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We can't control mental illness, but we

Smiles for Jake movement moves forward: Set to launch Thursday

ING THE BRA

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By Jennifer Kraus Staff Writer

We can't control mental illness, but we can control how we treat one another."

Those words, spoken by Pastor Hans Anderson of Trinity Lutheran Church in Brainerd Sunday, Feb. 17, at Brainerd High School, helped launch the nonprofit organization for Smiles for Jake, a suicide prevention movement through spreading positivity through lifeJake will be hopeful, positive, passionate, honest and kind."

The Smiles for Jake movement came about after a death by suicide by 16-yearold Jake Haapajoki, a Brainerd High School sophomore. Through conversations between family and friends and Jake Haapajoki's father, Eryk Haapajoki, organizers and supporters wanted to do something not only to address the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health issues, but what can be done to address the issues. "I can't believe it's almost been a year," since Jake passed away Feb. 21, 2018, Eryk Haapajoki said. "We sat here a year ago (Jake's funeral was at BHS) and we heard the lyrics, 'it's been a long day without you my friend and I'll tell you all about it when will I see you again.' Someday we all will be able to see Jake or our other loved ones but it won't be anytime soon, but we need to

prevention organization inspired by the suicide death of 16-year-old Jake Haapajoki. Look for fresh flakes Feb. 20

The community was invited to take part by giving each other hugs, smiles and high fives Sunday, Feb. 17, at Brainerd High School as part of the making of a promotional video for Smiles for Jake, a suicide

MINNESOTA

SINCE

off rooftops, the news that more is coming may not be the best news of the day.

For skiers, snowmobilers and snow-angel makers, it's the winter to dream about as another round of snow appears to be on the way adding to February's largess. Snow accumulation of 2-5 inches is possible with this latest snowfall arriving Wednesday, Feb. 20.

For those busy pulling snow expected to impact the morning and afternoon commutes.

^wThis is likely to make a slippery commute on Wednesday, but stay tuned as forecast snowfall totals are likely to change," the National Weather Service in Duluth reported.

Much of Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Wadena and Todd counties were in line for 2-3 inches, according to the most recent weather service update The National Weather Service Monday and the same one reported the fresh flakes are where they noted those num- **SNOW:** Page A4

bers are likely to be updated. Morrison and Mille Lacs counties may receive more snow with 3-4 inches, or higher in the southern end of Mille Lacs County. It all depends on where the storm tracks. The most recent forecast noted up to 6 inches of snow could fall Wednesday along the North Shore and maybe 8 inches of snow in southern Minnesota. And it may not be the last

How Minnesota spends your money, and the hurdles facing a new budget deal



By Christopher Magan St. Paul Pioneer Press

Kelly Humphrey / Brainerd Dispatch



affirming actions, with a short-term goal of reducing the suicide rate.

The Smiles for Jake mission is everyone should have hope hope through spreading proactive positivity while lending a helping hand, a listening ear, or an open heart so no one has to live in despair and hopelessness.

"Every person is loved, valued and is important,' Mike Bjerkness said to a crowd in the BHS gymnasium. "The values for Smiles for

smiles and high fives.

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Kelly Humphrey / Brainerd Dispatch

Eryk Haapajoki (left) hugs Alex Haapajoki Sunday, Feb. 17, at

Brainerd High School as part of the making of a promotional video

for Smiles for Jake, a suicide prevention organization inspired by

the suicide death of 16-year-old Jake Haapajoki, Eryk's son. The

community was invited to take part by giving each other hugs,

Don Davis / Forum News Service "The Progress of the State" statue, better known as the Quadriga, stands at the base of the Minnesota Capitol dome in this file photo.

ST. PAUL — It's the thing Minnesota Republicans and Democrats have to agree on - eventually.

Crafting a new, two-year state budget is lawmakers' top priority this legislative session. The current, \$45.5 billion biennial spending plan runs out June 30 and without a new one, state government will shut down.

Gov. Tim Walz, House Speaker Melissa Hortman and Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka have vowed not to let that happen.

With the nation's only divided Legislature, they say they want to prove government can still get things done in a bipartisan way.

Negotiations are likely to be intense over the next few months. Luckily, the state has a \$1.5

BUDGET: Page A4

Tribal leaders mark historic moment, painful past at 'Sovereignty Day'

top concerns

By Dana Ferguson Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — Representatives from each of the 11 American Indian tribes in Minnesota on Monday, Feb. 18, gave state legislators a refresher course on the history of Indigenous people in the state and asked that they keep them in mind when writing laws.



