Tony Damiano was recently hired on permanently in the position of research specialist for the Community GIS (CGIS) program. Tony will be splitting his time working on larger community mapping projects and special research for the director of CURA. Tony recently completed a master’s degree in urban and regional planning and has extensive experience using GIS and developing web mapping applications for CURA’s community partners.

Jeff Matson, CGIS program manager, along with Jacob Wascalus from the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank contributed an essay to a newly released book from the Urban Institute, Strengthening Communities with Neighborhood Data. Their chapter is about local efforts to build data partnerships among university, city, and community organizations. The book is available for purchase or as a free e-publication here: http://www.urban.org/strengtheningcommunities/

Jeff Matson was invited to present on the work CURA has been doing in partnership with Twin Cities and national Local Initiatives Support Corporation at the 2014 Neighborhood Revitalization Conference in Washington, D.C., in July. The presentation focused on racial disparities among a number of indicators in four Twin Cities neighborhoods and how we might quantify and develop solutions to the gaps that exist in areas such as housing, employment, education, and public safety.

On September 26, 2014, the Hennepin-University Partnership (HUP) hosted a tour of the University of Minnesota’s Minneapolis campus for Hennepin County Cohort members and their supervisors. County staff attending represented departments including Human Services, Public Works, Libraries, and Corrections. Tour participants visited 10 different locations on campus and heard from 17 University faculty and staff members, including Megan Gunnar, Institute of Child Development; Brad Hokanson, College of Design; and Albert Tims, School of Journalism & Mass Communication.

The HUP hosted a workshop on July 10, 2014, for Hennepin County employees entitled “Working with Students 101.” The workshop focused on different ways Hennepin County departments can engage with students. The event featured a panel of four Hennepin County employees who have engaged with students in a variety of ways. More than 30 county staff attended the workshop from 10 different Hennepin County departments.

Hennepin County’s Environmental Services Department worked with a class at the University’s Law School on a capstone class titled “Climate Change and Clean Energy,” supervised by Professor Hari Osofsky. The goal was to help the county explore options for expanding the distribution of the energy that is produced at its waste-to-energy facility, the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC). The HERC is located in downtown Minneapolis and burns 1,000 tons of garbage per day to generate energy. Students in this capstone gained practical experience on local efforts to combat climate change and clean energy while providing valuable information to the county on legal considerations associated with energy sales from the HERC facility.

During the summer of 2014, the Hennepin County Library hired a PhD candidate from the art history department to review artwork in each of the libraries for the Stop, Look, Art! project. The art historian researched 115 library-owned art pieces and produced brief descriptions for each piece. The existing information was incomplete or, in some cases, unverified. The library plans to use the descriptions generated to update its website and enhance in-building displays.

The Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office collaborated with University Extension to replicate a federally funded Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) study. The purpose of the study was to collect data on drug use and related behaviors among adults booked in jail. The study involved a survey that includes questions about drug use, health, and demographic data.

Jeff Corn received a social change award from Isuroon, a Somali women’s health advocacy organization, at their 5th anniversary celebration. CURA and Jeff have worked with Isuroon on culturally appropriate evaluation and in March testified in support of SF 1798 before the State Senate Health and Human Services committee on a bill that sought state funding for a CBPR health evaluation project. The award was presented to Jeff for “his unique ability to listen to and empower us to do our important work.”
treatment, age of first arrest, employment and housing history, and drug market activity. A team of researchers led by Professor Mary Marczak from University Extension interviewed and completed drug testing on a random sample of males booked into the Adult Detention Center over a period of two weeks. The researchers analyzed the data collected, which the Sheriff’s Office used to inform decisions about programming and the need for services.

Jeff Corn, Community Program Coordinator, wrote a case study in the book *Asset-Based Community Development in Higher Education*, published by the Minnesota Campus Compact. The article showcases the Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing’s work with Hmong youth in North Minneapolis. Jeff also presented on this topic at Universities Public Engagement Leaders Retreat in May.

Jeff Corn has been invited to serve on the University Public Engagement Council (PEC) representing the Campus Community Coordinators Alliance. The PEC informs the University’s senior officers and governing bodies on critical and important issues regarding publicly engaged work across the university system.

