

**GROWING ARE YOU FOR GR BUSINESS**

June 15, 2011  
The Golden Valley  
mnwin.org/

Join MN Win and speaker and speaker informative for you expand your growth, which New entrepreneurs physical and maintain the

**SAINT PAUL SMALL SOCIAL BUSINESS**

June 16, 2011  
Radisson Hotel  
saintpaulchar

Learn how to following and customers. Some of earned me present on business sales and networking.

**WHAT IS HEALTH DOING**

June 21, 2011  
Worrell De  
Minneapolis

medical  
Medical on the future company product a Forum will includes exp

**NETWORK MINNEAPOLIS ULTRA**

June 23, 2011  
REV Ultra Lo  
minneapolis

Network with connections contacts can business an Meet other Cities and e



Mel Yawakie, Turtle Island Communications

ce is proud of one of its members, Mel and Madonna tions — a business that installs broadband connecteived the Executive Excellence Award from American S). It is very inspiring to see the video of their work

ence in Minnesota, the Latino Chamber of Commerce. Other ethnic chambers in the metro area of Commerce, the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce, the Somali Chamber of Commerce and the Oromo

uja and her colleagues introduced the concept of of the same title. It is based on their experience used improvisation to create popular products for offer examples of the applicability of this ix underlying principles of Juguad iversity; do more with less; think and ple on the margins; follow your o.

il Minnesota, a visitor from Ger- oming into Europe should be levels and different culture. mong in Minnesota showed

dent of the Wilder Founda- tional Reserve Bank of Min- ely an asset. At an open hared how she brings the y people to critical deci- y policy at the Fed and her role sident Neel Kashkari.

ular — Maharaja's, the oldest ns to spice up the area with pt called Little India. The ing the question: How well ented in each of Minnesota's



Dr. Simone Ahuja

chal.news and is a professor of economics at



**MINNESOTA BUSINESS MAGAZINE ARTICLES**

*Minority Entrepreneurs*

**BY BRUCE P. CORRIE, PHD**



**Cultural districts as economic development tools**

**M**innesota offers a blue ocean strategy for economic development in low income neighborhoods that are developing areas rich in culture into cultural destination place for visitors who want to experience something different. It also inspires the local community to come out and support these

took a long time for policy makers and funders to "get it," and when they did they favored investing in larger mainstream organizations to implement the strategy rather than the World Cultural Heritage District that devel-

# minnesota BUSINESS

INSPIRATION FOR GROWING COMPANIES LARRY YATCH | LAURA KELLY | LAURA LIU | LESLIE HOLMAKER | MAURA STEBLAY | MICHAEL LANGLEY | MIKE BROMELKAMP | MYRNA MAROFFS ETALF | ROSS LEVIN | RYAN BROSHAR | RYAN BURNET | SARA BEATTY RATNER | STONY BARRANCO | WENDY NEMITZ | AARON HALL | ALBERTO MONSERRATE | AMANDA

## PERSPECTIVES

### GUEST COLUMN



Dilla, an Ethiopian restaurant



Beko Tufa, owner of Dilla restaurant

## Cultural districts as economic development tools

Minnesota offers a blue ocean strategy for economic development in low income neighborhoods that are rich in cultural assets — developing cultural destination places that in turn bring wealth and job creation for the residents of those neighborhoods.

The earliest model of cultural destination areas in low income neighborhoods were District Del Sol in St. Paul and the American Indian Cultural Corridor in the Franklin Avenue area of Minneapolis. The emergence of LRT on the horizon mobilized the community in the old Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul as current residents did not want to see a repetition of the destruction to the community that the construction of I-94 did to the African American community. Instead, the question was posed — could LRT serve to build the economic assets of the community? To this end, a concept called The World Cultural Heritage District was launched, with the vision to develop the area as a destination point for cultural heritage tourism.

Community leaders who were part of this conversation launched three concepts — Little Mekong, focusing on an Asian destination place; Rondo Historic and Cultural District, building on the earlier model of an African American cultural corridor; and Little Africa, a place to experience the culture of African

Developing areas rich in culture into cultural destination places can bring jobs to low income neighborhoods

BY BRUCE CORRIE, PHD

immigrants. Of these concepts, Little Mekong is the most developed and well known. The other concepts are still being developed and are receiving increasing attention.

The unique aspect of this strategy is that it builds on existing cultural assets and uses marketing and branding to create a destina-



tion place for visitors who want to experience something different. It also inspires the local community to come out and support these efforts, as they see their own culture being celebrated in visible ways. One gets a sense of this when one visits the Little Mekong Night Market or Little Africa Fest. Research of festival participants funded by the McKnight Foundation revealed that the Little Africa Fest drew people from 15 cities and 32 zip codes. It also helped market the local businesses to the larger community.

Research also shows that when these businesses grow they tend to employ people from their community and the entrepreneurs take on positive roles in the community. My research on the college student market for ethnic food conducted with students at Concordia University-St. Paul revealed untapped potential. Ethnic restaurants, especially those that served the ethnic market, usually offered an affordable option for college students.

Since a number of these neighborhoods are on major transit routes the potential to grow these cultural assets are huge. Some core elements are needed to progress this new economic development tool.

First, mainstream policy makers and funders need to understand the unique potential of this strategy. The experience with the World Cultural Heritage District was that it

took a long time for policy makers and funders to “get it,” and when they did they favored investing in larger mainstream organizations to implement the strategy rather than the World Cultural Heritage District that developed the strategy in the first place. Concordia University-St. Paul has consistently supported this concept in various ways and is a core supporter of Little Africa.

Second, public and private investment is needed to help build the cultural infrastructure in the form of facade improvements on buildings, as well as development of cultural concepts such as murals on buildings that help create a sense of place.

Third, the businesses need technical assistance to cater to mainstream customers who want a different experience but in a culturally and emotionally safe setting.

There is a unique experience happening in Minnesota and I am really thrilled to be part of the development of this strategy with colleagues such as Gene Gelgelu, Va-Megn Thoj, Nieeta Presley, and Lisa Tabor who are working so hard to make this happen.



BRUCE CORRIE, PhD is Professor of Economics and Associate Vice President for University Relations at Concordia University-St. Paul.

BELOW AND RIGHT: PHOTO PROVIDED BY BRUCE CORRIE; ABOVE: PHOTO BY DEREK THOMSON

# 10 WAYS TO GROW AMERICAN INDIAN BUSINESSES

BY BRUCE P. CORRIE, PH.D.

The Minnesota Indian Business Alliance released a report on strategies to grow American Indian businesses in Minnesota. The report derives its information from World Café forums held at the Leech Lake Reservation, Minneapolis, Duluth and Bemidji with over 100 entrepreneurs, artisans, small-business owners and practitioners in attendance.

The listening sessions revealed that American Indian businesses had unique values and culture, such as sharing, assisting and building others, and providing for family and community. Profit and competition were not dominant values.

American Indian entrepreneurs faced a number of barriers such as lack of detailed data; underutilization of businesses in public spending; overcoming invisibility; underdeveloped infrastructure; lack of a strong and unified business voice; insufficient access to supportive business resources and networks; and the need for coordinated advocacy and educational efforts.

**The listening sessions identified 10 strategies to grow American Indian businesses:**

- A statewide American Indian business directory
- A statewide business and financial resources directory
- Strong "Buy Indian" policies and practices drawing from the national Buy Indian Act.
- An annual American Indian Business showcase and conference
- American Indian Business Day in Minnesota to bring visibility to these entrepreneurs
- A statewide Buy Native-Choose Local First campaign
- Networking and partnering activities for business owners
- Better access to mentors
- Improved access to capital
- Access to business supportive and financial resources

**Separate listening session for Native artists were also held and participants identified the following strategies to grow artist entrepreneurs:**

- Creating an artist directory
- Developing a "Buying Native Art" guide
- Establish an annual Native art market
- Host a Native art crawl through the state.
- Create a Native Arts guild
- Develop Native tourism association with creative destinations
- Host TED type TIK talks (Traditional Indigenous Knowledge)



Pamela Standing

- Work with the Minnesota Arts Board to secure more funding for Native Arts.
- Develop art business incubators
- Native artists were frustrated that they were often overlooked in art circles with their art usually classified as "folk art" or "tribal arts and crafts."

**Pamela Standing**, project director of the Minnesota Indian Business Alliance was very enthusiastic about the process and report, and noted that, "Participants shared a strong pride in their culture and their businesses. Many stories of hard work, overcoming barriers, success and, yes, sometimes failure were shared. Each story brought people closer together and connected them to each other during the listening sessions."

According to the Survey of Business Owners, 2012, there were over 4,000 American Indian firms in Minnesota with over \$700 million in sales. Of these firms, 432 employ over 4,000 Minnesotans with an annual payroll of \$204 million.

The report can be found here: [mniba.org/images/docs/articles-and-reports/downloadable-reports/2016\\_MNIBA\\_LISTENING\\_SESSION\\_REPORT.pdf](http://mniba.org/images/docs/articles-and-reports/downloadable-reports/2016_MNIBA_LISTENING_SESSION_REPORT.pdf)



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University - Saint Paul.



## A Picture Worth A Thousand Words

Hamline Midway mural tells the story of overcoming challenges **BY BRUCE CORRIE**

Approximately 20 years ago, on the way to Hamline University's library, Freweini Sium felt so unsafe in the neighborhood that she took a bus on the short stretch on University Avenue. Today, however, she walks the neighborhood without hesitation, because today, Sium owns the block.

Sium moved to America from Ethiopia, looking to follow her dream of becoming successful and independent. Although she began her journey to success studying to be an electrical engineer, opportunity turned her into an entrepreneur. Someone showed her the building on the corner of University and Snelling, which extends almost the entire block, and after much deliberation, she bought

it with the help of her father. Over the years, through hard work, numerous setbacks and sheer determination, she has transformed the run-down building into a vibrant address that now houses more than 20 small businesses.

Listening to the tremendous challenges Sium faced securing capital to renovate the business one is struck by the question: Do minority female entrepreneurs pay a higher premium for access to capital? Banks and nonprofits told her they didn't fund real estate yet were known to have given loans to other businesses, and she paid a high premium for some short-term loans. Finally, after being rejected by area banks, she secured a loan from Vision Bank with the help of Mohamed Amin, a social entrepreneur.

Sium also faced the challenges of operating a business. When she couldn't find someone to run her beauty salon, she went to school and earned the credentials to do so herself. Now she operates a thriving business and is a sought-after stylist.