Dana Ferguson / Forum News Service Members of a drum group play and flag bearers enter the Minnesota House of Representatives Monday as part of Sovereignty Day.



For the first time tribal leaders were asked to speak with Minnesota lawmakers about their history,

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BRIEFS

Should Minnesota require a civics credit? Lawmakers are weighing that

By Dana Ferguson Forum News Service

ST. PAUL - Minnesota high school students also make an underwould be required to take a course in government and citizenship under a proposal up for consideration in the state Legislature.

The Senate Committee on E-12 Finance and Policy reviewed the proposal and put it aside, possibly to be added to a larger committee bill set to be presented later this year.

High school students are currently required to last year and said it is key take 3.5 credits of social studies as a graduation requirement. And under Senate File 294, one of those credits would need Our democracy requires to be a government and that we not only have citizenship course. If approved, entering high school that know how their gov-during the 2020-2021 ernment works," Nelson school year would be the said. "We want all of

SOVEREIGNTY

From Page A1

It was the first time in

more than a decade that lawmakers turned over the

House of Representatives

for an intensive session on

an issue. And it was the

first time all 11 tribes were

invited to speak in that

The event titled Sover-

eignty Day coincided with

Presidents Day. House

Speaker Melissa Hortman,

DFL-Brooklyn Park, said the timing was chosen with

"It was very intentional

that coincidence in mind.

chamber.

ment.

standing of civic life a performance measure for school districts. Students would be tested on that understanding and the state education commissioner would have to report the percentage of high school graduates who received a passing grade on the test.

The bill's author, Sen. Carla Nelson, R-Rochester, first brought the bill to ensuring Minnesota students are equipped for the real world.

"Civics is essential. engaged citizens, that we freshmen have involved citizens

first to face the require- our students to graduate knowing how their gov-The measure would ernment works so they can shape their government, so they can partic-ipate."

Students, civic organizations and others spoke in support of the proposal. Sen. John Jasins-ki, R-Faribault, sought assurance that the bill would ensure educators teach process, not political preferences.

"I[°]don't want my child's teacher to be telling my child what to think," Jasinski said. "(They) have to teach what the process is and not how to think."

A companion bill is set to be considered in a House Education Policy Committee.

Follow Dana Ferguson on Twitter @ bydanaferguson, call 651-290-0707 or email dferguson@forumcomm. com

Brainerd celebrates School Board **Recognition Week**

This week, Feb. 18–22, the Brainerd School District joins all public school districts across the state to celebrate School Board Recognition Week to honor local board members for their commitment to its students.

"It takes strong schools to build a strong com-munity," Superintendent Laine Larson said in a news release. "And these men and women commit countless hours to making sure our schools are helping every child learn at a higher level. They make the tough decisions every month and spend many hours studying education issues and regulations in order to provide the kind of accountability our citizens expect and deserve."

Larson noted the key work of school boards is to raise student achievement by:

► Supporting safe, secure and accessible facilities that enhance 21st century learning,

► Creating a vision for what the community wants the school district to be and for making student achievement the top priority,

Establishing standards expected to learn and be 12-year board member. able to do,

ensure the district's goals are achieved and students are learning at expected levels,

▶ Being accountable for their decisions and actions by continually tracking and org. reporting results,

Creating a safe, orderly climate where students information night is can learn and teachers can teach,

► Forming partnerships with others in the com-munity to solve common problems,

► Focusing attention on the need for continuous improvement by questioning, refining and revising issues related to student achievement.

"School board members give the Brainerd citizens a voice in education decision-making," Larson said. "Even though we make a special effort to show our appreciation in February, their contribution is a yearround commitment.'

Board of education members serving the Brainerd School District are:

▶ Sue Kern, chair, a Brainerd graduate and sixyear board member.

► Tom Haglin, vice chair, a Brainerd graduate and nine-year board member. ► Reed Campbell, clerk,

a Brainerd graduate and 15-year board member.

▶ Bob Nystrom, treasurfor what students will be er, a Brainerd graduate and ▶ Ruth Nelson, director,

▶ Measuring progress to a 13-year board member.

