

2025 Nonprofit Fundraising Conference



Wednesday, July 23
McNamara Alumni Center, Minneapolis

www.minnesotanonprofits.org/fundraising2025

Welcome, Fundraisers!

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* Wifi Access

Use the network: UofM-Guest (no password required).

* *New* Expanded Sessions

Want to dig deeper into a topic than only an hour allows? Consider joining one or both of the Expanded Sessions, which will unfold over 75-minutes and include insights from industry leaders and facilitated conversation and activities. [See Expanded Session descriptions on pages 6 & 8.](#)

* Download Conference Materials

Continue your learning after today's conference. Scan the QR Code or [visit the conference website to access the Download Center](#) with the digital conference program, and session PowerPoints and handouts.



* COVID Considerations

MCN no longer requires masking at events. We do ask event attendees to help us create a supportive environment for anyone wearing a mask, and we encourage all to feel free to wear a mask, if needed.

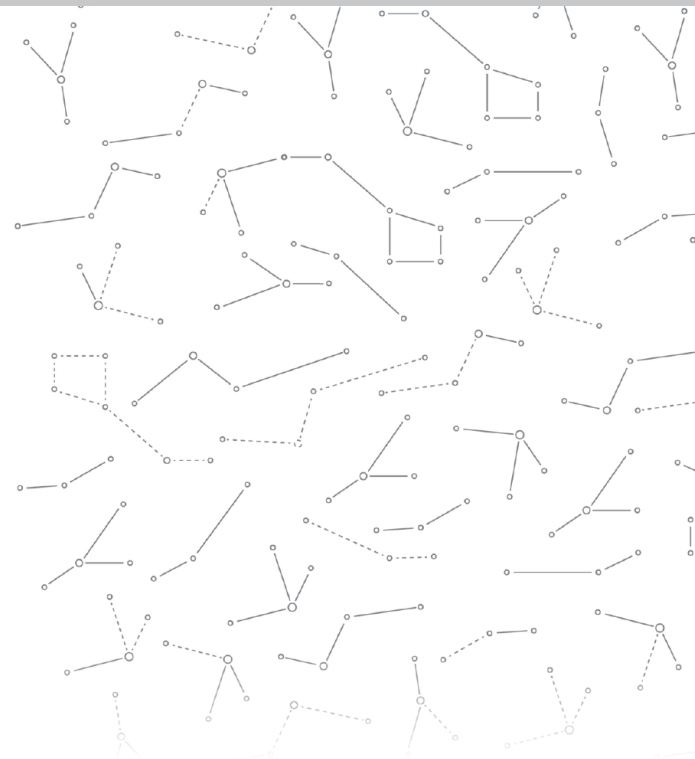
* Dietary Restrictions

If you noted specific dietary needs in your registration, place the slip of paper you received in your name tag on the table at lunch and servers will bring your alternative entrée.

MCN is committed to creating a welcoming event, free from harassment or bullying, that is inclusive for everyone to participate. Please help us to nurture a space where everyone feels included and where civility grows. Please let MCN staff know if you experience anything that needs our attention.

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Schedule

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Registration Opens; Connect over Breakfast Memorial Hall

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Round I Breakout Sessions

Capital Campaigns: Where Finance Meets People Ski-U-Mah Room
The Case for Ethical AI Use in Nonprofits Johnson Great Room
The Donor Journey: Targeted Communications for Fundraising Success Heritage Gallery
The Fundraiser's Secret Tool: Non-Development Staff Thomas Swain Room
Partnership as Resistance: Strengthening Nonprofits Through Collaboration Minnesota Room

8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. Expanded Session: Funding in Flux University Hall
See page 6 for 'Funding in Flux: Facing Federal Cuts, DEI Backlash, and the Path Forward' Expanded Session description

10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Main Stage Welcome & Keynote Memorial Hall
Welcome with Nonoko Sato, President & CEO of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN)
Keynote: The Future is Not Finished with Tonya Allen, President of McKnight Foundation and guest Ashley Oolman, Chief Equity Officer for the Office of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan and Founder and Equity Strategist for Allied Folk.

