



JOURNAL

Expanding the Civic Imagination



Islamic Civic Society of America and civic policy making

Renewing democracy and providing solutions in Minnesota's Somali community

By Imam Sharif Mohamed

In 1993, Somali immigrants began coming to Minnesota after fleeing the civil war in their homeland.

The community faces the overall challenges that reflect any immigrant experience:

- The majority of the first generation is focused on the country they left with many hoping to go back one day. Their interests are tied to fulfilling commitments to family left behind and the political challenges and struggles of their homeland. At the same time, all are working hard to survive and adjust within a new culture.
- The second generation is often left to find their way between the beliefs and practices of their traditional identity and what they experience as they enter the American mainstream culture.
- The community realizes the need to develop a civic infrastructure while experiencing the breakdown in traditional social structures and authority between the first and second generation. In particular, it needs to address the impact on the family as Somali culture blends with Western culture.

The impact of immigration on the structure of the family is closely associated with core problems experienced by the community including school dropout, economic stress, reliance on state and federal welfare systems and an overall sense of powerlessness felt by many in the Somali immigrant community. Direct interventions by police and social service agencies and the traditional Somali approach to family and

community problem solving do not develop the capacity for family and community members to become self-sufficient and to contribute in their new country.

Even before we were introduced to civic policy making, we knew that Islamic values and customs were compatible with democratic principles.

In June 1998, a group of scholars and community leaders established the Riverside Islamic Center in the heart of the West Bank in the Cedar-Riverside

neighborhood to help address the needs of the community. As the organization became established, the name changed to Dar Al-Hijrah Cultural Center.

In 2006, with much support from the Muslim community, the building was purchased. At the same time, several key leaders began exploring civic policy making as a way to show the compatibility between Islam and democracy and develop a sustainable organization. They joined the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative along with Kowalski's Markets and the Citizens League. In January 2007, Abdisalam Adam, Wali Dirie and myself decided to lead a civic organizing pilot with other key leaders to explore whether civic policy making would be an effective way to develop the organization.

By the end of 2009, we were clear in our intent to organize a civic institution in Minnesota and acknowledge the national and international role we play within the Muslim world. We finalized the name of the institution as the Islamic Civic Society of America (ICSA), and our leaders committed to working through the stages of civic policy making.

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CONNECTIONS

Building a League of Citizens

INTERN MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

ASHLEY MENZEL

Ashley Menzel is a senior at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. She is from Minneapolis, MN and is majoring in Sociology and Anthropology with a concentration in Family Studies. Ashley plays on the St. Olaf women's basketball team and is the secretary of the Sociology and Anthropology Club. She interned at Citizens League this summer, focusing on 60th anniversary outreach efforts.



How the Citizens League fits into her academic and career goals:

I hoped to learn a little bit more about how nonprofits work, in general, and about how the Citizens League works to initiate and influence public policy changes in Minnesota. I'm also interested in how they promote civic engagement. I would like to go to law school at some point in the future, potentially doing a dual degree in law and public policy. The Citizens League's focus on civic engagement and public policy is exactly what I hope to be involved with in the future!

How she is civically engaged in her life:

I vote and I follow news on Minnesota Public Radio. I try to stay up to date on what's going on the world, specifically Minnesota. Along with my direct involvement, Sociology and Anthropology classes have definitely made me aware of different viewpoints and ways of thinking. I think that fits in with the Citizens League really well because they emphasize looking at different points of view and coming together for a common solution.

MADELINE PAGE

Maddie Page is a senior at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, MN. She is from Tucson, Arizona and is studying Political Science with a concentration in Environmental Studies. She is currently involved with the College Democrats, the Sustainability Alliance, and the Center for American Progress, and she was a college senator. Madeline is an intern at Citizens League this summer, focusing on policy work and the Pathways to Prosperity project.



How the Citizens League fits into her academic and career goals:

I can see myself working in a career that deals with policy change. I've worked with these kinds of issues before in a more hands on way, and it's interesting seeing the "behind the scenes" part of policy work. The Pathways to Prosperities program interested me initially because I've worked directly with people affected by poverty. During this internship, I hoped to learn how to navigate policy issues and how to communicate to a wide variety of people with different views. I also hoped to learn how to be an effective member of a nonprofit organization like this and how to contribute to the cause.

How she is civically engaged in her life:

I have worked on field organizing for several congressional campaigns. I am also outspoken on issues I care about—whether that means writing to representatives, letters to the editor, or lobbying in Washington, I think it's exciting and important to be involved in the political process.

Thanks to our new and rejoining members and contributing organizations 6/30-9/30/12

Individual members

Andriana Abariotes
Susan Anacker
Donna M. Anderson
Kevin Anderson
Robert Armstrong
Jill Azocar
Jorge Azocar
Justin Bacon
Karly Baraga Werner
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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
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In addition, we would like to thank the following for donating creative and video services or sponsored advertising to the Citizens League in support of our 60th Anniversary and Civic Celebration: **Comcast, Ecumen, Haberman Modern Storytellers, Medica, Medtronic, Padilla Speer Beardsley, Social Wendy Group, Thomson Reuters, Weber Shandwick**

And finally, thanks to the following organizations for donating special incentives toward our member drive: **Best Buy, General Mills, Goff Public, Padilla Speer Beardsley, Target, Thomson Reuters**

GET INVOLVED

What We're Doing and How You Can Get Involved



MAKE MINNESOTA'S ELECTRICAL SYSTEM MORE EFFICIENT

More than 60 percent of the energy put into the U.S. electrical system at the beginning is wasted in generating, transmitting and distributing it, not using it.

The Citizens League is beginning the second phase of our **Electrical Energy Policy Project**, which will develop recommendations to answer a question:

What long-term, system-level policy changes would motivate electrical efficiency?

Find out more and sign up to participate <http://bit.ly/SDHfQm>.

Thanks to the sponsors of Phase 2 of this project: Xcel Energy, District Energy, University of Minnesota-Energy Management, and Target.

HELP US DEFINE TAX FAIRNESS

Watch this space for the Citizens League report about findings from our Common Cents conversations on reforming state and local government taxes, held across Minnesota. This report will contribute to a tax reform proposal that will go to Gov. Mark Dayton in early 2013.



HELP TRACK OUR LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

In our next Minnesota Journal edition, we'll outline the top legislative agenda items we want to see become a reality in 2013.



But we need your help to keep track of them. There will be many bills, many hearings and many opportunities to affect the course of legislation during the upcoming session. We're looking for active citizens who know how to track legislation and make sure we stay on top of our agenda.

Interested? Contact Policy Manager Annie Levenson-Falk by email at alevensonfalk@citizensleague.org or by phone at 651-289-1072.

ENSURE ANOTHER 60 YEARS OF IMPACT THROUGH INNOVATION

Help us reach our goal of securing at least 60 contributions each month for the rest of the year. Members and supporters like you make the Citizens League's work possible!

