

Aspiring to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's Beloved Community

"Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people... It begins by loving others for their sakes... Agape is love seeking to preserve and create community."

-- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. via the King Center

Portrait by **The Gentleman Artist**,
signed by community members

Northside Art Space

At RCFL, we believe that art is foundational to building and engaging community, telling our place-based stories, and celebrating and reinforcing the diversity in North Minneapolis. This January, in line with this mission, RCFL opened its first public art gallery: the Northside Art Space.

Devoted to Northside art and culture, this gallery hosts ten local artists with work hanging in Venture North, Redeemer Lutheran Church, and RCFL's Living Room with gallery infrastructure designed and installed by RCFL board member Dennis Skovsted. The Northside Art Space highlights colorful, creative, and powerful work and provides an opportunity for RCFL to invest in these

local artists. Unlike many other art galleries, challenging to enter and cost-prohibitive, the Northside Art Space provides a free space for artists to show their work, no matter what style, and allows artists to sell their work and earn income. It is common practice for most art galleries to take a cut of this earning, however RCFL aims to utilize this space for the artists themselves to profit from their work and exhibit their talent. This Northside Art Space deepens RCFL's commitment to investing in the vibrancy and excellency of North Minneapolis as we seek to preserve and create community.

During the soft opening of the gallery on Saturday, January 19, artists and community members gathered to look at the art, hear artists discuss their work, and enjoy snacks and

coffee at Venture North. As the gallery continues to expand, we plan to host a grand opening. No worries, we will keep you posted!





Marlo Ideniye speaks about her work during the soft opening of the Northside Gallery.

On exhibit at the Venture North gallery space (1830 Glenwood)

Longtime Northsider **Marlo Ideniye** shared handmade resin jewelry that encapsulates tiny photo memorabilia, bracelets, necklaces, and vibrant fabric-wrapped dangle earrings. Marlo spoke about and how she chooses color to communicate emotions, joy and empowerment.

Ian Magnuson, RCFL staff photographer and Communications Director, presented three photo portraits including a dazzling shot of a child

with a rainbow soap bubble. RCFL Artist-in-Residence and Harrison neighborhood resident, **the Gentleman Artist**, Robert Coleman, displayed his latest series of poured acrylic paint on canvas - bursts with swirling psychedelic color and texture.

On exhibit at Redeemer Lutheran Church, lower level (1800 Glenwood)

Multidisciplinary artist, **Deborah Flye**, contributes to this exhibition with black-on-white geometric

abstract line drawings that make dynamic shapes out of bold lines and dots. Deborah describes the abstractions as representation and fragments of her inner visions.

Harrison neighborhood resident, **SEE MORE PERSPECTIVE's** work expresses hip hop culture and personal themes of grief, healing and care, with paint marker graffiti on meaningful found surfaces.

RCFL Artist-in-Residence since 2013, and Harrison neighborhood resident, **Katherine Parent**, explores sacredness and the sensual with images of landscapes, haloed creatures, seed pods and wells.

Amoke Kubat is a "Northsider for Life", Yoruba Priestess, teacher, artist, and playwright. Amoke's art incorporates fabric, text, acrylic painting, beads and found objects. Amoke works to bridge African/African American culture and historical contributions into transformative actions for healing and building sustainable families and communities.

Northside Art Space galleries will be on a four-month rotation with the current exhibit up until May. Grab a hot drink in Venture North before perusing the these three gallery spaces.



Left: **Prabana Mendis**, Redeemer Art Organizer, greets community members during the soft opening of the gallery.

Top: Handmade jewelry by **Marlo Ideniye** is on display in Venture North.

Right: **SEE MORE PERSPECTIVE** gives insight on his artwork during the soft opening.



Stories from North Minneapolis, an RCFL Podcast

DUE NORTH, RCFL's new podcast, is set to go live in May. This podcast will provide a platform for residents in North Minneapolis to tell their stories through in-depth interviews with specific focus on just 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.