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Round II Breakout Sessions

Cut Through the Noise: Meaningful Messaging Amidst Uncertainty Ski-U-Mah Room
How All Board Members Can Amplify Resource Development Impact Heritage Gallery
Real Talk: A Candid Conversation for White Managers Minnesota Room
Talking Place, Legacy, and Generosity: Fundraiser's Toolkit Thomas Swain Room
Thriving Beyond Grants: Building and Growing an Individual Giving Program University Hall
Writer Smarter, Not Harder: Winning Grants with AI Johnson Great Room

12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Lunch, Mid-day Greeting & Table Conversations Memorial Hall
Greeting and state of nonprofit fundraising with Kari Aanestad, Vice President of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

2 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Expanded Session: Community Care University Hall
See page 8 for 'Community Care: Avoid Burnout, Be Well While Working' Expanded Session description

2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Round III Breakout Sessions

Crafting a Compelling Story: Connecting People and Impact Thomas Swain Room
Demystifying Endowments Johnson Great Room
Planning a 'Friendraiser': Why Overthinking is Your Enemy Heritage Gallery
Unlocking the 20%: Essential Strategies for Digital Fundraising Ski-U-Mah Room

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Round IV Breakout Sessions

Advocacy Across the Aisle: Legislative Case Statements that Grab Bipartisan Attention University Hall
Amplifying Impact: Lessons from a Multi-Nonprofit Fundraising Initiative Johnson Great Room
Piloting a Donor Organizing Capacity Building Program Ski-U-Mah Room
Practical Systems for Prospecting Strategy and Fundraising Intelligence Heritage Gallery
Unlocking Local Partnerships: Unique Opportunities to Collaborate and Fundraise with Businesses Thomas Swain Room

4:30 p.m. Adjourn

Highlights

* **Main Stage Welcome & Keynote** ***The Future is Not Finished with Tonya Allen, President of McKnight Foundation***

Location: Memorial Hall | 10 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

Kick start the morning with a Main Stage Welcome from Nonoko Sato, president & CEO of MCN, followed by today's energizing keynote, *The Future is Not Finished* with Tonya Allen, president of McKnight Foundation.

Tonya invites us to a conversation on what giving freely, abundantly, and without fear can look like and the current solidarity movement in philanthropy, spurred in part by McKnight, that is focused on ensuring resources continue to flow where they are needed to support thriving communities and a thriving democracy. As Tonya reminds us "*the future is not finished*" and now is the time to build the world we need and want together.

Tonya will be joined by Ashley Oolman, chief equity officer for the Office of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan and founder and equity strategist for Allied Folk.

* **Lunch, Mid-Day Greeting, and Table Conversations**

Location: Memorial Hall | 12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

During lunch, enjoy MCN's insights on the current state of nonprofit fundraising with Kari Aanestad, MCN vice president. After, engage in informal learning and discussion during table conversations with provided fundraising questions.

* **Exhibitor Hall**

Location: Memorial Hall | 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Stop by the Exhibitor Hall to meet nonprofit vendors ready to support your work with their expertise and tools.

[See page 11 for a full list of conference exhibitors.](#)

* **Coloring Page**

[Enjoy a brain break with a coloring page by Rare Press on page 10.](#)

* **Sensory Room**

Location: Gateway Room | 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Located next to Registration, enjoy AuSM's Pop-Up Sensory Room designed to provide you calm, focus, and comfort. A range of tools are available to assist with sensory sensitivities and the space itself has dim lighting and a mixture of seating.

Please enter with respect for those who are already in the room. You may stay as long as you like. Special thanks to the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) for their partnership.



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






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Conference Map



Map Key

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | All Gender Restroom
The All Gender Restroom can be found next to the Ski-U-Mah Room. |  | Nursing Room
The Big Ten Room (toward the University Avenue Parking Ramp exit) is the Nursing Room. |
|  | Breakout Session Room |  | Prayer Room
There are designated spaces for prayer by the McNamara Information Desk. |
|  | Entrance / Exit |  | Registration |
|  | Exhibitor Hall |  | Restroom |
|  | Main Hall (Breakfast, Keynote, and Lunch) |  | Sensory Room |
|  | McNamara Information Desk | | |

Round I Breakout Sessions

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Capital Campaigns: Where Finance Meets People

Track: Relationship Building
Room: Ski-U-Mah Room (Capacity 72)

Learn how to design and implement a capital campaign that balances financial goals with stakeholder engagement and organizational values. You'll gain an in-depth look at the importance of campaign storytelling, practical strategies for engaging diverse stakeholders, common challenges, and out-of-the-box solutions.

