

# Neighborhood

*Building community  
through civic dialogue  
and action.*

## C O N N E C T I O N S

SPRING 2002

## Neighborhood Leadership Breakfast Series

**T**his series, now in its 6th year, continues to be a remarkable journey into the insights of leadership offered by leaders that have shaped our own community. Each one deliciously unique, thought-provoking and personal. The chance to listen to their stories builds an appreciation for how people interpret the challenges and opportunities in their lives. Arriving in positions of influence have provided our guest speakers with lessons that we can all learn from, leaving us inspired and reflective of our own leadership in our daily lives.

Here are some highlights from the last two presentations:

### **Lee Pao Xiong**

President and CEO, Urban Coalition  
St. Paul representative to the  
Metropolitan Council

### **Being an Inclusive Leader: Leadership in a Changing Society**

**March 20, 2002**

Cultural values are handed down from generation to generation through the art of storytelling. Lee Pao began his discussion on leadership by telling a Hmong folk tale about the Woodcutter, his Rooster and his Wife. His message—critical to our ability to provide leadership in our communities of multiple cultures is our ability to understand the core values and beliefs from each culture's heritage. To that end, Lee Pao offered a glimpse into the cultural distinctions that make his community unique from mainstream America, and how elders and the Hmong clan structure play a vital role in maintaining cultural connection. He explained that he was taught to serve his county, society and family first, before serving himself.

In his own words, "To be a leader in my culture, you must give. Your reputation and credibility as a leader depends on how you have



served your community." He cited the work of Dr. Pao Saykao in Australia, who published a paper on Hmong leadership last year. After surveying members of the Hmong community he came to the conclusion that leaders within the Hmong community must exhibit the following qualities:

"Noj tau, hais tau"—He does as he says and says as he does; be accountable and lead by example;

"Siab loj siab dav"—Must have a big heart, in another word, be kind and considerate;

"Coj lus taug"—controlled and diplomatic;

"Coj ncaj"—honest and fair in all dealing;

"Nyiam kwvtij neej ntsa, nyiam phooj nyiam ywg"—Sociable and mix well with all;

"Paub kev cai"—Know the rules/customs/norms.

Lee Pao noted that "Minnesota has the largest urbanized Hmong population in the United States. When we talk about community, it transcends beyond neighborhood. In mainstream America, when you talk about a sense of community, you basically mean neighborhood.

*continued on page 5*



### **Upcoming Leadership Breakfast Speakers**

**David Fey** – deputy mayor,  
City of Minneapolis  
June 19, 2002

**George Garnett** – community  
development practitioner,  
Minneapolis representative to the  
Metropolitan Council  
September 18, 2002

**Susan Albright** – editor of the  
editorial pages, *Star Tribune*  
December 18, 2002

The Neighborhood Leadership Breakfast Series is provided in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of Minneapolis, and is co-sponsored by the Walker Art Center and KFAI 90.3 and 106.7FM.

*The event is free and open to the public, but because seating is limited we ask that you make a reservation by calling the Center for Neighborhoods at 612-339-3480.*

# Safe Passage

## Creating local models at the neighborhood level that inform regional policy discussions on traffic calming and pedestrian safety

**T**he Center for Neighborhoods, in partnership with the Capital City Traffic Calming Alliance (CCTCA), Transit for Livable Communities, and the Minnesota Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance will:

**Coordinate a demonstration project** in St. Paul designed to modify the behavior of adults and children to reduce car use and encourage walking, biking, carpools and transit which builds on the best practices of two national traffic calming models (the Neighborhood Pace Car Program and the Safe Routes to Schools program),

**Convene a regional dialogue** to identify ways to strengthen or create policies that enhance pedestrian safety and traffic calming at the neighborhood, city, county, regional, and state levels.

### St. Paul Demonstration Project

St. Paul neighborhoods have led the charge in demanding safer streets for pedestrians. Forming a broad coalition of district council leaders from across the city, the Capital City Traffic Calming Alliance (CCTCA) was established in 2000 to advocate for citywide solutions to traffic issues. The City of St. Paul responded by establishing city policies that respond to the need for greater traffic calming and livable streets, positioning the city to be the 'poster child' for the region on these issues.