Need an incentive?

There will be drawings for prizes each month. New, renewing and sustaining members each get an entry, and a second member of your household will receive an entry at no extra cost.

If you think citizenship, not partisanship, is what Minnesota needs more of today, we're asking you to support us. Contribute today at <http://razoo.com/citizensleague>.



CHECK MY LAKE ONLINE PORTAL

The Citizens League and Conservation Minnesota are developing an online portal for people across Minnesota to find and share information about the quality of our lakes. From a smartphone, tablet, or computer, users can view



water quality, invasive species, and other information. Beta testers are needed as the portal is developed and new features are added. For more information and to volunteer, contact Annie Levenson-Falk at alevensonfalk@citizensleague.org or 651-289-1072.

The Citizens League involves people of all backgrounds, parties and ideologies to create and advance solutions for Minnesota. The Citizens League's approach to policy—civic policymaking—results in the civic policy agenda, our case for action that is based on the belief that all people and organizations play essential roles in developing the ideas, skills and resources to govern for the common good. Visit www.citizensleague.org/who/identity to find out more.



Learn more about all of our work at www.citizensleague.org.

If you have questions about any of these projects or others, contact Policy Manager Annie Levenson-Falk at alevensonfalk@citizensleague.org or 651-289-1072.



When enough is enough

We need a quantum leap forward in civic leadership

by Sean Kershaw

The note taped to my monitor simply says, “enough.” It’s there to remind me when I feel overwhelmed that I actually have enough time, energy and resources around me to complete what needs to be done. It works, much to my surprise each morning.

Another reaction comes to mind, too. Most of the time, I feel as though I’ve had enough of our current political and civic leadership, especially at the national level. The whole ridiculously partisan, small-tent, smaller-vision, non-fact-checking, un-innovative, fiscal-crisis-ignoring, democracy-diminishing bunch. We’re dancing toward the fiscal and democratic cliff, and it feels like they just want to turn up the music.

But I’m also tired of the pity-card being played by people like me who know better: who have enough time and energy and resources around them to do something differently, who recognize the silliness of whining and civic victimhood, and who realize that our leadership is a reflection of all of us and of a civic culture that has become too passive and a political culture that has become too toxic.

Much of what passes for leadership *development* today isn’t enough either. We worship the heroic and charismatic leader, when all of the evidence says this charisma can’t produce the changes we need. And we spend our time in technical leadership development, forgetting that the practice of leadership really does require a broader civic vision.

The failure of this leadership approach is an opportunity for innovation—and for the Citizens League. What can balance the need for big-picture vision and aspirations about what being a citizen means with practical skills-building and support?

QUANTUM CIVICS

Quantum Civics™ is the Citizens League’s new approach to civic leadership development.

We’ve always been in the business of developing civic leaders—from Verne Johnson to Dave Durenberger to Jean King. All of them made my current leadership opportunity possible by deliberately reaching out to me and others to mentor and provide leadership opportunities.

This is the template we need, because the fundamental role of a civic leader is the desire to build the capacity for others to be active citizens and civic leaders: to do for the next generation what Verne and Dave and Jean’s generation continue to do for mine.

But where this civic leadership happens today is different from the past. We don’t need to wait for people in formal positions of power to do something, and we don’t need to become those people to have an effect on our communities. The days of hierarchical leaders being able to control things are over.

IMAGINATION AND CAPACITY

We need a new *imagination* about civic leadership. We need citizens in all sectors and types of organizations, and in all positions of authority, to see the opportunity they have to be civic leaders where they are. The first step is reclaiming the word “citizenship” from the current toxic discussion about legal status and recognizing that we all play a role in a democracy as citizens, and our individual actions relate and have impact on a larger scale. All of the bad habits that I complained about in our national leaders were learned somewhere, from someone: in their families, workplaces, schools, places of worship or communities.

On policy issues, we have to imagine the connection between the day-to-day problems we face and larger, more complex challenges. How we as consumers use electricity affects energy grid efficiency. How we all save for our later years affects Minnesota’s budget crisis. How businesses structure their training programs and relationships with schools affects post-secondary education. And how we all choose to

ride or drive every day affects our transportation system’s sustainability.

Quantum Civics takes this big civic imagination and role and builds the capacity to be leaders in our everyday interactions: how we run meetings, how we build accountable relationships within and across organizations, how we learn to analyze problems, how we learn to ask critical questions while remaining open to new ideas and opportunities.

A QUANTUM LEAP

The use of the word “quantum” is not accidental. Quantum mechanics wasn’t just an improved version of Newtonian mechanics—it was an entirely new way of viewing the physical world that could explain what was actually going on.

These small steps eventually add up to larger policy change—and we need change on a large scale. Civic leadership requires a critical mass of leaders inside all institutions that are committed to working—together—to develop the innovative civic policies that we need to confront the challenges we face in Minnesota, and to create a state worthy of being called The Star of the North.

We hope our Quantum Civics program is not just an improved version of leadership development but also a new way of viewing the civic and policy landscape.

The policy issues we care about aren’t out there in the ether. They are right in front of us. The leadership I complained about didn’t emerge from the ether, either.

It’s not enough to settle for the status quo, or to complain about how awful it is in politics and public policy. We all have enough—vision and resources and opportunities—to take another quantum leap forward in Minnesota’s policy and political landscape. It won’t be easy, but discovering a new way forward will be worth it. ●

Sean Kershaw is the executive director of the Citizens League and a member. To learn more about Quantum Civics or schedule a training, contact Sean at skershaw@citizensleague.org, 651-289-1070, @seankershaw (Twitter), or Facebook.



Civic policy making

The Citizens League's approach to public policy

By Ashley Menzel

Minnesota has a longstanding tradition of citizen engagement in public affairs. Yet this same tradition has assumed policy solutions to our state's problems come from big institutions and through one-time prescriptions from the Legislature and governor.

Over recent decades, our world has changed dramatically, and the state is more diverse and complex than ever. Though our desire for good government remains, our attitudes toward policy making are hard to shake, and our civic institutions have not yet adjusted to our changing landscape. Our role as citizens has been minimized to raising our voices and waiting for someone else to solve the problem. Meanwhile, constituencies at the Legislature are in partisan gridlock without the ability to build common ground for the common good by solving complex problems.

A NEW APPROACH TO PUBLIC POLICY

If the need is to re-energize democracy to address these issues, and if the problem is the inadequacy of our current institutions and practices, we must focus our efforts on new strategies, new institutions and new opportunities for citizen engagement. We need a new approach to public policy that strengthens Minnesota's civic infrastructure while addressing complex problems. The Citizens League believes our transformation begins with recognizing two ideas:

We believe in the need to put the public back in public policy. Citizens want and deserve better solutions—and a bigger role in the policy process. We can no longer rely only on our leaders at the Capitol to craft solutions to our state's problems. We believe that all Minnesotans should have a role in defining public problems, coming up with solutions and influencing future policy recommendations.