Presented by: Mary Niedermeyer, Chief Executive Officer and David Monterrosa, Director of Finance and Operations, CAPI USA; Wale Falade, Locus Architecture

The Case for Ethical AI Use in Nonprofits

Track: Research and Trends
Room: Johnson Great Room (Capacity 126)

Discover not only potential AI applications like enhanced donor engagement, automated routine tasks, and improved decision-making, but also the critical ethical considerations, such as data privacy, bias mitigation, and responsible AI governance. You'll gain insights into best AI practices while ensuring alignment with your mission-driven values.

Presented by: Lou Bialon-Crane, Manager and Jamie Van Nostrand, Director, RSM US

The Donor Journey: Targeted Communications for Fundraising Success

Track: Relationship Building
Room: Heritage Gallery (Capacity 56)

Donors, like consumers, engage at their own pace. Discover the "Donor Journey," a structured communication and cultivation model that aligns donor engagement with marketing best practices. By tailoring messaging to a donor's familiarity with your organization, you can build trust and move donors from awareness to deep investment.

Presented by: Gena Johnson, Vice President of Development, Rein in Sarcoma

The Fundraiser's Secret Tool: Non-Development Staff

Track: Relationship Building
Room: Thomas Swain Room (Capacity 96)

Every staff member plays a role in donor cultivation. Let's reimagine the donor journey by mapping how staff touchpoints influence donor trust and engagement, identify gaps and opportunities in your current donor experience, and learn how to equip non-fundraising staff with simple ways to authentically engage supporters (without feeling like fundraisers).

Presented by: Heidi Louise, Annual Fund Manager, Dodge Nature Center and Preschool

Partnership as Resistance: Strengthening Nonprofits Through Collaboration

Track: Philanthropic Reform and Disruption
Room: Minnesota Room (Capacity 50)

Let's explore innovative strategic partnerships that disrupt the status quo, move us forward in solidarity, and ensure vital programs and services continue. Through interactive activities and discussion, gain an understanding of collaborative opportunities including mutual fundraising events, joint service ventures, and shared leadership models such as subsidiaries.

Presented by: Kimberly Peterson, Director of Development, Rebuilding Together Minnesota

Expanded Session

Funding in Flux: Facing Federal Cuts, DEI Backlash, and the Path Forward

8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. | Room: University Hall (Capacity 90)

Join MCN for a frank, data-informed, and heartfelt conversation on the current climate of the nonprofit sector and its intersecting points with fundraising. Using MCN's new 2025 Current Conditions Report, presenters will weave together external resources, information, and insights into:

- Disruptions to and loss of federal funding for nonprofits—what to know and what you can and should do;
- The myth of so-called "illegal DEI" and holding steady in our collective work toward justice while addressing the very real concerns of funding cut retaliation;
- Potential cuts of federal funding to the state of Minnesota and advocacy avenues for shaping state decision-making about how to deal with those potential cuts.

Presented by: Kari Aanestad, Vice President, Marie Ellis, Public Policy Director, Shonni Krengel, Research Manager, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

Round II Breakout Sessions

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Cut Through the Noise: Meaningful Messaging Amidst Uncertainty

Track: Relationship Building

Room: Ski-U-Mah Room (Capacity 72)

Explore emerging trends and proven strategies for engaging donors through impactful storytelling. Going beyond presentation to applied practice, you'll craft a compelling case for support that weathers uncertainty and cuts through the noise, and leave understanding how to use your fundraising to connect with audiences during times to change and volatility.

Presented by: Jenna Ray, Executive Director, and Maddie Korva, Director, Marketing & Communications, GiveMN

How All Board Members Can Amplify Resource Development Impact

Track: Relationship Building

Room: Heritage Gallery (Capacity 56)

Rethink and re-conceptualize board fundraising so simple asks feel realistic, possible, and rewarding. You'll cover board member annual gifts, amplifying board social media involvement, and realistic ways boards can help with grant seeking.

