

HOPE *Summer Update 2010*

In a neighborhood once abandoned by investment, it takes more than housing to build community. It takes people working together to build a better future.

Making Peace

For Hope, making peace has been a strong value deeply rooted in our history. Which is why, when we were invited by youthrive—a nonprofit organization engaging young people as leaders and peacemakers—to be the Southside host for a worldwide youth peace movement called PeaceJam, we were honored. A PeaceJam planning committee, made up of community leaders and over 30 youth from organizations across South Minneapolis, met weekly at Hope for seven months. They planned the Southside community service learning projects that were part of the two-day PeaceJam youth conference, involving over 800 youth from the Midwest and the inspirational Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum of Guatemala.

Leading up to PeaceJam weekend, Hope focused all youth programs around PeaceJam's 2010 theme, Healing Communities Torn by Racism and Violence. Hope staff member Andrew Hopkins expressed huge pride during PeaceJam and said, "Our youth did a great job. They were connected to something bigger. They grew personally and engaged with their community, family and friends around an important issue." Service Learning projects included a peace march, a community mural lifting up the importance of the U.S. census, a teen pregnancy and awareness workshop, and much more.

Alexis Morris (age 17) lives at Hope and volunteered to be on the PeaceJam planning committee. When asked what she gained most from the experience, she replies, "It was great to talk with other youth about ideas that can help our community."



Photos by Bruce Silcox

The PeaceJam mural located at the southwest corner of 25th and Chicago Avenues brought over 100 youth together to create a mural celebrating community and the importance of voter and U.S. Census turn-out.

New Homes for Families

Maricela Tlaseca and Juan Ponce live in a three-bedroom at Hope with their three young children. This is their first real home. They are one of 16 families who live in Hope's oldest homes, most dating from the 1890s, which were part of a major renovation project this year. Maricela says, "I feel peaceful here. I like the family environment."

Born in Mexico, Maricela and Juan have lived in Minnesota for 12 years. For their children—Juan José (age 12), Daisy (age 7) and Lizardo (age 2)—they wish a life where they can go as far as they can go. Maricela says, "I want for them, more than I could ever do."

Juan José wants to be a professional soccer player and Daisy a teacher. But Maricela has dreams too. She would like to learn English at Hope's basic adult education program and help support her family like her husband, who is a chef.

For many who live at Hope, having a beautiful home they can afford makes all the difference. This spring Maricela planted flowers in the front of their home. She says, "Our home at Hope is nicer than where we've ever lived before."

Note: These homes are for people who support their families on less than half of the metro area median income.

Maricela and Juan with their family in front of their home at Hope.





Musical chairs bring people together at the Community Getting Together Spring Potluck for Hope tenants.

Photos by Bruce Silcox

Making Connections & Growing Community

“When we are sitting at one table and talking, we know each other,” says Munira Mohamed, a leader at Hope, “we feel like one family in one place.” Every other Saturday at Hope, a group of Hope tenants, calling themselves Community Getting Together, meet to plan events and activities for tenants. This spring the group initiated creative partnerships with nonprofit organizations to connect with tenants around learning new skills and building community.

Hope Community Garden

This spring, former farmer and Land Stewardship Board Member Rhys Williams brought five families who live at Hope and Hope staff to an organic farm in Farmington to purchase seedling plants, and to learn more about organic farming techniques. Rhys is volunteering as a garden mentor to Hope families who have a plot in Hope’s Community Garden. But the Hope garden is much more than learning the tools of gardening. It’s really about neighbors coming together to create something wonderful, and to build relationships that continue far past gardening season.



Hope tenant Bonita learns the nuts & bolts of her new bike from Sibley Bike Depot.

Community Bike Library

The Community Bike Library at Hope focuses on individuals who have the least access to bicycles. Partner Sibley Bike Depot empowers people to use bicycles not just as a form of transportation but to build a sustainable environment and community. To date, 24 people—Hope tenants, neighbors, students, volunteers and family members of Hope participants - have become members of the Bike Library. Bikes are loaned to members for six months and longer with the opportunity to earn a bike by volunteering to own. One member expressed what drew her to the program, “With a bike I can get out of the box of my car, and meet more people and make more connections.”

Summer Program Highlights

Adult Education Five Days a Week—At Hope, immigrant adults learn basic English, writing, math and computer skills to improve their futures. A partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools adds resources and provides teachers.

A Community-Literacy Program for Young Children and their Families—Kids in a community-literacy program learn that reading and writing is fun alongside their parents, mentors and friends. This summer, cultural storytelling will take kids on their own book-making journey.

Hope’s Take on Summer Camp—Thanks to a grant from Pohlad Family Foundation, over 35 kids who have never been to overnight camp will go to Camp Icaghowan for one week in Wisconsin. But before that, kids will commit to a five-week camp mentoring and leadership program where they will prepare for a positive experience by learning new skills and building new friendships. On the morning of camp departure, parents of campers will come together to cook a send-off breakfast.

Summer Murals Beautify and Engage Teens—Hope’s summer mural program attracts youth from many south Minneapolis neighborhoods—Phillips, Powderhorn, Cedar-Riverside and Seward to name just a few. Across differences, youth learn new skills and collaborate artistically to accomplish a collective vision that builds neighborhood pride.

A Local Park Inspires Leadership and Community—One block from Hope Community sits a park called Peavey that has been challenged by limited resources. Hope youth leaders are working together to change that. Today, they are working on the annual National Night Out celebration that will bring neighbors out for music, food, cultural performances and activities. All happening in Peavey Park!