We believe policy happens everywhere. Good public policy ultimately depends on the decisions all Minnesotans make in the places they live, work and spend time. This recognizes the role of policy experts and public institutions, but emphasizes the critical new importance of governance in all institutions and the expertise that all citizens bring to policy-making. We cannot rely solely on professional experts to design system reforms.

DEMONSTRATING OUR APPROACH

Minnesota Mental Health Action Group (MMHAG)

In 2003, it was clear that the mental health care system needed reform, but there was a big gap between “change it” and “how to change it.” The Citizens League served a critical role as a neutral

convener, deliberately building Minnesota Mental Health Action Group (MMHAG), a coalition of individuals and groups affected by and working on mental health reform. The steering committee members all had leadership roles within their own constituencies to effectively champion change.

We believe that all Minnesotans should have a role in defining public problems, coming up with solutions and influencing future policy recommendations.

Ultimately, it was this base of support that broke through the barriers and persuaded a divided government to support and sign legislation in 2007 that enacted the most comprehensive package of mental health system improvements and funding increases that have occurred since the original enact-

ment of the state's mental health acts in the 1980s.

Collaborating for Urban Partnership Agreement transportation financing

Based on the 2005 report *Driving Blind*, the Citizens League began to organize for a multi-pronged approach to reduce congestion in the Twin Cities. The Citizens League played pivotal roles of neutral convener and champion to bring together opposing perspectives to support the Urban Partnership Agreement, resulting in \$188 million in “cutting edge” congestion reduction work.

The Citizens League:

- Introduced legislation that got the attention of MnDOT and Met Council, where there was some resistance to pursuing the UPA, and successfully pushed for application.
- Organized a Road Pricing Summit that brought in federal officials and built the relationships between state and federal officials. Minnesota was awarded one of five UPA grants nationally.
- Worked through potential opposition from Minneapolis and Hennepin County
- Helped garner the support needed for \$55 million in state funding to match the \$133 million federal that was on the table at a time when most other funding in the state budget was getting cut or was stagnant.

In 2008, Minnesota received \$133 million in federal money, along with \$55 million in state funds, for a rare opportunity to model how transparent funding and transportation choices can be integrated through free-flow pricing, increased transit options and employer incentives. ●

Ashley Menzel is a former Citizens League intern and a St. Olaf College senior.

Islamic evidence to support democratic principles

The core principles of Islam and democracy are compatible. Both strive to achieve the principles of law, conscience, equality, freedom, diversity, unity and justice. However, these principles or "goods" are in tension with one another.

For an example, we will focus on the tension between freedom and equality that exists in a democracy and illustrate how these democratic principles have support in Islamic teaching. The "common good" has to be determined in the tension.

FREEDOM and EQUALITY

Freedom: Everyone has the right to express himself, assemble, work, choose and believe. Compulsion is incompatible with religion because religion depends upon faith and will. Islam sees freedom as the true version of life. Freedom is one's life, and being without it means death even if one is eating and walking on the earth (2: Dr. Muhammad 'Amar. 18p).

- "And say, 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills—let him believe; and whoever wills—let him disbelieve.'" (18:29)
- "There is no compulsion in the religion. The truth stands out clear from error" (2: 256).
- "And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed—all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?" (10:99).

- "So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller." (88:21-22).
- "And obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away—then upon Our Messenger is only [the duty of] clear notification" (64:12).

Equality: Islam, as a religion, provides human beings with the equality that no one is better than anyone else, whether that is in race or gender, as mentioned in the Qur'an and hadiths (traditions of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him):

- "O mankind! We created you from a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily, the most honored of you in sight of Allah is most righteous of you." (49:13).
- "O people! Your Lord is one Lord, and you all share the same father. There is no preference for Arabs over non-Arabs, nor for non-Arabs over Arabs. Neither is there preference for white people over black people, nor for black people over white people. Preference is only through righteousness." (narrated by Musnad Ahmad)
- "All mankind are from Adam and Adam was created from dust." (narrated by Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi)

DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM

Even before we were introduced to civic policy making, we knew that Islamic values and customs are compatible with democratic principles. But integrating our immigrant, Muslim population into American society is a challenge. We must deal with significant language and cultural differences, and we need to build a new institutional infrastructure in this country that supports the community and prepares us to contribute to American society without losing our own history and identity.

Getting the support necessary to develop an institution whose purpose went beyond being a mosque was a challenge, but to define that purpose as being civic only increased the challenge. In the Muslim world, democracy is often associated with Western governments and decades of Western colonization, producing negative associations with democracy, including the language surrounding its meaning.

In addition, the common understanding of democracy when it is defined as "majority rule" or simply the rights of the individual is in contrast to Islamic principles, which are focused on justice, doing what is right and holding community well-being as a primary good. When expressions of democracy focus on narrow self-interest, as often happens in current American culture, it results in significant barriers for ICSA as we try to introduce and demonstrate civic policy making to our community.

Members addressed this barrier by co-authoring a governing

document for ICSA that shows the compatibility between Islamic and civic principles. Members use the document not only to develop their internal governing system but also to teach the compatibility between Islam and democracy both within the Somali community and the larger society. For an example of how this is expressed, see the textbox above.

Linking ICSA's identity to the role of citizenship—meaning the obligation to make decisions for the common good—builds upon the Islamic understanding of justice and community well-being as a primary expectation. However, tying the identity of citizenship to the role and function of policy making is a greater challenge that we face and is not unique to Somali immigrants.

Like most Americans, our community imagines that policy is mainly what government does. Most often, however, it is the function of family and religion that we see as essential to engaging community members in addressing the problems that we face and to build decision-making capacity that can affect the community. Currently, the decision making that occurs within and between families, or within one's faith, or in the community, tends not to be associated with the function of policy making. Yet these are precisely the places where essential policy is formed and where our culture interacts with mainstream American culture.

We have an opportunity to promote a new approach to policy making by ensuring that family, faith and community are primary policy institutions and not simply social units that are focused on when troubles occur.

THE NEED FOR CIVIC POLICY MAKING

Using my 15 years of experience as an Imam in the immigrant Somali community, I am in the process of developing a new model for family counseling based upon civic policy making that addresses the core problems facing Somali families. In my role as family and marriage counselor within the Muslim community, I recognized the need to produce a civic model for family counseling that integrates Islamic, civic and therapeutic principles and practices to develop the capacity for family members to govern for the good of the family while contributing to the well-being of community and society.

The need for civic policy making within the family in the immigrant Somali community is demonstrable in the following examples:

- A loss of family leadership, and parental confusion about role, authority and appropriate use of power.
- The increased breakup of families.
- The frequent use of children as a key contact for Western systems, which contributes to the power struggle within the family.
- The resulting isolation of professionals from the parents who are the key family stakeholders responsible for providing sustainable solutions.
- A high potential for fragmentation that puts children at risk.

