Power Camp, Step Up Interns, Sunday Funday and Northside Hangouts, Bike Camps, Cookouts, Redeemer's Community Garden

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Farewell LVCers

Solomon Raymond's Story

As told on Episode 8 of Due North

In Episode 8, released in July, we interview Solomon Raymond, Director of Technology at RCFL and Minister of Education at Redeemer Lutheran Church. In this episode, he discusses life that began in Trinidad, his time in the Duluth Federal Prison Camp, and his experience of work and community at Redeemer. Solomon was born in Trinidad, in the West Indies, seven miles northeast of Venezuela and came to this country by means of his father's and grandfathers' hard work. In Solomon's words, "They sacrificed pretty much everything they had so that the younger generations can have a chance or shot at more resources in the United States." Solomon has an incredibly powerful story to share. Here's a sneak preview of his interview:

D: Can you tell us about what you do here at Redeemer Center for life?

S: It's like a jar overflowing. Like you have a pitcher of water and you're pouring it into a cup or glass and you don't want to stop when it gets to the top. When I got out from Duluth, my extended vacation in Duluth, by the courtesy of the bureau of prisons, I got back here and I asked pastor what I can do and he poured. To be specific, I started off helping out with technology and that has since then moved to hardware technology and networking technology to teaching people about technology.

B: Solomon was uprooted from the community when he went to prison in Duluth with a five-year sentence on charges related to a business loan. Solomon shares some of his insights regarding his prison time here. We are really grateful for his honesty and openness about this experience.

"The little bit of freedom or what we call freedom that we have, we should take it, appreciate it, wrap it up, cherish it. So to lose that freedom and then experience what I did years in an institution, a correctional institution, you learn to appreciate freedom."

--Solomon Raymond, Due North Episode 8

D: How did the experience of being in prison, change your worldview?

S: Being in prison has changed my worldview in a couple of ways. One is I believe it has made me a better person because until given that much time to really look at yourself and focus on your inequities, where you're not giving back, where you're not putting forth the amount of effort you really thought you were putting forth, and for me specifically, I realized I wasn't who I thought I was. ...I needed to grow. I got time to work on that. I had time to work on me. Secondly, I had a chance to revisit what I had left here in Minneapolis. I could have just done what was suggested to me by not only my wife but my brother-in-law and sister-in-law, siblings. Everyone said, who's it going to hurt but my pride [to plead guilty to the felony charges and receive probation instead of prison time - but as you will read later this was a complicated deal], and it hurt my pride so I wasn't going to let that happen. I decided I'm going to fight this and there's no way in the world that I'm going to lose, and I lost. I said to myself, It's just a technicality and I just started getting more angry and more angry that they would put a nice guy on the good side in jail for a technicality... until I had that time. It was called "the time after nine," because that was lockdown. Until I had that "time after nine" to reflect on myself and see that reality. You are here for a reason, reflect and peel the cover off. Look in, see who you are for who you are, and change what you can so that the real legacy you leave behind is who you really are and not a fake person. And if you can share that type of attitude with others, then you can not only help yourself, you would help others to grow. Where better than where I left or where I was aspiring to help out - North Minneapolis and the church [Redeemer] that I had just found. I can share with my peers, I can learn from the elders, because no matter how old you are, you can always grow and learn another day.

D: How have you had to adjust since returning from Duluth and coming back to the community?

S: The main adjustment is realizing and appreciating freedom. Freedom isn't something we should take for granted, which takes us all the way back to Martin Luther King's birthday back to what he was thinking when he saw that we were not truly free ... the little bit of freedom or what we call freedom that we have, we should take it, appreciate it, wrap it up, cherish it. So to lose that freedom and then experience what I did years in an institution, a correctional institution, you learn to appreciate freedom.



B: What sorts of things do you hope to be able to do with Redeemer and in North Minneapolis?