▶ Charles Black Lance, director, a district parent in his first year on the board. For more information about Brainerd Public

Schools, visit www.isd181.

Brainerd High School Feb. 26

Brainerd High School's registration information night for the 2019-20 school year for parents of students in eighth-11th grades is Tuesday, Feb. 26, in the high school cafeteria.

Parents of students currently in ninth-11th grades will meet from 5:30-6:30 p.m., and parents of current eighth-graders will meet at 7 p.m.

A post secondary enrollment option information meeting will take place from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the choir room.

All of these meetings are for parents. Students should not attend.

Online registration for current eighth-grade students will be March 5 during the school day at Forestview Middle School. Brainerd High School will also have online registration for current ninth-graders March 5. Registration for students in grades 10 and 11

will be March 6-7. For more information about the registration process, call Joy at 218-454-6298.

States, said the administration planned to consult leaders of each tribe before proposing state budgets moving forward.

She said the budget would include dollars for tribal schools, boosting holistic therapies for parents who are incarcerated, funding the creation of a task force for missing and murdered indigenous women and supporting the use of traditional healers to address the opioid crisis.

Rep. Paul Torkelson, R-Hanska, represents the district that encompasses the Lower Sioux Community. He said the forum was helpful to learn about other tribes and the issues that face their members. He said the state should consider ways to maintain relations with tribal leaders on an ongoing basis. "Taking the tribes' needs and concerns into the process is valid and worthwhile," Torkelson said. "I think it behooves all of us."

Dakota people. They urged lawmakers to understand and acknowledge the sacrifices of Indigenous peo-

ple. "We are standing on Dakota property," Shelley Buck, president of the Prairie Island Indian Community said. "This is Dakota land, my ancestors' homeland."

The leaders said the dialogue was a constructive first step in establishing a deeper understanding of each tribe's perspectives on different issues and they urged lawmakers to keep tribal leaders involved in policymaking, to visit each tribe and to keep Indigeto recognize there is this tribe and to keep Inc. sovereignty that existed nous history in mind.

"It's hard for us to States of America as we stand up here and not talk know it today," Hortman about all the injustices

Dana Ferguson / Forum News Service Minnesota Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan addressed lawmakers at Sovereignty Day in the



said. "Now it's on us to that happened to our peorespond to and respect ple but also, it's importwhat we heard."

before we had the United

Tribal leaders acknowl- and you guys understand edged they were glad to what we've gone through be part of the historic day, as Native people," Sam but said they felt conflicted Strong, Secretary of the about coming to the Cap- Red Lake Nation, said. "All itol building, a symbol of of you did not create these loss and oppression for the wrongs but it's important

Minnesota House of Representatives on Monday

ant that we bridge the gap to recognize the wrongs comes that stemmed from hoped their budget, which of the past if we mean to correct them, if we mean to move forward in a good way."

He pointed to disparities in education, economic prosperity and health outtribes.

the failure of the federal is set to be made pubgovernment to adequately lic Tuesday, could reduce enforce its treaty obliga- some of those disparitions to American Indian ties. Flanagan, the highest-ranking Indigenous Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan woman elected to state-

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said he suffers from and sought professional help for depression.

"It's OK to ask for help. it's OK to see someone, Wade Haapajoki said.

For more information on Smiles for Jake go to www. smilesforjake.org.

JENNIFER KRAUS may be reached at iennifer.kraus@brainerddispatch.com or 218-855-5851. Follow me at www. twitter.com/jennewsgirl on Twitter.

SMILES

From Page A1

make a change together because no matter what's going on ... all we can do is control ourselves. We can be nice and be kind and make people laugh because that laugh at that split second may put a person in a better place for that day, that's where they need to be.

"No one should have to sit up here, when I say that I shouldn't be here. The Smiles for Jake thing is a phenomenal movement and will touch a lot of lives ... but we don't have a choice. It isn't the way life is supposed to go but if we work together, we can accomplish that."

Anderson said people can't control mental illness, but they can control how they treat one another.

"Through breaking the silence, through asking for help, through being a friend to one another and to know that you are never ever alone. We can tame the beast. We can tame the beast that is inside us," Anderson said.

