

AT HOME HARRISON N.

December 2019

Phyllis Chatham as Black Santa in the 80's
pg. 8



A publication of the life, culture and times of Harrison Neighborhood

AND REMEMBER...

1. Thank you
2. You're Special
3. Change starts with a conversation

HARRISON

ATHOM



Phyllis Chatman
photo by Keegan Xavi

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Steffi
photo by Awa Mally



ENDS

PODCAST

ENDS Media was able to get a better understanding of what it's like growing up in Minneapolis with Harrison resident Davontae. This Minneapolis native and Harrison neighborhood resident...had a unique perspective on the impact Minneapolis culture had on his life. Check out the full interview [here](#) on youtube.



Jovan Shabazz

“Davontae”
photo by Jovan Shabazz



LOVE
HOPE
RISE

SEE US
HEAR US
FEEL US

When we prioritize profit potential over people, we abandon the well-being of our most vulnerable communities. Tell our city council and mayor not to sell public housing!

"Tani maxay macna kuu samaynaysaa?"

"What does that mean for you?"

On August 11th, 2019, MPHA was approved for Section 18 — Demolition + Disposition. This allows for the public housing authority to demolish or dis-

pose of an entire property, or transfer it to private developers. Section 18 has eliminated over 190,000 properties since 2009 while the stock of affordable housing has decreased since 2010. The mayor of MPLS has approved for the demolition and disposition of over 700 scattered sites* while over 10,000 families remain on the waiting list. The highest amount of scattered site public housing resides in the Harrison, Near North, Willard-Hay and Jordan neighborhoods outlined above.

Scattered Site*
single room home
duplex, duplex, 4plex

Stats provided by
Defend the Land.
dgpnc.org

For more info on Section 18 and how to get in contact w/ your council person, visit
dgpnc.org



SECTION 18

“Information about a recent decision by the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority to try and privatize public housing, most of which is located in North Minneapolis.”

Yonci Jameson



“LoveHopeRise”
photos by Leon Wang
(upper left corner)

LET NATURE BE YOUR TEACHER

Interview by Keegan Xavi



Keegan Xavi



Phyllis Chatham
 Interviewed at Milda's Cafe
 November 2019
 photo by Keegan Xavi

As I grew up in this neighborhood we were outside all the time so we were connected to Harrison Park where we coached kids. We coached kids softball, football, ice-skating, all year-round sports. There was a guy named Larry Nelson and a guy named Mackie who gave us our first job at Harrison Park. At 12 years old I was working. We were creative and coached other kids doing arts and crafts and a lot of outdoor things. We got a chance to go camping at the North Shore. We got a chance to play. Just play. We would go off from the Northside to Wirth Park. Wirth was a community where we had an opportunity to swim and then go up to Eloise Butler and see the birds. We would just explore. And just be outdoors. That's where I got my creativity from: Nature.

We started developing programs for youth. I've always tried to empower young girls, always tried to empower young people in our community. I'm not afraid of our young people so the work that I was doing, people knew who I was. I still have kids coming up to me today and I may not know exactly who they are but they know who I am. We had Girls Clubs, flag football, ice-skating, we were broomball champions, softball. My sister Candy Whitaker was the first person from the Northside to have a traveling team for girls' basketball. Some of the girls who played on her team she actually went in WNBA. She coached Faith Johnson. A lot of our connections became bigger than us. We extended from the Harrison community to Phyllis Wheatley. My brother coached a lot of young males in boxing including Spike Moss. We were also involved in The Way. When they started having dances for youth we would go to The Way and they also had a softball team. My sister played on the softball team. We all knew each other. There was the sense that if you got in any trouble somebody knew that you got in trouble. An elder would connect with you.



Phyllis Chatham and her artwork

For 30 years I used to dress up as Black Santa and I would go around to homes, or I'd do it at the Roller Gardens or the other Black-owned roller-skating place that used to be on Plymouth. The Hughes family owned that place. I had been Santa Claus for a long time for all the Black children in the neighborhood and it ended up becoming a whole family thing too. The kids would surround me and they were like "Santa, I want an X-Box, I want this." and they still believed that I was Santa after even knowing who I really was. Like Clark Kent/Superman. So one time, I took this Santa Claus suit off and I was sitting next to my grandson and he was 6 and he looked up at me and he said "Nana. You know that Santa Claus... is a boy. And Santa Claus don't wear red lipstick!"

Youth are my passion but what really inspires me is all of Nature and the opportunity to be outside. I was connected with trees. I was connected with the Earth. I was connected with the four seasons. So that really inspired me. It became magic. Nature is healing. The same practice Native Americans have, Africans have. We're connected to the Earth. We only took from the Earth what we needed. My mother was born in Texas on a farm and we would drive down to

Texas every summer and we'd be a part of her farm and so we always ate fresh. My mom always cooked fresh foods. Then I got involved with some farming because my youngest sister became a farmer through a program in Minnesota so I started doing more farming and I realized how healing it is. I say "let Nature be your teacher".