P: As one person. I can't help the whole world, but I can do my part and it starts here where I am. I look forward to being able to fulfill the goals and aspirations of Redeemer Center for Life. And if and when I am directed, to positions that can not only elevate me but help elevate the direction of the community. I look forward to teaching and showing and learning from others ... We can help each other so that we don't end up in the same situations and be a repetitive circle as people in the past or black people in the past.



We reached out to Solomon when pulling some of his interview for this RCFL Quarterly News story. We wanted to provide clarity, and do justice with Solomon's story. Any one of us could have been in Solomon's shoes, signing a loan application and trusting the process, and then when asked to sign witness to charges against the loan officer that go beyond our personal experience, maintaining the integrity to say no, our witness doesn't truly extend that far. Some of what we hear in this interview is the result of systematic dehumanization of a humble man.

In the beginning the US Government offered Solomon 90 days probation and a felony conviction, if he had chosen to implicate the loan officer and Wells Fargo. Instead, Solomon chose to take it to court. The jury convicted him, stating that it was Solomon's due diligence at closing to review all the forms before signing. Solomon was sentenced to five (5) years in prison. He reflected that in the beginning he was angry, but "over the years, and a lot of prayer, I have come to the conclusion that they were correct; because it was my due diligence to review every form for inaccuracies. Technically, I was guilty of fraud and am paying the consequences for my actions."

Solomon notes that his family, Pastor Kelly, and Redeemer, have supported him throughout. Solomon's time was shortened due to 'good behavior' and his participation in rehabilitative programming while confined at the Duluth Federal Prison Camp.

Solomon added, "I thank God for his blessings, and for not forgetting me, as well as forgiving me. I have learned a valuable lesson from all of this - to be more humble, and to pay close attention to what I sign. I want to give back to my church (by supporting RCFL and the Redeemer community), my family, and to God for always being in my corner - despite my arrogance. That's it in a nutshell."

At Home in Harrison, ArtPlace, Year 2

/2019 – 2020/ *artist organizer cohort* >>>>>



**EJ
EASLEY**



**YONCI
JAMESON**



**AWA
MALLY**



**DENETRICK
POWERS**



**JOVAN
SHABAZZ**



**KEEGAN
XAVI**

Photo by Adja Gildersleve.

Photo by Osman Photography.

Photo by K. Pickett.

On Saturday June 22, we hosted our seventh At Home in Harrison gathering - and the first gathering planned by Redeemer's year-two artist organizers, Ej Easley (Hip Hop/Spoken Word), Yonci Jameson (Music), Awa Mally (Photography), Denetrick Powers (Photography and Performance), Jovan Shabazz (Visual Arts) and Keegan Xavi (Mixed Media). This seventh gathering served as a community ice breaker for this new cohort, Harrison neighbors and friends, and a chance to talk about what home means to each of us. This gathering was hosted at La Doña Cervecería with food from Breaking Bread Cafe and Catering. At Home in Harrison is an RCFL project funded by ArtPlaceAmerica.

At Home in Harrison works to preserve and expand affordable housing, mitigate displacement, and inspire residents to invest long-term in the Harrison neighborhood and its current diverse community. North Minneapolis artists and community leaders have engaged neighbors in Harrison and the broader Northside community asking questions about what Home means to each of us, and our individual experiences of gentrification. This project highlights the importance of bringing residents together to meet one another, share food and stories, and engage around such a timely, life- and city-changing topic. These gatherings have served to highlight the importance of being exposed to new experiences and perspectives, especially for those professionals who may not spend much in the neighborhoods directly affected by their work.

Join us for the next At Home in Harrison gathering, Saturday, August 24, at Harrison Park in partnership with the Harrison Neighborhood Association's 35th anniversary celebration.

