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# St. Cloud Times

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A ST. CLOUD TIMES SPECIAL REPORT PART TWO

# OPTIMISM ABOUNDS



## ST. CLOUD RESIDENTS — OLD AND NEW — ARE EMBRACING THE RECENT INFLUX OF MUSLIM REFUGEES

Austen Macalus St. Cloud Times  
USA TODAY NETWORK

ST. CLOUD — On their first date, Fadumo Hassan and Abdi Daisane grabbed tea and walked around Lake George, the centerpiece of Eastman Park in the heart of St. Cloud.

Abdi and Fadumo were relatively new to the area. He moved to St. Cloud in 2013 to attend college. She came a year later after finishing nursing school in Oregon. But both quickly took an active role in the community and the pair hit it off after seeing one another at

several events.

Sitting on a bench overlooking the lake, Fadumo quickly gravitated toward Abdi's radiant positivity and abundant passion for the community. "He had so much hope," Fadumo said.

Abdi liked Fadumo's intelligence, kindness and civic-mindedness. He was initially shy — which he says doesn't happen often — but Abdi knew right away he wanted to build a life with Fadumo.

Abdi wanted that life to be in St.

See **OPTIMISM**, Page 4A

### About this series

"Hope & Fear in Minnesota's Heartland" is a four-part series taking an in-depth look at how St. Cloud is addressing a bitter divide about its growing Somali refugee population.

Abdi Daisane plays with his son, Maher, at the dinner table Aug. 1.

ZACH DWYER/ST. CLOUD TIMES

## Committee raising cash for statue of 'Mrs. C'

Sarah Kocher Tribune Content Agency

Marion Ross may call Albert Lea a more permanent home if a group of community members are successful.

The Marion Ross Statue Committee (or MRS C, after Marion Ross's character on the '70s TV show "Happy Days") is fundraising \$125,000 to erect a bronze statue of Ross, an actress who claims Albert Lea as her hometown. In addition to playing the beloved Mrs. Cunningham in "Happy Days," Ross has also made appearances in "Gilmore Girls" and as the voice of SpongeBob SquarePants' grandmother.

For the statue to be a success, the committee needs to remind people of these other roles that have spanned her career, committee member Pat Mulso said.

"We need to reach the people that maybe are young, younger and don't realize her fame in 'Happy Days' but might relate to a Hallmark movie or some other thing that she has done," she said.

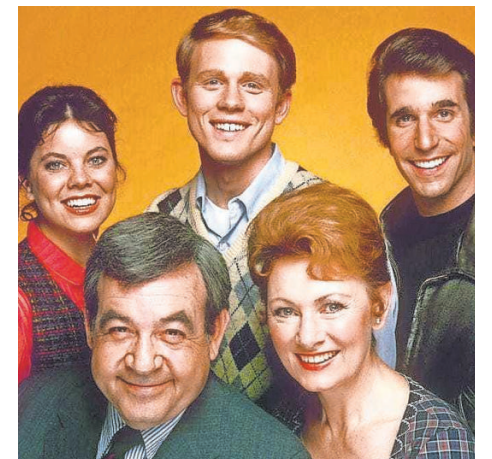
The statue's intended location is near Marion Ross Performing Arts Center, Mulso said, but the City Council still needs to approve the final location.

It will depict Marion Ross sitting on a bench with her arm resting along the top of the bench, so people could sit down beside her for photos.

"I think that would be really neat," Mulso said.

While Mulso said they hope to raise the \$125,000 — which includes the statue's creation, delivery and base for it to sit on — by spring, fellow committee member Kari Brick does not have a hard

See **STATUE**, Page 6A



Marion Ross and cast of "Happy Days." ABC

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### Weather

High 37° ■ Low 20°  
Mostly cloudy.  
Forecast, **6B**

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