A Steering Committee, chaired by Don Ludemann of the CCTCA, will advise the demonstration project. The Committee consists of representatives from St. Paul government agencies and jurisdictions (Public Works, Police Department, Public Schools, City Council) and community groups to build critical partnerships that will test strategies that promote greater pedestrian and bike safety and traffic calming. Alice Tibbets and Paul Chramosta are the lead organizers of the project. The project will identify two–three sites where neighborhood and school partnerships form the opportunity to test two national models:

The **Neighborhood Pace Car program** (establishing community standards and promoting behavioral change) designed by David Engwicht, currently being rolled out in Boise, Salt Lake City, Atlanta, and elsewhere; and

The **Safe Routes to Schools program**, a federally funded effort that encourages walking and biking to school rather than busing or being dropped off by car, has successfully piloted programs in Marin County, California, and Arlington, Massachusetts.

The Neighborhood Pace Car program asks adults to pledge to drive less and while driving, to go at or under the speed limit, obey all laws including the crosswalk law, and generally be more courteous. They also promise to "reclaim their street" by spending more time in their front yards, changing the streetscape to encourage traffic calming, etc. Their cars and lawns are marked with stickers and signs saying they are participants. As more cars and homes in the neighborhood join the program, behaviors changes are reinforced. The intended result—traffic speeds and volumes are reduced, people feel safer as pedestrians and bikers and are more positive about the livability of their block.

Safe Routes to Schools program gathers children, youth, parents, teachers, and school administrators to encourage walking and biking to school rather than busing or being dropped off by a car.

They map out "safe routes" and then organize to form "walking school buses" and "bike trains." They learn about walking and bike safety in school. Students and classes are rewarded for behavior changes, and contests are held. To sustain the effort, curriculum is developed and incorporated into the school's programming.

There are obvious synergies that can be gained by joining the two programs together. For example, having kids sponsor Pace Cars and having adults pledge to encourage their kids to walk or bike to school. The demonstration project will take the best elements from each program, with the goal of modifying the behavior of adults and children to reduce car use and encourage walking, biking, carpooling and transit. The premise is that as behaviors change block-by-block, school-by-school, neighborhood-by-neighborhood, the current cultural norms that encourage driving rather than walking or biking will also change.

### Regional Policy Initiative

The Center for Neighborhoods will convene a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from MN DOT, Minnesota Department of Safety, Minnesota Dept of Health, Met Council, Hennepin County Commission, State House and Senate, Minnesota Safety Council, and other interested agencies and organizations to coordinate a regional dialogue that identifies ways to strengthen or create policies that enhance pedestrian/bike safety and traffic calming. The opportunity to bridge the interests of urban and suburban communities will lay the groundwork for organizing a coalition of support to carry the policy recommendations forward at the city, county, regional and state levels.

Research and analysis will be provided by Transit for Livable Communities, who will work to compile local and national examples of policies that enhance pedestrian safety and traffic calming, and provide analysis of the barriers to policies that are already in place. Presentations will be developed to communicate the findings of the analysis to the Met Council, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, state legislative committees, and municipalities.

A regional conference will be held in the fall of 2002 to bring key decision makers and national experts together in working sessions to identify policy directions that are suited to our regional context. A broad spectrum of participants will be invited to expand the scope of the issue, extending pedestrian and bicycle safety objectives to education, commercial corridor revitalization, and public health. The findings from the conference will be compiled by the research consultant, and will highlight the key lessons and recommendations that emerged from the working session. The report will be distributed to city, county, regional, and state officials, and will be made available to other community and neighborhood leaders.

The initiative is designed to set the groundwork for a coalition of organizations to move policy recommendations forward that support pedestrian safety and traffic calming. Critical policy makers will be identified to champion the recommendations. A media campaign will also be structured to bring greater public awareness to the issues.

*This project is provided through the generous support of the McKnight Foundation, St. Paul Public Works, and the Snelling Hamline Community Council.*

# Center for Neighborhoods 2002 Board of Directors

## On why neighborhoods are important

**W**ho are the people that serve on the Center for Neighborhoods Board of Directors? They are people that have been involved with neighborhood work at some point in their lives, and bring a diverse set of ideas about what is valuable about that work. To introduce them, we have asked that they share their thoughts on why neighborhoods are important:

**Andriana Abariotes, Local Initiative Support Corporation (St. Paul) — President**

“Neighborhoods are critically important for the health and livability of a city. They are the physical place where people of different ages, interests, histories, ethnicities, faiths, and dreams come together to live, work and play—and place still matters.”

**Joey Brochin, Psychotherapist (Minneapolis) — Vice President**

“Active neighborhoods, where people have the opportunity to build community, are a vital part of civic democracy and of a good society. Our fragmented, privatized world has only increased the importance of bringing neighbors together.”

**Genie Dixon, Consultant (St. Louis Park) — Treasurer**

“Neighborhoods form the infrastructure of strong communities—strengthening neighborhoods is an investment in the future.”