RCFL Staff members **Dylan Walker** and **Bex Klafter** are currently conducting interviews and recording a 10-part series podcast of 30 minute

episodes highlighting stories from North Minneapolis.

Podcasts are not only a popular way to disseminate information and stories but also give a fuller narrative that truly captures and centers someone's voice.

This podcast presents an opportunity for residents to express their stories and have them heard in a new and more detailed way. Through this podcast, we hope to listen to, and learn from, our neighbors, all the while sharing the stories with all of you.



DUE NORTH will debut in May.
Look for more information on the RCFL
web and Facebook pages
for how to tune in!

Upcoming Episodes:

Joe Davis: local poet and resident in RCFL housing

Denetrick Powers: RCFL youth program alum and president of the Harrison Neighborhood Association

Princess Titus and Michelle Horowitz: Founders of North Minneapolis-based food justice organization, Appetite for Change

Bertha McKinney: Community Liaison with Health Commons at the RCFL Living Room

Dr. Michael Brooks: Dentist at Northpoint

Lonna Field: Redeemer church member, previously RCFL youth staff

Paul Solomon Raymond: RCFL Director of Technology and Administration

Tootie Martin: RCFL board member, Redeemer Church member, and founder of Tootie's Peanuts

Commissioner Irene Fernando: Hennepin County commissioner and Harrison Neighborhood resident



"I love the intentionality of the people here. It's always the people who make the place... What keeps me here is definitely the people, and just the intentionality and the relationships and the authenticity and what I like to call the radical hospitality. I think that's really beautiful and I haven't seen that elsewhere... but it's really deeply rooted here... cultivated over generations... I really appreciate that." -- **Joe Davis**

Winter Extravaganza at the Loppet Trailhead

Deeply committed to the renewed relationship between Northside community and our very own Theodore Wirth Park, RCFL partnered with the Loppet Foundation - an organization that provides year-round outdoor adventure - to put on two free Winter Extravanzas for residents of North Minneapolis and the Redeemer community.

On Sunday, January 13th and Sunday, February 24th, the Winter Extravanzas provided a wonderful space for building community, enjoying winter fun in our own backyard, and together striving toward equitable usage of Theodore Wirth Park.

Between the two events, over 130 Northside residents and Redeemer community members came to the new Trailhead at Theodore Wirth Park for snow-tubing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, as well as a fat tire group ride from Venture North to the Trailhead. With bikes provided by Venture North, event participants who had never ridden fat tire bikes before braved the snow and rode to the Trailhead in Theodore Wirth Park.

Once at the Trailhead, the events began with RCFL staff welcoming

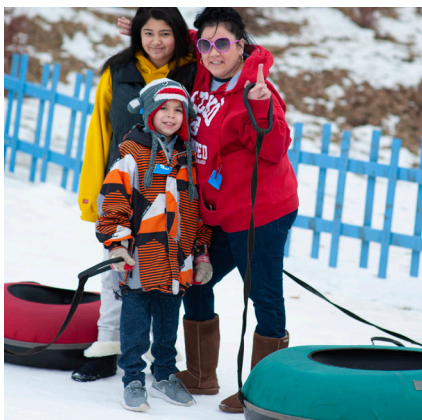
participants, assisting with waivers and forms, and helping participants find the right fit for ski boots. Volunteers from the Loppet Foundation Ski Club offered two cross-country ski lessons for people of all ages and skill levels. Likewise, peals of laughter and shrieks of excitement and joy could be heard from the snow-tubing hill where children and adults sped down the icy track, huge smiles pinned to their faces.

Additionally, RCFL staff led a winter hike and snowshoe around the park, enjoying the snowy scenery and exploring Theodore Wirth's many trails.