While visiting Los Angeles, Sium came across a unique ethnic mall and wanted to bring the concept to Minnesota. Thus began her next big challenge of creating AJ International Mall. Her vision for the mall is to have a mix of complementary businesses that can do business with each other. Fifteen of the 17 mini stores currently in the mall are occupied by businesses from different cultures, and sell products such as clothing or cell phones, or



Freweini Sium

offer services such as henna tattoos. The two new challenges she's now working on are how to market the retail stores so that they can be profitable and how to address parking issues, so customers have a pleasant shopping experience. But like the challenges she's encountered before, she is facing them straight on.

The building Sium owns is part of the Hamline Midway Murals initiative — a public art project that pairs immigrant business owners with artists to create a "gallery" of murals that tell the stories of the Little Africa Business and Cultural District. The mural that adorns the exterior of her building embodies the spirit of Sium and provides a warm, vibrant welcome to people entering Snelling Avenue.

The mural's — and Sium's — message to Minnesota is this: Dream big, work hard and keep your eye on the prize. Success will come in beautiful, vibrant ways. **■**

PHOTO BY EMILY J. DAVIS



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University — Saint Paul.

Online  
M.B.A. Ranked  
**12** IN  
THE  
TOP 25  
by Princeton  
Review

**M.B.A.  
ONLINE**

**FULLY  
ACCREDITED  
NATIONALLY  
RANKED**

**BEACOM  
SCHOOL OF  
BUSINESS**

**ONLINE. ACCREDITED**

[www.usd.edu/online](http://www.usd.edu/online)



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTH DAKOTA**  
BEACOM SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS

**BUSINESS NEWS FROM IMMIGRANTS TO PRE-IMMIGRANTS**

BY BRUCE CORRIE



Mel Yawakie, Turtle Island Communications

The Minnesota Indian Business Alliance is proud of one of its members, Mel and Madonna Yawakie of Turtle Island Communications — a business that installs broadband connections in tribal lands. Mel recently received the Executive Excellence Award from American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES). It is very inspiring to see the video of their work on the MNIBA site ([mniba.org](http://mniba.org)).

Two ethnic chambers renewed their presence in Minnesota, the Latino Chamber of Commerce and the Hmong Chamber of Commerce. Other ethnic chambers in the metro area include the American Indian Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce, the Ghana Chamber of Commerce, the Somali Chamber of Commerce and the Oromo Chamber of Commerce.

(Real) Power 50 member Dr. Simone Ahuja and her colleagues introduced the concept of Jugaad Innovation from their new book of the same title. It is based on their experience observing how entrepreneurs in India used improvisation to create popular products for underserved markets. In their book they offer examples of the applicability of this concept to countries like the U.S. The six underlying principles of Jugaad Innovation are: seek opportunity in adversity; do more with less; think and act flexibly; keep it simple; include people on the margins; follow your heart. It makes a good mantra for life too.

While speaking on immigration at Global Minnesota, a visitor from Germany questioned whether immigrants coming into Europe should be considered as assets given their low skill levels and different culture. I countered that the experience of the Hmong in Minnesota showed that this notion is wrong.

A case in point — Dr. MayKao Hang, President of the Wilder Foundation, recently took over as Chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. She is definitely an asset. At an open house at the Fed she shared how she brings the experience of ordinary people to critical decisions around monetary policy at the Fed and her role in the hiring of Fed President Neel Kashkari.



Dr. MayKao Hang

Two stories on Chai.News are very popular — Maharaja's, the oldest business in downtown St. Paul, has plans to spice up the area with a Temple of Rock and Roll and a concept called Little India. The other story is my research and data posing the question: How well are minority economic interests represented in each of Minnesota's legislative districts?



**BRUCE CORRIE, PH.D.**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.



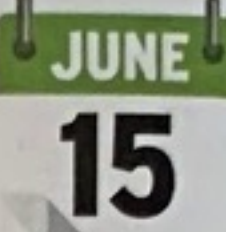
Dr. Simone Ahuja

**GROWING YOUR BRAND: ARE YOU PREPARED FOR GROWTH IN YOUR BUSINESS?**

June 15, 2016, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

The Golden Valley Country Club

[mnwin.org/events](http://mnwin.org/events)



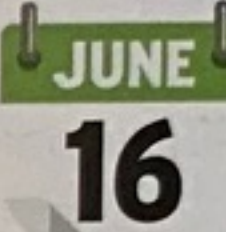
Join MN Women in Networking and speaker Jennifer Cermak for an informative presentation that will help you expand your business and create growth, which is the basis for success. New entrepreneurs have to reach financial, physical and emotional balance in order to maintain their business in the long run.

**SAINT PAUL CHAMBER SMALL BUSINESS SERIES: SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS**

June 16, 2016, 7:30 – 9:00 AM

Radisson Hotel, Roseville

[saintpaulchamber.com](http://saintpaulchamber.com)



Learn how to grow your social media following and build connections with your customers. Speaker Adam Dince, the director of earned media at Deluxe Corporation, will present on building brand loyalty, creating sales and running campaigns through social networking.

**WHAT ARE DIGITAL HEALTH COMPANIES DOING WRONG?**

June 21, 2016, 8:00 – 10:00 AM

Worrell Design Inc., Minneapolis

[medicalalley.org/events](http://medicalalley.org/events)



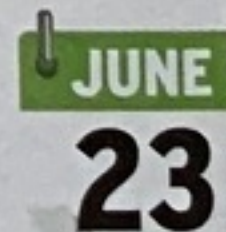
Medical Alley presents a conversation on the functioning of digital health companies and insight for reforming product and services. The Health Leaders Forum will host this discussion, which includes expert speakers.

**NETWORK AFTER WORK: MINNEAPOLIS AT REV ULTRA LOUNGE**

June 23, 2016, 5:00 – 9:00 PM

REV Ultra Lounge, Minneapolis

[minneapolis.networkafterwork.com](http://minneapolis.networkafterwork.com)



Network with local entrepreneurs and make connections in a fun setting. Improving your contacts can help you create growth in your business and reach your professional goals. Meet other professionals around the Twin Cities and expand your business!



Molly Glasgow

# “WHAT’S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?”

## Rethinking our business model

BY BRUCE CORRIE

I usually get the attention of my ECON 101 students when I tell them that Tina Turner was really talking about the American business model when she belted out her pop hit, “What’s love got to do with it?” The traditional supply-and-demand model of the market system, if it worked the way it was supposed to, ultimately brought the rational players of the market into the promised land of efficient production and satisfied consumers.

The fundamental mantra of free markets was what American economists would lecture governments and people all across the world about, and berated those who did not follow the model with fancy pull-me-downs, such as India following the “Hindu rate of growth.” These economists missed seeing the lines to the soup kitchens as they scuttled between luxury resorts. They did not see the pain of unemployment and underemployment — the kind of angst reflected in blue-collar workers today who voted loud and clear this past election and is reflected in attempts to raise the minimum wage, bring universal health care or preserve the environment. Something about the market model was not working well. Are there options?

In Minnesota there are models that present potential.

The Metro IBA is a network of small local independent businesses. While attending their meetings and interacting with members, I get a clear message that these businesses operate beyond the financial bottom line. They seem to be integrating the “common good” into their business model. In November 2016, after the election, when there was considerable fear and anxiety about the future, the

### ■ OPERATING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

**METRO IBA**, a network of small local independent businesses; President: Molly Glasgow, [buylocaltwincities.com](http://buylocaltwincities.com)

**ELEMENT BOXING**, St. Paul boxing gym and incubator for fitness startup; owners: Dalton and Lacey Outlaw, [elementgym.org/story](http://elementgym.org/story)

president of Metro IBA, Molly Glasgow, who is a young entrepreneur (Point Acupressure [pointacupressure.com](http://pointacupressure.com)) had a call to members to be extra welcoming to customers. On her business website you can see this message in multiple languages. We can often find members advocating for community issues beyond pure business issues.

It is not surprising that Minnesota passed legislation to create the Social Benefit Corporation. Companies can integrate the common good as part of their core business identity and measure both financial and community success. Over the weekend a new social benefit corporation was born, Element Boxing, SBC. Dalton and Lacey Outlaw, two young entrepreneurs symbolize this new business model in a very unique way. Their business platform at its core is an inner-city boxing gym with rich cultural connectedness. However it is also an incubator for small fitness start-ups such as Push and a young man I recently met who is building a new life after serving time in prison. Also integrated into this business model is the common good as they work to build youth and help them find their purpose. “We put people and community before profits” is a tagline on their new website. [elementgym.org/story](http://elementgym.org/story)

I think we are on the verge of something good in Minnesota.



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.



(from left) Dr. Ausaf Sayeed, Consul General of India, Chicago, Governor Mark Dayton, Arun Kumar Singh, Ambassador of India, Katie Clark Sieben, DEED Commissioner

# Minnesota-India Economic Relations: A Turning Point?

A major US-India health care summit in Minneapolis underscores possibilities for a growing economic partnership **BY BRUCE P. CORRIE**

**C**ould we be at a turning point in Minnesota-India economic relations? A number of recent events and data appear to be pointing in that direction.

## International Summit

In August, the U.S.-India Healthcare Summit 2015 convened in Minneapolis, a location that bespeaks Minnesota's strength in health care firms and medical device manufacturing.

Consul General of India, Chicago, Dr. Ausaf Sayeed, convened the summit with Seann Nelipinath of the Minnesota-based India Chamber of Commerce. The conference spotlight opportunities both in India and Minnesota. "The huge economic potential between Minnesota and India remains untapped," said Dr. Sayeed.

Lt. Governor Tina Smith delivered a keynote address, highlighting her work with the Destination Medical Center in Rochester.

"This is the first I've heard about the Destination Medical Center," said Sivashenbagam Kaliappan, group CFO of Lifeline Healthcare based in Dubai. "I look forward to hearing about opportunities to partner with them."

Dr. V. Mohan, a pioneer in diabetes research, said, "India is introducing to the world low cost scalable technologies to make health care affordable and accessible to all. A

new trend we observe are researchers coming to India to work with us on research that will benefit diabetes treatment in the U.S."

Dr. Kedar Belhe of Plymouth-based Metamodix was at the conference to develop relationships with Mohan. "I want to gain Dr. Mohan's perspective on our approach to the treatment of diabetes."

## Dayton meets India Ambassador

The ambassador of India, Arun Kumar Singh, met with Governor Mark Dayton, Lt. Governor Tina Smith and DEED Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben to build relationships with Minnesota.

"India has a special focus on growing its manufacturing base and this presents a lot of opportunities for U.S.-India collaboration in the health care sector," said Ambassador Singh. "Minnesota is one of the leading business-friendly states with a major focus on health care, innovation and lifestyles, and I look forward to exploring how Minnesotan companies can help meet the health care needs of India."

Dayton was pleased to hear these words. "Indian companies play a critical role in Minnesota's economy and we are proud that Minnesota is a top five U.S. state for Indian investment," said Dayton. "We look forward to more economic collaboration in the future."

