



# HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE: Exploring the History of Mutual Aid in Minneapolis

Through Art, Archives, & Community Dialogue

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**Part One: Archive Exploration & Dialogue**

Saturday Oct. 24th, 2020

Facilitated by Acoma Gaither & Andrea Manolov  
In partnership with the Hennepin History Museum

## Note about **recording**:

This event will utilize Zoom's recording function.

A **text transcription** of this event will be used to select **ANONYMOUS quotes**, without identifying information, to be incorporated in the Lake Street Breathe public history project.

**Video and audio files will not be public.**

*For any questions, or if you wish to be identified in quotes, we welcome contact:*

*Andrea: [manol024@umn.edu](mailto:manol024@umn.edu)*

*Acoma: [gaith019@morris.umn.edu](mailto:gaith019@morris.umn.edu)*

# Welcome



# Schedule

1:00 - 2:00pm (Recorded)

Optional Post-Event Conversation  
(Unrecorded)

2:00 - 2:30pm

- Introductions
- About the Exhibition  
+ Lake Street Breathe
- Starting Questions
- A Historical Framework of Mutual Aid
- Archival Exploration
- Observations + Discussion
- Optional Post-Event Conversation

# Introductions

1. **Name**
2. **Pronouns**
3. **What  
brought you  
to this  
event?**

# History for the Future

A community based, site-specific, mediation on the history of mutual aid and the future of our community

Exhibition Date: *May, 2021*

Location: *27th/Lake Intersection, placed with intention and in tension against the former MPD 3rd Precinct*

OCT. 24, 2020  
1:00PM CST  
REGISTRATION:  
[HTTPS://HISTORY-FUTURE.BPT.ME](https://history-future.bpt.me)

EXPLORING THE HISTORY OF **MUTUAL AID**  
THROUGH ART, ARCHIVES,  
AND COMMUNITY DIALOGUE, PART 1



# HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE

# History for the Future

is one of multiple exhibitions and programs created for the multi-year collaborative public history initiative *Lake Street Breathe*

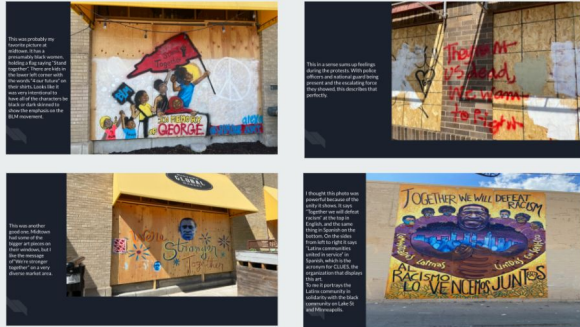


Image samples from Esteban Perez-Cortez's 2020 *Lake Street Breathe* photo documentation

# Lake Street Breathe

Partners include:

*Minnesota Youth Story Squad. Heritage Studies and Public History Faculty and Graduate Students, University of Minnesota. Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies Faculty, University of Minnesota. Hennepin History Museum.*

# Starting Questions

When and where have you witnessed mutual aid?

Have you engaged in mutual aid?

How do you understand the history of mutual aid in the Twin Cities?

Feel free to share your thoughts out loud

AND/OR

Record on in the next slide

[These slides will be saved and made public after the event]

# Questions

[How do you define mutual aid?]

**When and where have you witnessed mutual aid?**

**How do you understand the history of mutual aid in the Twin Cities?**

[Participant response]

[Participant response]

**How have you engaged in mutual aid?**

[Participant response]



# Brief Narrative of Mutual Aid

People in every society in every time period have worked together to ensure their communities can survive.

Mutual aid has been practiced extensively in marginalized communities and has deep roots in the African American community.

The term "mutual aid" was popularised by the anarchist philosopher Peter Kropotkin in his essay collection *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, which argued that cooperation, not competition (as advocated by Charles Darwin) was the driving mechanism behind evolution.