To warm up, we offered sambusas from the new Somali restaurant at Glenwood and Morgan, Mome's Sambusas, delicious dessert from Venture North's very own barista, **Jasmine Greene**, as well as giant cookies from Cajun Twist, the new restaurant in the Trailhead, and hot cocoa and Swedish coffee from Salem Lutheran Church. All the while, within the warmth of the Loppet Trailhead, participants played board games with **Pastors Kelly and Babette**, chatted with friends old and new, and brought Redeemer's vibrant community to the Trailhead.



Above: Northside resident, **Christine Belfrey Johnson**, shared on social media, "Thanks to Redeemer Center for Life for the Ski Pass Opportunity! Loved skiing so much for the 1st time that I'm buying a Season Pass."





New Management of Bike Services

We'd like to introduce you to **Simon Fulda-Strate** and **Diamond Wren**, new management of bike services at Venture North.

Simon, who began as an apprentice in summer 2013, worked part-time throughout high school and became

a full-time mechanic in March 2018. Simon's main goal as service manager is to be of service to the community. He hopes that in 2019 Venture North can become more well-known as a well-established bike shop in the Cities and anticipates that new infrastructure such as the Northside Greenway trails will provide opportunity for more bikers to come to North Minneapolis and utilize Venture North.

Similarly, Diamond, born and raised in North Minneapolis, began his work at Venture North as an apprentice in 2015. He then worked with our Director of Facilities to maintain our Redeemer campus. He now works as a service mechanic at Venture North and continues to assist our Director of Facilities with maintenance and engineering.

Both Simon and Diamond credit Venture North's bike apprenticeship program with teaching them not only the useful skills of bike building, maintenance, and repair but also the confidence and capability to run the shop, serve customers, and grow Venture North's partnerships and networks.

Simon and Diamond, now expert bike mechanics, highlight Venture North's mission to provide workforce development and employment opportunities--giving young adults a safe, supportive community and useful skills. Thus, through Venture North, RCFL invests in the potential and existing talent North Minneapolis youth have to offer and further entrenches our commitment to beloved community.



Left: "It's been a pleasure working here and I enjoy being here. I've met a ton of great people who I work with and one thing I hope to accomplish here is to help others and make them feel not left out."
--Diamond



Right: "The apprenticeship taught us a lot of bike skills, but it also gave us a lot of job skills. How to show up, be prepared, make sales, day-to-day life in a retail environment. So the transition from apprentice to part-time employee to service manager was pretty smooth."
-- Simon

Outreach for Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice

On February 16, **Simon Fuld-Strate**, Service Manager at Venture North, along with former employees and current volunteers, **Darrow Jones**, **Ian Magnuson**, and **Alexis Pennie**, presented at Silverwood Park's climate change event on how biking relates to environmental sustainability and social justice. Specifically, the presentation focused on how Venture North exemplifies the power of cycling to bring commu-

nities together while providing a sustainable, healthy, and affordable way to commute. During this presentation, the Venture North team showed participants how to fix a flat tire and brought some of Venture North's fat tire bikes for participants to test ride and learn how to bike safely in the winter. In addition to sharing valuable knowledge about bike safety and maintenance and the environmental and community-building benefits of cycling, this presentation also spread the word about all that Venture North does in North Minneapolis!



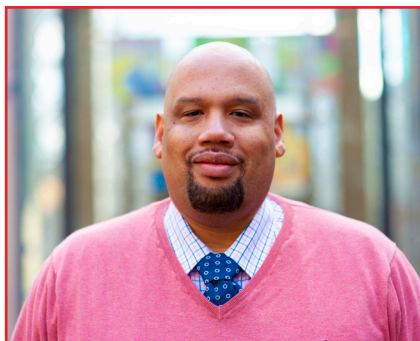
Seeking to Preserve and Create Community

Richard Webb, Director for Equity and Inclusion

Richard joins Redeemer Center for Life as the Director for Equity and Inclusion. Richard has worked in multiple contexts leading and supporting efforts to develop equity and inclusion. He works tirelessly to facilitate learning environments and experiences that reinforce developmental approaches toward lifting up similarities and leveraging differences that bring multiracial and multicultural communities together to foster change, unity, and organizational effectiveness. Richard is an alumnus from Augsburg University where he received his master's degree in Education. He also served in multiple leadership roles at Augsburg and Luther Seminary. Richard had the distinguished honor of participating in Thrivent Fellows

Program for Leadership in Lutheran Higher Education, and serving as a member of the African Descent Strategy team for the ELCA Church-wide and the Unite Table.