During the event, organizers filmed the last part of an impact video with Eryk Haapajoki, his son Alex Haapajoki and the audience. Smiles for Jake plans to launch the video

Kristi Westbrock, an organizer who also spoke at the event, said Smiles for Jake is separate from the nonprofit called The Lighthouse Project, which initially was called Smiles for Jake, but changed its name to broaden its outreach. BHS junior Noah

Jake Haapajoki and one of the founders of The Lighthouse Project, said they have raised \$75,000 to support voluntary mental health screenings for BHS and Forestview Middle School students.

Jake Haapajoki's uncle, Wade Haapajoki, also spoke during the event and

House Ag Committee staff has strong ties to Minnesota, ND

By Barry Amundson bamundson@forumcomm. com

WASHINGTON — With U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn., chairing the House Agriculture Committee, a bevy of new committee staff members have ties to Minnesota and North Dakota.

As Peterson and U.S. Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Minn.,

are preparing for a bipartisan town hall discuss to agriculture and dairy programs Melin rose, Minn.,



Thursday, Feb. 21, the chairman has announced eight new staff members.

Five of the eight were uate of Texas A&M. either born on Minneso-

ta or North Dakota farms, serve as legislative assis- a degree in political sci-State University or previously worked for Minnesota congressmen. They include:

▶ Rebekah Solem will serve as director of scheduling. She grew up on a cattle farm in Thief River Falls, Minn., and holds a degree from Carleton College in Northfield, Minn. She is pursuing a master's degree at George Mason University.

▶ Emily German will serve as legislative assistant. She has worked for several past members of the committee, including Congressman Pete Gallego of Texas and most recently as senior legislative assistant for Congressman Rick serve as the committee's Nolan, D-Minn. German is staff assistant. Murphy from Houston and a grad-

attended North Dakota tant. Prior to joining the ence from North Dakota committee, Titus was a legislative assistant to Congressman Tim Walz, D-Minn., who is now Min- a wide swath of westnesota's governor. A New ern Minnesota from the Jersey native, she holds a Canadian border south bachelor's degree in public policy from the University of Chicago.

> ▶ Ross Hettervig will serve as the committee's digital outreach specialist. Hettervig comes to the committee from the North Dakota Democratic-NPL Party, where he was digital director. He grew up on a beef cattle operation in the Red River Valley and is a graduate of North Dakota State University.

► Callie Murphy will grew up on a row-crop farm in Felton in north-Alison Titus will west Minnesota and holds

State University.

Peterson, a 22-year veteran who represents to almost Iowa, said he's joining with Emmer at the town hall because Melrose is in Stearns County, where Peterson represents the western half of the county and Emmer the eastern half.

Peterson also announced that the full ag committee will hold a hearing at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 27, with Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue on "The State of the Rural Economy" at the U.S. Capitol.

The meeting will be streamed live via the committee's YouTube channel. **Reporter Barry Amundson can be** reached at 701-451-5665.

ERS FROM ASK THE EYE SURGEON Great River Eye Clinic formerly Crosby Eye Clinic Stacy Sjoberg, M.D., Ph.D. (218) 546-5108 - Crosby (218) 825-1976 - Baxter

Q: Is there anything I can do to reduce the pressure in my eyes, such as vitamins, so I won't have to start putting drops in my eyes for glaucoma?

A: Unfortunately there is no magic and no substitute for good medical care when it comes to glaucoma. Glaucoma is an inherited disorder that causes excessive pressure in the eyes that, left untreated can lead to blindness. There is only three ways to control the pressure and prevent visual loss; drops, laser or surgery.

There is absolutely no evidence that any kind of dietary regimen, supplement or vitamin can control the intraocular pressure. Beware of the totally false claims that some vitamins or supplements can control the pressure. The FDA is looking into some of these claims and is beginning to take some action.

There are also some holistic healers that claim they can cure people with massage, pressure point manipulation or spinal manipulation. All of these claims are totally false and only serve to delay proper treatment while your vision is being irreversibly damaged.

If you have concerns about your eyes you should be seeing your eye care professional for competent accurate advice and treatment.

ASK THE EXPERTS!

Write your question and mail it to: Answers From Experts, Brainerd Dispatch PO Box 974, Brainerd, MN 56401. Fax 218-829-7735 Attention: Jill or Email jill.wasson@brainerddispatch.com Then check the paper every Tuesday for your answer!

said she and Gov. Tim Walz wide office in the United Sundberg, friend of Thursday. All audience members received a free white T-shirt with the Smiles for Jake logo and its message "#wearealljake."