**“Kropotkin never described Black Women's mutual aid societies or the chorus in Mutual Aid, although he imagined animal society in its rich varieties & the forms of cooperation & mutuality found among ants, monkeys & ruminants. Impossible, recalcitrant domestics weren't yet in his view or anyone else's.”**

**— Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals***



**Ladies Aid Society, Pilgrim Baptist Church**

Image credit: Minnesota Historical Society



# Archival Exploration

Hennepin History Museum, Minnesota  
Historical Society, AiM Interpretive Center,  
Hennepin County Libraries, 1924-1995

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Image Credit: Hennepin History Museum

# Phyllis Wheatley House, 1924



Image credit: Minnesota Historical Society

# How did African Americans exercise autonomy and influence through community?

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[Add responses, reflections, additional questions HERE]

- One way was that they offered monetary funds to churches, organizations, and individuals.
- Another way to create banks and credit unions.
- Service clubs provided many resources.
- Food programs, created by Black Panthers.

# Credjafawn Social Club, 1928-1980



Image credits: Minnesota Historical Society

What is the role of food cooperatives today? Are these forms of mutual aid? Did you know the history of Mississippi Market?

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[Add responses, reflections, additional questions HERE]

- They are a great place to buy local and support local farmers BUT I personally can't afford them
- Good to think about food cooperatives today as sites of opportunity for community partnerships--beyond food. "Opportunity" is the operant word.
-

# 1934 Teamsters Strike



Image credit: (Top) Truck Strikers Riot Against Police  
Hennepin History Museum

(Left) Police and Strikers in Tear Gas Cloud, Hennepin  
County Library



What other examples of radical labor militancy have you heard about?  
What modes of survival were practiced?

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[Add responses, reflections, additional questions HERE]

# The Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program, 1959-1965

Image credit: 1964 Program  
Statement, The Interfaith  
Fair Housing Program. From  
the Hennepin History  
Museum Collections

Detailed information regarding any items discussed or alluded to can be furnished by the Program upon request.

## THE PROGRAM'S MANDATES

The Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program has operated under these five continuing mandates:

- \_\_\_\_\_ To create residentially dispersed communities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To utilize organized religion as the primary catalytic tool for galvanizing all community resources in pursuit of fair housing or residentially dispersed communities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To record and systematize the insights gained from empiric experiences in utilizing organized religion in pursuit of fair housing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To close the obvious and glaring gaps between the pronouncements of religion and the meaningful actions of religion at the local level.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To invest and endow religion with a legitimacy and a credibility as an instrument for motivating and influencing human behavior in a highly organized industrial society.

What types of needs was The Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Housing Program meeting? How does this project help us think about mutual aid?

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[Add responses, reflections, additional questions HERE]

What happened to this program?

How successful was the program? Was there pushback?

# Northside Pilot City Program, 1968

PILOT CITIY REGIONAL CENTER

OPEN HOUSE - MAY 19, 1968

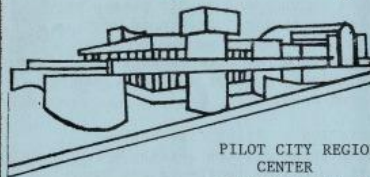
WELCOME TO PILOT CENTER

Pilot City Regional Center is the result of North Minneapolis residents participating together with Federal, State, and local, public and private agencies in an intensive planning process to determine the specific needs of the area and developing programs to meet those needs. The initial stages of implementing the programs have just begun. I hope you will join with the staff and me to nurture Pilot City Regional Center into being the successful neighborhood center that services the needs of our community.

James Mosley, Director

Image credits: James K. Hosmer Special Collections,  
Hennepin County Library

Help us  
to Help  
You!



PILOT CITY REGIONAL  
CENTER  
1315 Penn Ave. No.

Our Services  
are **FREE** to  
**ALL** Northsiders  
**348-4700**

# Pilot City Program

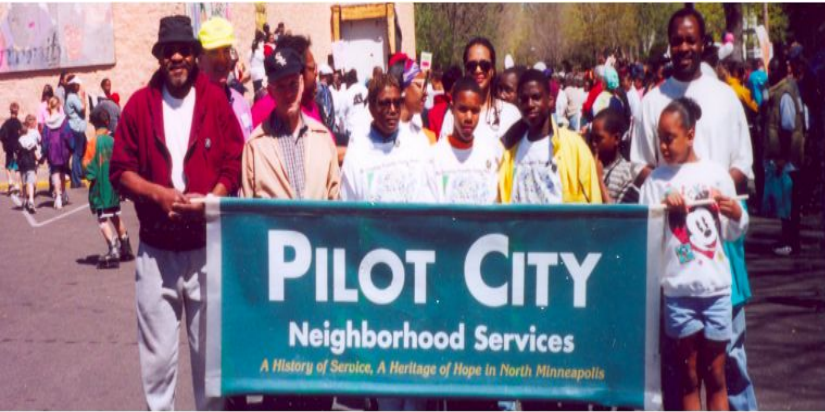


Image Credits: James K. Hosmer  
Special Collections, Hennepin County  
Library

## 15 houses found for poor

Housing hard to find for family of 13: Page 1C

By JIM SHOOP

Minneapolis Star Staff Writer

About 15 houses acquired for the site of the new North High School would be used as temporary housing for displaced poor families under a plan agreed to by a special emergency housing committee Tuesday.