The power dynamic within families affects the community and larger society in the following ways:

- Increased gang activity, violence within community and society as well as family.
- Increased dropout rate.
- Increased economic stress within the family, community and larger society.

- Increased reliance on state and federal welfare systems.
- Increased sense of powerlessness felt by all stakeholders.
- Increased investment in reactive interventions, which do not develop capacity to address core systemic problems.

A lack of civic infrastructure increases:

- Isolation between individuals within families, between families and community and between the community and larger systems.
- Fragmentation, mistrust, lack of communication, inaccurate information, and use, misuse and non-use of power and resources within all systems.
- Inability to organize the complex resources and capacity needed to address the above problems.

Roles are defined by current power arrangements:

- In traditional Muslim family, religious and community leadership, concepts of power and governance are more often authoritarian than collaborative. This does not lead to engagement of all members in defining the problem, producing solutions and developing self-governance.
- Western systems are based upon a professional service model that tends to see the family as the problem and in need of services vs. a source for capacity building. Interventions are culturally biased because they are one-sided. Interventions by police and/or welfare are not intended to strengthen the family or the community, or address root cause, but rather to react to conflict.
- Expert-based solution strategies are usually technical, professional or legal responses that do not develop the capacity to organize the complex base of key stakeholders and perspectives needed to find sustainable solutions.

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Standards and practices of civic policymaking

Practice is guided by the following standards for governance so that decision making is linked to a higher purpose (principles) and to ensure that methods are used to achieve that purpose while addressing particular problems.

- Those affected by the issue (stakeholders) define the problem in light of Islamic, civic and individual principles and the particular economic, political, social and environmental situation in which the problem occurs.
- All those involved (stakeholders) actively contribute resources (time, knowledge, constituencies—meaning those they influence—and dollars) for solving the problem.
- All those involved (stakeholders) participate in decision making and policy creation.
- All those involved contribute to sustainability of the outcomes in accordance with ICSA's identity and mission in the places where they have the authority to act.

Specific practice develops the following skills:

- Critical thinking—distinguishing objective reality (facts) from subjective reality (interpretative) as both relate to principles and common goals.
- Open-ended questions to engage different perspectives.
- Strategic listening to determine and clarify self-interest as it relates to common goals.
- Suspending judgment to get different points of view.
- Ability to negotiate and compromise while staying accountable to civic principles.
- Fostering constructive tension.
- Holding self and others accountable for follow-through on agreements.



A civic business

Kowalski's Markets and democratic principles at work

By Jeff Linder

In the last 10 years, Kowalski's Markets has dedicated substantial resources in terms of time and money to send all of their leadership personnel through an in-depth training course on civic organizing and civic leadership. Owners Jim and Mary Anne Kowalski take their obligation to be more than just a successful business very seriously. What they and their company have undertaken is a new approach to policy making, based on democratic practices, which we use to solve business issues and meet our goals.

So how does civic policy making work in our company? Over the last several years, we have been focusing on building a civic infrastructure within our company. Everyone in key positions from our COO and VP, to our corporate staff and all department managers is called a "Civic Leader". This group is tasked with the responsibility to teach and organize the rest of our employee base (stakeholders) to understand the identity of the company and the role they play in it. These employees are called "Active Citizens." The nature of our business is that a high percentage of our stakeholders are part-time and entry-level employees. To organize this group, which includes a large number of young people that typically do not stay in our employ for a long period of time, is a large task, and we are definitely still in a phase where we are learning how to most effectively organize them to their role.

A key ingredient of our mission is our public meeting strategy. In addition to the organizing and capacity building that occurs on a daily basis, all management personnel are expected to have regular one on one meetings with their key stakeholders and quarterly or semi-annual meetings with their entire department. The goal of these meetings is to integrate the technical aspects of our business with the individual roles of active citizens by focusing on our identity with particular emphasis on our operating principles (the primary policy document within our company).

When our employees involve themselves in policy making within these meetings, they are sharing the responsibility to help create success in their department, store and the company they work for. This process is open and transparent, and in their role of active citizen, they contribute to civic policy making by being public with concerns, being involved in problem solving and achieving goals and contributing to justice and the common good. When these stakeholders begin to understand that every decision they make has an impact on everyone else around them as well as the success of our company, they tend to make better and more responsible decisions. The idea that we clearly expect them to be involved in decision making around the opportunities and challenges that we face every day tends to create a strong sense of ownership among our employees.

While we are still learning this new approach, there is a strong commitment to sustaining our efforts, because we have substantial evidence that it is working to create a base of employees who understand that their role needs to be one of involvement and ownership, whether it is around quality of product, customer service, attendance or any other issue. At the entry level, there is a vague sense of being part of something new and different, with



a certain amount of surprise and satisfaction that even in their positions we ask them to be involved in policy making and to contribute to justice and the common good. Our long term part-timers, of which there are many, have begun to fully understand that they are key stakeholders in our company and that their role is critical to sustaining our company as a successful civic business into the future. The level of ownership among this group has surpassed anything I have seen among comparable employees in the nearly 40 years I have been in this business.

Civic organizing and this new approach to policy making has really made us a much better, more effective and productive business, which ensures our sustainability into the future. However, we must recognize this as a tremendous benefit of this approach, but not at all the primary reason we became involved in it. As the influence of civic organizing continues to grow within our company, we hope and expect to see both the civic leaders and active citizens take what they have learned outside the walls of our company to help create a new approach to policy making in the greater world, where current approaches are riddled with apathy, hypocrisy and ineffectiveness.

This is the mission of the [Minnesota Active Citizenship](#) initiative of which we are a member, alongside the Citizens League, and we are committed to achieving this mission. Whether it is existing employees within neighborhood or community organizations, or employees who have moved on to new employers and/or occupations, we are confident that they will bring the concept of civic organizing and civic policy making to their new institutions in the places where they have influence. By doing so they will be expanding this new approach to policy making we call civic organizing, to help create a more effective way to achieve justice and the common good. ●

Jeff Linder is the store manager of Kowalski's Oak Park Heights market.



Civic organizing around water quality

A new approach to cleaning Minnesota's lakes and rivers

By Lynne Kolze

Several years ago, my daughter, who was in the midst of a school history project, asked me, “Mom, what do you think is the most important technological achievement of the 20th century?” Immediately, my mind went to the usual suspects—space travel, antibiotics and computers. However, because I have spent my career as an environmental professional, suddenly something very unglamorous came to mind. “Wastewater treatment,” I said. She looked at me with a twisted smile. “Really, Mom?” she said. “Yes!” I responded.

Without wastewater treatment, millions of people would fall ill from communicable diseases; many of our rivers and lakes would be dead zones; businesses that need clean water to manufacture goods would have their costs skyrocket; and our quality of life and ability to enjoy fishing, swimming and other recreational activities would be greatly diminished, I argued.