## Minnesota stands out already

A report by the Confederation of Indian Industries ranks Minnesota third in the U.S. for investments by Indian companies. Six Indian companies invested \$1.8 billion in Minnesota, creating almost 2,500 jobs in the state. Only Texas and Pennsylvania had larger such investments. The primary sectors for Indian investments are information technology and services, and mining, materials and manufacturing.

An analysis of the \$21 billion export market to India in 2014 found Minnesota ranking 16th in the nation with \$321 million of exports. From 2011-14, exports to India grew by 56%, ranking 13th in the nation in the growth of exports. Nationally, exports to India grew by only 12%.

## Indian Minnesota Community

Minnesota's economic relationship with India is strengthened by the state's small but very influential Indian-American community in Minnesota. According to the Survey of Business Owners, in 2012 there were more than 2,000 Indian American firms in Minnesota, with close to a \$1 billion in sales, employing more than 7,000 Minnesotans with an annual payroll of \$226 million. Many of these entrepreneurs have active business relationships with India and around the world. Indian-American Minnesotans have buying power close to a \$1 billion. Theater and art groups such as Ragamala, Pangea, Kathak Dance Academy and the Indian Music Society of Minnesota have a very vibrant national and local presence. Key policy leaders in the state such as the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Dr. Narayana Kocherlakota, the dean of the Carlson School of Business, Dr. Sri Zaheer, the producer of Untold Stories on PBS, Fred de Sam Lazaro, and renowned chef Raghavan Iyer, have Indian roots. One of the largest Hindu temples in North America is located in Minnesota.

Coming up in the spring of 2016, the Indian-American community has partnered with the Minnesota Historical Society to bring an exhibit from the Smithsonian, "Beyond Bollywood," that will celebrate the many contributions of Indian-Americans nationally and locally.

And there is talk of a potential trade mission to India...stay tuned... **■**



Dr. Sita Dash

# PROBIOTIC PIONEER TO GROW NEW BUSINESSES

**Dr. Dash commits \$1 million to build entrepreneurship in low income areas**

BY BRUCE CORRIE

Long before probiotics became a household name, Sita Dash, PhD, a New American entrepreneur, began groundbreaking work on manufacturing a robust probiotic strain in 1979. He completed his doctorate at South Dakota State University in 1973 and served as director of South Dakota's Food and Drug Administration. Like every successful innovator, he saw a connection between two unrelated areas and launched both the research and manufacturing of probiotics for human consumption. The growth of his company, UAS Labs, paralleled and fueled the growth of the probiotic movement from a \$10 million industry to one that today is worth more than \$35 billion.

Over the past two years, I have worked closely with him as he pursues his new passion — helping to build Minnesota and the country as a whole through entrepreneurship. He is committing \$1 million to invest in businesses that will bring in jobs and economic develop-

ment, especially in low-income areas. He is also looking invest in a food manufacturing business that could benefit from his expertise as well as the three research centers he has established in South Dakota, Nebraska and India. Details about this initiative will be announced soon. To this end, he has spent a lot of time exploring options and is close to launching this effort.

At the same time, Dr. Dash is a strong advocate of the community, whether supporting shelters for battered women, or launching the Asian Institute for Public Health in India, or supporting a wide range of individuals and organizations from the largest Hindu temple in the nation located in Maple Grove, to the India Association of Minnesota. He was the chief sponsor for the first Non-Violence Day in 2016 — an effort to celebrate the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi and the important role for nonviolent solutions in our increasingly polarized world. He is a strong supporter of art and cultural activities in the Indian community, with efforts such as being a major supporter of the Beyond Bollywood exhibit at the Minnesota History Center.

Dr. Dash feels strongly for the need to strengthen the voice of New Americans in the policy area and has been connecting with community leaders on ways to do this.

Dr. Dash's work continues to garner local, national and global accolades. The President of India recently awarded him a special recognition. In October, the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans recognized him with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

It is tough to describe Dr. Dash: Innovator. Entrepreneur. Philanthropist. Activities in these areas take up 20 hours a day and he does this all while constantly traveling across the world, primarily focused on his philanthropic activities. However, there is one quality I especially admire in Dr. Dash — his strong desire to give back and build the community. 🐔



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

## STAT BITES: TURKEYS AND STARTUPS



### ON THE UP-AND-UP

Minnesota's rank went up from 21st to 16th in the latest Kaufmann Index for startup activity in the 25 largest states. Wisconsin remains in last place on the list, which is based, among other things, on the rate of adults becoming new entrepreneurs. California leapfrogged Texas and Florida to achieve the top ranking this time around.



### FIND A FRIEND

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) figures that half of all startups fail within 5 years; however, entrepreneurs can greatly enhance their probability of survival by connecting to one or more powerful allies, thus creating competitive advantages and reducing risk.

*(Source: Gilbert Gonzalez, "What Factors Are Causal to Survival of a Startup?", August 18, 2017, Muma Business Review)*



### FAIR OR FOWL FACT

The National Turkey Federation reports that turkey consumption more than doubled since 1970, "due to consumers' recognition of turkey's good taste and nutritional value."



### THE BIRD IS THE WORD

Minnesota ranks 1st in U.S. production of turkeys at 45 million per year, accounting for one-fifth of all turkeys grown country-wide. 🐔

*(Source: "Minnesota Poultry Profile", Su Ye, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 2015.)*



Facts provided by **MARK ANDERSON** Principal, Stat-Ease, Inc. mark@stateease.com





## RURAL IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR IS RESHAPING THE FOOD INDUSTRY

BY BRUCE CORRIE

I drove down to Clara City, a small town of around 14,000 people, to meet with Dr. Massoud Kazemzadeh, or Dr. Kay as he is affectionately known. He is co-founder of Kay's Natural, a company focused on "plant-based, high protein & gluten-free cereals and snacks with great taste." The U.S. Small Business Administration recognized him as an Encore Entrepreneur in 2017, adding to his long list of awards and recognitions. He also has over 20 patents in his name; is an accomplished food scientist; and has done some innovative work in food manufacturing, along with product and process development. He has a PhD from Texas A & M University.

Dr. Kazemzadeh came to Minnesota about 30 years ago because his wife, Linda, was diabetic and needed a kidney transplant. She had helped launch a line of products that were designed specifically for diabetics. After his wife passed away there was a pause in his entrepreneurial energy for a few years. He is now married to Ann, an attorney and his business

partner who helped relaunch Kay's Natural. In 2010, they bought the plant in Clara City and now employ 34 people.

I enjoyed hearing from him about his Baha'i faith, a religion that celebrates the universality of all faiths and celebrates our common humanity. It is perhaps this faith experience that is behind his global vision to offer nutritious products that could simultaneously be very effective in famine areas as well as for mainstream consumers looking for healthy plant-based options. Kay's Natural definitely occupies that niche with a wide range of products that are dense in protein and fiber while being low in sugar. His latest innovation is a line of products called "Pass the Peas," made from pea proteins and chickpeas.

As I watch the images of millions hit by famine in North Africa and corresponding relief efforts, I am struck by the potential for his products to become a part of the solution to ending world hunger. Dr. Kazemzadeh said that they received very positive responses for



"We realized that most of the foods which are sent to the needy areas are basically either starch-based or sugar-based and truly do not meet the standards of nutritious products."

—Dr. Kazemzadeh

the products they donated for relief efforts.

"We realized that most of the foods which are sent to the needy areas are basically either starch-based or sugar-based and truly do not meet the standards of nutritious products for those who are under stress," he explains. His protein-rich products, which serve as "mini-meals," can be very effective in these situations. He says that around 2 billion people in the world suffer from micro-nutrient deficiency or "hidden hunger."

Recently, there were requests from the Middle East exploring a partnership to help meet the food needs in the region, both for the mainstream markets as well as in the famine-prone areas.

There is also increasing interest in health foods with a number of major retailers offering a variety of new products. In this new and competitive sector, Dr. Kay is working hard to be a market leader, offering products made from plant protein.

Both he and his wife are committed to their new home in Clara City and work hard to build it up at every opportunity. He has turned down offers to sell his plant because he wants to make sure the business remains in the city. The next great revolution in food innovation could well come from Clara City, Minnesota. ■



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

“I AM EXCITED BEING IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS, EMPOWERING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.”

—TASHITAA TUFAA



## FROM POLITICAL REFUGEE TO MULTIMILLIONAIRE

### Ten insights from Tashitaa Tufaa

BY BRUCE CORRIE

It took 13 years for Tashitaa Tufaa to grow his business revenue to \$35 million. He came to Minnesota as a young political activist from the Oromo region of Ethiopia. After securing political asylum, he earned a graduate degree from the University of Minnesota. His entrepreneurial story is a remarkable one — from cab driver to the owner of more than 300 school buses as part of his company, Metropolitan Transportation Network Inc. Here are some insights gleaned from his entrepreneurial journey:

**1 Follow your heart** — Tashitaa had a boss who wanted him to do the wrong thing. He refused. Life became hell for him. He talked with his wife about starting a business — something he always wanted to do. She told him to follow his heart. After a stint driving a taxi, he started his own company.

**2 Adversity brings opportunity** — Tashitaa found there was an opportunity to be a school bus owner and so went to a dealer to explore buying a bus. It took a \$10,000 check that cleared the bank to convince the dealer he was serious. Today he owns hundreds of buses.

**3 Change cultural attitudes toward credit** — Tashitaa did not like to be in debt or use credit. He soon found out what prevented his business from growing was capital — yes, borrowing money! So he did.

**4 To gain a banker’s trust we need more than a good credit score** — Tashitaa found that bankers need to see someone who looks like them in order to build trust. He went to meet the banker with an associate from the banker’s culture.

**5 Build strong core pillars of business** — Tashitaa hired people with solid business skills to build the capacity of various functions of his busi-

ness: management, payroll, human resources, logistics, etc. This structure allowed him to achieve solid growth and fulfill customer expectations.

**6 The customer is first** — The customer is always the top priority for Tashitaa and he constantly strives to “put himself in the customer’s shoes”. Since he works with children, safety is also a top priority. Because he has a severely autistic child, he focuses on children with special needs and wants to create welcoming experiences for them.

**7 Treat employees right** — Tashitaa tries hard to make his business a welcoming and comfortable place for his employees, offering competitive wages, flexible shifts and “classy” annual employee recognition events.

**8 Learning by doing and listening** — Tashitaa continues to drive one of his school buses, helping him stay connected with his drivers and customers. He is constantly asking people how he can improve operations, which he jots down on his writing pad to take up with his team in the future.

**9 Stay humble** — Tashitaa does not work out of a personal office, he works around spaces in his Fridley headquarters. He is a very humble entrepreneur and leader.