The first units would be ready in four to six weeks.

The Hennepin County Welfare Department and the Minneapolis Relief Department would pay the costs of insurance, utilities, operating expenses and upkeep to the Pilot City Regional Center, an organization providing health and social services to north Minneapolis residents. The center was asked to act as a non-profit rental agency for the houses, which

would be used to provide shelter for a matter of days or a few weeks until the families placed there could find permanent housing.

The offer to use the empty houses was made by the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority, which acquired them by condemnation. The new school, to be started sometime next year, will be between Irving and Knox Aves. and between 14th and 16th Aves. N.

**Housing Authority officials said a total of about 85 houses will be acquired in the four-square-block site, but all but about 15 or 16 are substandard.**

The agreement, subject

to ratification by both the Housing Authority and Pilot City boards was reached at a closed-door meeting in City Hall. Committee members voted not to admit reporters while details were being discussed.

The committee was organized last month at the urging of Hy Rosen, Pilot

City information specialist, who said the number of transient families without homes and local low-income residents displaced by eviction or condemnation is rising.

The committee is composed of representatives of

**HOUSING  
Turn to Page 4A**

## CCC fund pact approved

In a surprise move Tuesday the board of the Hennepin County antipoverty agency approved an agreement to restore federal funds to the Citizens Community Centers.

The action came after a meeting of the program committee of the antipoverty agency, Mobilization of Economic Resources, Inc. It had not been expected until Monday.

Matthew Eubanks, who resigned last month as director of the centers, and center staff members objected to the approval.

Details: Page 2C.

Image credit: The Minneapolis Star, Minneapolis, Minnesota 17 Sep 1969, Wed,  
Page 1

Do you know of any alternative programs or grassroots orgs that are doing similar work today? If so, which ones?

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[Add responses, reflections, additional questions HERE]