I am not sure I made a convincing case to my teenage daughter, but the truth is that science and technology have allowed us to remove many pollutants efficiently and effectively from our waste waters. This amazing achievement is not visible to most people, but its success is something to celebrate. Yet, despite this success, **approximately 40 percent** of the bodies of water in Minnesota are impaired (a legal designation that means they are unable to meet state water quality standards). Why?

DIFFUSE WATER POLLUTION THREAT

One of the greatest challenges in water management today is finding effective ways to reduce what we call “nonpoint source” pollution. This kind of pollution comes from many diffuse sources, such as rooftops, parking lots, streets, sidewalks, construction sites, farm fields, gullies, lawns, bridges and many other land-based places. As water from rain or melting snow moves over the ground, it picks up and carries with it a variety of pollutants, including soil, leaves, grass, salt, fertilizers, pesticides, bacteria, oil and grease, toxic chemicals and heavy metals.

Often, this polluted runoff flows to our favorite fishing holes, beaches or canoeing rivers. As a result, aquatic ecosystems are altered and compromised, economic and recreational opportunities are diminished, and cleanup costs climb higher. Because the sources of polluted runoff are numerous, nearly everyone who lives, works and uses our vast transportation system contributes to this problem in some way. Collectively, our daily decisions and

activities on land unintentionally add up to major problems locally and downstream.

Millions of individual actions every day collectively result in degraded water quality. However, regulation of all of these actions would be extremely difficult to implement and enforce. Many people would be unhappy to see this level of government intrusion into their lives. Yet the problem is often seen as government's to solve. So, what then can be done to better govern the health of our waters?



Photo: Paul Andre, MPCA

Addressing water quality problems of this kind will require a reawakening of citizenship—a reimagining of the place where we live as a living watershed system and of ourselves as having a critical role in governing this watershed home. It will require us to think about our watershed as “the commons” and to co-manage the public asset that we all depend upon for survival. It will require that citizens stop expecting government to “fix it.” Instead more people must commit to working together in our role as citizens who are obligated, as part of a democracy, to govern for the common good.

Under a shared civic identity, we can combine the best science, values and individual experiences with sound civic principles, standards and practices. These capabilities can be brought together to produce a collective vision for our waters and a way to ensure that this vision is sustained in each generation.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND WATER QUALITY IN MINNESOTA

With encouragement from the **Clean Water Council**, created by the Clean Water Legacy Act, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is increasing efforts to bring citizens and stakeholders into water restoration and protection discussions. This requires the agency and local government partners to look outward to the communities we work with to talk, partner and engage with interested citizens so that the best ideas for addressing complex water problems find voice.

This new approach acknowledges that citizens are key collaborators in achieving water quality goals, both in the policy-making realm and in implementing best management practices on the ground. Believing civic engagement to be a core strategy for successfully managing water resources, the MPCA is testing a number of civic engagement approaches to learn how best to achieve the overall goal.

One approach—called civic organizing—is being tested in the **St. Croix River Basin**. The premise of a civic organizing approach is to create a common civic identity among key stakeholders, while benefitting from the unique knowledge and capacity each can bring to addressing water quality problems.

All participants in this pilot will take on the role of an “active citizen;” that is, each individual will take responsibility for helping to define the problems and for offering solutions to water quality problems in their community while governing for the common good.

Participants will test civic organizing practices in the places where they have the authority and ability to act. At the same time, they will work together as a cohort to learn from practice. From their insights, participants will endeavor to influence water policy

making within each of their organizations as well as work with other institutions that have similar goals in the river basin.

One of the greatest challenges in water management today is finding effective ways to reduce what we call “nonpoint source” pollution.

In the coming years, agencies like the MPCA will need to create welcoming spaces and meaningful opportunities to collaborate with citizens ready to lead change. By fostering trusting relationships, we can encourage citizens to become problem-solvers and leaders

alongside agency experts. Through a collaborative model of inclusion and dialogue, we hope for better water outcomes, especially as we work to address the remaining and most challenging sources of pollution. ●

Lynn Kolze is the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's civic engagement coordinator for watershed projects and a Citizens League member.

The impact of too much phosphorus in Lake St. Croix

The St. Croix River, its tributary streams and rivers, and Lake St. Croix are highly valued resources that provide exceptional recreational opportunities and support diverse fish and wildlife.

Lake St. Croix is a naturally impounded riverine lake in the lower 25 miles of the St. Croix River. It consists of four pools downstream of Stillwater: Bayport, Troy Beach, Black Bass and Kinnickinnic pools. The St. Croix River Basin, which drains to Lake St. Croix, represents a large area, about 7,760 square miles, with approximately 44 percent of the basin land area located within Minnesota and 56 percent within Wisconsin. The St. Croix River originates near Solon Springs, Wis., and flows west and south more than 160 miles until it joins the Mississippi River at Prescott, Wis.

Over the years, the lake has been negatively affected by the delivery of too many nutrients, especially phosphorus, from watersheds with the river basin. The elevated level of phosphorus in Lake St. Croix causes blooms of algae that diminish the enjoyment and use of the lake, while also affecting aquatic ecology. While progress has been made in recent years to understand and reduce the sources of phosphorus entering rivers and streams in watersheds draining to the lake, much work remains.

A nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) has been developed for Lake St. Croix. Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act and EPA's Water Quality Planning and Management Regulations (40 CFR Part 130) requires states to develop TMDLs for water bodies that do not meet water quality standards. The TMDL process establishes the allowable loading of pollutants for a

water body based on the relationship between pollution sources and conditions in the water body. By following the TMDL process, states can establish controls to reduce pollution and restore and maintain the quality of their water resources.

Once a TMDL is established, an Implementation Plan must be developed. The Implementation Plan is designed to ensure that the required reductions in pollutant loadings identified by the TMDL will be achieved. The Implementation Plan provides information on management measures and regulatory controls; timelines for implementation of management measures and attainment of water quality standards; a monitoring plan designed to determine the effectiveness of implementation actions; and a description of adaptive management procedures. An Implementation Plan has been developed for Lake St. Croix. For more information, see the MPCA's Lake St. Croix TMDL website at <http://bit.ly/YqPFPJ> or contact Chris Zadak, MPCA, at 651-757-2837.

To learn more about Lake St. Croix and the entire St. Croix River Basin, visit the following sites:

- St. Croix River Basin – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, <http://bit.ly/YqPFPJ>
- St. Croix River Basin – Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, <http://1.usa.gov/YqPZhm>
- St. Croix Basin Water Resources Planning Team, <http://bit.ly/YqQ3xz>
- St. Croix River Association, <http://bit.ly/YqQd8a>



Teens affect statewide health discussion

Students Speak Out adds an often-absent voice to policy issues

By Hannah Eilene Oakes

Many teenagers believe they are silenced by their age when it comes to politics. Until the age of 18, nothing we do seems to hold any importance. The Citizens League's **Students Speak Out** (SSO) initiative gives students a voice in important policy discussions and allows them to find solutions and bring about change for tomorrow. Teens are able to openly share their opinions on issues relevant to society with the knowledge that adults—the people with all the power—are listening and reading what they have to say.

