CURA Program and Staff Updates

The **Community Geographic Information Systems (CGIS)** program recently hired research assistants **Kristen Murray**, a master's student in landscape architecture, and **Gina Hollinday**, a master's student in geographic information science, to assist with community-based mapping projects. Outgoing research assistant **Jacob Wascalus** started a job with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis in early November. **Jeff Matson**, CGIS coordinator, was invited to present "Using Data to Manage Neighborhood Change" at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis on October 28, "Tracking Community-level Outcomes" at the Opportunity Finance Network conference in Minneapolis on November 15, and "Mobilizing Grassroots Participation in Data-Driven Policy" at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond in Baltimore, Maryland, on December 7. Research from the CGIS program was also featured in the *North Minneapolis Housing Market Index,* a report produced by the Folwell Center for Urban Initiatives. The report can be found on the CURA website at www.cura.umn.edu /publications/catalog/h2011-1**.**

The **Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing (MCNO)** received an Outstanding Community Partner Award from the University of Minnesota Office for Equity and Diversity for its Sunday Hmong tutoring program, which brings Hmong students to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus to work with tutors in a variety of subjects. **Jay Clark**, MCNO program director, received a VISION award from Validating and Inspiring Successful Initiatives for Outreach and Network (V.I.S.I.O.N.) in September at the organization's annual event honoring individuals, businesses, and organizations in service and leadership in the Hmong community. Clark was given the award in recognition of his many years of dedicated service to strengthen the Hmong community. On November 10, Clark was an invited presenter at the Neighborhood Initiative Workshop in Grand Forks, North Dakota, leading a conversation about how Grand Forks might envision the community from its neighborhoods up. **Margaret Kaplan**,

MCNO operations director, attended the PolicyLink Equity Summit in Detroit, Michigan, in November, along with CGIS Program Coordinator **Jeff Matson** and CURA Engagement Coordinator **Sara Bielawski**. The three were among 150 Minnesota delegates, many of whom plan to convene regularly in the Twin Cities to discuss how to apply the lessons and insights learned at the summit to their local work.

Neighborhood Partnerships for Community Research (NPCR) has been renamed the Kris Nelson Neighborhood Research Program in honor of NPCR's longtime director, **Kris Nelson**, who passed away in June. The program will continue to focus on enhancing the capacity of community-based organizations in the Twin Cities by providing access to research and technical resources available at local academic institutions. This September, Nelson was posthumously recognized for his work on behalf of neighborhoods and communities in the Twin Cities with an award for individual lifetime achievement and leadership in planning from the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association.

The **Community Growth Planning Assistance Center (CGPAC)** is finishing work on a two-year grant from the McKnight Foundation that funds its program activities, which support faculty and student research and technical assistance to help developing communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area grow more sustainably. Pending identification of new funding sources, the program will be on hiatus beginning in January. **Mike Greco**, CGPAC director, presented outcomes from two CGPAC projects on municipal fiscal impact analysis and retrofitting suburban communities for sustainability at the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association Conference in St. Cloud in September. Greco also presented the CGPAC approach to sustainability education and community engagement at the Imagining America conference in Minneapolis in September and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) conference in Pittsburgh in October.

Edward Goetz, CURA director and Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs faculty member, received an award for outstanding contributions to postbaccalaureate, graduate, and professional education from the University of Minnesota in April. The award recognizes faculty members for excellence in instruction, instructional program development, intellectual distinction, advising and mentoring, and involvement of students in research, scholarship, and professional development.

Tom Scott, professor emeritus in the Department of Political Science and director emeritus of CURA, received a 2011 University of Minnesota President's Award for Outstanding Service. The award recognizes exceptional service to the University, its schools, colleges, departments, and service units by active or retired faculty or staff.

Will Craig, CURA associate director, was named a fellow of the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science, a consortium of more than 70 U.S. universities that focuses on research and education related to geographic information systems. Craig also completed a final year on the board of directors of the National States Geographic Information Council as past president, and co-chaired the Outreach Committee that developed a 2012 advocacy agenda for the council. He currently serves on the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office's Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council and chairs its Outreach Committee.

Esther Wattenberg, CURA's policy and program coordinator in family and child welfare, coordinated a series of reflective seminars for child-welfare supervisors and other practitioners this year. Topics have included "Trauma-Informed Practice" (March 15), "Double Jeopardy—Depressed Mothers and Their Very Young Children: A Remarkable Prospect for Change" (June 15), and "Vulnerable Children in High-Risk Families: Developing Protective Factors… Messages from Resilience Research" (December 9). For summaries and other materials from these seminars, visit www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/events /past_events/.