**10 Build community** — Tashitaa supports various community groups, whether it is the Oromo Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce or Little Africa. He buys local. He believes in empowering communities and deliberately chose to locate his newest location in the heart of North Minneapolis, choosing as his contractor Thor Construction, a leading minority contractor. “I am excited being in North Minneapolis, empowering the local community,” he says. **■**



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

# INDIAN-AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURS AND ECONOMIC POWER

BY BRUCE CORRIE



## MAHARAJA'S IN ST. PAUL LOSES ITS PRINCESS!

The oldest minority and immigrant business in downtown Saint Paul — Maharaja's — will no longer be the same. Last November, Ena Bhatia, the young entrepreneur who was the heart of Maharaja's, tragically lost her life in a motorcycle accident. Whenever I walked into the store she would greet me with an infectious smile and chat about what she was doing in the store. She added a youthful sense of humor to the store, especially around customers who would entertain her cats. Her innovative and creative spirit was on display when we celebrated Prince at the Xcel Center: Ena created a special poster showing Prince alongside other music legends. As her father Jit Bhatia says, "Minnesota lost its Prince, and Maharajah's lost its Princess." Beginning in April, the store will no longer be the same. Jit is transforming the business along the entrepreneurial vision of his daughter Ena.

## IS AMERICA LOSING ITS BRAND?

The Brand America is a magnet that attracts top talent from around the world. Anyone can succeed with

hard work and determination in this land of opportunity! This brand is under attack from within as many immigrant and minority groups feel the wave of hate touching their souls. Most recently, the successful Indian American community felt vulnerable when one person was killed in Kansas and another shot in Washington in a rage of hate. The reaction in India was very strong as media report many questioning the relevance of the Brand America and pushing back plans to visit the country. So let's get some perspective of what Brand America stands to lose if the over-three million Indian Americans all decided to take a week's vacation....

Total income of Indian Americans in 2015 according to the American Community Survey, was \$165 billion. This is bigger than the state domestic product of Kansas of \$149 billion — and eight other states. Indian American business sales volume is almost double that amount according to the Survey of Business Owners, 2012. The health care system will collapse, as highly skilled doctors and surgeons will not be around and the internet system might just go silent with many corporate giants hit by the lack of tech support and expertise.

But what is not so easily quantifiable is the decline in trust in Brand America, and with that breakdown in trust, everything in the economy is going to get more expensive and difficult. America could lose the economic premium it receives being the top economic destination of choice for people all over the world. The local Indian American community gathered recently to denounce hate crimes in any form and offered in solidarity to build up Brand America. **■**



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

**17 NEON THINKING ABOUT BUSINESS WORKSHOP**  
**JUNE 17, 2017, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**  
**NORTHSIDE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY NETWORK, MINNEAPOLIS**  
*eventbrite.com*

Join the Northside Economic Opportunity Network for a morning workshop geared toward new entrepreneurs. Learn about considerations before going into business, and receive guidance with building an Action Plan to transition to being a business owner.

**19 NATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2017**  
**JUNE 19, 2017, 10:00 AM – JUNE 22, 12:00 PM**  
**GRAND CASINO HINCKLEY**  
*leadershipdevcon.com*

The theme for the 2nd Annual National Leadership Development Conference is "Discover Your Potential—Embrace Your Leadership Legacy." Join other executives and business leaders for a series of speakers and workshops focusing on developing your potential as a leader. Specific topics include transforming workplace culture, communication strategies, work/life balance, and other related leadership topics.

**20 OMNISHOPPER USA – THE NEXT GENERATION OF RETAIL**  
**JUNE 20, 2017, 8:00 AM – JUNE 22, 3:15 PM**  
**HYATT REGENCY MINNEAPOLIS**  
*marketing.knect365.com/omnishopper*

This three-day conference focuses on the future of retail in a world of both digital and physical shopping. Hear speakers from retail giants such as Amazon, Best Buy, and Walmart share their strategies to create a seamless shopping experience. Other speakers include consumer goods manufacturers, retailers and other thought leaders.

**23 2017 MNSEARCH SUMMIT**  
**JUNE 23, 2017, 7:30 AM—6:30 PM**  
**ST. PAUL RIVERCENTRE**  
*mnsearch.org/summit*

Hosted by the Minnesota Search Engine Marketing Association, this full-day conference invites business and marketing professionals to spend a day learning from speakers and industry leaders, including Krista Seiden, Analytics Advocate at Google. Topics covered include SEO, email, video, social media and more.

**STARTERS**



## PROPOSED MIXED-USED PROJECT FOR RONDO

### Housing and small businesses could revive legacy of thriving African American neighborhood **BY BRUCE CORRIE**

Major economic development projects have eluded the low-income section of Selby Avenue between Dale and Lexington in Saint Paul. This might change if an innovative partnership led by the Rondo Community Land Trust bears fruit. It could expand the concept of a land trust to commercial real estate development — the Selby-Milton-Victoria Housing and Commercial Land Trust.

Here is how the challenge has been framed by Greg Finzell and Mychael Wright, who are with the Rondo Land Trust.

- We have a low income area that needs economic revitalization. Previous efforts to revitalize the area have not worked out.
- The preferred mode for development is to build on assets of the African American presence in this historical Rondo neighborhood.
- Small development projects have a hard time coming off the ground with adequate capital; so, to be successful, there has to be a housing-themed public-private partnership with some gap financing and space for minority businesses.
- The lack of economic development in the area suggests that commercial lease rates

have to be below-market to support minority-business development and growth.

- There is a need for affordable senior rental housing in the neighborhood, particularly the need for senior housing rooted in the local culture and community.

The core partners in the project are the Rondo Land Trust and the Community Housing Development Corporation. The service partners are Neighborhood Network for Seniors and Neighborhood Development Center.

Two mixed-use development projects will have 34 housing units combined with an affordable 9,200 square feet of leasing space for minority businesses. Three of the units will be work-living apartments where an entrepreneur can work and live in the same space.

A creative financing package for the \$10 million dollar project will involve tax credits and funding from public sources. Grants from foundations and other resources will help to keep the commercial lease spaces affordable.

#### **Is this project worth it?**

Let's take the example of Golden Thyme on Selby Avenue and pose the question: What if it

did not exist at the corner of Milton and Selby? For many years, it has served as a social and economic anchor for the African American community. It is a local culturally-themed business that is a community space for neighbors as well as people seeking a unique African American experience. As an economic anchor it has served to support and grow the economic base in the area.

Golden Thyme has also engaged in another activity that helps illustrate the economic potential of a culturally themed business. Every year the Selby Jazz Fest brings more than 10,000 people to that commercial node. People come for the unique cultural experience.

The experience of Golden Thyme illustrates that there is economic need and potential in the area for a culturally themed development concept. Connected to other projects in the Rondo Neighborhood it could well spur much needed economic revitalization in the area. ■



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.



# Progress is possible.

We work hard every day to help people and growing businesses make financial progress. It's at the heart of what we do, whether you're our customer or just getting to know us. [Ready to get started?](#)

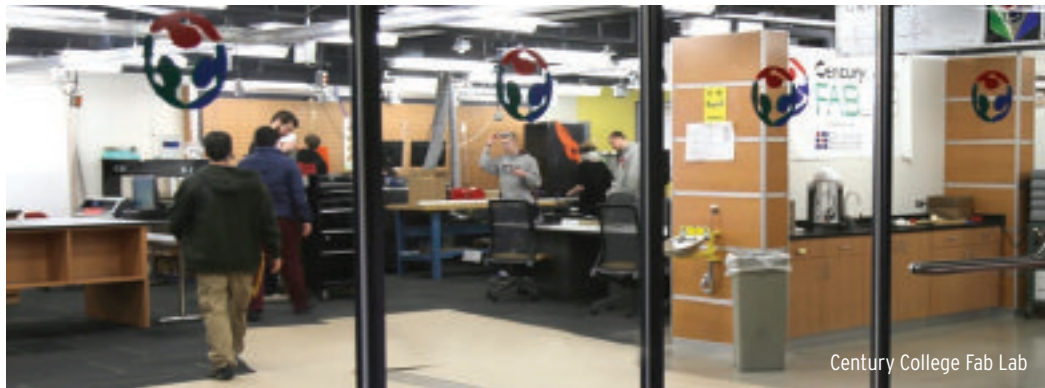


**John Hoffman, CLF**  
Regional Managing Director  
11100 Wayzata Blvd, STE 405  
Minnetonka, MN 55305  
(952) 277-4300  
[hoffman.john@principal.com](mailto:hoffman.john@principal.com)

©2017 Principal Financial Services, Inc. Principal, Principal and symbol design and Principal Financial Group are registered trademarks and service marks of Principal Financial Services, Inc., a Principal Financial Group company. Insurance products issued by Principal National Life Insurance Co. (except in NY), Principal Life Insurance Co. Securities and advisory products offered through Principal Securities, Inc., 800/247-1737, member SIPC. Principal National, Principal Life, and Principal Securities, Inc. are members of Principal Financial Group®, Des Moines, IA 50392. AD3247 | t160728008s

## STARTERS

### CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS



Century College Fab Lab

# PROSTHETICS INNOVATION

## Century College and collaborators using 3D printing to develop devices to serve the disabled

BY BRUCE CORRIE

The other day, Senator John Hoffman called me with a question: Can 3D printing technology improve mobility options for the disabled? He had heard about the innovative partnership between Concordia University and Century College around undergraduate and graduate degrees in prosthetics and orthotics (external devices that provide bodily support), and he wanted to brainstorm with faculty about the idea.

Senator Hoffman's work is inspired by his daughter, Hope Hoffman, who is doing innovative work in two areas — how we talk about people with disabilities and new technologies to improve mobility options for them, including the ability to wear heels. *Awesome* and *inspiring* are two words to describe Hope Hoffman.

That conversation took us to a meeting at a new locus on innovation at Century College, which is doing industry-leading work in orthotics and prosthetics. This effort fuses robotics and technologies in Century's digital fabrication laboratory. Currently, a global team of students, faculty and practitioners are doing cutting-edge work to improve mobility options for the disabled using 3D printing technology as well as digital manufacturing technologies.

It was inspiring to see a 3D printer built by a student from Ghana who studied at Century, the new robotic arm used in the program, the digital fab-lab, as well as the pioneering work of faculty instructors Stan O'Connor, Chad Smith and Scott Simenson. Right in the heart of the metro area some industry- and life-changing work is going on!

Minnesota is a leader in the revolutionary world of 3D printing, thanks to the pioneering

work of a Minnesotan, Scott Crump of Stratasys Ltd. What we discovered at Century College is the need to take this technology to the next level, fusing new areas such as laser and digital technologies in order to develop mobility devices that are thin, strong and can be customized to the individual needs of people.

