

# Program and Staff Updates

**T**he Hennepin–University Partnership (HUP), in collaboration with Hennepin County Public Health Department and Hennepin County Library, hosted forums on May 10 and June 21 to connect front-line staff from Hennepin County with University of Minnesota faculty who have expertise on brain development that is relevant to the County’s work with children and families. The first forum, “Understanding Infant Brain Development,” featured Megan Gunnar, director of the University’s Institute of Child Development, and Ann Masten, Irving B. Harris Professor of Child Psychology, and drew 195 County staff. The second forum, “Maladaptation and Resilience in Maltreated Children,” featured Dante Cicchetti, William Harris Professor of Child Development and Psychiatry, and drew 90 attendees. HUP is working with County and University contacts to develop possible follow-ups, including providing more “research-to-practice” resources for County staff. For those interested in this or other topics related to Hennepin County, local government, and the University of Minnesota, visit the Hennepin–University Partnership Interactive Site at [hup.hoop.la](http://hup.hoop.la). This website is an online resource for Hennepin County and University of Minnesota faculty, staff, and students to converse about their interests, share resources, and exchange ideas.

The **Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing (MCNO)** extends its thanks to Yia Yang for his five years of work at CURA. Yang recently began a new job as a coordinator at the University of Minnesota’s Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence, where he will be working with University students. MCNO wishes him all the best. He will be missed.

For the second consecutive year, Crow Wing County received a National Association of Counties (NACo) National Achievement Award for a project supported by CURA’s

**Community Assistantship Program (CAP).** Crow Wing County received the award for its Lakeshore Impervious Surface Coverage Research Study, conducted in 2012 with assistance from Robert Backes, a CAP research assistant from St. Cloud State University. The project calculated impervious-surface data for 32 lakes of more than 500 acres in size using high-resolution aerial photography and property sketches from the County’s Property Valuation and Classification Office. Studies have shown that water quality begins to decline when impervious-surface coverage reaches 12–15%. These local data will help guide land-use decisions to improve water quality in lakes and rivers within the county.

CURA was recently awarded a grant from the McKnight Foundation to support expansion of its already successful **Neighborhood Partnership Initiative**. This new pilot initiative is centered on the role of technology in strengthening low-income communities in the Twin Cities. The program will work with diverse communities in the Twin Cities to collaboratively create, design, and deploy community technology tools and practices.

The **Resilient Communities Project (RCP)** and its community partner for the 2013–2014 academic year, the City of North St. Paul, hosted a kick-off event for the partnership on September 6. More than 60 city staff, residents, business owners, and community partners joined University faculty, staff, and students to inaugurate the year-long partnership, which will match more than 20 city-identified projects with dozens of University of Minnesota courses and hundreds of students during the fall and spring semesters. RCP Program Manager **Mike Greco** will be sharing success stories from RCP’s first-year partnership with the City of Minnetonka at the Upper Midwest Planning Conference in Rochester, Minnesota in September, as well as the

Imagining America National Conference in Syracuse, New York and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Conference in Nashville, Tennessee in October. RCP is pleased to welcome **Nancy Ferber**, a first-year graduate student in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, who was recently hired as a program assistant.

**Will Craig** begins his 54th (and last) year at the University of Minnesota, where he entered as a freshman in 1960. He has been at CURA since 1970 and has served as associate director since 1999. This past summer, he organized sessions for the 24th Annual Conference of the National States Geographic Information Council. His focus is on helping states develop and support state-wide address systems, complete with geographic coordinates, that will help emergency responders, the U.S. Census Bureau, and others do their work more efficiently and effectively. Several states have such a system, but each has been created in a different way. The different approaches will be documented, accompanied by recommendations and best practices. In addition, Craig is serving on a study panel for the Transportation Research Board’s Airport Cooperative Research Program. The thrust of this study is integrating airport GIS data with public-agency GIS, focusing on barriers, opportunities, and successful examples. Craig was also recently reappointed to the Minnesota Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council.

In September, **Neeraj Mehta** traveled to Portland, Oregon, with 40 leaders from communities of color in the Twin Cities to participate in a learning exchange with the Coalition of Communities of Color, an organization focused on addressing the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by Portland families, children, and communities.