My involvement began in 2010, when SSO took on the **Parks and Trails**. I got involved through my high school, The **School of Environmental Studies**. I began contributing to the discussion and promoting the project to my entire school to raise interest.

Since then, I've been involved in the **Minnesota Go!** project, focusing on planning for transportation for the next 50 years. I contributed to the **Student Achievement** project and finally became involved with the latest project, **Teen Citizen Solutions**. I initially got involved because of my passion for the parks and trails Minnesota has to offer, but I stayed involved for the sense of importance I feel knowing that adults are listening to what teens say in the discussion forums on the **CitiZing** website.

The Citizen Solutions project is a conversation among Minnesotans about the future of health care and individual health within our state for the **bipartisan Minnesota Health Care Reform Task Force**. The responses in these discussions will help guide policy proposals in regards to Minnesota's health care system. Adults and teenagers are able to weigh in on prevalent issues related to health care in our state to improve the quality and costs of health care.

SSO projects exist to tackle a public problem and usually follow the same basic format: Adults who are passionate about solving the problem pose the questions; teen panelists respond, launching the conversation and inviting other teen and adult project members to throw in their ideas and experiences; and SSO adult facilitators help build the conversation, acting as a liaison between teens and the question-askers. The discussion questions, as in most situations, are simply guidelines and the conversation is able to take off on many different paths as more voices are heard.

Teens' ideas and experiences are sometimes similar to adults, and other times very distinct. SSO creates a place for teens to voice their positions where adults are asking them to think deeply about public problems and listening to their responses. This formula allows previously unnoticed ideas and experiences to be brought forth into the light. In Citizen Solutions, for example, adults suggested that health education must be improved, while teens said that health education is pretty good already. Distinctions

like these must be considered if policy proposals are to be successful with both age groups.

The teen project had six weeks of discussion. Week One's discussion was centered on the question: How do you define "health?" Teens responded that the term "health" includes three main components—physical, mental and emotional health—each as important as the next. Overall, teens are concerned about the influence of the media on the visual definition of health, about mental illnesses and that health is something Minnesotans can only achieve if they make

Being a part of the (Students Speak Out) projects has taught me the importance of civic participation.

time to fit it into their routines.

Week Two's question was: What expectations and responsibilities are most important to creating health and well-being for all Minnesotans? Teens agreed that the top expectation of the health system and policy makers is that they make health care affordable and, thus, accessible to them. Teens said that citizens' top responsibility is that each person practices healthy behaviors because achieving health and well-being begins with the individual.

Week Three's question was: How do you learn about health? Are these means effective? How can we do better? Students commented that information comes from the home and from school. Teachers inform students of the ill-effects of behaviors and have a consequence-centered method of teaching. Several teens believe a better approach would be to help teens recognize the value of healthy choices.

Week Four's question was: What would you change about the environment around you for health? The panelists on the project all agreed that family and school are the two major influences to their healthy decisions.

Week Five's question was: How do you make the connection between your choices, lifestyle and habits, and the cost of health care? Many students mentioned that knowledge of their coverage affects the activities they involve themselves in. Students who are uninsured take more precautions to protect themselves from accidents, while insured students have less inclination to care about their decisions. Many of the students involved are cautious of their actions regardless of coverage.

Week Six's question was: What are your summary recommendations for the Minnesota Health Care Task Force? Many students wished more people knew the importance of taking health care costs into consideration while making life choices. Overall, they insisted that health care be improved for everyone.

Three open discussions took place following the weekly question period, on the following topics: How active are you, really?; Are more school counselors needed to assist students with mental and emotional health issues?; and Examining the contents of the food we eat.

The final report was presented to the bipartisan Health Care Reform Task Force in July. The most important conclusions we wanted to emphasize to the task force were:

- Being a healthy individual is all about personal responsibility. While we, as a society, don't prioritize health the way we should, and social pressures can affect us negatively, we are still the ones ultimately responsible for our health.
- Health care should be affordable. While it's not easy for many to see the connection between health and cost, many do and take it seriously.
- People need access to healthy foods and a safe environment in order to live healthy lifestyles.
- There is no such thing as a "normal" body type, and health promotion efforts should be cautious and responsible in promoting an ideal body type.
- Health education can be improved. Teens learn about health from health classes in school, which need to do a better job teaching students about the consequences of negative choices

as well as the benefits of positive choices. Teens also need to learn more about the economics of health care.

- Teens do care about health and health care.

Being a part of the SSO projects has taught me the importance of civic participation. If citizens didn't participate in these conversations, there would be perspectives completely overlooked during policy discussions.

I was first interested in Teen Citizen Solutions because I believe mental health is often overlooked in the health care system, but the conversation and perspectives from fellow contributors have influenced me to become more interested in the other aspects of health and well-being. SSO has created a safe environment for teens to openly express their opinions and thoughts on important matters where our voices would otherwise be ignored, allowing us to learn from one another and come to understand different aspects of political issues that will affect us tomorrow. ●

Hannah Eilene Oakes is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota Duluth studying English literature and geography.

Islamic Civic Society of America continued from page 7

The roles of each of these stakeholders in producing the above barriers to capacity building are supported by policy or rules that govern their role, yet often these key stakeholders do not see themselves as policy makers called to govern to develop sustainable solutions.

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY: APPLY CIVIC POLICY MAKING

Islamic Civic Society of America demonstrates the compatibility between Islamic and civic principles in a democratic society. Members of ICSA are dedicated to governing for the common good while addressing the specific needs of the Muslim community. The ICSA Institutional Governing Document guides members in their commitment to advance ICSA's identity while achieving specific goals. This governing document provides the same foundation that is used by the Citizens League in its civic nonprofit role and by Kowalski's Markets in its civic business role.

The Islamic Civic Society of America's role is to Renew the Public Congregation (RPC). RPC is about developing the moral capacity of the people to produce a just society. RPC understands that within a democratic society, moral capacity encompasses both religious precepts and democratic principles.

The Civic Policy Model for Family Counseling that I am developing is based upon the belief—and will make the case—that the family is the core institution in society. The decisions made within the family are defined as "policies" that affect the well-being of each individual member, the whole family and the larger society. Civic policy making will direct my approach to develop sustainable solutions in the following framework:

- Establish the need for a new approach to family counseling, based upon indicators that current approaches have limitations.
- Make a case that the family is the core policy center within society and demonstrate the consequences of not imagining or acting in accordance.
- Teach the compatibility between Islamic, civic and therapeutic principles with a focus on how those principles support the need to develop the decision-making capacity of individuals and their institutions, including family, faith, work, community, learning and governance.
- Develop and implement a civic model for family counseling that uses a civic organizing approach to build the capacity to make decisions (govern) and set individual and institutional policies based upon core Islamic and civic principles. Practice will be in keeping with therapeutic principles that aim to build capacity.
- Track outcomes to make a case for the effectiveness of the model.