The good news is we can get there! So the team from Century College and Concordia University are putting their thinking caps on, while Senator Hoffman begins policy conversations at different levels and Hope Hoffman continues her innovative quest to provide practical guidance along the way.

The area of Orthotics and Prosthetics 3.0 — the new field being carved out in Minnesota — will require the collaboration of graphic artists, engineers, academics and practitioners to be successful. Dr. Katie Fischer, Interim Dean, College of Health and Science at Concordia University, and Dr. Peter Rundquist, chair of the doctoral program in Physical Therapy, are ready to involve graduate and doctoral students in evidence-based research to improve prototypes coming out of this effort.

In the process, Minnesota may well become the industry leader in this new area, and manufacturing clusters will evolve around 3D printing and digital manufacturing. But most importantly, mobility options and capabilities of people with physical disabilities would dramatically improve.



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS



Amina Deble

■ **AMINA DEBLE**, owner of East Village Grill in Minneapolis (pictured), is more than a successful restaurateur; she is also a global business leader through her involvement with the Somali Chamber of Commerce in Somalia, where she chairs the livestock sector, and is also representative of the chamber in the US. Visiting dignitaries often stop by her restaurant. She supports various community initiatives, including the new Somali Museum in Minneapolis, and works hard to build the Somali community in Minnesota and Somalia.

■ **ODEH MUHAWESH**, with roots in Jordan, repeatedly shakes up the software industry with valuable products and companies others want to own. His latest venture is, Truscribe, is a market leader in animated whiteboard videos. Political and other leaders often seek his advice. He is an adjunct professor at the University of Saint Thomas where he engages in inter-faith dialogue. His latest book attempts to bridge Christianity and Islam.

■ **SIAD ALI** is fluent in three languages, and that makes him an excellent outreach specialist for Senator Klobuchar. His studies across several countries and his workforce placement experience inspires his work on the Minneapolis School Board. He wants to build a world-class workforce in Minnesota, where ground zero is a highly engaged learning environment that works for all students.



■ **MUKHTAR THAKUR**, an engineer and core player in the construction of the Blue Line, also brings the sounds of Bollywood through Sangam Radio for decades and more recently Geetmala TV and Diversity in Focus on TPT. With roots in Africa and Asia, he often reflects on the experience of Uganda where Asian professionals and entrepreneurs were forced to leave their country overnight. That misplaced policy had a huge negative impact on the Ugandan economy as a critical number of entrepreneurs and professionals left the country for America, UK and Canada, whose economies benefited from their talents and resources. His core message to Minnesota — continue to be open and welcoming — that is your core competitive advantage.

■ **MNAR MUHAWESH** was born in Minnesota in a family with roots in the Palestinian Authority. As a girl, her family moved for a few years back to the Middle East. While living in the West Bank, she experienced the harsh toll of war on children. It scarred her but also gave her a vision. How can she illustrate the talent, energy, creativity and compassion of women who wear the hijab? Being the first TV News anchor wearing the hijab was one way she showed the world. She also founded Mint Press News, a space for news unbridled by special interests and a forum for the voiceless.



## MEET A FEW AMERICAN BUSINESS PEOPLE... ...who happen to be Muslim

BY BRUCE CORRIE

I invited Hassen Hussein, the director of business development at African Economic Development Solutions, to share his insights as part of the Muslim Journeys series at Concordia University. He is an American poet, scholar, writer and business professional. I got the sense I was putting him into a narrow box when he commented that he was a bit surprised to be asked to speak on his personal faith, which was just one dimension of who he was.

I have met many people in Minnesota whose personal faith is Islam, but who love America the Beautiful and work hard every day to build America and Minnesota. Here are some examples from various sectors: software, workforce, media, professional services, food and global trade.



BRUCE CORRIE, PHD, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS

# WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FROM FARM TO FABRICS AND BEYOND

BY BRUCE CORRIE

## Hmong American Farmers Association

Pakou Hang has an infectious enthusiasm that engulfs you seconds after you meet her. The other day I met her for coffee and now



Pakou Hang

I want to become a farmer! She took the opportunity of a Bush Fellowship to take the experience of Hmong farmers to a unique space in Minnesota. Building on a cultural affinity with farming among Hmong Americans, she co-founded the Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA), located

on a 155-acre farm in Dakota County. I am intrigued with the farm-to-fork, whole food model that HAFA is developing to help create efficiency, productivity and economic wealth. This includes entrepreneurial and agricultural training, production, marketing and distribution through community networks. HAFA has adapted the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model where a person can invest in a farm in return for an agreed-upon supply of vegetables. In many ways Pakou has a forward-looking vision, because as HAFA develops its model, the market for locally grown food is exploding. As Minnesota is becoming more diverse, its food supply is also becoming more diverse, with new vegetables common in Southeast Asia now reaching our dining table. The young girl who started life picking cucumbers for Gedney is now the visionary bringing customized fresh local produce into our homes. [hmongfarmers.com](http://hmongfarmers.com)



Tsegereda Cherinat

## Mena Market

I often stop by Samson Custom Upholstery in the Little Africa district in St. Paul to talk with Samson Zeleke about his ideas about growing his business, and while there I would see Tsegereda Cherinat working hard sewing various pieces for Samson's business. One day I began to see a lot of very colorful Ethiopian clothes in the shop. I asked Tsegereda about the dresses, and she told me she had formally launched her own small business. Samson Upholstery in effect has become a mini business incubator. With a unique relationship with Samson, she stores her garments at his shop and when people want a traditional outfit for a cultural event she takes them to the basement of the shop where they can pick the best outfit. She imports these outfits from Ethiopia. She also combines the sales of these outfits with offering clothes alteration services. She named her business Mena Market after her daughter. Working two jobs and running a small business is both inspirational as well as entrepreneurial! [facebook.com/MenaMarketMN](https://facebook.com/MenaMarketMN)



Lisa Tabor

## Culture Brokers

Lisa Tabor is one of Minnesota's earliest pioneers in the concept of creative placemaking in minority communities. I was inspired by her concept of the African American Cultural Corridor. Before Minnesota developed the concept of a social benefit corporation, she was doing it with her business, Culture Brokers LLC and the Culture Brokers Foundation, a nonprofit attached to the business. Her business helps bring cultural intelligence and relationships to organizations. One thing that always stands out is the way she builds others up as she builds her own business, whether it is offering free service to a nonprofit or employing youth as paid interns. She is also working hard to create intercultural cities in Minnesota. In the European tradition, these are cities that operate at a high level of cultural intelligence and capacity. [culturebrokers.com](http://culturebrokers.com)



BRUCE CORRIE, PHD, blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

## THREE BUSINESSES ROOTED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

BY CRISTINA CORRIE, GUEST WRITER

Over the summer, I was blessed with an internship at the Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) in St. Paul, where I helped document the vibrancy of NDC-supported entrepreneurs in their neighborhoods. As a college student studying business, I was inspired by how these entrepreneurs engaged in creative placemaking.



■ Inspired by her mother, a street vendor in the refugee camp she grew up in, Becky Xiong started her own business. **PAJAI FRUIT ARRANGEMENTS AND BAKERY** produces beautiful custom fruit carvings, caters traditional Hmong meals and creates a variety of desserts — a perfect trio for any special event. Xiong’s specialty is fruit carvings, which she was inspired to make through her work with mental health patients, who found these fruit carvings therapeutic. Throughout the next six years, she continued to make beautiful carved fruit arrangements for special events. She began by working in her own kitchen — but the demand soon outgrew her space. With help from the Neighborhood Development Center, Becky secured a loan to invest in a storefront that has the space to create her carved fruit arrangements, while also serving as a retail outlet to sell fresh desserts and fruit Boba to customers walking down University Avenue in St. Paul. [pajaiarrangement.com](http://pajaiarrangement.com)



■ **AWASH MARKET** adds to the rich kaleidoscope of ethnic malls in Minnesota — this one focusing on the Oromo community. Walking through Awash Market, you are immediately greeted by a host of traditional East African food such as Injera and fresh cuts of goat and lamb. Mubarek Lolo converted an abandoned corner of a decaying mall into a vibrant hub of community activity. Community members attending the nearby Towhid Mosque are his steady customers and he gives back to the community by supporting community activities, hiring from the community and providing space to incubate their business ideas. The organic coffee shop in Awash Market has also become a gathering place for members of the Oromo community, who use this space to socialize and discuss their shared experiences. [awash-market.squarespace.com](http://awash-market.squarespace.com)



■ Driven by the desire to reintroduce home-cooked and high quality soul food while still being health-conscious, Kathleen Johnson and her two daughters, Kelli Johnson and Ordia Drew, founded **WHOLESOUL: A LAVENDER AND SAGE EATERY**. This family-owned business travels through local communities serving dishes like “Wings That’ll Make You Sing” and “Phat Bellie Hammie Sammies” to customers at festivals, parties and street corners across the Twin Cities. Faced with the problem of having to load and unoad a tent every time they catered an event, WholeSoul partnered with NDC and the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce to purchase a mobile kitchen, which kick-started their growth. Named the official cooks of the “Paisley Park After-Dark series” and one of the Star Tribune’s “Top Food Truck Picks,” Kathleen, Kelli and Ordia plan to continue on this upward trajectory while bringing the community together through real, authentic and delicious soul food. [wholesouleatery.com](http://wholesouleatery.com)



**CRISTINA CORRIE** is studying business at Babson College, Massachusetts.



## INFORMATIONAL SESSION FOR ENTREPRENEURS

February 10 & 23, 2016, 11:30 AM & 6:00 PM respectively

2021 E Hennepin Ave,  
Minneapolis

[womenventure.org/events](http://womenventure.org/events)

WomenVenture offers a variety of different services to those planning to start or expand a for-profit business.



## 148TH ANNUAL MEETING (PRESENTED BY XCEL ENERGY)

February 11, 2016 5:00 – 9:00 PM

InterContinental Saint Paul  
Riverfront

[web.saintpaulchamber.com/events](http://web.saintpaulchamber.com/events)

Join colleagues and friends from the Saint Paul and East Metro business community and hear from Garrison Keillor. This is the Chamber's premier annual event, attracting many of the council's members, city officials, and community leaders.



## FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING: MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

February 16, 2016, 7:00 – 9:00 AM

Doubletree Park Place, 1500 Park Place, Mpls,  
55416

[feitwincities.com/events/event](http://feitwincities.com/events/event)

The February monthly meeting is a joint event with NACD and will feature Russ Meyer, CFO of White Castle Systems, and moderator Allen Bettis.



## STUDENT ADVERTISING SUMMIT

February 26, 2016, 7:30 AM – 6:00 PM

McNamara Alumni Center, U of M  
[ad2sas.org](http://ad2sas.org)

This day-long networking event for students and young professionals provides opportunities for attendees to connect with industry heroes and learn about advertising, marketing, and public relations.



