

June 2011

Building Bridges

"Reconnecting Communities Divided by Race, Time, and 35W"

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Building Bridges:

Reconnecting Communities Divided by Race, Time, and 35W

Building Bridges is a project led by neighbors from South Minneapolis who live East and West of 35W, including in Central, Bryant, Kingfield, Regina and Northrop. These residents believe that race-based dialogue about a dog park proposed in Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park highlighted a racial divide that still exists within our community and our need to build stronger relationships and understandings between neighbors of diverse race, culture, and age.

The mission of **Building Bridges** is to understand how race and racism impact our communities and to build the future of our neighborhoods together. The goal of **Building Bridges** is to reconnect our communities divided by race, time, and 35W. Your involvement is welcome in the projects initiated by **Building Bridges**. **Building Bridges** also supports projects organized by others, some of which are mentioned in this newsletter, that serve to reconnect our communities and highlight our neighborhood history in the context of race.

Please check the **Building Bridges** Facebook page for regular posts updates, photos, and news at www.facebook.com/buildingbridgesmpls.

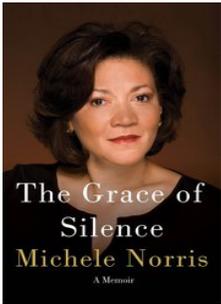
In April 2011, **Building Bridges** sponsored two training sessions on conversations about race, conducted by the St Paul Foundation through its *Facing Race* initiative. Over 60 neighbors participated in these trainings.

Another recent event to strengthen neighborhood connections, featured in the photograph above, was the **public art project (Yarn Bomb!) on the 40th Street Pedestrian Bridge across I-35W**, funded and sponsored by the Kingfield neighborhood. This project was completed on June 11, as part of the Grand Opening of the River Lake Greenway Bicycle Boulevard which connects many of our neighborhoods East and West of 35W. Artists and dozens of volunteers covered the top of the bridge with yarn in colors to symbolize a river; traveling across the bridge felt like traveling underwater. To see more photographs of the 40th Street Pedestrian Bridge art project, go to: <http://kingfield.org/building-bridges-to-better-connect-neighborhoods/>.

Thank you to each of you who work every day to build bridges between our communities!

Councilmember Elizabeth Glidden
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Community Read of *The Grace of Silence* by Michele Norris



Based on the inspiration of **Building Bridges**, the City of Minneapolis is sponsoring a city-wide community read of *The Grace of Silence* by Michele Norris in October 2011. *The Grace of Silence* is a memoir of Ms. Norris, who grew up in the Field Neighborhood, and describes the revealing of painful race-based secrets withheld from her by her parents. You can read more about her book at www.michele-norris.com.

Doris Christopher, Michele Norris' Aunt, is chairing efforts to plan an October event relating to the community read of *The Grace of Silence*. A planning meeting for this October event will be held **July 11, 8 am, at Anodyne Coffeehouse, 4301 Nicollet**. RSVP your attendance or your interest in being involved in future conversations to Sarah Linnes-Robinson of KFNA at sarah@kingfield.org or 612.823.5980.

KFNA's Project to Enhance the 40th Street Pedestrian Bridge

Kingfield Neighborhood (KFNA) is directing grant funding they received to enhance the Kingfield side of the 40th Street Pedestrian Bridge. This project will enhance the area as a gateway between the Kingfield and Bryant neighborhoods. The project is proposing to include murals and enhanced maintenance of greenspace.

Interested in updates and helping to review project plans and perform community outreach? **Please contact Sarah Linnes-Robinson of KFNA, at sarah@kingfield.org or 612.823.5980.**

Community Scrapbook Event

One of Building Bridges' action steps is the collection and preservation of stories with the goal to learn about our community's history within the context of race. We plan to host a **Community Scrapbook Event**, where people can share photographs, memorabilia, and stories

of our neighborhoods' past. We will share the Community Scrapbook event, and other stories and reflections on race in our community, on an interactive website for **Building Bridges**.

An initial planning meeting for a **Community Scrapbook event** is set for **Thurs, July 14, 3:30, at Currans, 4201 Nicollet**. RSVP your attendance or your interest in being involved in future conversations to Elizabeth Glidden, elizabeth.glidden@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612.673-2208.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park Legacy Advisory Council Meeting

The Minneapolis Park and Rec Board hosted its first meeting on June 22nd of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park Legacy Advisory Council. Community members met for months to make recommendations on how to best honor Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr at the park named in his honor, which have been approved by the Park Board. The Legacy Advisory Committee will provide ongoing help in implementing improvements and programs that honor Dr King at the park. All are welcome to be involved!

To get details on future Legacy Advisory Council meetings, please contact Jennifer Ringold, Minneapolis Park Board, at 612-230-6464 or jringold@minneapolisparks.org.

A Time to Remember: The Lee Family Commemorative Event

In July 1931, Arthur and Edith Lee became the first African-American family in the Field neighborhood when they moved into their new house at 4600 Columbus Ave. Immediately, the family was pressured to sell the house and leave the neighborhood. They stood their ground, even against a riotous mob who gathered to threaten the Lees.

Eighty years later, we want to honor the Lee family, their friends, and their attorney, Lena Olive Smith, whose courage inspires us. Please join neighbors, event organizers, and FRNNG, on **Saturday, July 16, 6:45 - 8 pm**, at Field School, 4645 4th Ave S. Come walk 46th Street, hear the story of the Lee Family, see the house, and pledge to unite in peace with all our neighbors www.julysixteenth.org.