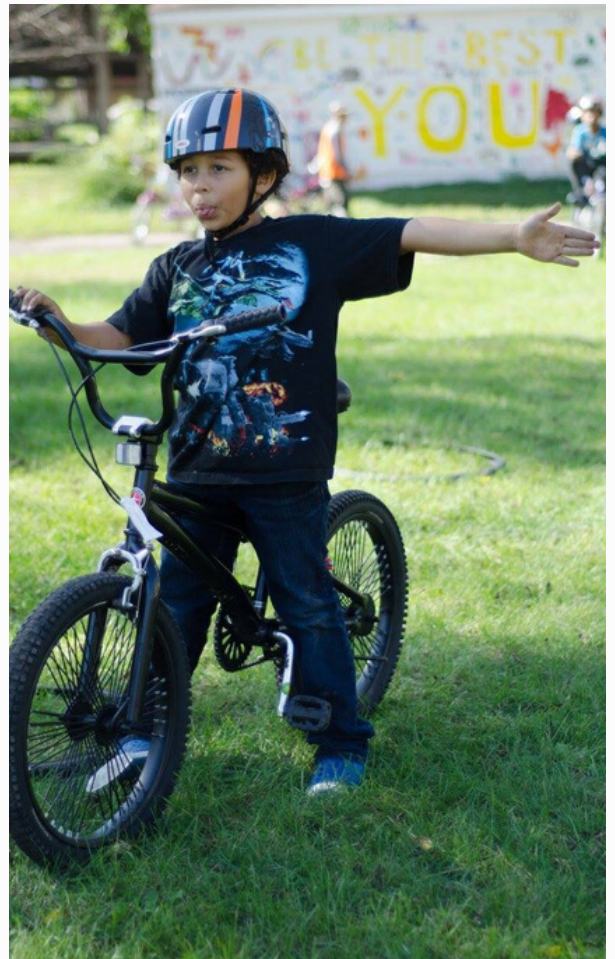


Summer at RCFL

Summer at Redeemer brings a brilliant energy shift. This place-based community organization shines. And in this space of summer sun we respond with brilliance to the call for youth leadership, workforce development opportunities, and creative community engagement! We note the vibrancy of this summer's community garden, and heartily invite each of you to join us as we engage each other, the soil, and growing plants. We also open our doors wide to enjoy the magic of summer youth programming and workforce development activities, and to experience community gatherings at their best by way of our weekly Wednesday night cookouts, and the annual Redeemer Block Party. We hope to see you!



This summer, alongside MN Interfaith Power and Light, RCFL introduces Youth N'Power, to North Minneapolis. Through this enterprising summer camp youth in grades 5-12 will embark on three weeks of dynamic leadership training and an in-depth exploration of renewable energy, environmental justice, and urban farming all by way of engaging hands-on projects and compelling field trips. The final week of camp will culminate in team projects that draw from the experience gained within the first two weeks. Youth N'Power will address climate change and the power of youth to create a new energy revolution.





Youth Leadership & Workforce Development

This summer at RCFL, 60 northside youth will generate summer magic! Engaged as Step Up interns, Northside Lens filmmakers, Youth N'Power summer campers, Youth who join for Northside Hangouts and Sunday Fundays, and Venture North Earn-A-Bike day campers, these 60 plus young people will grow in relationship, and cultivate a lasting sense of accomplishment, joy, and confidence as they stretch, grow, play, and learn.

"Our goals are to reach these kids, give each one the opportunity that either we never had, or that we see missing in community today. We want to build solid relationships with neighborhood families, and give youth additional sources of mentorship, diverse leadership, fun summer enrichment, and for the older youth, solid work skills for the future, and the opportunity to prove their reliability and make connections." --

*Traiveon Dunlap and Payton Bowdry,
Youth Directors*

North Minneapolis Youth Step Up to create bright futures through professional skills training, on-the-job experience, and connections with adult mentors who can help them achieve their goals. The experience cultivated for interns at RCFL is rooted in what it means to be part of the Redeemer community and our mission for inclusive development in the Harrison neighborhood. This summer's 20 Step Up interns will engage the Redeemer community as Venture North baristas (2) and bicycle mechanics (2), Youth N'Power camp counselors (6), and Northside Lens documentary filmmakers (10). RCFL provides outstanding opportunities for youth in North Minneapolis to gain valuable work experience.

