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A Spirit of Celebration

Merrick Community Services was founded 110 years ago as a settlement house in response to some of Saint Paul's hardest realities: poverty, hunger, instability, and inequality. From the beginning, the work has not been easy, but when I look through photos from various time periods in our organization's history, I see a common thread: joy. I see people laughing, helping each other, and celebrating successes large and small.

Merrick's programs and services are marked by a spirit of celebration. In this issue of our newsletter, you'll find many opportunities to celebrate with us. Whether it's attending an event, **making a gift**, or volunteering with one of our programs, know that you're always invited.

Thank you for being a part of our community,

Daniel A. Rodriguez,
Executive Director



MERRICK
Community Services
Growing. Stronger. Together.

SAVE THE DATE

Merrick has planned a series of FUNdraisers happening over the next few months. These fun, casual events are an opportunity for supporters to get out and enjoy the summer while supporting Merrick's programs. Come to one or come to them all!

Eat for Change

Saturday, June 9
4-8 p.m.
Chipotle, 7455 Currell Blvd, Woodbury
Chipotle will donate 50% of proceeds to Merrick Community Services when you show a flyer or let them know you're supporting the cause.

Band Together, Fight Hunger

Saturday, June 16
6:30-9 p.m.
Guardian Angels Church, 8260 4th St N, Oakdale
An evening of great music featuring David Ray, Diminished Faculties, and Chaunté Shayne. All proceeds benefit local food shelves. Tickets include burgers, brats, beer, and pop. Contact Samantha Soriano at ssoriano@merrickcs.org to get tickets (\$15 for adults, \$10 for youth).



This year's Merrick Mix & Mingle will be held on Thursday, October 11, from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the James J. Hill Center in Saint Paul.

As in past years, the Mix & Mingle will feature live music and entertainment, heavy hors d'oeuvres, live and silent auctions, and an inspirational program. This social gathering of philanthropists, community leaders, organizational partners, and friends of Merrick will be an engaging networking opportunity for all interested in making a difference on Saint Paul's East Side.

Come celebrate Merrick's 110-year commitment to the East Side community and support individuals and families who are struggling with poverty.

Visit <https://merrickcs.org/mmm/> for more information and to get tickets.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Is your business or organization interested in becoming a sponsor of the Merrick Mix & Mingle? Sponsorships are available at various levels, ranging from \$500 to \$15,000, and include promotional benefits such as:

- Logo and link featured on Merrick's website.
- Social media shout-outs.
- Acknowledgement in news releases.

Contact Brandon Griffin at bgriffin@merrickcs.org or 651-219-5557 for more information about becoming a sponsor.

Construction Training Graduates Celebrate & Support Each Other

On Friday, May 25th, the 2018 Construction Training graduates celebrated their completion of the program with an intimate gathering of family, friends, and Merrick Community Services staff.



Construction Training graduate Thao Xiong and his mother

The celebration involved tacos, cake, and a chance for any of the graduates to give a speech. “This is the first thing I’ve really accomplished in my life,” said an emotional Jessica Bales.

“Let’s support one another. Let’s reach out. Let’s get this,” said Marion Smith.

During the intense weeks of learning to operate machinery; getting certified in OSHA 30 and First Aid & CPR; and visiting job fairs and unions; the Construction Training participants became a tight-knit group. Now, they’ve started a Facebook group to stay in touch and share opportunities with each other.

Merrick’s Construction Training Program empowers unemployed and underemployed adults to

start a new career path, gain steady employment, and earn a livable wage. Women, who are often underrepresented in the construction field, made up more than half of this year’s graduating class.

Last year, 70% of Construction Training graduates were placed into gainful employment. Of those employed, 70% retained their job for at least one year. Prospects are good for this year’s graduates, who are equipped with a new set of skills and certifications, as well as, perhaps most importantly, an energetic and supportive community.

To learn more about Merrick’s Construction Training Program, contact Robert Taylor at rtaylor@merrickcs.org or 651-219-5555.



Graduates: Jean Louis Teyouda, Henrique KAI, James Reaves, Twayne Anderson, Benjamin Lenoir, Mishalina Ramsey, Marion Smith, Mandisa Curtis, Talayah Scurlock, Ethan Thao, Charlissey Tyson, Jessica Bales, Thao Xiong.



Marion Smith accepts her diploma from Employment Services Supervisor Robert Taylor.

SAVE THE DATE, CONTINUED

Crooked Fundraiser Give-Back Event

Monday, June 18
Crooked Pint Ale
House & Event Center,
1734 Adolphus Street,
Maplewood
The Maplewood Crooked
Pint will donate 15%
of your dine-in bill to
Merrick's Family Services
programs.

Bean Bag Tournament

Sunday, June 24
2 -4 p.m.
Gulden's, 2999 North Hwy
61, Maplewood
A family-friendly event with
all proceeds benefiting
the Merrick Community
Services Food Shelf.

Merrick Night Out at the Saint Paul Saints Game

Friday, August 17
A night at the ballgame
to benefit Merrick's
Employment Services
with special ticket prices
available for Merrick
partners. Contact Brandon
Griffin at
bgriffin@merrickcs.org for
more information.



Long-time volunteer Della Knoll with Merrick Community Services
Executive Director Daniel A. Rodriguez.