Here at RCFL Richard is currently serving as a point of contact for Harrison community members, Redeemer community, and congregational partners to support the development of equity and inclusion within and throughout the Redeemer community. Richard is designing and leading trainings for RCFL staff as well as Redeemer church members, and will facilitate organizational development, strategic planning, and program assessment for the non-profit. Additionally, Richard is working in support of RCFL youth and young adult programs where he hopes to leverage his background in workforce development and post-secondary readiness to assist in narrowing access and opportunity gaps within this Northside community.



"I am very excited to listen and learn from the people inside of our organization and in our community. There is a wealth of experience here and authentic hope to collaborate together to meet goals and deliver more equitable outcomes within more inclusive environments."
-- Richard Webb

INVEST IN RCFL

Redeemer Center for Life serves the Harrison Neighborhood's call for youth leadership opportunities, attainable housing, and workforce development. Join us as we continue to invest in, and celebrate, North Minneapolis.

Your support and partnership at every level empower Redeemer Center for Life to continue to act as an agent of hope and transformation to preserve a vibrant community in the Harrison Neighborhood and broader North Minneapolis.

We appreciate you!

Become a sustaining donor or send in your one-time gift today!



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Together We Mourn the Loss of Ms. Francis and Naoko

Ms. Francis and Naoko were integral members of this close-knit Redeemer community, Naoko for more than a decade, and Ms. Francis for nearly two. We mourn these two women and all that they each brought to this world, and to our Redeemer community. Each made remarkable contributions, each left their own impact. They are, and will be, missed.

Ms. Francis Douglas moved from Chicago to Minneapolis, and into one of the RCFL 16-units of efficiency housing in 2002; she was a resident for 17 years.

Ms. Francis was known to be outspoken and truthful. She considered Redeemer 'her people' and as her health began to decline, she wanted to stay close to her community and began to look for assisted living options close to Harrison. **Pastor Babette** recalled her last conversation about hearing the children in the

hallway outside of her door. "My reaction was to say something to the parents and she said, 'No, no, no, I like to hear them laughing.'" The laughter of one year-olds playing near her door brought a smile to her face.

Ms. Francis, the mother of two sons, Redeemer housing resident and community member for nearly two decades, passed away Sunday, February 17.

Naoko Tsukui Pellinen joined our Redeemer community in 2007, when she moved to Minnesota to be near fiancé, **David Pellinen**. Naoko lived in an apartment above Milda's cafe with two Lutheran Volunteer Corps interns.

After marrying at Redeemer, Naoko and David were foundational leaders in youth and young adult ministry, and could often be found dancing, singing, playing, and sew-

ing with community youth. When Redeemer Center for Life began investing in additional properties, Naoko and David became the first owners of RCFL's house at the corner of 4th & Morgan. Naoko, David, and their two sons, **Kiyoshi** (10) and **Isaih** (7), spent many years in their Redeemer home and engaged throughout the Redeemer community.

Naoko passed away on Wednesday, January 30. At the time of her death, Naoko worked full time as a nurse with Provident Home Healthcare and was a prominent and deeply dedicated board member of the Minnesota Japanese School. Naoko is remembered by all as a devoted community member, a loving wife and mother, and one whose arms were always open and welcoming to families and children upon whom she'd lavish love and care.



Community in the Cold



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Redeemer Center for Life acts
as an agent of hope and transformation
to preserve a vibrant community in the
Harrison neighborhood & broader
North Minneapolis.

We ❤️ N Mpls

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