Northside Lens - a youth media production program in partnership with St. Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN) - will train 10 Step Up interns in camera techniques, audio and video editing skills, production and circulation. Each participant will create a website portfolio, gain exposure to prominent northside filmmakers, visit the SPNN cable access television station, and create their very own documentary film. This incredible program is taught by Northsider and SPNN Media Education Program Manager, Joua Lee, and our own Wesley Ferguson, filmmaker and Venture North barista!

Find us on Facebook
Northside Youth Association

We ♥ N Mpls

SUNDAY FUNDAY

Sundays, 12-4 PM
Venture North
1830 Glenwood Ave

Questions?
Traiveond@gmail.com
612-354-4833

Redeemer Center for Life's
Sunday youth program
Ages 20 and Under

Tuesdays & Thursdays
11 AM - 3 PM

We ♥ N Mpls
All ages are welcome to join us for art, video games, movies, field trips, music, and snacks!

NORTHSIDE HANGOUTS

Redeemer Center for Life's
twice-weekly Northside youth program

Find us on Facebook
Northside Youth Association

Questions?
Traiveond@gmail.com
612-354-4833

The Living Room
1716 Glenwood Ave

Northside Hangouts & Sunday Funday exist year-round as a place for youth to come and kick it! All school age children are invited to join from 11am-3pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at the RCFL Living Room. Led by RCFL youth staff (and during the summer, RCFL Step Up interns) participating youth are engaged in relationship, served healthy snacks, and guided in conversation and games that facilitate social emotional skill building.

Venture North's well-loved Earn-A-Bike camp extravaganza will return twice this summer! Children participants, cheered on by their respective adults and guided by Venture North mechanics, Step Up interns, and RCFL youth staff will engage in two intensive one-day bicycle empowerment workshops, riding their way through six stations: bicycle maintenance, bicycle art, an agility/skill bike maze, the Slalom Stop Sign for practice in hand signals and stopping, a bike lock relay, and a helmet fitting. Participants roll away from this action-packed day with their very own Venture North bicycle, helmet, lock, and some celebratory ice cream!

*This summer's first Earn-A-Bike will Thursday, July 11, 10:30am-2:30pm, at Venture North! All children ages 6-12 are invited to join. Suggested donation of \$25/participant.

Redeemer Backyard Cookouts

Each Wednesday through July and into August, Redeemer holds an outdoor cookout that with support from our partners brings together Redeemer community from near and far. Our backyard comes alive during the summer with garden bounty, smoking grills, the conversation and laughter of community, and the interweaving of youth programming! We hope to see you among the crowd.

July 10 - sponsored by Immanuel Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie

July 17* - _____

July 24 - sponsored by Westwood Lutheran Church, St. Louis Park

July 31 - sponsored by Edina Community Lutheran Church

August 6 (Tuesday) National Night Out! Sponsored by Redeemer & Health Commons

August 14* - _____

August 21 - Redeemer Annual Block Party

*Interested in sponsoring July 17 or August 14? Please call Mali at Redeemer 612-374-4139

Redeemer Community Garden

As summer warms up, we are having a blast in Redeemer's Community Garden! Our garden not only provides fresh, delicious produce for summer's weekly Wednesday night cookouts and the Annual Block Party, the space serves as a place for people to gather outside in community. As a place-based organization, we value connecting with the land and each other as we grow food for communal enjoyment.

We are currently blessed with more than 18 volunteers and weekly gardening sessions Tuesdays from 3-6 PM where we plant, weed, and prepare the garden for the summer ahead. Additionally, many community members--returning and new--have personal plots that they each maintain.

