

Principal arrest

The principal of a middle school in Savage was arrested in St. Louis Park on a felony charge.
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Mainstreet

JCI Hopkins sponsored its annual Mainstreet Day, an arts and crafts festival, May 21 in Hopkins.
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Thursday, May 26, 2022



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

St. Louis Park Mayor Jake Spano, center right, listens to an attendee of the State of the Community event May 15. The mayor focused on challenges during the pandemic, although the event included moments of levity and celebration as well.

First St. Louis Park State of the Community event in 3 years looks back on challenges

City presents award to family of late Perspectives Inc. employee

By **SETH ROWE**
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The three years between State of the Community speeches in St. Louis Park have been anything but typical, Mayor Jake Spano told an audience that gathered outdoors May 15 at Dakota Park.

During the city's Connect

the Community event Spano acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 as well as the unrest and reckoning that followed the murder of St. Louis Park resident George Floyd in Minneapolis.

"The city still had to continue on," Spano said.

In responding to COVID, Spano said the city had to press

firefighters and EMTs into service to distribute vaccine doses. Spano said that work took place through direct engagement with Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan, a resident of St. Louis Park who attended the speech.

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Hopkins Public Schools hosts first annual Black Male Summit

The summit was held on May 18

By **NATALIE CIERZAN**
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For the first time, Hopkins Public Schools was the host of a Black Male Summit on May 18 at Eisenhower Community Center.

They welcomed more than 60 students from several school districts, including Hopkins, Mounds View and Robbinsdale. Students were offered breakfast along with a well-loved pizza lunch and they were given the opportunity to attend four sessions hosted by guest speakers.

The sessions focused on topics such as building resilience, careers, mental health and navigating school.

Guest speakers included One2One Executive Director Karl Benson, Black Men Teach Executive Director Markus Flynn, Youth Services Liaison for Brooklyn Park Antonio Smith, as well as Student Equity Leadership & Develop-

ment Program Manager for St. Paul Public Schools William "Chuckie" Hill.

"I'm 54-years-old and this is one of the most precious and beautiful things I've seen as an educator. This is beautiful and you need to know this is a village and you are our kids and you are our babies. We love you and this is a great opportunity for us to come together to have some of those authentic conversations about how we go about literacy and how we go about learning, but in the most important aspect is how can we be each other's keeper?" said Gatewood Elementary Principal George Nolan, one of the co-creators of the event.

Nolan along with Innovation, Design and Learning Specialist Keenan Jones created the event with the goal of supporting and empowering young Black males in grades 6-12 in Hopkins Public Schools and also surrounding communities.

"Ultimately, as the young brother said here, it truly does

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Summit

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take a village to raise a village... which means we're all responsible for each other," said Antar Salim, a director of education and a member of The National Black MBA Association Twin Cities Chapter, which sponsored the summit.

Salim told the students that they were welcome, that he saw them and recognized them.

Hill later hosted a session that involved providing a space to hear the voices and values of the Black male attendees regarding their personal lives, student lives and what they would like to see differently in their community and in their school. His session involved games to get the students moving as well as learning, growing and discovering commonalities with the other students at the summit.

"I hope that they get a sense of pride of being with others that look like them. Also, my hope is they can see a way to be in a class that really, truly builds community," he said. "As traditional classes can be in rows and things like that, and

there's a lot of power dynamics and inequities that we put ourselves in. But when we are in a truly equitable place in circle, everyone has the same vantage point."

For Hill, all students need safe spaces, but especially African American men and Black men.

"They just need safe spaces where they truly feel honored and valued, not just saying that they're valued but actually modeling and doing some things with (them) and just creating that opportunity for them to see other people like them in different districts and things," he said. "And hopefully that will broaden their sense of community and to not just limit their neighborhood, their school, their district, but the Twin Cities and beyond."

Students at the summit

Alexander Mathis, an eighth-grader from Plymouth Middle School, said he was really excited about the summit when he first heard about it.

"I was like, this is a time for me to show who I am," he said. "Like an opportunity I have to take because I wasn't born here. So it blew my mind."

Mathis added that he liked presenters talking

about how Black males impacted the world and how they were important.

"It gives me courage, it makes me learn new things, (gives) me stuff I never knew about it," he said. "It's kind of shocking to hear the stuff that's going on."

Akzem LaChapelle, a sixth-grader from Hopkins' Meadowbrook Elementary, was enjoying his time at the summit.

"There should be more people of color that can teach," he said after listening to the presenters.

John Ongubo, a ninth-grader from Hopkins West Junior High, was curious about the summit and wanted to see what it was about when he initially found out.

He felt he received the most value out of the session with Flynn because he'd always been interested in teaching and was able to ask him questions about how to get better at it.

"It takes practice to keep the attention of others," he said he learned.

Many students were also able to approach the presenters after the session and ask questions. Presenters also offered their contact information to students so they could reach out in the future.



(SUN PHOTOS BY NATALIE CIERZANI)

Innovation, Design and Learning Specialist Keenan Jones speaks to students at the Black Male Summit.



Gatewood Elementary Principal George Nolan and Innovation, Design and Learning Specialist Keenan Jones kicks off Hopkins' inaugural Black Male Summit May 18.

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EDUCATION BRIEF

Park High quiz bowl team will play at nationals

With its strong finish at Minnesota High School Quiz Bowl League Playoffs, the quiz bowl team from St. Louis Park High School earned a chance to play on a national stage.

The team will represent their school in a 271-team national competition, the National Academic Quiz Tournaments' High School National Championship Tournament, Friday, May 27 in Atlanta.

Quiz bowl is a competitive, academic, interscholastic activity for teams of four students. Quiz bowl teams use buzzers to answer questions about science, math, history, literature, mythology, geography, social science, current events, sports and popular culture. The matches feature a blend of individual competition and team collaboration.

Participation in quiz bowl both reinforces lessons

from the classroom and encourages players to develop new intellectual interests.

St. Louis Park has attended the High School National Championship Tournament six times in the past. Most recently, in 2019, the school entered three teams, of which one made the playoffs and finished in 73rd place.

The team comes in with some nationals experience: Julia Lorenzen played the 2020 Individual Player National Championship Tournament in Rosemont, Illinois, and Truman Fillbrandt played the 2019 High School National Championship Tournament in Atlanta.

The team will be captained by Truman Fillbrandt, who will be joined by Silas Cowell, Jacy Demicak, Julia Lorenzen, and Woods O'Neill. The team will be coached by Peter Dangerfield.

Tournament results will be updated throughout the three days of competition at www.naqt.com/go/stats/12402.