## CHAI NEWS & VIEWS

### A FEW OUTSTANDING WOMEN

[This new monthly column features items from Bruce Corrie, PhD, who blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University. –Ed.]

BY BRUCE CORRIE

I have been inspired in recent days in the work of these outstanding community leaders who are not only trying to grow their business ventures, but are also actively building the community.

**LEA HARGETT**, small business owner and president of the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce, made a compelling case for growing Black-owned businesses in Minnesota at the recent annual meeting of the chamber. Reflecting on recent Census data that documents declining economic assets in the Black community, Lea made a strong case why investing in Black-owned businesses, especially micro-businesses, is a very effective strategy for economic development. Latest data from the Survey of Business Owners show Black-owned businesses creating jobs and growing in numbers, sales and payroll faster than non-minority-owned firms. Lea is usually the first person to support collaborative efforts focused on policy issues and has been working hard to build the chamber over the past few years. She constantly advocates for policies and strategies to grow minority-owned businesses in the state, especially in the professional services area.

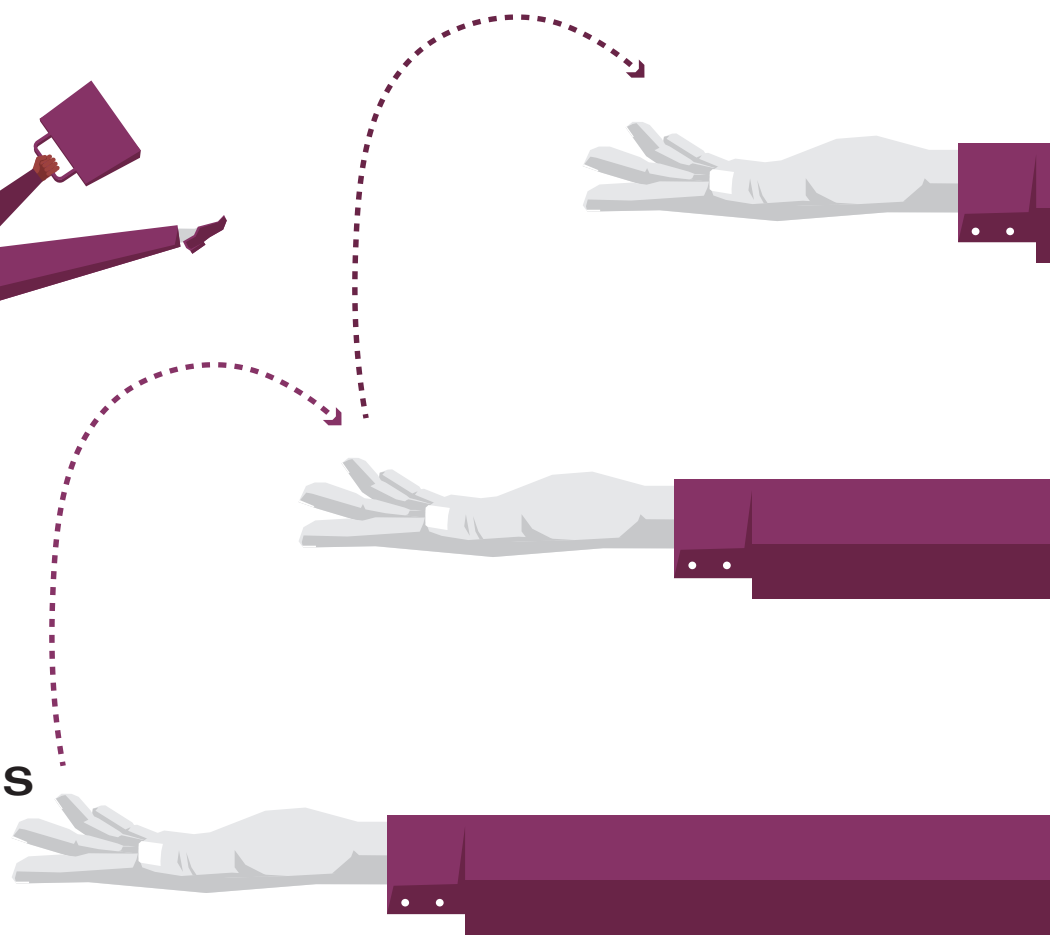


**BOTHAO** owns small business RedGreen Rivers LLC, which connects female artisans in Laos to markets in the United States. Her business was very popular among visitors to the recent Little Mekong Night Market in Saint Paul. When she is not growing her business she is active building the new network, Coalition of Asian American Leaders or her work with the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in philanthropy. Recently, President Obama appointed her to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, a national board to help integrate the talents and needs of the Asian American community in federal agencies. She is one of the few people in Minnesota with the honor of having the same day named after her both for Minnesota and Saint Paul.

**PAMELA STANDING**, founding member of the Minnesota Indian Business Alliance, is also a small business owner, making specialty jams and other delicious treats. The Jalapeño jam she gave me had me buzzing around like a bumblebee for a few days! For years I have watched her persistently work to create a broad collaborative and network around Native American economic development. Recently she did some pioneering work connected with the implementation of the Buy Indian Act which, although established in 1910, is yet to be fully implemented. Recent data from the 2012 Survey of Business Owners, found Native American businesses growing faster in sales, numbers and job creation than non-minority firms. Effective strategies to grow these businesses will benefit all. Pamela and the Minnesota Indian Business Alliance have been hosting world cafes all across Minnesota to get the input of the community on how best to grow Native businesses.



**HYON KIM**, small business owner and entrepreneur focused her energy and money in recent months on a very tragic situation — the plight of refugees from North Korea, many of them female, who undergo great hardships and abuse as they search for freedom. The United States has accepted only a very small number of these refugees and so her international conference at the Humphrey School aimed to bring visibility to this issue. With an active group of volunteers this conference was successful.



**CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS**

# 9 WAYS TO SOLVE MINNESOTA'S MINORITY BUSINESS PARADOX

BY BRUCE CORRIE

Newly released data from the 2012 Survey of Business Owners reveals a paradox: Minority firms are growing in numbers faster than other firms, yet their sales have been a flat 1% for over a decade. What can we do about this?

According to the survey, there were over 47,000 minority firms with almost \$8 billion in sales in 2012. One can easily see the transformation of inner city neighborhoods by minority businesses, whether on University Avenue, Lake Street or Brooklyn Boulevard. Minority businesses are also an important engine for economic growth in rural Minnesota. Minority business presence can be found in two thirds of counties and 166 cities in Minnesota. There is a very strong entrepreneurial energy in minority communities. While the growth in non-minority firms declined by 3%, minority businesses increased by 52%. Minority businesses are creating jobs, especially in their own communities and neighborhoods. Minority firms as a group employed 58,765 people.

Minnesota's challenge will be to grow the pipeline from startups to large companies. A recent study on African immigrant entrepreneurs revealed the kind of assistance needed are tools to grow and market their businesses. Minority firms as a whole are smaller than non-minority firms with average sales being \$165,000 as compared to \$557,000

for non-minority firms. We need to continue to build capacity in these areas:

1. Expand ethnic specific technical assistance and training as pioneered by NDC (Neighborhood Development Center)
2. Expand mentoring and business growth programs such as those delivered by MEDA (Metropolitan Economic Development Corporation)
3. Develop stronger supplier channels to large and small corporations such as the work of NCMSDC (North Central Minority Development Council)
4. Create financial tools for growing companies such as alternative loan funds and equity crowdfunding tools like MNVEST, which allow businesses to sell securities online to Minnesotans
5. Implement fully MN state statute 16C calling for greater utilization of small and minority businesses in state spending
6. Allocate 0.5% of all state transportation project dollars to build capacity of small businesses and communities impacted by these projects

7. Support the new economic development strategy using cultural assets to grow ethnic businesses such as Little Mekong and Little Africa
8. Connect minority entrepreneurs in rural Minnesota to resources and the deliver these resources in culturally intelligent ways
9. Incorporate cultural intelligence into policies and programs serving small businesses to make them more accessible

Minority business development is one of the most effective and powerful strategies for economic development. Let's keep this engine of economic growth humming in Minnesota.

For more information and a report on a recent forum on this topic see recent articles in *Chai.News*.



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD** blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

**NEXT MONTH**

**1ST TUESDAY SPEAKER SERIES**

April 5th, 2016, 11:30 AM  
McNamara Alumni Center,  
Minneapolis



[carlsonschool.umn.edu](http://carlsonschool.umn.edu)

The 1st Tuesday Speaker Series features top executives addressing hot topics in business and leadership. The program attracts alumni and business leaders from the corporate community, and has become an attractive spot for professionals in the metropolitan area to network. James "Jim" Prokopanko served as president and CEO of The Mosaic Company for eight years before retiring in August 2015. He remained as senior adviser through January this year and will be April's keynote speaker.



**INVESTOR CONNECTION EVENT**

April 19 2016, 3:30 – 6:30 PM  
Minneapolis Club



[thenetworkconnect.com/tnc-events](http://thenetworkconnect.com/tnc-events)

This event allows investors to connect with business opportunities and for investors to meet other like-minded investors. Appetizers will be provided and a cash bar will be available. Typically reserved for investors and invitation-only businesses, ICE is open for business networking. If you're a business owner, entrepreneur, C-level or senior business person, you are invited to join in and network!

**2016 SPRING CONFERENCE**

April 21, 2016, 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM  
Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis



[mhta.org/event/spring](http://mhta.org/event/spring)

One of the science and technology community's must-attend conferences. Save the date to join in at the Guthrie Theater for a full-day agenda featuring industry thought leaders and sessions focused on today's top technology trends. Do not miss the opportunity to connect with other science and technology professionals at this must-attend event.

**CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS**

**THE 5 DIMENSIONS OF CULTURALLY INTELLIGENT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

**BY BRUCE CORRIE**

Sabrina's is a new café at the corner of Snelling and University avenues in Saint Paul, located in an area being branded as Little Africa — a destination where people can experience African food, music and culture. Recently I enjoyed drinking traditional Ethiopian coffee and chatted with the owner, Karima Omer and Gene Gelgelu, the visionary behind Little Africa, about ways to help small businesses like Sabrina's Café grow and expand.

Below are the five elements of an effective small or micro business development strategy to help entrepreneurs like Karima to be successful.

**1. GIVE A FISH**

This refers to grants and programs that are awarded to businesses to start up or expand. These programs are in the tool kit of state and local development agencies.



**2. TEACH HOW TO FISH**

These are programs such as technical assistance and business plan and business development assistance offered to entrepreneurs either free or for a fee.



**3. PROVIDE A SPACE TO FISH**

This refers to the breaking down of barriers preventing business success or formation.