Presented by: Steve Boland, Director, NEXT in Nonprofits

Real Talk: A Candid Conversation for White Managers

Track: Philanthropic Reform and Disruption

Room: Minnesota Room (Capacity 50)

This panel will reflect on the highs, lows, and lessons learned as a white manager and BIPOC fundraiser. From embarrassing faux pas to career-changing breakthroughs, they'll share their experiences to help you build strategies for strengthening your allyship and better understand the important role you play in building a more resilient, fulfilling sector.

Presented by: Courtney Backen, President, Association of Fundraising Professionals - Minnesota; Adam Breininger, Director of Development and Communications, Minnesota Land Trust

Talking Place, Legacy, and Generosity: Fundraiser's Toolkit

Track: Research and Trends

Room: Thomas Swain Room (Capacity 96)

Discover a toolkit created by community foundations to better understand Minnesota's historic transfer of wealth. You'll practice using messaging and engagement tools from the toolkit to discover how you can capitalize on this moment to benefit your fundraising.

Presented by: Dominic Papatola, Chief Impact Officer, CommunityGiving; Katy Sullivan, Consultant and Allan Martinez Venegas, Consultant, AmplifyDMC

Thriving Beyond Grants: Building and Growing an Individual Giving Program

Track: Relationship Building

Room: University Hall (Capacity 90)

Discover the necessary tools to start and grow an individual giving program, helping you acquire new sources of revenue beyond grants. You'll explore new donor acquisition, prospect management, and donor engagement and stewardship strategies. This interactive session includes case studies and group discussions.

Presented by: Representative, BWF

Writer Smarter, Not Harder: Winning Grants with AI

Track: Grant Prospecting and Writing

Room: Johnson Great Room (Capacity 126)

Go beyond buzz to explore the real impact of AI on grantwriting: what's working, what's not, and how to strike the right balance. We'll debunk AI myths, highlight best practices, cover writing strategies to improve generated content, and show you how you to use AI responsibly and authentically to write stronger grants, faster and maintain funder trust.

Presented by: Katie Castillo, Instrumentl; Danette Fetting Halloran, Corporate and Foundations Relations Manager, Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery

Round III Breakout Sessions

2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Crafting a Compelling Story: Connecting People and Impact

Track: Relationship Building

Room: Thomas Swain Room (Capacity 96)

Learn about elements of compelling stories and ways to identify, collect, and share them. You'll learn tips on telling a good story with passion and authenticity and avoiding exploiting someone's trauma. The session covers storytelling trends, training exercises for training staff and board members, and examples from the speakers' experiences.

Presented by: Mary Jones, Chief Advancement Officer, TPT; Gretchen Piper; Kristen Spargo

Demystifying Endowments

Track: Grantmaking

Room: Johnson Great Room (Capacity 126)

Endowments are more accessible than you may think. This session demystifies endowments, offering a clear understanding of what they are, how they work, and how small- to mid-sized nonprofits can successfully create and grow endowed funds. You'll also discuss partnering with a local community foundation to overcome common barriers.

Presented by: Tod Herskovitz, Nonprofit Strategies Manager, St. Paul & Minnesota Foundation; Heather Logelin, President/CEO, St. Croix Valley Foundation

Planning a 'Fundraiser': Why Overthinking is Your Enemy

Track: Relationship Building

Room: Heritage Gallery (Capacity 56)

Are you looking for a low-investment fundraiser? Learn how this nonprofit planned and executed a 'fundraiser' that is light on budget but big on impact. You'll leave ready to explore outside-the-box ideas for your next donor event.

Presented by: Kaylie Burns Gahagan, Director of Advancement, Genessis Lopez, Advancement Coordinator, and Andrew Kochen, Communications Specialist, Missions Inc. Programs

Unlocking the 20%: Essential Strategies for Digital Fundraising

Track: Relationship Building

Room: Ski-U-Mah Room (Capacity 72)

Feel empowered to enhance your online presence and fundraising capabilities without overwhelming your team or budget. Learn to identify and focus on high-impact digital fundraising strategies, discover practical ways to incorporate AI, and gain tactics and tools to improve your donor engagement, increase online giving, and build lasting relationships. This workshop is designed for small to mid-sized nonprofits.