I think we have to teach kids how to play and be outside. And what I found out is I have to teach adults how to play because we don't know how to play anymore. We have become too desensitized with technology, with what's happening in the world. We need more Black people to connect with our children, they need to see our faces. We need our neighborhood. We need to connect with the mothers. We need more places where mothers can hang out and feel safe and able to connect with each other and know each other.

Words with Neighbors

A Photo Series



Awa Mally

“Our neighborhood is diverse, the community is nice, all the neighbors are nice and friendly.

We never have any problems. The area is very safe.

This area is convenient, it's so close to downtown and transportation. I'm glad they didn't build the train rail, that would've ruined a lot of thing.

One thing I'd change about my neighborhood is add more stop lights, there's accidents that happen often in my area.”



Abdul
Somali
Student
photo by Awa Mally



Jenni and Nadia
Togolese
Sisters, Students
photo by Awa Mally



“This area is so close to our friends, and even the school we went to. Everything we need is here. When we have parties and barbeques no one complains, I like that about this area. Everyone is cool.

I’d add better parks and playgrounds. I wouldn’t live here in the future; it’s just we’ve lived here for so long and its cold. I’d come back to visit.”






A poem by Steffi

*A quick trip to downtown
On an adventurous bus ride with
people
That are of my own kind
I find solace in hearing
Sing song voices that sound like
mine
Surrounding by similar skin tones
Intertwined*





Steffi
Guyanese
Psychology Student, Photographer,
Youtuber (perksofstef)
photo by Awa Mally



We were able to sit down with Will Wallace, director of the North 4 program located in North Minneapolis. In the interview, we gain a full perspective on what it is like to help serve the community of North Minneapolis as well as mentor the young men that reside there. Get to know Will Wallace and the work of North 4 [here](#) on youtube.




A black and white photograph of Denetrick Powers, a Black man with short dreadlocks, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a dark jacket over a white shirt and holding a white speckled mug with both hands. The background shows a dining room with a wooden floor, a patterned rug, and a glass-paned door leading outside. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling.

Denetrick Powers
Interviewed In Harrison Residence
December 2019
photo by Keegan Xavi

POW CURR

By Keegan Xavi

I'm a learner, educator, real estate developer, curator. I'm an artist. I'm a man of many hats. What I don't do? I do not quit.



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ny things.

My aunt moved to the Harrison neighborhood in late '99, early 2000. My aunt is almost like my grandmother as well. We were always at her house with a couple of my cousins. My family moved to the neighborhood in and out a few times, but I'd say consistently since about 2005. So most of my life. Harrison differs from the rest of North Minneapolis, I would say mostly because of its location. It's damn near central to Minneapolis. It's just right outside of downtown. You can only cross this neighborhood to get to Golden Valley. It's closer to more affluent residents. That's the biggest way it differs. I mean at one point this neighborhood was more similar to the rest of North Minneapolis but right now it's changed because of its proximity.

Young people need more opportunities to be curious. They need space to be curious, too. Curiosity is punished depending on what setting you're in. They need honesty. I think a lot of kids have been lied to. There needs to be more of a focus on extracurricular activities, and a lot of them. Just keep them coming. Keep putting different things in front of them. Because kids are going to change too. We expect kids to keep doing the same thing like "oh you've been doing basketball for five years? We'll keep doing basketball". But what if it's like "naw, we don't want to do basketball no more, we want to do art" because this is what the kids want to do now. People push back on that, like "oh? You're just going to keep changing?". But we should be fluid because kids are going to have different interests. They're kids. But it depends on where you're at and what you've been exposed to. My mom did a good job look inf for opportunities for me. Keeping her ears open for us. She wanted us to be in extracurriculars.

A big part of the organizing work I've been doing is asking people questions about their surrounding environment so they might start thinking about it different, and being engaged with it differently. That's what being exposed to a new question does. It asks us a question about ourselves. It's about being and living and raising these kids' political consciousness where they understand "I'm not just confined to my block. I'm not just confined to me neighborhood, to my city, my state, to the United States, to North America. You can be a global person and once you start to travel the world and seeing "Wow. I'm international. I have people across the world I can build relationships with. And those places become home as well."

My vision for the next ten years of the Northside is tripling the amount of Black businesses that are here now. Maybe quadruple them. We need to quadruple the amount of Black business located in North Minneapolis. Multiply the number of Black homeowners in the neighborhood in ten years. Let's multiply the amount of students who are graduating, either entering four-year universities or are entering the world with a business and an EIN and some cash to start their business.

We send our gratitude to the funders and leaders of ArtPlace America, and Redeemer Center for Life for being stewards of Harrison neighborhood, and to all our readers who digest our creative produce.



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