For more about what guides this approach, see "Standards and Practices of Civic Policy Making" on [page 7](#).

ICSA has built the capacity to begin demonstrating how civic policy making is the new approach that is needed to renew democracy for all Americans. While it offers a path to a sustainable future for our community, it will also create citizens who govern for the common good in pursuit of a just democracy. ●

Sharif Mohamed is the imam of Islamic Civic Society of America (ICSA) and a well-known Somali Islamic scholar in North America. He is the author of the Civic Model for Family Counseling and he and his colleagues are organizing ICSA to be a demonstration in civic policy making.

Navigating a path for undocumented immigrants

Civic policy making in action on higher education access

By "Alicia"

My parents always taught me that education is the only way to get a better life; education, hard work and perseverance, I thought, were the only things I needed to pursue a higher education. Little did I know that when you are an undocumented citizen in Minnesota, like myself, that is not the whole story.

The migrant story of my family goes back to the early 1900s. Then, my great-grandfather worked as a blacksmith in the southern U.S.; my grandfather was a member of the **bracero program** during WWII. My father also migrated to California in the late '80s. Finally in 1992, a couple of months after my baby brother was born, he left again, and I didn't see him until the early 2000s when I joined him here in Minnesota.

Because of my father's work, we were all able to go to private schools on scholarship back home. My father still had to pay for the remaining tuition; he held several jobs but always called every Saturday night to check on how his children were doing. He said that he wanted to go to school and study agronomy because he loved the fields, but he never got a chance because money was always tight, and he had to work from a young age to make ends meet.

When I joined my father in Minnesota, he immediately assumed I was going to keep pursuing an education and go to college afterward. When the time came, we knocked on doors and asked around but the answer was always the same: "She is illegal, she cannot go to college." Meritocracy fell flat on its face; hard work, perseverance, exercising my civic citizenship in the community and my efforts did not matter.

My discovery of NAVIGATE was unbelievable. I was taught to not talk about my status, and yet these guys were building this organization to help people like me!

Then, years later, at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, we met Rose Vega-Shannon, an advisor there. Not only did she help us with the paperwork, but she also told us about a new group of people committed to higher education for undocumented students: NAVIGATE (www.navigatemn.org).

NAVIGATE was created to "address the growing need for resources that help immigrant students, regardless of immigration status, in Minnesota to pursue higher education. We strive for fair consideration of all immigrants in pursuit of higher education. We have focused our work on addressing the lack of information and bad information that currently exists in MN schools around immigrant students' right and means to pursue a college education."



NAVIGATE was founded by five students (four undocumented) and a cross-country coach in 2007. At that time, we were trying to pass the MN Dream Act, which Gov. Tim Pawlenty did everything to block. Those four undocumented students had already gained acceptance to private colleges in Minnesota, but during high school, they experienced how school staff weren't prepared to assist undocumented students; classmates dropped out because they thought they could not go to college; immigrant-rights organizations in Minnesota kept telling students they could not go to college without the Dream Act; and students were hearing a growing anti-immigrant sentiment everywhere—in the media, from politicians and even in their schools.

They learned how to navigate the system and wanted to make sure students coming after them did not have to struggle as much to pursue their dreams in Minnesota. In the first year, they created a website, including videos of themselves and other undocumented students so that other students would see real young people like themselves in college, parents would lose fear of their students trying to go to college and school staff would stop telling students they couldn't go to college.

NAVIGATE students also started visiting classrooms and attending conferences around the state to inspire students to stay in school and share with the world that going to college was possible even against great odds. Undocumented students have to pay out-of-state tuition in many Minnesota public colleges and universities, are not eligible for federal or state aid even if they and their families pay taxes, are not allowed to compete for most scholarships and are often limited to low-paying jobs because of their immigration status.

Also, NAVIGATE students participated in the Citizens League's Immigrant Students and **Higher Education study**. Today the Citizens League supports NAVIGATE because it falls under one of its **recommendations** for students to have access to reliable, Minnesota-focused and undocumented-student-centered information, and because these students are affected by the issue and

are actively inserting themselves as part of the solution. It is worth noting that NAVIGATE's leadership is made up mainly of undocumented college students and graduates.

My discovery of NAVIGATE was unbelievable. I was taught to not talk about my status, and yet these guys were building this organization to help people like me! So that meant that there were many others, and I was not alone. I joined NAVIGATE as a volunteer and am now a college connector. In NAVIGATE, I learned to embrace my migration story and speak up; through leadership development, my hope came back, and so did the dreams. I have received training to help other people go to college, made presentations to students and parents in Minnesota, talked in conferences and given testimony to hundreds of people that we all can go to college. That is how important NAVIGATE is for many of us; it is safe space, it is a motivational space, and it is fulfilling.

What started many years ago with hopes and dreams is now a reality, with dozens of volunteers from all around Minnesota and committed, helpful staff. I have seen many of my peers involved in NAVIGATE graduate from college and open the path for many who will follow behind. I see that their professional choices have widened from contractor jobs to grad school, or even law and medical school. Many graduates have also joined the nonprofit world and work toward social equity, inclusion and community development. Some even work on political campaigns.

Like the Citizens League, we are multi-issue and bipartisan. We care about immigration, a fair economy and trade policies, repeal of DOMA and approval of same-sex marriage that will benefit many of our LGBT members, and we are working with people from all political affiliations, within and outside government, faith groups, businesses and the nonprofit sector to make the policies that affect our lives a reality.

Undocumented students around the nation are becoming the change factor and a breath of fresh air when anti-immigrant campaigns and economic disparities are becoming part of the everyday rhetoric to divide communities. NAVIGATE's role is fundamental in fighting division and injustices, and making our academic dreams a collective reality for our students, our migrant communities and our nation.

On June 15, President Barack Obama made a historic announcement. His administration will grant temporary relief from deportation for undocumented youth who meet the established criteria and will refrain from placing other eligible young immigrants into deportation proceedings. The policy, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, will allow eligible immigrants to apply for work permits that will be valid for two years.

With this, our nation acknowledges the contributions and talents of thousands of undocumented young people who will benefit from this policy and who call the United States of America their home. It is a victory indeed worth celebrating.

However, NAVIGATE's work is far from done. We are sure that Obama's announcement will motivate many young students to perform and excel in their academic pursuits and will keep doing the same once in college. NAVIGATE will be here to make sure immigrant students have the right information to keep pursuing their academic dreams.