**4. INVENT A NEW FISH**

This refers to institutions and opportunities for creative innovation such as business incubators or maker labs.



**5. TRANSFORM THE FISHING INDUSTRY**

This refers to a business climate and infrastructure that allows and supports innovative transformation of the industry, such as the movement from a typewriter to the laptop.



**CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE**

This refers to the cultural skills of people and processes in the system to understand differences within the system and allow entrepreneurs from diverse cultural backgrounds to be successful.



My quick evaluation of the business development infrastructure in Minnesota is that if focuses mainly on the first two categories listed above especially as it relates to ALANA (African Latino Asian and Native American) businesses. And even these programs are not effectively reaching ALANA entrepreneurs and largely operate with low cultural intelligence.

Gene, Sabrina's Café, and the Little Africa model, I am glad to say, operates at a high level of cultural intelligence. The challenge of creating Little Africa straddled multiple areas: providing a space to fish (a new cultural business district); inventing a new fish (culture-themed businesses); and transforming the fishing industry (through a virtual network). Gene and a group of community leaders have been working hard on this challenge — can we grow and connect African immigrant entrepreneurs dispersed all across the state through an African themed concept?

The vision is slowly emerging (see businesses listed on [littleafricamn.org](http://littleafricamn.org)) — but could it have been done faster with a flexible, dynamic and culturally intelligent environment in Minnesota? I am looking forward to seeing new varieties of fish in Little Africa and Minnesota! In the meantime, try the traditional Ethiopian coffee at Sabrina's some time.



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS

**5 ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEYS**

BY BRUCE CORRIE

Recently, I met five entrepreneurs from various backgrounds that help illustrate the many entry points that begin the journey to a successful business.



**RAMA PRASAD** transitioned from the corporate world and is exploring a new business idea. It is in early stage development in the wearable technology sector. She is very close to launching her idea and all I can say at this time about her product — Wow! It was nice to see Rama able to connect with resources and mentors to help bring her idea to fruition — however she realizes that the local start-up ecosystem is not as good as the San Francisco area.



At the launch of the George Latimer Library in St. Paul, **OCEAN C. POET** talked about the difficulty for a disabled and transgender graphic artist entrepreneur to launch a business. I offered to introduce Ocean to some business resources like African Economic Development Solutions. Ocean's test of our business infrastructure revealed that it may not be accessible to all. [oceancpoetstore.wordpress.com](http://oceancpoetstore.wordpress.com)

**CONNIE SHEEHAN**

thought about launching a fitness training business for a while. Connie envisioned it to be more than just a business, more of a social enterprise that merged fitness training for women with spiritual and cultural wholeness rooted in African American spirituality. I introduced her to a young and innovative entrepreneur, Dalton Outlaw, owner of Element Boxing and Fitness in St. Paul and they struck a deal. She leases space at Element Boxing, a perfect way to incubate and grow her business, PUSH Fitness. Saint Paul's newest business — Welcome! [pushfitnessforyou.com](http://pushfitnessforyou.com)



Teenagers **CRISTINA CORRIE** (my daughter!) and **MOLLY RATHS** launched iPerform Theatre Company seven years ago. It is a business which offers summer theatre camps for and by neighborhood youth. Because both Molly and Cristina have started college out of state, they created an intern program to teach kids business and theatre skills. Interns turned co-presidents Sean Corrie and Frankie Buettnier and executive team members Jackson Humes and Megan Raths are helping to gear up for the new season. Time to sign your kids up for this fun theatre camp weekday nights from July 5th-29th! [iperformtheatre.com](http://iperformtheatre.com)

There is a transition of ownership of family farms with the aging of family farm owners in Minnesota. Recently, Agua Gorda Cooperative in Long Prairie secured a loan from the Latino Economic Development Center to purchase a farm in Todd County. The 54-acre farm will be used to grow several crops, including tomatillo, brussels sprouts, honey dew, summer squash,

watermelon, melon and hot peppers. "It is great to be able to connect the enthusiastic Latino farmer with a farmer who is moving on but at the same time wants to make sure the farm passes on to good hands," says Mario Hernandez of LEDC. [sharedgroundcoop.com/farms/agua-gorda](http://sharedgroundcoop.com/farms/agua-gorda)



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at *chai.news* and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.



**MINNOVATION**

With super-companies like General Mills and Target headquartered in Minnesota it should come as no surprise that Minnesota is one of the most innovative states in the country (according to a Bloomberg ranking from 2016). Founder of Replace and Hamilton Ink Spot Jeff Johnson set out to show the world just how talented Minnesota is through a book of posters and stories celebrating all of these inventions. Johnson calls it his "love letter to Minnesota" because of his belief that these innovations couldn't have come from anywhere but here. The first volume is available now on Amazon or at [mninvents.com](http://mninvents.com).



PROVIDED PHOTOS

## NEWS & VIEWS OF MINNESOTA'S DIVERSE ECONOMY

**KOU VANG** is a pioneering entrepreneur in the Hmong community. His latest venture is expanding the reach of the newly launched health care digital personal assistant app from Nutraspace LLC, to Southeast Asia where he sees a lot of potential. He is dreaming big and wants to be the Ali Baba of the health care sector in Southeast Asia and is currently exploring local investors. With the recent attention of the power of “bots” it is good to see local entrepreneurs thinking ahead.



Joel Brown

**JOEL BROWN** used to listen to stories of his Dad's experience as an African-American soldier in World War II. His father, Johnny L. Brown, was in the 28th Quartermaster Battalion fighting in Europe. This inspired Joel

to launch a business to educate people about the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II, who were a group of African-American pilots of fighters and bombers. The Tuskegee Airmen fought for the freedom of the world while experiencing segregation within both the military and civil society. Joel's other passion/business is teaching Afro/Cuban drums. Often one can see him play the drums as the Cameroonian choir sings at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church in St. Paul. He was inspired to play the drums after experiencing the music of his uncle, Willie Brown, who used to play in a band with the father of the legendary artist, Prince. [tuskegeeairmenreenactor.com](http://tuskegeeairmenreenactor.com)

**MINNESOTA ENTREPRENEURS FROM INDIA:** It is tough to argue that immigrants are a drain on the economy when one sees the many contributions of immigrants from India on display at a special Smithsonian Institution exhibit at the Minnesota History Center through July 10, 2016. Various dimensions of the internet have benefited from immigrants from India. For example, the co-founder of Hotmail, the first provider of “free email” service, was Sabeer Bhatia. Second generation Indians are also building America in many ways — Premal Shah, who has roots in Minnesota, is a co-founder of Kiva, a popular global vehicle for microfinance. The president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Neal Kashkari, has Indian roots. A pioneer in the field of probiotics, Dr. S. K. Dash, is a Minnesotan who is using his business success to invest in communities in India and the U.S. and is a major sponsor of the exhibit.



Samson Zeleke

**SAMSON ZELEKE** is an immigrant from Ethiopia who owns a small upholstery business in the Little Africa area of Saint Paul. He specializes in a niche area — affordable boat, car and furniture upholstery. Since the upholstery training programs at the community colleges all closed down he has a tough time finding trained people who could help him grow his business. So he is caught in a growth trap — he needs affordable and patient capital (with long horizons for returns) and trained workers but cannot find either. His business has the potential to expand rapidly, judging from the customers knocking on his door just by word-of-mouth. At the same time he has a good heart and has hired former felons and has tried to work with them to succeed in breaking from the chains of the past. His business is also an incubator for another small sewing business. I do hope one of these days the stars align for him to reach the next level.



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

**NEXT MONTH**

**HOW TO LEVERAGE PR FOR YOUR NONPROFIT**

September 16, 2016, 7:45 – 9:45 AM



Impact Hub MSP, Minneapolis

[jabberlogic.com/courses](http://jabberlogic.com/courses)

Jabber Logic and Impact Hub MSP have teamed up to support social innovation for Minneapolis and St. Paul entrepreneurs. This class will teach nonprofits how to successfully navigate press releases and make the most out of the collaboration with the media.



**GLOBAL TRADE EDUCATION LUNCH**

September 20, 2016, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM



Cooper Irish Pub, St. Louis Park

[mgta.org/events](http://mgta.org/events)

Join the Midwest Global Trade Association for an educational lunch that will provide information on the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act. Learn how the new regulations will impact your business.

**THE WIN CONFERENCE – 2016 STEPPING UP**

September 21, 2016, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM



The Golden Valley Country Club, Golden Valley

[mnwin.memberzone.com/events](http://mnwin.memberzone.com/events)

Sign up for a full day of networking and developing your brand. Women in Networking (WIN) events allow you to make sincere connections with your peers and listen to speakers that motivate and inspire.

**CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS**

**CHAI NEWS & VIEWS**

**Ethnic malls serve as business accelerators and community builders:**

■ Ker Lor of KL Clothing in Hmong Village started her business five years ago with a small stall in Hmong Village in St. Paul. Now this young entrepreneur owns three stalls selling popular clothing. My wife thought she struck a gold mine after visiting that store! [hmongvillage-shoppingcenter.com](http://hmongvillage-shoppingcenter.com)

■ PaSee Yang and his wife, Kay Yang, incubated in Hmong Village for about a year, tested the market and then launched Hmong House, a full-service restaurant and community banquet and meeting center filling a unique niche market. PaSee is also the Board Chair of the Hmong Chamber of Commerce, working hard to build up Hmong-owned businesses. [facebook.com/HmongHouse](http://facebook.com/HmongHouse)

■ Enrique Garcia Salazar and his wife Noelia Urzua launched La Loma, a tamale restaurant, at the Mercado Central and now he has six locations for his popular business. Their products are also in area grocery stores. They are very connected to their community and sponsor educational scholarships and the annual golf tournament for the Latino Economic Development Center. [laloma.com](http://laloma.com)

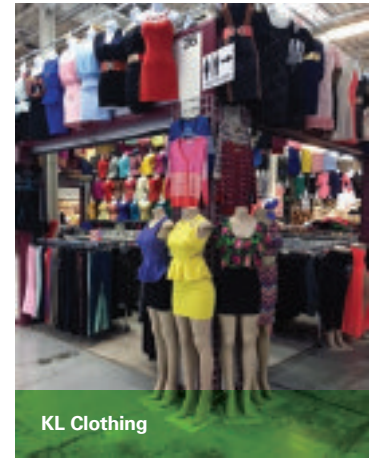
**Young entrepreneur department:**

■ Dalton Outlaw, owner of Element Boxing and Fitness, has a unique business model — a core boxing business which also incubates other fitness start-ups. Now he is thinking bigger — a multi-sports fitness complex. I just saw the plans to develop the Midway area in St. Paul around the new United soccer stadium. I noticed they included a fitness facility. I hope they have Dalton in mind! [elementboxingandfitness.com](http://elementboxingandfitness.com)

■ The other entrepreneurial youth on my mind is my 19-year-old Cristina, who has just launched an internship program in her business iPerform Theatre (with friend Molly Rath) where 14 youth are being trained in business, management and leadership. It was so cool to see all of them in our basement hard at work the other day learning about Marketing 101 and elevator sales pitches. I particularly liked the air of self-confidence many of the interns displayed as they walked into the room. If only we could multiply that experience a hundred times across Minnesota! [iperformtheatre.com](http://iperformtheatre.com)

**Executive action needed on minority workforce development**

■ A lot of attention has been focused on Minnesota's looming worker shortage and how the minority and immigrant communities are increasingly filling those labor gaps. I did some analysis of the data and it was heartening to see the legislature and Governor Dayton make some progress in investing in minority business and workforce development. They took a broad-based and medium-term approach. However, executive action is needed to ensure that these programs and policies include the diversity between and within the minority communities and include smaller organizations. More on that on Chai.News. [chai.news/2016/06/did-the-legislature-get-equity-right-in-2016-an-analysis](http://chai.news/2016/06/did-the-legislature-get-equity-right-in-2016-an-analysis)



KL Clothing



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.