A Legacy of Service

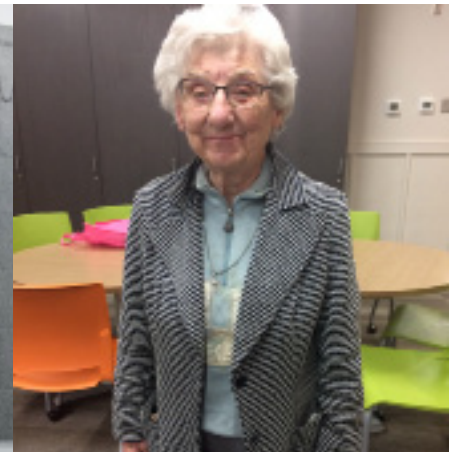
At Merrick's Volunteer Recognition & Awards event on April 12, Merrick staff and board members gathered with volunteers to share a meal, conversation, and awards both serious and silly.

One of the individuals recognized was Della Knoll, a Meals On Wheels volunteer who has been delivering meals to East Side seniors for almost 40 years.

Each year, we look forward to this opportunity to get to know our volunteers better and celebrate the incredible work they do to strengthen the East Side community.



Della Knoll pictured in a 1988
MCS newsletter



Della Knoll reports for service
in 2018

Merrick Staff in the Spotlight: Summer Interns Abdalla, Lizzy, and Matt



ABDALLA GAILDON **FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION INTERN**

Abdalla is studying Finance at the University of Minnesota, where he will be a senior this fall. He is pursuing a career as a financial analyst and hopes to complete the process to become a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), one of the most respected designations in finance. In the future, he would like to travel the world.

He grew up in Woodbury and enjoys running, bicycling, playing video games, and shooting hoops.



LIZZY HUNTER **HUMAN RESOURCES INTERN**

Lizzy will be a senior at the University of Minnesota, where she is studying Communications and Psychology. At the U, she is part of a sorority that is very active in hunger relief efforts, and her interest in helping others attracted her to working with Merrick Community Services.

She grew up in Bloomington. In her free time, she likes to read, go to the gym, watch Netflix, and spend time with her family and friends.



MATT HELGASON **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INTERN**

Matt attends Metro State University. He is studying Business Administration and will be a junior this fall. He is currently on the board of directors of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus and plans to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector.

He grew up on the East Side, so he's well-acquainted with the community that Merrick serves. In addition, he is a serious runner who has completed multiple marathons.

Merrick's **5th annual Momentum Breakfast** on Friday, May 18 featured a delicious meal compliments of Fay's Homestyle Catering; powerful stories from Merrick program participants Denise Keeler and Mandisa Curtis; and a message from Saint Paul Police Chief Todd Axtell.

"People are in need and often live in the shadow of the prosperity on the East Side," said Axtell. "I see firsthand the difference that Merrick makes each and every year."



Saint Paul Police Chief Todd Axtell



Breakfast provided by Fay's Homestyle Catering

From Homeless to Hopeful: Featured Speaker Mandisa Curtis Shares Her Story



Six years ago, Mandisa Curtis moved to St. Paul from Chicago. As a single mother of four who had just left an abusive relationship, she was struggling to support herself and her children.

"I came here homeless and broken," said Mandisa. "My domestic violence situation left me with no trust in people, and closed off from the world."

One afternoon, while she was grocery shopping, a woman overheard her explaining to her kids that she couldn't afford to buy them fruit snacks. The woman told Mandisa about Merrick Community Services, where she could go to get help.

Mandisa started visiting the Merrick Food Shelf, a reliable source of nutritious meals for her family. As she began to gain more trust in the people around her and envision a stable future for herself, she made use of more of Merrick's programs and services. Now, she is a graduate of the Construction Training Program. She is on track to find a steady job as a carpenter, and has gained the optimism and confidence that comes with developing a new skill set.

"I hope to become a carpenter and obtain a livable wage for my children and a better life," she said. "One day, I plan on building and maintaining my own home for my family."

Celebrating Another Successful March Food Drive

Thank you to all who contributed to the success of the **2018 March Food Drive.**

With committed individuals like you, we collected **over 3,000 pounds of food** and **\$80,000+** to help food-insecure families on the East Side.

Whether you contributed volunteer hours, financial support, or food donations, we appreciate your partnership. We could not do this work without you.

Thank you for your commitment to making it possible for every family to gather around their table for wholesome and nutritious meals.



Thank You to Our Recent Partners



WCA FOUNDATION





Merrick Community Services
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info@merrickcs.org

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[youtube.com/channel/
UCDwt-isjF3Hx67XGEisOzww](https://youtube.com/channel/UCDwt-isjF3Hx67XGEisOzww)

From left: Senior Services brunch, 1970's; A Family Services participant receives handmade teddy bears donated by volunteers from Cappella University, 2018; Youth Services awards ceremony, 1970's

MERRICK BY THE NUMBERS

-13

Winning score submitted by a team from Ecolab at the 2nd Annual Merrick Golf Scramble at Phalen Golf Course.

23,000

Pounds of food to be distributed during Merrick's 4 Summer Produce Distributions, equivalent to the number of breaths the average person takes in one day.

13

Number of graduates from this spring's Construction Training Program, enough workers to complete 2 miles of highway construction on I-94.

50

Participants served by Merrick's Family Services eviction prevention programs in May, enough families to fill a whole high-rise apartment building.