NAVIGATE's mission is to make sure undocumented students have access to higher education, jobs and legal status. We are working

on organizing college campus groups that will be a statewide network for immigrants and will respond to local, state and national pro- or anti-immigrant proposals. NAVIGATE is also working with other stakeholders to propose a new Minnesota Dream Act that includes financial aid access and in-state tuition rates for undocumented students (again, we all pay taxes).

A possible satellite NAVIGATE office could open in Central Minnesota in the coming year. We continue to work with and thank our congressional officials, including Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken, for continuing their support for the Federal DREAM Act and other pro-immigrant proposals. And we continue to work with national partners in pushing for this DREAM.

In Minnesota, we have a goal to speak in person with more than 3,500 people in the coming year about how undocumented students can go to college. Currently, we are working with groups like the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota to organize workshops about Obama's Deferred Action to make sure that the most students benefit (it's estimated that 10,000 undocumented youth will benefit in Minnesota).

Unfortunately, I am over the age limit to qualify for this policy. However, my educational dreams are far from being extinguished; education is still the only way for me to go. We will continue to fight for a humane and comprehensive immigration reform.

These are the wonders of education—it is all yours and no one can ever take it away from you; and when you use it toward positive community collective efforts, great things can be achieved. Undocumented students have challenged, redefined and raised the bar away from the erroneous stereotypes that immigrant communities face. We cannot do it alone, of course. Alliances matter. Groups like the Citizens League are essential in our efforts to produce good, common-sense policies. ●

"Alicia" is a college connector for NAVIGATE, an organization created to address the growing needs of immigrant students, regardless of immigration status. The Citizens League is a partner with NAVIGATE. She uses a pseudonym here because of legal concerns due to her immigration status.

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PERSPECTIVES

Expanding Minnesota's Conversation



Next steps, now

Civic policy making in practice among Minnesota's Millennials

By Diane Tran

In May 2009, inspired by my engagement with a Citizens League Action Group focused on connecting young people with opportunities for meaningful community engagement and volunteerism, I began blogging about active citizenship, emerging leadership, and issues of relevance to the Millennial generation in Minnesota.

What can we emerging leaders do now to build relationships, trust, and a shared vision for Minnesota so that we, today and in 20 years' time, can be more successful in implementing it? This question pushed me to engage others' insights. During the year and a half that followed, I completed nearly 50 one-on-one conversations, sharing my ideas and vision for Minnesota Rising and listening for how it might be applicable to the efforts of local emerging leaders and their organizations.

I attended numerous young professionals' events, met with leadership from a range of emerging leader organizations, and spoke about Minnesota Rising at the Minnesota Jaycees 2010 Annual Convention. After some initial conversations and a year of online interaction via Twitter, Facebook, and blogging, I developed enough followers and friends to begin engaging in large group conversations with emerging leaders across the Twin Cities.

I convened the first meeting in May 2010, with 20 people in attendance on a Saturday morning, including representatives from many of the key emerging leader organizations. The opportunity to map the myriad existing young professionals groups and the potential to develop some type of generational agenda with other emerging leaders excited those in the room. At the close of the gathering, we agreed that we should continue to meet in this manner and determined that one way to move forward would be to jointly plan a large event that each of our groups could benefit from as well as help to carry out.

A 10-person planning committee targeted Nov. 13, working to develop content,

logistics, and outreach for the first Minnesota Rising Un/Conference, so named for its hybrid of traditional and innovative activities for facilitating conversation and interaction. We enlisted 16 Network Partners to help promote and execute the event, brought on four event sponsors, and despite a surprise snowstorm, had 70+ attendees present out of 100+ registered. The Un/Conference, focused on the potential the rising generation has to contribute to Minnesota, energized the attendees, many of whom have since engaged more deeply with Minnesota Rising as it seeks to build the network for what's next.

CHANGE GENERATION

With massive numbers of Baby Boomers retiring, Minnesota's workforce and demographics will look dramatically different in just a few short years. One oft-noted issue of concern is the leadership gap that will deepen as many seasoned, long-standing executives and leaders retire. While some succession planning has taken place, the sheer numbers of the Baby Boomers means their departure will have a profound impact upon how business and society function in coming years.

The challenge of a successful transition of power is heightened by the lack of an emerging or middle talent pool that has been cultivated with skills, institutional knowledge and relationships, and a shared vision for how to proceed. Without a sustained group of leaders and citizens committed to the betterment of Minnesota, policymaking and critical decisions are subject to political cycles and partisan campaign promises. Policy decisions and conversations have to be broader than election cycles; otherwise, they are subject to progress within the confines of two-, four-, or six-year terms. The tough problems we face as a state will not be solved with short-sightedness and polarization.

The Citizens League's new method of civic policy making allows not only for a

more expansive understanding of who can be policy makers (emerging as well as established leaders), but invites in ways to participate in public dialogue and engagement.

As we've learned with Minnesota Rising, we need to forge a new civic discourse, built on trust and relationships cultivated over time. This culture shift won't take place easily or overnight. It may, in fact, take an entire generation to change the conversation. That's why we need to begin the work now. Emerging leaders are poised to be the next Greatest Generation. Unlike previous generations' brick and mortar legacies, the very manner in which today's emerging leaders conduct their work may ultimately be the most powerful contribution we make to our society.

UPWARD AND ONWARD

The work of developing a shared vision for our generation is being co-created, and while we have some general principles and parameters, the end remains to be seen. For the time being, the work is an attempt to shift society from back-room dealings to relationship-based politics and a culture of collaboration. The intent is for emerging leaders to learn a new way of being before arriving in positions of leadership to repopulate the old systems. This new way is achieved through collaborative leadership.

Over the coming years, we hope to create a powerful, idealistic, vivid vision of the future in Minnesota through engaging emerging leaders, high-schoolers, college students, and more, across the state. Through the Minnesota Rising Cascading Conversations Tour, we'll seek to discover our shared visions and values, and to leverage expansive leadership to build our Minnesota. Working collectively, we will be able to identify, nurture, and take with us the best of our generation as we move up and on in life. Together. ●

Diane Tran is a Citizens League board member, founder of Minnesota Rising, and a project manager at Grassroots Solutions.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685

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Signed, Larry Schumacher, Editor, November 30, 2012

Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total number of copies (net press run)	1,375	1,250
B. Paid and/or requested circulation		
1. Paid/requested outside-county		
mail subscriptions stated on form 3541	604	525
2. Paid in-county subscriptions	514	522
3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	0	0
4. Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
C. Total paid and/or requested circulation	1,118	1,047
D. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside-county as stated on form 3541	0	0
2. In-county as stated on form 3541	0	0
3. Other classes mailed though the USPS	0	0
4. Free distribution outside the mail	0	0
E. Total free distribution	0	0
F. Total distribution	1,118	1,047
G. Copies not distributed	257	203
H. Total	1,375	1,250
I. Percent paid and/or requested circulation	100	100

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