**Dan Nordley, Triangle Park Creative (Minneapolis) — Secretary**

“Neighborhood work keeps our men strong, our women good looking, and our children above average. It also goes a long way in training our pets and politicians—even though we still need to clean up after them.”

**Joe Barisonzi, Search Institute (Minneapolis)**

As the world gets smaller, and our economic systems get larger; the challenges our communities face are no longer contained within the artificial borders of our nations, or the natural borders of our ecosystems. The deep interconnections across cultural and physical divides present us both a challenge and an incredible opportunity. The power of communities could continue to shift from local control of civic society to simply being pawns in a larger socioeconomic system; or a new way of thinking about community power in a global context could emerge.

**Eduardo Barrera, Wilder Foundation (St. Paul)**

“Neighborhood work is important because it give us the opportunity to engage in the planning and decision making to make it the best place to live and share with others.”

**Rebecca Brown, City of Crystal (Minneapolis)**

“Why is neighborhood work important? because...The health of our city is dependent upon the strength of our neighborhoods and the involvement of all those living, playing, and working in our communities.”

**Jonathan Bucki, Center for Policy, Planning, and Performance (St. Paul)**

“I believe healthy neighborhoods are a fundamental building block of a free, democratic society where families of all sorts can thrive.”

**Meg Forney, West Calhoun Neighborhood Organization; Chair, Committee on Urban Environment (Minneapolis)**

“I have been involved in neighborhood groups since 1977. Soon after I moved into the East Calhoun neighborhood 13 diseased elms were taken down from my street’s boulevard. Through the newly formed shade tree committee, I became “hooked” on a process that works, it’s hands-on, roll up your sleeves and really see

tangible results. Here almost 25 years later, I am the chair of the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council: I still love this basic building block of activism. I would recommend this “addiction” to everyone.”

**Dave Gagne, Hamline Midway Coalition (St. Paul)**

“Relationships with friends and neighbors around real issues and interests define neighborhood work and provide great satisfaction as we deepen our relationships by working together to create a more inclusive, diverse and better quality neighborhood.”

**Belinda Garnett, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (Minneapolis)**

“I believe in democracy and that informed and active citizens working together can envision and create a better environment; better neighborhoods and a better world.”

**Nancy E. Lee, Central Community Housing Trust (Minneapolis)**

“Neighborhood work is about sharing your talents and interests with others to improve ALL of our living conditions—physical, psychological and social. For me it’s about being unselfish.”



**Center for Neighborhoods Executive Committee members Andriana Abariotes, Genie Dixon, Joey Brochin, and Dan Nordley.**

**Laura Johansson, Lyndale Neighborhood Association (Minneapolis)**

"I think that neighborhood work is important because it is the context from which our most fundamental civic engagement is both possible and meaningful. It is where we do not have to abdicate to a representational model, but instead can find the power of collective, grassroots action. Together we are creating a sense of place and therefore a sense of community. Our ability to foster, regain and strengthen our sense of community is crucial to retaining a civil society. And our ability to know our neighbors, mediate disagreements, to allow our children to run safely among them, to form diverse friendships, and to gather together to celebrate is crucial to retaining healthy, vibrant communities. These are reasons why I am involved and why I think neighborhood work is so important."

**Roger Meyer, Consultant (St. Paul)**

"I am on C4N because it is my belief that active citizens are the only force that can energize neighborhoods to create livable and sustainable communities, and C4N's works can support, educate and inform this work."

**Michael Jon Olson, Seward Neighborhood Group (Minneapolis)**

"To put it in the most simple terms possible, neighborhood work is important because neighborhoods are where we live."

**Julia Paulsen, Minneapolis Planning Department (Minneapolis)**

"Building capacity in neighborhoods leads to strong partnerships between city government and neighborhoods."

**Nieeta Presley, Aurora-St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corp. (St. Paul)**

"Neighborhood work is important because community people need to know that they are directly responsible for determining the kind of quality of life that will exist in their neighborhood."

**Galen Robinson, Legal Aid Society (Minneapolis)**

"Neighborhoods are the core of community. Neighborhood people working together are an invaluable resource to help meet community needs."

**Jean Sazevich, Pohlads Family Charities (Minneapolis)**

"The stories of life happen at the neighborhood level —where you were born, learned how to ride your bike, had your lemonade stand. Our neighborhoods are the starting point for each life and continue to be that essential place where we experience what is truly important. So, all the work that goes into keeping neighborhoods vital is central to shaping the quality of life for countless numbers of individuals and families."