This summer in particular we have the good fortune of engaging a new Harrison neighborhood resident, Greta Klawiter-Lein, as our volunteer community garden coordinator. We asked Greta if she would introduce herself within this newsletter. Her words follow.



"Hey everyone! My name is Greta Klawiter-Lein and I just moved to the Harrison neighborhood in January. I have been an avid traveler since 2014 and haven't set down roots in any one place for more than 3 months until now. After many years of traveling, I missed a sense of community, and I really missed growing my own food. I grew up on an organic farm outside of Northfield, MN and have been involved in growing, sharing and advocating for good food for most of my life.

I am really passionate about making good, healthy food accessible to everyone. I am also super excited about getting outside and working the land with my community. I made a big life choice to stay in one place so I could make these dreams of sharing in the garden together a reality. Once I found a place to call home I started reaching out to community gardens, even started to look at what it would take to start my own. I wanted a space that was open to everyone, was focused on bringing people together around food and needed help spearheading events. Coming across Redeemer's Community Garden was truly a divine intervention. I am so excited about all that is happening at the garden and all that is to come!

Being a part of this garden and this community is exactly what I was hoping for! Come hang out at the garden with us - we want to see and feed you."

-- Greta Klawiter-Lein



Upcoming Events

Adult Bike Camp

Tuesdays, July 9, 16, & 23, 2-4pm

Venture North, 1830 Glenwood Avenue, 55405

Join us for a bike camp to gain the basics of riding and gain confidence over three sessions. For anyone ages 17 and up to learn how to ride in a judgement FREE zone.

Venture North Earn-A-Bike Camp

Thursday, July 11, 10:30am - 2:30pm

Venture North, 1830 Glenwood Avenue, 55405

Venture North welcomes all kids ages 6-12 to learn how to ride a bike and ride safely in an urban environment! Older kids will learn how to change a flat tire and the basic components of a bike! All campers without a bike or helmet will receive one by finishing the day of camp free of charge. Please indicate ahead of time if your child needs a bike or helmet.

\$25 suggested donation per participant

Garden Volunteer and Pizza Day

Sunday, July 14, 1-4pm

Redeemer Community Garden, 1800 Glenwood Avenue N, 55405

Join us for homemade pizza from the community bread oven, garden maintenance and harvesting. A fun way to enjoy our communal outdoors space and the summertime! Free

2nd Annual Utepils Happy Hour for the Whole Family

With Tootie's Peanuts & the Gentleman Artist!

Tuesday, July 16, 4-8pm

Utepils Brewing, 225 Thomas Avenue North, 55405

Bring the whole family out to Utepils Brewing to celebrate summer, catch up with your fellow friends and fans of Redeemer, and toast Redeemer Center - all to benefit RCFL and our continued investment in North Minneapolis. One dollar per pour will be donated right back to RCFL. Make a donation of \$20 or greater directly to RCFL and receive a free drink token and ring the Utepils taproom bell! Meet our the Gentleman Artist, play a taproom board game, and purchase peanuts from RCFL board member, Tootie, with Tootie's Peanuts! The more, the merrier!

Northside Bike Tour & Bread Oven Event

Saturday August 3, 10am-2pm

Venture North, 1830 Glenwood Avenue, 55405

This ride through North Minneapolis is a collaboration between Redeemer and St. Michael's church in Roseville. We've dreamt up a Northside bicycle tour set to begin at Venture North at 10am with coffee and cookies from Cookie Cart. The ride will begin at 10:30am, and will head to Theodore Wirth Lake, through Theodore Wirth Park, and then through North Minneapolis neighborhoods. We will close the event with RCFL storytelling and a lunch of handmade pizza at our outdoor community bread oven at noon.

\$20 suggested donation per family



Farewell to Our 2018-19 Lutheran Volunteer Corps Volunteers

This year, Redeemer Center for Life welcomed four Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC) members to our staff. Throughout their eleven months with us, they have enriched our work in countless ways, from creating new events and projects, to providing valuable assistance with our existing programming. We're sad to see them go in July, but excited to see what they do next!