Presented by: Rich Dietz, Founder, Nonprofit R+D; Jennifer Bratulich, Director of Development & Partnerships, AmazeWorks



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Expanded Session

Community Care: Avoid Burnout, Be Well While Working

2 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. | Room: University Hall (Capacity 90)

Join two fundraisers who have been overcome by serious burnout and lived to tell the tale. Explore how to create an active, effective culture of community care in your team, which is far more powerful than self-care. Prepare for an interactive session as you deeply engage with facilitators and each other to co-create a meaningful learning experience.

The intention of this session is for you to leave feeling grounded and equipped to re-enter working life and transform it by prioritizing your own wellness and that of your colleagues. As Betsy and Cecelia remind us, nothing else we do is possible without our wellness. So, let's prioritize it together in community!

Presented by: Betsy Altheimer, Owner, Table Forte; Cecelia Caspram, Founder and CEO, Mission Growth Partners/For the Love of Humanity

Round IV Breakout Sessions

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Advocacy Across the Aisle: Legislative Case Statements that Grab Bipartisan Attention

Track: Relationship Building
Room: University Hall (Capacity 90)

Whether your goal is policy change or landing a state appropriation, it's tough to grab and hold a lawmaker's attention, and even harder to engage bipartisan support. Learn tips and tricks for developing case statements for bipartisan legislative audiences that are authentic to your mission, and learn how to deploy your case statement effectively.

Presented by: Andy Eilers, Associate Lobbyist, Christopherson Advocates, LLC; Martha Grave, Director of Institutional Giving and Government Affairs, Neighborhood Development Center; Julian Loscalzo, Lobbyist, JEL Consulting

Amplifying Impact: Lessons from a Multi-Nonprofit Fundraising Initiative

Track: Philanthropic Reform and Disruption
Room: Johnson Great Room (Capacity 126)

Discover the insights, challenges and successes of working in a multi-nonprofit project to raise funds collectively. You'll learn their process for identifying a shared initiative, creating a framework for shared fundraising, dividing the proceeds, and engaging donors. Get inspired to consider what partnerships might amplify your fundraising and grow your donors.

Presented by: John Briel, Member Relations Manager, Friends of the Mississippi; Jennifer Foth, Director of Development, Metro Blooms; Jenna Ray, Executive Director, GiveMN

Piloting a Donor Organizing Capacity Building Program

Track: Relationship Building
Room: Ski-U-Mah Room (Capacity 72)

Gain an in-depth perspective on donor organizing and practical strategies to support relational fundraising within your base. You'll learn from this nonprofit's experience launching a grassroots fundraising program with donors, board members, staff, and community members, how it was structured and staffed, and reflections for continued development.

Presented by: Malaika Eban, Executive Director and James Miller, Development and Communications Manager, Legal Rights Center; Ray Martinez, Founder and Principal Consultant, RM Methods

Practical Systems for Prospecting Strategy and Fundraising Intelligence

Track: Grant Prospecting and Writing
Room: Heritage Gallery (Capacity 56)

Gain an introduction to the core competencies of prospect development—prospect research, relationship management, and data science—and the ways they support and enhance your fundraising work like making your fundraising more sustainable, saving us from burnout, and amplifying impact.

Presented by: Don Irwin, Senior Manager of Data and Research, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota



