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A ST. CLOUD TIMES SPECIAL REPORT PART ONE

HOPE & FEAR



IN MINNESOTA'S HEARTLAND, REFUGEES SEARCH FOR SAFETY; SOME DON'T FIND IT

Austen Macalus St. Cloud Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

ST. CLOUD – Farhiya Iman grew up on the move, looking for an escape from conflict. She eventually sought refuge – and made a home – in the heartland of Minnesota.

Farhiya's family lived in Congo when violence broke out in the early 1990s. Although the family had once called Somalia home, that country's ongoing civil war prevented them from returning. Trapped between two wars, Farhiya fled to Uganda as a refugee.

When her family came to the United States in 2001, Farhiya remembers her mother speaking about the promise of

good education, well-paying jobs and ample opportunity. Years later, she had come to live out her mother's aspirations in St. Cloud.

But now Farhiya is once again looking to flee, this time away from Central Minnesota.

She's considering moving out of St. Cloud, fearful for her children's futures in a city where refugees, particularly those from East Africa, have faced a stark backlash. "I hate the feeling that people don't want me here, and it sucks. I think about this all the time," she said. "That's what I don't want that for my kids."

See HOPE & FEAR, 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.

ABOVE: Farhiya Iman pauses while sharing her experiences on July 22 at Nori Cafe in St. Cloud. Iman said she worries that her children will face discrimination and she will be forced to move her family. DAVE SCHWARZ/ST. CLOUD TIMES

"I hate the feeling that people don't want me here ... I think about this all the time. That's what I don't want that for my kids."

Farhiya Iman, St. Cloud resident

Libraries, clinics fill malls as stores exit

Expert: 70% of enclosed malls are nearly bankrupt

Bob Shaw St. Paul Pioneer Press

ST. PAUL – The courtyard of the mall was deserted, except for six people clustered around a coffee stand.

"We love this. Don't we, Bill?" said Tracy Schifsky, an attendant for a group of people with disabilities. Bill sat in his wheelchair, unable to speak. What she and Bill love about Maplewood Mall is the good coffee, the bright lights, their barrier-free walks with wheelchairs.

What they love is not the shopping. In that mall and others, shopping is drying up – and everything else is filling the void. Malls are becoming community catchalls for government offices, dance studios, medical clinics, homeless centers, massage parlors, live theaters and even apartments.

The tenants are a smart response to a tough situation, say retail experts. They keep malls alive by maintaining foot traffic – even if no one is shopping.

See MALLS, Page 10A



"Enclosed malls are in terrible shape," says retail professor George John of the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. JIM MONE/AP, FILE

Man dies after running into burning home to save dogs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS – Authorities say a 36-year-old northern Minnesota man died when he ran into his burning house to get his dogs.

The Star Tribune reports authorities were called to the home in the small town of Shevlin early Thursday night.

They found the body of Michael William Norgaard inside the burning home.

A preliminary investigation indicated that Norgaard arrived home to find the house full of smoke and called his sister, whom he asked to call 911, saying he was running inside to get his dogs out. No foul play is suspected, but authorities say the state fire marshal will investigate and a University of North Dakota forensic pathologist will conduct an autopsy.

USA TODAY

Census officials are working with tech giants to fight misinformation bids. **12A**

Boost your boo

7 easy ways to upgrade your Halloween decorations. **1B**

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