Jason Hirsch (he/him)

Youth Program Coordinator -- works with the youth team to create engaging programming for youth in the church and surrounding community

What are you doing after LVC wraps up?

I am staying in Minneapolis and will be living with an assortment of other LVC volunteers from this year. I plan on staying involved with Redeemer as a member of the congregation. I am going to be completing a Masters of Social Work (MSW) and doing a practicum in the Fall and Spring with the National Association of Social Workers.

What would you tell an LVCer in your shoes next year?

Explore the city and try to get involved in different ways. It might be hard, especially when it's cold, but it will be worth it based on the relationships you will build.

What has been your favorite thing about living and working in North Minneapolis?

I have loved living in North Minneapolis and working with such amazing people in the community. Every person has a story and a lot of neighbors are genuinely interested in getting to know you.



Sara Hovren (she/her)

Manager of Coffee Bar at Venture North, works on outreach for Venture North and other RCFL events (such as the Winter Extravaganza)

What are you doing after LVC wraps up?

I am sad to be leaving Minnesota, but am excited to be moving to Akron, Ohio to continue to develop skills in community health and health equity to later pursue a Master's degree in Public Health. In these next few weeks and months I will hopefully solidify a job in Northeast Ohio, and ideally find one close enough to continue commuting by bike in the warmer months.

What's your favorite moment at Redeemer this year?

Learning how to cross country ski with co-workers preparing for the Winter Extravaganza because we were falling all over the place, just laughing and making our own relationships stronger.

What's your proudest accomplishment from this year?

Seeing the community coming together, spending time with family and meeting new people at the Winter Extravaganzas.



Bex Klafter (she/her)

Strategic Outreach Coordinator -- assists with development and communications, manages the community garden, co-produces the podcast Due North

What are you doing after LVC wraps up?

Unclear at the moment! I will be living in a communal house in Minneapolis and possibly staying in my role at Redeemer or working for another non-profit.

What's your proudest accomplishment from this year?

My proudest accomplishment this year has been organizing two Winter Extravaganzas at Theodore Wirth Park. We had over 160 participants join us for winter activities like cross-country skiing, snow tubing, and snow-shoeing. Not only did we have a lot of fun but we brought our Redeemer vibrancy and community to the park.

What has been your favorite thing about living and working in North Minneapolis?

Living and working in North Minneapolis, particularly in Harrison, is like living in a small town. I can't go anywhere without running into at least one neighbor and I love it. This community has welcomed me and I am so grateful for their support.



Dylan Walker (he/him)

Storytelling and New Media Associate -- uses film, podcasts, photography, writing, graphic design, and more to tell the story of RCFL and North Minneapolis

What are you doing after LVC wraps up?

I'm going to continue living in Minneapolis, start a new position in Macalester College's Marketing and Communications Department, and keep raising succulents and practicing cross stitch. I might also adopt a cat, so stay tuned.

What lessons have you learned from this year at Redeemer?

1. There is power in vulnerability and there is power in trusting the people around you.
2. There is power in self-confidence and developing the ability to stand up for yourself.
3. Find your allies, your accomplices, those who stand beside you as you practice lessons one and two. Keep them close, thank them often, and never take them for granted.

What skills have you developed this year?

I've learned so much about podcast hosting and marketing, various editing and design programs, and how to use a sewing machine, Redeemer's button-maker, and acrylic paints (thanks, Katherine Parent!). Plus I can snowshoe now.


Starting in August, we'll welcome three new LVCers: Alexa Rother as Youth Staff, Rebecca Galbraith as the Bike and Coffee Shop Assistant, and Rebecca Sandness as Administration Assistant. Be sure to welcome them when you meet them this fall!



We  **N Mpls**

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