## FROM PLATE TO PRINT

BY KILEY PETERSEN

While planning a party, many hosts wish they had the resources to hire cooks or caterers to take over the kitchen, especially if the hosts aren't too savvy in the kitchen. Minneapolis-based Chowgirls Killer Catering has the answer: its cookbook, *Chowgirls Killer Party Food: Righteous Bites and Cocktails for Every Season* will be published this October through Arsenal Pulp Press. The recipes showcase Chowgirls' signature mix of healthy local and vegetarian or vegan-friendly fare, and include several cocktails to pair with the dishes. Despite Chowgirls' immense success in catering, this is co-owners Heidi Andermack's and Amy Lynn Brown's first venture into retail, with the goal of creating a series of cookbooks.

Learn more at [chowgirls.net](http://chowgirls.net).

### CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS

## CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS

BY BRUCE CORRIE

I recently had lunch at the newly opened Los Ocampo restaurant in the Frogtown area of Saint Paul with Mike Temali, CEO and founder of the Neighborhood Development Center (NDC). Mike is well known for creating a unique economic space around neighborhood-based entrepreneurship. With the Wilder Foundation, NDC is able to document the many economic roles neighborhood entrepreneurs play, such as hiring and buying locally, and serving as role models and community builders. Now he is taking this model national, working with communities to replicate the NDC model in other cities. [ndc-mn.org/ndc-staff](http://ndc-mn.org/ndc-staff)

Mike introduced me to the young co-owner of Los Ocampo, **Julian Ocampo**, a recent graduate from the University of St. Thomas. I enjoyed hearing about the portfolio of ethnic food and dining experiences Los Ocampo offers to the metro area, from catering to a full-service restaurant and bar. Now, Los Ocampo is planning to develop further efficiencies in its operations by centralizing certain functions. Julian is actively using his social media skills to build the Los Ocampo brand and widen its consumer base. [losocampo.com](http://losocampo.com)



Julian Ocampo

Some years ago we organized the ALANA (African Latino Asian and Native American) Green Summit to help the community think about the possibilities of the emerging green economy. So I always keep my antenna up to learn what ALANA entrepreneurs are doing in this area. **Anoop Mathur**, founder of Terrafore Technologies is on the verge of a breakthrough in the field of thermal energy storage. He uses a patented technology to improve the efficiencies in materials used in the thermal energy storage process. Anoop laments that the U.S. is still not active in this field and he is finding greater interest in Europe and Africa. To bring his concept to scale he needs an investment of at least a million dollars. Once he reaches a large enough scale he envisions dramatic progress. [terraforetechnologies.com](http://terraforetechnologies.com)

There is a core identity in Minnesota as a welcoming place with a culture of openness, innovation and creativity. A multi-ethnic coalition recently relaunched OneMN.org with the vision of growing this space in Minnesota. OneMN.org recently presented its first Big Idea: Think and Act Long Term (to Achieve Racial Equity and Social and Economic Inclusion). State Demographer **Susan Brower** set the stage, documenting Minnesota's increasing dependence on ALANA workers to meet its growing labor shortage. **Tasha Byers** of the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce shared the experience of GreaterMSP in recruiting and retaining high-skilled ALANA workers who are not finding Minnesota culturally attractive. **Shaun Williams-Wyche** from the Office of Higher Education spelled out what was needed to grow the ALANA workforce to attain the goal of 70% of Minnesota's workforce with a post-secondary certificate or degree. I shared a new model for economic and political representation at the precinct level to help achieve the Big Idea. September's Big Idea will be on the theme Putting People First.



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.

**MN CUP UPDATE**

# MN CUP'S 2015 GRAND PRIZE WINNER GOES HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH DESIGN INDUSTRY GIANT

BY MELISSA KJOLSING

Last September, local startup Astro HQ won the MN Cup Grand prize and walked away with \$80K in cash. Its app Astropad turns the iPad into a professional graphics tablet for Mac, and the app has been gaining traction in the art community. Astropad 2.0 was recently unveiled — a sleek new software update available for free to existing Astropad users.

The update comes just in time, as Astropad has positioned itself head-on against design industry leader Wacom. Wacom makes and sells hardware for artists, including the Cintiq tablet that has been the graphics industry standard for years. But in the wake of Apple's announcement of the iPad Pro and Apple Pencil last fall, Astropad found a way to cut into Wacom's market share and eliminate the need for expensive graphics hardware. Now, you can get the same creative experience using Astropad on an iPad Pro. All sorts of artists

— from professional animators to entire creative agencies — are making the switch from Wacom tablets to Astropad.

The success has allowed Astro HQ to expand its team (hiring former MN Cup intern Savannah Reising for marketing) and explore foreign

markets. Along with the release of Astropad 2.0, the company is also focusing efforts on Japan, where a growing number of manga and anime artists are using Astropad. The updated software is now available in Japanese to accommodate this market.

In the update, users can expect to notice a revamp of the system's core technology, allowing it to run three times faster with massively reduced pixelation. Other features include a refined pressure curve and enhanced compatibility with other Mac software. For more information, check out Astropad's official website: [astropad.com](http://astropad.com)

Sincerely,  
MN Cup Team



**MELISSA KJOLSING** is the director of the Minnesota Cup, an annual entrepreneur competition at the University of Minnesota. More at [carlsonschool.umn.edu/mn-cup](http://carlsonschool.umn.edu/mn-cup).

**CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS**

# ADVANCES IN EQUITY



Members of the Oromo Community of Minnesota celebrate a graduation

BY BRUCE CORRIE

- New immigrant groups are working hard to develop their talents, especially the second generation. That was the impression I got when I was invited by Teshite Wako to speak at the graduation ceremony of the Oromo Community of Minnesota. The Oromo are originally from East Africa (Ethiopia, specifically) and have a fairly large presence in Minnesota, very often invisible to policy-makers. I heard the story of a pharmacist whose credentials were not accepted in Minnesota who now completed his doctorate in pharmacy. A young man who studied hard in refugee camps and now is a pre-medical student. A teenager going to study accounting and a young graduate who has started a nonprofit to mentor female students in STEM. They shared stories of young graduates from top medical schools doing their residency in Minnesota. This community is offering such rich talent to Minnesota.
- New DEED Commissioner Shawntera Hardy is setting a new inclusive tone by offering information sessions on economic development programs that the diverse communities can participate in. She also called a meeting of all nonprofit recipients of state equity funding to help them collaborate and understand the state system and grant processes.
- The Big Idea Forum of OneMN.org focused on an important topic needed in strategies to address racial economic disparities in Minnesota — the need to think and act long-term. Community input at that forum set the tone for the next Big Idea Forum on September 22nd — put people first, especially the poor.
- I had the opportunity to review the state workforce system and discovered an unfortunate fact — I am not convinced the system is effectively reaching the people on the street because it is a top-down approach. I am exploring a strategy from the base and will update you on progress.



**BRUCE CORRIE, PHD**, blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.



CHAI NEWS AND VIEWS

**THE NEW FACES OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN MINNESOTA**

BY BRUCE CORRIE

I am always struck by the practical wisdom of Michelle Moore, who currently is the Transitional Care Unit Nurse Manager at Walker Methodist in Minneapolis, and leads the care for Alzheimer's/Dementia patients. A quick review of the symptoms, and her medical insight usually is correct — and in many case better than a doctor. This practical wisdom derives from her medical training and years of work as a nurse. She views her work as a calling and very often goes the extra mile to take care of people. Apart from practical experience, Michelle is also a life-long learner — she is regularly updating her credentials through training opportunities, personal research and certifications. She is often sought-after for advice from her peers, colleagues and even supervisors. My wife calls her the “best baby nurse on the planet” and now she is taking that passion to care for people going through a very tough period in their lives. That passion is also born out of the pain of losing loved ones to Alzheimer's. I learned something interesting from her about the role of music as therapy for people with Alzheimer's. Michelle's cheerful spirit in the most trying of times is a precious and unique gift to people she interacts with. “I do view my role, my life and my actions as a true calling by God,” she says. “Every opportunity and person is brought into your life for a reason and it is up to us to optimize every interaction placed in front of us.”



“Every opportunity and person is brought into your life for a reason and it is up to us to optimize every interaction placed in front of us.”

—Michelle Moore, Walker Methodist

often meet Dr. Abe Dalu at community meetings, whether it is the launch of the Oromo Chamber of Commerce or at activities in Little Africa in St. Paul. He has impressive credentials — a Ph.D. in Toxicology/Pharmacology, years of work at Fortune 500 companies, and is fluent in four languages, including Russian. He made the transition from the corporate world to home health care when he launched his business, A&A Reliable Home Health Care LLC, with his wife Aster, who is a registered nurse. Launching the business meant depleting his retirement account, as banks would not lend in this sector. But he and his wife persevered, secured Medicare certification and now operate a rapidly growing home health care business. He is proud of the fact he brings both professional and quality health care as well as culturally intelligent care to his patients. He has a very diverse client base. His wife supervises the staff to ensure quality care and compliance. They look at their work as more than a business: It is an opportunity to touch lives and give back to the community. He often spends time educating immigrants about their rights in the area of home health care services so that they can better access the system. In 2017 they want to focus on marketing to help grow their business. [aareliable.com](http://aareliable.com)



Aster Dalu, RN, and her husband Abe Dalu, PhD, founders of A&A Reliable Home Health Care

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



BRUCE CORRIE, PHD, blogs at [chai.news](http://chai.news) and is a professor of economics at Concordia University – Saint Paul.