



Minneapolis Connects

a bi-monthly newsletter brought to you by the
Neighborhood and Community Relations Department

September/October 2010

'We Want You Back Campaign' enrolls 100 new people

In support of Minneapolis Public Schools, City of Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, and community partners, the Neighborhood and Community Relations department's Access and Outreach team participated in the Day of Action - an outreach effort to attract young people that have dropped out of school to re-enroll, to finish credits and earn a diploma. The event was held throughout Minneapolis on Saturday September 11, 2010.

Billie Mae Imhoede, Roman Gonzalez, and Mohamed Hajin were assigned to Broadway Alternative School to help with interpretation and outreach services. Bill Carter helped at Little Earth of United Tribes, while Gao Vang was stationed at Wilder School. Prior to the Day of Action, there were 247 people enrolled in this program. Through this effort, an additional 100 people enrolled with the help of over 300 volunteers. For more information about We Want You Back visit www.wewantyoubackmpls.org

Apply for openings on Minneapolis boards and commissions

Volunteers on City of Minneapolis boards and commissions provide valuable insights, help shape key policy decisions and provide community-based input into administration of services. Applications are now being accepted for the over 100 open positions on 16 boards and commissions that the City Council and Mayor will appoint this fall. The City is seeking applicants with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to strengthen the work of the City.

Applications will be reviewed beginning October 4th, 2010, however the positions are open until filled. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions as well as additional information visit the boards and commissions website at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions.

To learn more about a particular open position or board/commission please join us in an online chat or visit our open house:

Online chat: Tuesday, Sept. 21 from noon to 1 p.m. To access the online chat visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/chat.

Open house: Thursday, Sept. 23 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in City Hall Rotunda at 350 S. 5th St.

"Hello Neighbor" is knocking at your door!

Hello Neighbor. A simple greeting that welcomes new arrivals to the City. Funded by a generous grant from the Bush Foundation, the Neighborhood and Community Relations department has developed an outreach initiative to welcome newly arriving East African immigrants and refugees. The initiative is called Hello Neighbor. It emanated from the City's core values of engaged residents and broader participation, with the goal of extending these treasured values to our new arrivals. This is a pilot project that we hope to extend to everyone who is moving to the City.

We are working very closely with the five resettlement agencies that serve in Minnesota as well as a number of East African community agencies. We are looking for volunteers from the City's long-term residents to actively participate in this effort and extend a warm welcome to new arrivals. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Ahmed Muhumud, Access and Outreach Manager with the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department at 612 – 673 – 2162.

Looking to expand participation and outreach?

The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department's Access and Outreach team specialize in addressing and removing barriers to participation and meaningful engagement where cultural norms, practices, language or even abilities limit access. These services are available to both City departments and neighborhood organizations.

The Access and Outreach team has the cultural experience and the ability to communicate in Spanish, Somali, Oromo, Amharic and Hmong. We also have staff with expertise in American Indian culture and American Sign Language.

NCR now offers Skype Video Phone for deaf and hard of hearing callers

In an effort to expand the City's services for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community, the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department (NCR) in conjunction with BIS (City's IT Department) recently launched Skype Video Phone as a pilot project. The software is installed on a standalone computer and comes with a high resolution camera. Billie Imhoede, the American Sign Language specialist in NCR is handling calls that come in via the Skype Video Phone as well as the traditional TTY calls.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing individuals are particularly encouraged to participate in testing the tool by contacting us during the 60 to 90 day pilot period. Skype is free software that can be downloaded by going directly to their website www.skype.com. You can also find plenty of tutorials, instructions and helpful information by Google search. To contact the NCR via the Skype Video Phone, add cityofminneapolis-ncr account to your contact list and follow the instructions to place the call. If you have any problem connecting with the City's Skype account, please contact Billie Imhoede at 612 – 673 -3220 (voice) or 612 – 673 – 2626 (TTY).

Community Participation Program Guidelines

At its August 24, 2010 meeting, the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) completed a draft of the **Community Participation Program Guidelines**. The draft guidelines outline how \$3,000,000 will be provided to neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis to assist with community engagement. The draft guidelines were developed following several weeks of meetings with neighborhood organizations earlier this year, and were sent to neighborhood organizations for a 45-day review and comment period on August 27.

The NCEC will continue reviewing the draft guidelines and allocation formula through September and October. Input from neighborhood organizations is an important part of that process. Final recommendations for program guidelines and allocation formula, including variables used or weighting assigned, may change based on community input and ongoing commissioner discussions. The NCEC expects to make its final recommendations to City Council in November 2010.

For further information on the draft Community Participation Program Guidelines or providing comments, see the NCR website at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/>

Neighborhood organizations and the ADA

Not sure what the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act means for your neighborhood organization? It is vital that neighborhood organizations are committed to following the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department is a resource for neighborhoods to meet these requirements and support broader ADA awareness by providing technical expertise, guidelines, tools and best practices. We have a template format that neighborhoods can use and customize to meet their particular situation. Compliance with the ADA laws is an important part of ensuring access and participation of all residents. Considerations include selecting locations where the meetings will be held, signage, publications being available in alternative formats, and/or providing Sign Language Interpreters when requested. Please contact ahmed.muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us with any questions.

Office to End Homelessness

The Office to End Homelessness is a cross-departmental team coordinating the implementation of Heading Home Hennepin, the 10-year community plan to end homelessness in Hennepin County and Minneapolis by 2016. In addition, the office organizes Project Homeless Connect, a biannual one day event that links more than 1,500 homeless households with support services. The next Project Homeless Connect will be held on Monday, December 13, 2010 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. For more information about Heading Home Hennepin and Project Homeless Connect please follow: www.headinghomehennepin.org and www.homelessconnectminneapolis.org

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