Health at the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses on the development and evaluation of community-based obesity prevention interventions with parents and children, especially parents and children in low-income and minority families. Kirti V. Das is a research fellow in the State and Local Policy Center at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. He has worked on a wide range of health-related research projects, including the SPLASH project described in this article, and projects examining the health impact of neighborhood greenness and the health disparities between urban and suburban residents.

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### Faculty Interactive Research Program Awards

CURA is pleased to announce the recipients of faculty research awards for 2013–2014 provided through the Faculty Interactive Research Program (FIRP). FIRP was created to encourage University faculty members to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. Grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis.

- **Structural and Individualistic Determinants of Access to Healthcare Services: A Case Study of Somali and Sudanese Immigrants and Refugees in Duluth, Minnesota.** According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Somali and Sudanese immigrants and refugees who initially settle in the Twin Cities continue to engage in secondary migration by moving their families to northern Minnesota. The region experienced a 27% increase in new settlements of immigrant refugee families from the Twin Cities between 2000 and 2010. In this study, John A. Arthur (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Minnesota at Duluth) will analyze the healthcare sector in the Duluth area to: investigate the normative, cultural, religious, and economic factors that impede access to healthcare services among Somalis and Sudanese; identify the organizational and institutional/structural context within which these impediments are found; and develop social policies and conduct reviews in conjunction with Duluth-area hospitals, clinics, and stakeholders about how to ameliorate these impediments. The project will develop policy outcomes and protocols to streamline access to healthcare services for Somali and Sudanese residents.

- **Identifying and Mitigating Impacts from Expanding Urbanization to Duluth-Area Streams.** Urbanization has steadily replaced native vegetation with impervious surfaces, affecting watershed hydrology. In coordination with the City of Duluth, Karen Gran (Department of Geological Sciences, University of Minnesota at Duluth) will develop a model relating urbanization to hydrograph behavior (the rate of flow past a specific point in a channel over a period of time) for basins within Duluth. Her research team will hydrologically condition light detection and ranging (LiDAR) topographic data and generate up-to-date land-cover data for Duluth. These data will be used to generate synthetic hydrographs that combine topographic and land-cover effects on runoff. Stream gauging on subbasins with different land-use assemblages will help calibrate the model. Study basins will be chosen in consultation with the City of Duluth to include areas where urban expansion is likely, so future scenarios may be run to test the effect such growth may have on peak flows. As city managers rebuild from the June 2012 flood and plan for future growth, these data will help them proactively manage growth in local watersheds.

- **Fringe Banking and Low-Income Communities in the Twin Cities.** Fringe banking—using financial services such as check-cashing outlets, pawnshops, and payday lenders instead of conventional banks—has grown rapidly in recent years. These services are costly, with fees and higher interest rates costing customers several hundred to more than a thousand dollars a year in excess of conventional banking. Despite the higher fees and interest, the industry tends to thrive in poorer urban and ethnic-minority communities. However, very little is known about the industry and why residents use it. David Karjans (Department of American Studies, University of Minnesota at Twin Cities) will estimate the extent and location of fringe banking in the Twin Cities, interview consumers of these services to gather data, conduct analyses on why they choose fringe banking over conventional banking, and distribute the results to community-based organizations to inform future policy development.

- **Minnesota Boomers at Work/in Transition.** Demographic and economic forces are upending conventional career paths, constraining the employment and retirement options of Twin Cities metropolitan-area baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964). Because of age discrimination and the absence of flexible, part-time, project-based, and meaningful jobs for this age group, many more baby boomers want to work than actually do so. Joining forces with SHiFT, a grassroots nonprofit that supports people at midlife who are reframing and transitioning their work and life, Phyllis Moen (McKnight Presidential Endowed Chair, Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota at Twin Cities) will investigate local innovations that offer new ways of working for Twin Cities baby boomers as they move from (or lose) career jobs. The goal of the project is to identify policies and practices that better fit the demographics and preferences of the 21st-century Twin Cities workforce.