Jeff Corn is excited to be participating in the 2014 Shannon Leadership Institute. The Institute is a structured, challenging, and supportive opportunity for personal and professional renewal for experienced leaders of philanthropic, civic, and community service organizations. Participants clarify the purpose of their work and their core values, identify strategies to increase their effectiveness and articulate the changes needed to enhance focus, commitment, energy and satisfaction.

The Resilient Communities Project (RCP) and the City of Rosemount co-hosted a kickoff event at the Rosemount Community Center in September to recognize their yearlong partnership. The partnership will enlist hundreds of students and dozens of faculty to provide course-based assistance to Rosemount on community-identified projects that advance local sustainability and resilience. More than 60 guests attended the kickoff event, including state representative Anna Willis and state senator Greg Clausen (both of whom represent the Rosemount area), local residents and business owners, Rosemount city staff and elected officials, local community organizations, and University of Minnesota faculty and students. For more information about the partnership and the projects involved, visit rcp.umn.edu/2014-2015-partner-rosemount/.

In July, Mike Greco transitioned to a full-time position as RCP program manager, relinquishing his duties as CURA’s communications coordinator and editor of the *CURA Reporter*. In October, Greco participated in a Frontiers in the Environment panel at the University of Minnesota’s Institute on the Environment that considered the question, “How might the Twin Cities catalyze needed urban innovations?” Other panelists included Pat Hamilton, director of the Science Museum of Minnesota’s Global Change Initiatives; Anne Hunt, environmental policy director for the City of Saint Paul; and Peter Frosh, director of strategic partnerships for Greater MSP.

Will Craig was a finalist for the University of Minnesota President’s Community Engaged Scholar Award based on his longstanding academic career that embodies the University of Minnesota’s definition of public engagement. A large group of university and professional colleagues met June 4 in the Campus Club to celebrate Craig’s career at the University of Minnesota. He started that career in 1967 and moved to CURA in 1970 as assistant director. His career at CURA involved pioneering work in the development of GIS and making that technology useful to local community organizations. He has been honored by his peers at state, national, and international levels. “This was all made possible,” said Will, “by a University culture that encourages creativity and supports work that contributes to society.”

Esther Wattenberg, CURA’s policy and program coordinator in family and child welfare, recently wrote an article on the demise of the last remaining elements of the General College at the University of Minnesota. You can read her piece at z.umn.edu/rfd.

CURA has hired Malik Holt as the Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing’s (MCNO) new Program Coordinator. Prior to joining MCNO, Malik worked as a Community Organizer with the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition to promote access, equity, and community engagement. A large group of university and professional colleagues met June 4 in the Campus Club to celebrate Craig’s career at the University of Minnesota. He started that career in 1967 and moved to CURA in 1970 as assistant director. His career at CURA involved pioneering work in the development of GIS and making that technology useful to local community organizations. He has been honored by his peers at state, national, and international levels. “This was all made possible,” said Will, “by a University culture that encourages creativity and supports work that contributes to society.”

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benefits of bicycle infrastructure, policy, and engagement. He also served as the Executive Director and Economic Development Organizer of North Minneapolis’s Harrison Neighborhood Association for 11 years leading community engagement projects, racial equitable development initiatives, business development, and land use planning.

Malik currently sits on the Board of Directors for the Headwaters Foundation for Justice. He is a long-standing member on CURA’s Kris Nelson Community Based Research Program Grant Review Committee, a 2004 graduate of MCNO’s Neighborhood Organizing Training Program, and a past member of the MCNO Advisory Committee.

Jonathan Miller was hired as the new Communications Coordinator for CURA at the end of October. He is also the co-editor of this issue of the CURA Reporter and going forward he will be the sole editor of the publication. Since starting his position, Jonathan has met individually with CURA program staff to identify areas of common need that he will prioritize to accomplish in the first several months of his tenure. He has also plugged into as many communications resources that the University of Minnesota has to offer as possible. Previously Jonathan was the Director of Communications for the Minnesota State College Student Association and the co-editor of The Alley Newspaper in south Minneapolis.