

# CBR Project Summaries Spring–Summer 2015

Each issue of the *CURA Reporter* features a few capsule descriptions of new projects under way at CURA. These projects represent only a portion of those that receive support from CURA and its partners during the year. Please visit the CURA website for a full listing of supported projects and for more information on applying for the next round of Community-Based Research projects. Whenever possible, we have included the name and program of students attached to each project—those who are missing have not been assigned by time of press.

## ■ “Cleveland Neighborhood Tenant Organizing Project”

*Cleveland Neighborhood Association*  
**Sarah Rossman, Youth Development Leadership**

The Cleveland Neighborhood Association (CNA) is a nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the quality of life in the North Minneapolis neighborhood. CNA has struggled with meaningfully engaging renters to participate in CNA beyond event attendance. The organization seeks to have all tenants engaged in every aspect of the organization and therefore have an accurate representation of the neighborhood and its needs. A graduate assistant will collect direct narratives and survey responses from tenants and landlords in the Cleveland Neighborhood. The student will also help host focus groups and prioritize contact with tenants to encourage engagement in events and committees. The results will help inform the CNA board and staff of ways to engage a previously under-represented group of residents with the hope that more tenants will be involved in the neighborhood’s leadership.

**Program:** Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program, Spring 2015

## ■ “Conservation District Impact Study for the Logan Park Neighborhood”

*Logan Park Neighborhood*  
**Collin Calvert, Master of Public Health**

The Logan Park Neighborhood Association (LPNA) is a city-recognized neighborhood association for community engagement located in Northeast

Minneapolis. Logan Park is one of the first planned communities of Minneapolis with a housing stock that consists of more than 50% duplexes. This has created a historic area of affordable housing within walking distance to downtown that has also become the center of the Northeast Arts District. The Minneapolis City Council has created a Conservation District designation that would focus on the design and aesthetic character of a neighborhood. A student researcher will research the feasibility and potential impact of creating a Conservation District within the Logan Park Neighborhood by looking at historic data on housing and analyzing communities where similar districts have been created. The final project should report on the feasibility for Logan Park Neighborhood to qualify for a Conservation District designation, the benefits and downsides of such a designation, potential design guidelines, and defined boundaries of the Conservation District(s). The goal is to find out if becoming a Conservation District will help keep housing affordable so Logan Park residents aren’t forced to relocate by development pressures and to maintain the character of a historic neighborhood.

**Program:** Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program, Summer 2015

## ■ “Cultivate Corcoran: A Grassroots Strategy for Full Storefronts”

*Corcoran Neighborhood*  
**Eric King, Master of Urban and Regional Planning**

Corcoran Neighborhood Organization (CNO) was established in 1975 around a grassroots effort to create Corcoran Park on a closed school site. Since then, CNO has continued to unite and equip neighbors to improve and protect the neighborhood. This project is to create a community-authored and -driven strategy to cultivate a commercial real estate environment that is fully occupied, stable, and responsive to residents’ needs, through strategic support and collaboration with business and property owners. A student researcher will gather, compile, and present demographic, economic, and business trend data to support this initiative. The student researcher will also work with

a CNO consultant on the larger initiative to create a community-driven economic development strategy and will provide additional support for the initiative as workload and time allows. The final project will help support the larger initiative that aims to develop and cultivate ongoing roles for residents to drive a more responsive and mutually beneficial retail environment.

**Program:** Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program, Summer 2015

## ■ “Exploring the Medicine Wheel as a Framework for American Indian Organizational Development”

*American Indian Family Center*  
**Lann Briel, Master of Professional Studies in Arts and Cultural Leadership**

The American Indian Family Center (AIFC) is a nonprofit organization established under the St. Paul Ramsey County Children’s Initiative in 1996. Its mission is to provide programs and services enriched with American Indian values and culture to American Indian individuals and families residing in St. Paul. The Medicine Wheel is at the core of all AIFC services. The graduate assistant will help review the previous research project (which will provide a framework from which to work on), research how AIFC currently utilizes the Medicine Wheel, look at how its data is being managed and provide recommendations on how to more effectively manage its services and data to meet the needs of AIFC using the Medicine Wheel. The student may also connect with other American Indian and non-American Indian organizations to learn what is similar and different about the way they manage data and develop organizing strategies that incorporate the Medicine Wheel. The results will be compiled into a report that will help benefit everyone served by the AIFC.

