

Recent Project Awards

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 will receive support from CURA and its partners during the coming year.

■ **Ain Dah Yung Center's Cultural Evaluation Project.** The Ain Dah Yung Center hosts the first culturally relevant emergency shelter for American Indian youth, as well as allowing American Indian youth and families to understand and uphold their indigenous rights. This project was needed to develop a more efficient evaluation model for gathering data from community members and to help Ain Dah Yung Center address the immediate needs of youth in crisis, as well as impact issues at the root of homelessness. The model is culturally relevant, acknowledging the social, political, and cultural contexts surrounding today's social conditions. Scott DeMuth, a sociology Ph.D. student in the College of Liberal Arts, analyzed the current evaluation system, conducted a literature review of indigenous measures, and developed the evaluation tool based on the medicine wheel, interviewed organization staff, then compiled the results into a final report. His work is being used to evaluate multiple aspects of Ain Dah Yung Center's activities and will allow the center to create better programs and help at-risk youth.

Program: Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

■ **District Council Community Planning Engagement.** The Macalester-Groveland Community Council is the official citizen-participation organization for residents, businesses, and institutions in the Macalester-Groveland area. This project kick-started a two-year community planning process intended to engage residents and stakeholders through extensive community outreach. The research informed the council with a better sense of what processes and strategies have worked for other communities and how best to implement them. Andrew Tran, a Master of Urban and Regional Planning student at the Hubert H. Humphrey

School of Public Affairs, discovered, categorized, and summarized neighborhood-planning processes and community-engagement activities, as well as literature reviews of case studies and interviews with residents and neighborhood groups. The final results are being used to develop the neighborhood's engagement strategy for their district plan and will serve as a resource for other district councils.

Program: Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

■ **Minnesota South Asian Health Study.** Sewa-Asian Indian Family Wellness is an organization committed to bringing total family wellness to the South Asian community through promoting research, community, advocacy, and direct services to improve the quality of life of its clients. This project conducted a baseline Minnesota South Asian Health Study to gain a better understanding of health disparities and needs in this community, as well as to identify health problems unique to this community and to improve the amount and quality of health data for South Asians in Minnesota. Melissa Kwon, Ph.D., a Research Associate in the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, served as a faculty mentor for the project. Julie Lee, an undergraduate student in the College of Liberal Arts, and Phyo Ma, an undergraduate student in the College of Biological Sciences, informed the community about the survey, assisted in collecting data using surveys and interviews of community members, entered the data into a program for data analysis, and presented the project results to stakeholders. These results are being used to increase access to needed health care for the South Asian population and to help address issues that community members face that impact their quality of life.

Program: Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

■ **Welcome Back to the River Winona, Working Together to Transform Levee Park.** The city of Winona is a strong community with important connections to its water resources, which contain many scenic, ecological, and cultural

characteristics. However, some of these connections need refurbishing. This project sought to understand how to utilize the public space of Levee Park, which ranges from traditional park spaces to wetlands and forest islands. Improvements were considered for public access, recreation, and other programming that celebrate connection to the river, strengthen economic vitality, support tourism, and enhance the community as a whole. Erin Garnass-Holmes, a dual-degree Master of Landscape Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning student, documented historical and existing conditions on the river site and identified redevelopment case studies. The final project report is serving as a roadmap for implementation of the physical and programmatic improvements necessary to stimulate a renewed public interest in the riverfront.

Program: Community Assistantship Program (CAP)

■ **Melrose Lake Targeted Resource Protection and Improvements.** Melrose Lake Improvement Association is an organization created to proactively preserve and protect the general welfare of the lake and its environment. This project consolidated data, obtained updated mapping, and identified historic baseline data to determine if the current decreases in water quality, fish count, and water depth are anecdotal or a part of a pattern. This work was the initial step in the restoration of the lake, and was aimed at packaging data and maps into a report while at the same time determining the scope of lake deficiencies and how to resolve them. Ruby Irving-Hewey, a graduate student in Biological Sciences at St. Cloud State University, performed a literature review, determined baseline lake characteristics, implemented water-quality tests, executed GIS mapping of nearby watersheds, and summarized best practices to mitigate the lake's deficiencies. The project materials are being used to begin a scientifically efficient restoration of Melrose Lake through historic understanding of the lake, as well as current mapping and treatments to keep the lake and its wildlife healthy.

Program: Community Assistantship Program (CAP)