# Red School House (Started 1972), Frogtown Saint Paul

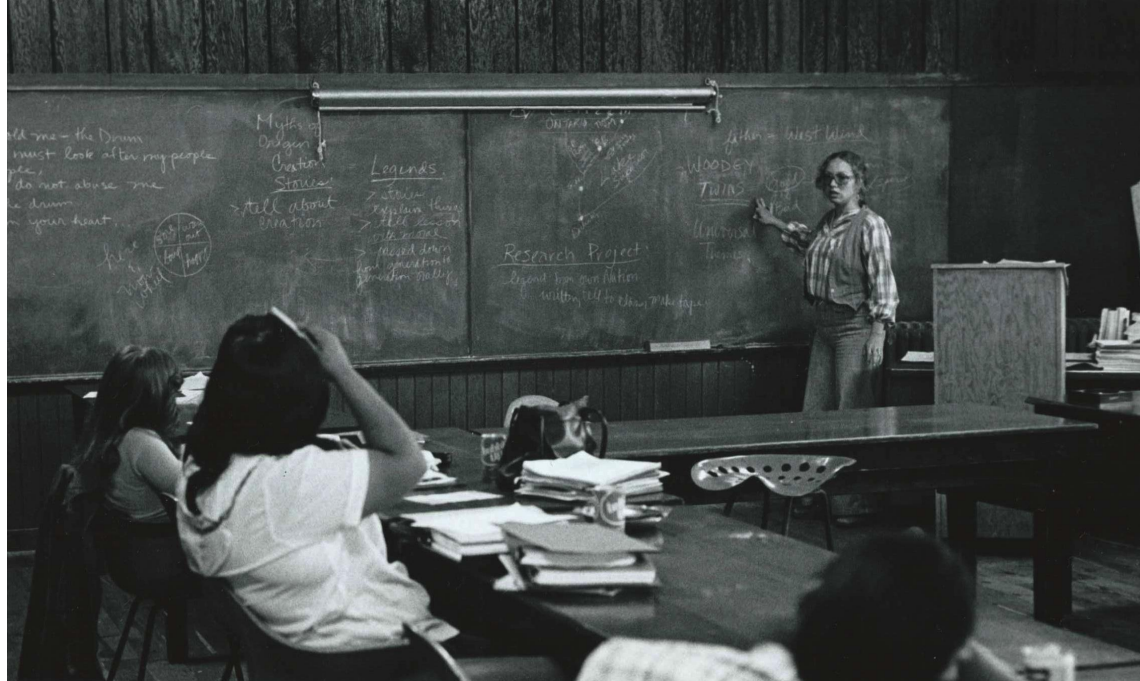


Image credit: American Indian Movement (AIM) Interpretative Center Digital Gallery  
<<http://www.aim-ic.org/red-school-house/4d7px37p3dnqonlkwg5rzwu6ttfszk>>

# What type of need were the AIM Survival Schools meeting? How do these alternative schools help us understand the purpose of mutual aid today?

[Add responses, reflections,  
additional questions HERE]

[We can always add more  
slides!]

## THE RED SCHOOL HOUSE PHILOSOPHY

The Red School House is an Indian-designed alternative to education in the public schools that stresses native participation and control, a culturally/spiritually based curriculum, and the encouragement of attitudinal change which can lead to an increased self-confidence and pride.

Our goal is that our children learn by participating in their culture, rather than learning about life by observing their culture. Beads and feathers alone do not make a culture.

The school presents a school curriculum which integrates respect for cultural heritage with an awareness of problems associated with the modern environment.

Beginning in 1974-75 and continuing to the present, the school has developed a model school program for pre-school through 12th grade students based on the belief that modern Indian life, though rooted in traditional values and life customs, is dynamic and is constantly evolving and changing as the way is shown to us.



Although actual subjects taught at the school are both traditional and modern, the teaching methods themselves are founded on Native philosophy and thought.

All classes are conducted with students and instructors arranged in a circle. On many occasions, the instructor will take the center of the circle for teaching. But on many other occasions, students will occupy the center to present their ideas. In this way, a constant and



# Themes for Closing Discussion

2  
5



Image credit: Kevin Murphy, June 2020

## Future

What does it mean to “mobilize” people?

## Sustainability

How do we sustain the GOALS of mutual aid organizing?

# Dean Spade's KEY ELEMENTS OF MUTUAL AID

2  
6



**01**

**MEETING SURVIVAL NEEDS**

**02**

**ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN & PARTICIPATORY**

**03**

**MOBILIZE PEOPLE, BUILD MOVEMENT**

## Do you agree with Dean Spade's 3 key elements of mutual aid?

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- Do these elements make sense after our archival exploration?
- Do these elements make sense with your personal experience?

[Add responses, reflections, additional questions HERE]

Yes, seeing it first hand, and seeing community coming together to help eachother has shown that, but it needs to be kept up as well.

# THANKS!

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Do you have any questions?

Lake Street Breathe  
University of Minnesota  
Heritage Studies & Public History

CREDITS: This presentation template was created  
by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon**, and  
infographics & images by **Freepik**



# How to stay involved with History for the Future and Lake Street Breathe?

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Programming will continue until the exhibition opening in May, 2021. We will every send a feedback form and information on future programs by email

Questions? Comments?  
Suggestions? Did we miss  
something?

We WANT to stay in touch!

*Andrea: [manol024@umn.edu](mailto:manol024@umn.edu)*

*Acoma: [gaith019@morris.umn.edu](mailto:gaith019@morris.umn.edu)*

# Resources

Listed below are the sources we used to prepare this presentation and dialogue. **Please feel free to add to the resource list!** This slideshow will be saved and made publicly available online at the Hennepin History Museum, and the forthcoming Lake Street Breathe website.

- BOOK Dean Spade. *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (And the Next)* (2020)
- BOOK Pyotr Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1902)
- WEBSITE American Indian Movement (AIM) Interpretive Center Website <[www.aim-ic.org](http://www.aim-ic.org)>
- DIGITAL ARCHIVES Minnesota Historical Society Collections <<http://search.mnhs.org/?brand=findaids>>
- LOCAL ARCHIVES Hennepin History Museum Collections
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