



# Letter from the Editor Harry Colbert, Jr.

My intention was to use this space to talk about my decision to get my COVID-19 vaccine ... a decision that did not come lightly ... but sadly, the virus that has killed millions isn't at the forefront of my mind.

Six-year-old Aniya Allen is.

The third child in North Minneapolis within a week to be shot, Aniya was the first to succumb to injuries ... the other two are still fighting for their lives as of press time. As innocent of a victim as there comes, Aniya was riding in a car with her mother at the intersection of Penn and 36th Avenues North on the evening of May 17 when she was caught in a hail of bullets; one of which struck her in her head. Aniya held on for two days before she could hold on no more. She had taken as much as she could endure.

And we as a community have taken as much as we can endure.

While every victim of this senseless violence deserves our concern, with

the shooting of the three children – one 10 years old, another 7 years old and playing on a trampoline at a birthday party and Aniya – the sense of urgency and outrage have merged in a call for action.

The call was heard loudest at the intersection of Penn and 36th. No voice calling out for justice and an end to the violence was louder than well-known peace activist KG Wilson (featured in the Sept. 25, 2020 edition of North News). And while it was normal to hear Wilson's voice in the streets following a tragic killing, this time his voice had far more resonance. It had far more anger. It had far more pain.

That's because Aniya wasn't another tragic victim, Aniya was his granddaughter ... she was his legacy.

But as Wilson put it, she was our legacy. She was the community's legacy. Our future doctor, teacher, lawyer, mayor, governor, vice president ... president. The possibilities were end-

less. Sadly, the possibilities will never be known.

There are multiple factors that are contributing to the spike in violent crime plaguing the city – particularly North Minneapolis – and in the next edition of North News and in the days and weeks to come in digital platforms, we'll offer an in-depth analysis of the problem of community violence and present possible solutions.

But for now, we will offer our heartfelt condolences to the families directly affected by the violence in our community. As of press date, the shootings of Aniya and the two other children remain unsolved and the investigations are active. For anyone with information regarding these shootings, or other crimes, please call CrimeStoppers at (800) 222-TIPS (8477). Callers can remain anonymous.

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## INSIDE OUR "O"

North Minneapolis residents have a new point of connection with the Mississippi River after the opening of scenic overlook May 11 at 26th Avenue North.

Minneapolis Parks officials, architects and representatives from Juxtaposition Arts, whose artists led community engagement and designed key elements of the platform, gathered to celebrate the river overlook's opening.

It is the first phase of an \$18 million River First project aimed at connecting the various trails and attracting more visitors to the river. The overlook includes a generous deck bordered by an allegorical railing designed by artist Sam Ero-Phillips and other artists from Juxtaposition.

An angled mast-like structure juts out from the center of the overlook. It is topped with color-changing lights to serve as a beacon. A sturdy blue net is cast around the base of the beacon for a comfy place to recline.

"When I stood here two years ago, this spot was a rundown dead end with a fence that blocked the river," parks Superintendent Al Bangoura said. "Now we have a beautiful overlook...We're excited to see the space enjoyed by community."



Sam Ero-Phillips and artists from Juxtaposition Arts collaborated to create the angled lighthouse inspired sculpture overlooking the Mississippi River. Photo by David Pierini