**Sherilyn Young, Eureka Recycling (St. Paul)**

"Organizing at the neighborhood level teaches the fundamental skills we all need to move through the world in a positive and life-affirming way. Some of these skills are listening, understanding, respecting and being open to new ways of doing things."



**Dick Little with Cathy Wurzer of NPR, Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, and Minneapolis schools superintendent Carol Johnson.**

## A Tribute to Dick Little Founding Member of the Center for Neighborhoods

**W**e take this opportunity to pay tribute to the life and accomplishments of Dick Little, founding board member of the Center for Neighborhoods. Dick was a tireless advocate for the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Recipient of the 2001 Minneapolis Award Special Recognition Award, Little was described by Dr. Carol Johnson, Superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools as, "...a coalition builder who works respectfully with all people. He is a model of informed an active citizenship." He had a deep passion for tackling diversity issues, and was committed to finding stable housing solutions to help children achieve success in school.

Little developed the Community Circles Model of Citizen Participation, a unique approach to problem solving. "I developed the Community Circles Model of Citizen Participation because I firmly believe that all stakeholders in a situation should be involved in creating solutions," said Little. "I've always believed that there is a critical tie between education, housing, racial equity and neighborhood livability. The Circles Model has helped everybody involved with this complex issue, including parents, teachers and students, regardless of their race, income or national origin, come together to formulate solutions." This model was recognized as a "promising practice" by President Clinton's Initiative on Race and is now used throughout the nation. In the Twin Cities, the program has helped citizens, parents, staff and students become more involved in schools and education, and in supporting affordable housing.

Little's tireless efforts can be seen in the many organizations, task forces and committees he has been involved with, chaired or helped to create, including the Minneapolis Planning Commission, Minneapolis Affordable Housing Task Force, Richard R. Green Institute for Teaching and Learning, Greater Minneapolis United Way, The Education and Housing Equity Project, Hubert Humphrey Institute, INTER-RACE, Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAHA), Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism education task force, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Minnesota Community Policing Institute, Citizens League, League of Women Voters Minneapolis Chapter, the Minneapolis Quality Schools Initiative, and the Center for Neighborhoods.

We'll miss you, Dick. In fond memory.

## Coming soon...

### **“Building Vibrant, Affordable Neighborhoods in Minneapolis: A Role for Neighborhood Organizations” (June 2002)**

An overview of the McKinsey Report recommendations, what they suggest for the future of community development in Minneapolis, and the Center’s response.

### **“How Neighborhoods Can Build Effective Partnerships with Developers— A Handbook” (May 2002)**

A guide for strengthening the neighborhood’s hand in influencing development that occurs within their community.

### **“Public Art and Design: A Framework for Program & Policy Development Throughout Hennepin County” (May 2002)**

The summary report and findings of the Public Art Policy Task Force, this document provides a common framework for public art program and policy development for the public sector. The Public Art Policy Initiative, coordinated by the Center for Neighborhoods and in partnership with Forecast Public Artworks, Intermedia Arts, the Minneapolis Office of Cultural Affairs, and Hennepin County, was created to draw together the fragmented pieces of conversation and efforts to integrate public art into policy and community revitalization efforts.

To receive copies of any of these reports, please contact the Center for Neighborhoods at 612-339-3480 or visit our web site at [www.center4neighborhoods.org](http://www.center4neighborhoods.org)

## **Breakfast Series, continued from page 1**

When (Hmong) talk about a sense of community, we talk about the entire community. When we talk about a strong sense of family, we talk about the seven levels of social structures in our community and more than 19 clans in our society. ... It is only through understanding and learning that we can truly be inclusive leaders.”

In conclusion, Lee Pao quoted from Sir Wilfred T. Grenfell, who said, “The service we render to others is really the rent we pay for our room on this earth. It is obvious that man is himself a traveler; that the purpose of this world is not ‘to have and to hold’ but ‘to give and serve.’”

### **Rip Rapson President, McKnight Foundation Creating Connections in Multiple Dimensions**

**December 12, 2001**

In his usual, self-effacing manner, Rip Rapson depicts leadership not through his own acts, but points instead to the remarkable leadership of others. By telling the stories of when he encountered acts of leadership in his life, one begins to understand his passion and talent for tapping energies that create undercurrents for change.