**Program:** Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program, Spring 2015

## ■ “NEON Incubator/Coworking Space”

*Northside Ec Op Network*  
**Lawrence Karongo, Master’s of Public Policy**

The Northside Economic Opportunity Network (NEON) seeks to address

imbalances in racial and economic equity among lower-income entrepreneurs of color seeking to develop small businesses. NEON is currently building a business plan to create a traditional general business incubator and coworking space for community members and entrepreneurs in North Minneapolis. A student researcher will conduct a needs and interest survey and analysis of professionals and entrepreneurs that will likely utilize the space. The student researcher will also research and consolidate data from successful models that have been implemented in similar demographic areas. The research conducted will be used as an analysis to be included in the final business model for the NEON Incubator and be shared with community stakeholders and potential supporters to secure necessary funding for the project, and increase the program's success and sustainability.

**Program:** Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program, Summer 2015

■ **“Ramping Up the Hazelnut Industry through Market Development”**

***MN Hazelnut Foundation***

**Amanda Sames, Conservation Biology**

The Minnesota Hazelnut Foundation (MNHF) was formed in 2008 with a mission of growing hazelnuts, hazelnut farmers, and hazelnut farming through outreach, education, and collaboration between members and their communities. Using the University of Minnesota Southeast Regional Partnership's successful Byerly's Apple Pie project as a model, this project will convene a focus group specific to hazelnuts to work through potential food product and marketing strategy in order to maintain and stimulate hazelnut production. A graduate assistant is interviewing Minnesota Hazelnut Foundation members about what they are currently doing with their nuts, products they are

selling and to whom, and strategizing about other possible uses for locally grown hazelnuts. The graduate assistant will compile the interviews into a report, start a list of researchers who can contribute to product development components, and also convene a focus group of hazelnut buyers from the Twin Cities. All of this will be compiled into a final report where the results will be published and shared with existing and new growers so they are aware of the marketing avenues available before growing.

**Program:** Community Assistantship Program (CAP), Spring 2015

■ **“Renters' Rights in the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood: Assessing Renters' Knowledge Resource Access, Impediments, and Advocacy”**  
***Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association***

**Erin Olson, Urban and Regional Planning, Public Health**

The Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA) is a nonprofit neighborhood organization that works to enhance the quality of life in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood by facilitating community engagement, embracing a diversity of voices, and fostering economic and community development. This project will illuminate further issues and challenges for neighborhood renters, who comprise over half the neighborhood. PPNA will determine the roadblocks for renters to understand and exercise their right to safe, healthy housing, and will coordinate with the student researcher and tenant leaders. PPNA has established its renter networks and these residents are eager to be a part of this project. A student research assistant will work with PPNA to develop and implement a research project that will assess renters' knowledge. PPNA will use these findings

to shape its collaborative renter engagement work in 2015 and to better meet the needs of tenants to implement strategies.

**Program:** Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program, Spring 2015

■ **“Tools for Measuring the Yield of Community Farms and Gardens”**  
***Urban Farm Garden Alliance***

**Rachel Grewell, Sociology**

Started in spring 2014, the Urban Farm and Garden Alliance includes leaders from six different community gardens who share ideas and resources and co-host education sessions on various garden topics. The Alliance is part of a network of community gardens in the Frogtown, Midway, and Summit-University neighborhoods that partner with other organizations and institutions to educate, create, and engage the neighborhood with a new model for growing healthy food. A student researcher will help test, and where necessary develop, practical ways for volunteers and backyard box gardeners to measure the yield of their work, both vegetative yield (the food they grow), and social yield (the relationships and skills people build through the Alliance gardens and backyard box gardening programs). Yield is a central measure of agriculture, providing a set of metrics for farmers to demonstrate what they produced for planning, securing credit, etc., but is very difficult for urban farmers to quantify for various reasons. An expanded understanding of how to measure yield would enable community food advocates to make their case to funders, assess how well they meet food needs directly, and also demonstrate the broader range of positive impacts the activities have on community food security.

**Program:** Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program, Summer 2015