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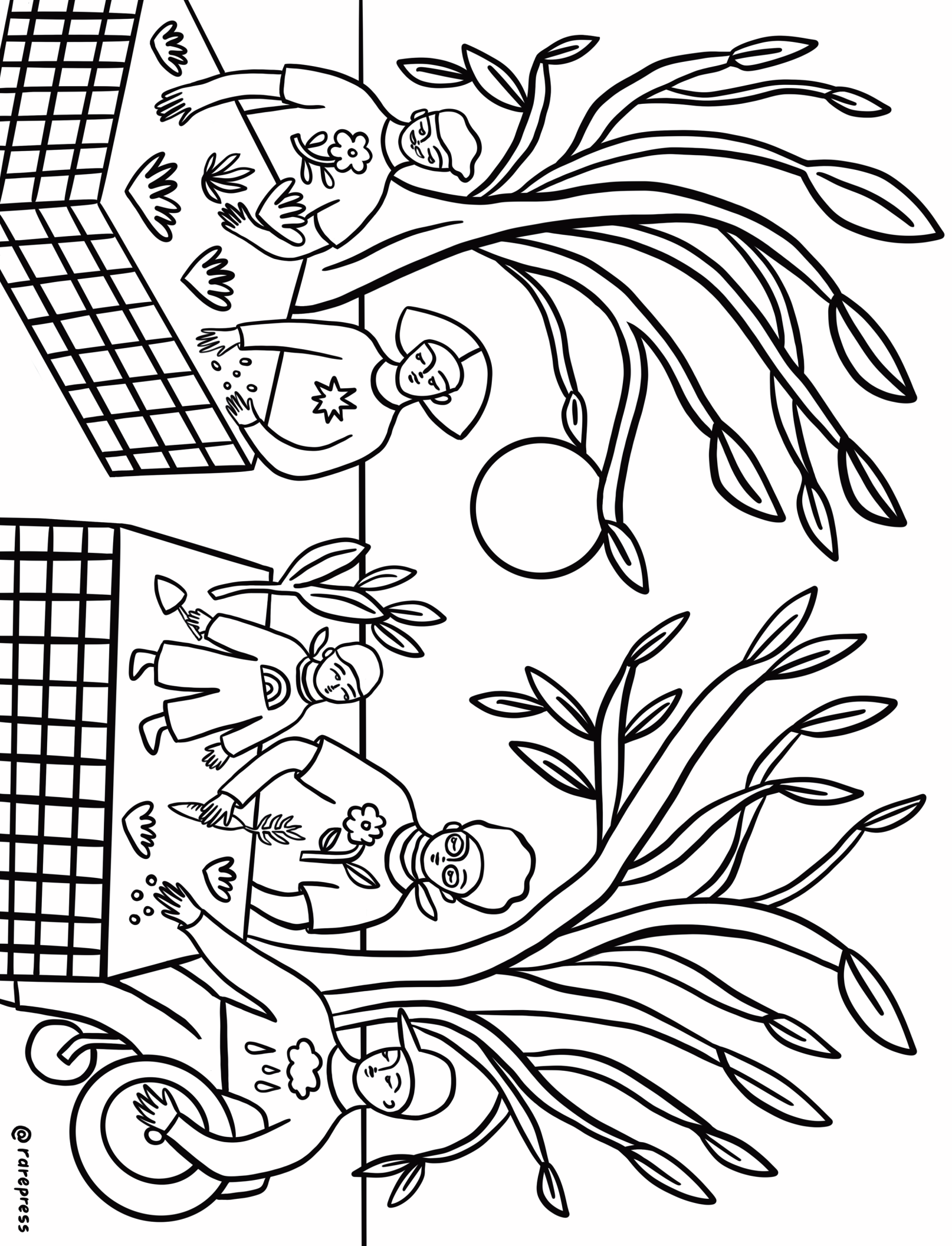
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Unlocking Partnerships: Unique Opportunities to Collaborate and Fundraise with Businesses

Track: Relationship Building
Room: Thomas Swain Room (Capacity 96)

Explore unique opportunities to partner and fundraise with local businesses in ways that go beyond traditional sponsorships. You'll gain insights into creative fundraising initiatives, employee engagement programs, cause-marketing campaigns, and how to align a business' goals with your mission-driven work.

Presented by: Stacey Jensen, Development Director, CornerHouse; Aaron Bedessem, Vice President of Marketing and Operations, Running Aces Casino, Hotel, and Racetrack; Eric Simon, Ticket Sales Manager, St. Paul Saints Baseball



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Minnesota Council on Foundations

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MCF is a vibrant philanthropic community connecting, strengthening and mobilizing the power of philanthropy to advance prosperity and equity. As an association of grantmakers, our members are adaptable, responsive, principled and accountable to the community. Learn more at www.mcf.org.

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

www.minnesotanonprofits.org

As one of the largest state associations of nonprofits in the country, the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) joins nonprofits across interest area to advance important nonprofit issues. MCN is a trusted ally and advocate for you, offering relevant workshops and conferences, timely nonprofit data and research, impactful state and federal advocacy, and a strong member network and benefits.



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We are a trusted ally and advocate for you, providing relevant workshops and programming, timely sector research, state and federal advocacy, and a strong member network and benefits.

Visit our website to discover how MCN can support your mission and professional development:
www.minnesotanonprofits.org.

* Join us for MCN's
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