As deputy mayor, Rip saw how community leaders changed the city. Members of the Garbage Transfer Station Task Force created an alternative analysis that resulted in the Green Institute (*lesson learned: professionals can often be led by those they propose to lead*). Earl Craig, the first director of the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), believed that the one infinite resource we have is people well-organized where they live (*lesson learned: the importance of capacity-building at the neighborhood level and a commitment to grassroots decision-making*). Mayor Don Fraser’s innovative leadership that created the Neighborhood Early Learning Centers which were replicated in six to seven locations across the city (*lesson learned: clarity of vision and single minded focus*). And the emergence of Art-a-Whirl, proof that transformation could happen to anyone if it happened to Walt Dziedzic (*lesson learned: listening, even when your decision-making repertoire doesn’t usually involve that*).

In the following excerpt, Rip outlines three larger lessons that arise from his stories:

“First, because leadership is inextricably interwoven with change, the nature of leadership depends on the nature of the change in question.

Whether leaders are guiding people through it, helping them resist it, or forcing it upon them, change is the crucible in which leadership is shaped.



At one end of the spectrum is what has been called “transactional” leadership. This kind of leadership typically arises when the change being sought is short-term, and relatively superficial. These leaders are above all pragmatic, very interested in getting the job done. They have a shrewd eye for opportunity, and are persuasive negotiators, have skill at aligning short-term public opinion on specific issues, and are often willing to compromise the means a little to achieve the ends. Often, politicians and business people are transactional leaders.

At the other end of the spectrum is “transformational” leadership, arising when the change sought is long-term, deep, and implicates complex social systems. This is visionary leadership, uncompromising, and critically concerned with values, ideas, and purpose. These leaders are able to link theory and morality, ends and means, in ways that can coalesce diverse people around a common purpose.

Second, despite the situational nature of change, certain fundamental qualities seem to hold true across the spectrum of leaders.

You can make your own list, but my stories suggest to me principles such as: honesty, integrity, courage, selflessness, persistence, compassion, resourcefulness, competence, risk-tolerance, creativity, and deep belief in the power of an idea.

Third, all true leaders not only teach, but are taught, not only lead, but follow.

They realize that much of leadership is based on relationships—getting to know others, respecting what they have to offer, and drawing them into meaningful opportunities to shape events. They acquire much of their understanding and many of their skills from everyday experience. They are constantly learning, and channeling that new knowledge toward their greater purpose.”

Even in his work at the McKnight Foundation, Rip continues to focus on the importance of connecting fiber. In his eyes, and through his hands, leadership is a bridging activity.



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## Sustaining the Movement A Recap of the Neighborhood Environmental Sustainability Conference

**T**hank you to all that participated in the Neighborhood Environmental Sustainability Conference on January 26th. With over 400 people in attendance the energy of the conference was invigorating! The drumbeat of sustainability continues to mount, and the conference provided a wonderful opportunity to discuss and learn from some of the work going on at the grassroots level, and to embrace the larger movement as it evolves in our twin cities region.

The conference brought together neighborhood volunteers and staff, environmental resource groups, funders and elected officials to learn from successful local projects to improve neighborhood environmental sustainability in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Through interactive workshops and hallway conversations volunteers linked up with environmental resource organizations and funders that can assist them with their neighborhood sustainability projects. The central theme was that the environment, economy and equity all win when resources are used wisely to meet human needs.

The keynote speaker, Rolf Nordstrom from the Minnesota Office of Strategic and Long Range Planning and Chair of the Merriam Park Community Council provided an overview of the global environmental challenges that are causing people to rethink the dominant model of economic

growth. The conference centered around six topical workshops:

- watershed protection,
- community gardening, urban agriculture and forestry,
- solid and toxic waste reduction,
- traffic calming / transportation alternatives,
- safe, healthy and energy efficient buildings, and
- working with industries for win/win solutions

Follow-up activities have permitted participants to continue their efforts. Resources provided by the conference can be accessed at the following web sites:

The Center for Neighborhoods recognizes the importance of keeping this work strong at the neighborhood level, and is dedicated to supporting future conferences, either on an annual or semi-annual basis. We will keep you informed as that effort unfolds.

Thank you to Sean Gosiewski for his outstanding work in coordinating the event, to Sisters Camelot for the great food, to the First Unitarian Church for providing the space to gather, and to our funders that made this event possible:

Reliant Energy, Metro Solid Waste Management

Coordinating Board, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Hennepin County Environmental Services, Minneapolis Solid Waste, and the City of St. Paul and the Saint Paul Neighborhood Energy Consortium.



**Center for Neighborhoods**  
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The Center for Neighborhoods serves as a catalyst and a resource to promote and encourage ideas, alliances, policies, and actions that strengthen the livability and vitality of neighborhoods.

The Center's goal is to strengthen cities and the region by deepening civic dialogue at the neighborhood level, where shared goals can be set between public and private interests, and where people can actively participate in making their communities better.