

RETHOS™

PLACES REIMAGINED

Issue 1, 2024

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Lighthouse
Updates

Old Home Certified
Wraps



RETHOS®

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*Rethos is a private, nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization
dedicated to connecting people to historic places,
promoting community vitality, and building reuse.*

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OUR PROGRAM PARTNERS



**MAIN STREET
AMERICA®**

Nationally recognized.
Locally powered.™



Community Education



GRANT AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT



Minnesota
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CARL AND VERNA SCHMIDT FOUNDATION

COVER IMAGE | Rethos' North Pier Lighthouse in Duluth

2024 Doors Open Minneapolis Sponsors

Presenting Sponsor





Rethos Board President
Kristen Anderson

The First Word

Looking back on 2023 it is amazing how much we accomplished together. You and your fellow supporters of historic preservation in all its forms, along with the Rethos staff and volunteers, have made important progress in the ongoing effort to save our most cherished spaces.

Of course, one of the highlights was a successful Doors Open Minneapolis event this past May. This city-wide celebration provided special, behind-the-scenes tours of more than 85 buildings all over the city. Over 14,000 visitors attended this free two-day civic pride event and we needed 550 volunteers to make it possible. Doors Open Minneapolis 2024 will be on May 18-19 this year. We expect more than 100 venues and 20,000 guests this time around. Visit our website to learn more and to sign up for a volunteer role!

Last November our annual Gala and Awards Celebration highlighted outstanding preservationists, creative building reuse projects, and welcomed our generous benefactors to share in the fun and excitement. We can't wait to invite you to our party this fall!

It hasn't been without challenges this past year, however. We are feeling the echo effects of the dramatic reduction in historic rehab projects during the pandemic and subsequent commercial real estate slow down. While we were proud of our work to successfully renew the Minnesota state historic tax credit last legislative session, the uncertainty created by its failure to be renewed on schedule forced many projects to be placed on hold. Rethos is working to expand our Historic Rehab Loan program to more states (we are currently operating in seven states with more on the way) and we are pressing hard to establish a Minnesota state Conversion of Underutilized Buildings tax credit (CUB tax credit) that will speed up renovations of excess office space into housing, community spaces, and other amenities that people want and need.

Your ongoing engagement and investments in Rethos and our work will continue to advance historic preservation in Minnesota and beyond. Your passion for saving our most important structures and places will make sure that our shared stories will be told for years to come.

I am grateful to have you in our corner!

Sincerely,

Kristen Anderson, Board President

The Virginia Sweatt Preservation Fund for Minnesota

A Preservation Fund program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation



Calling all Minnesotans with a Preservation Project!

Are you a Minnesota nonprofit organization, Main Street community, educational institution, public agency, or other non-profit organization with a preservation project in mind?

Funding for your Minnesota preservation project is available via the "Virginia Sweatt Preservation Fund for Minnesota," a Preservation Fund program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Minnesota organizations are encouraged to submit applications. For more details, please visit <https://savingplaces.org/preservation-funds>

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Fund program awards small grants for local projects. Since 2002, over \$5.5 million of funding have been distributed nationally through the program. Grants usually range from \$500 to \$5,000. Eligible entities who may apply include nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and public agencies. Awards require a 1:1 match with public or private funds. Allowable uses include activities such as consultant services for rehabilitating buildings, technical assistance for tourism that promotes historic resources and educating children about their heritage. Often these grants are the deciding factor on whether historic buildings or sites can be saved for future generations.

In case you don't know, who is Virginia Sweatt?

Born Virginia Townes Ecklund in Edina, MN, "Ginny" as she is known to those close to her, grew up attending local Minnesota schools before venturing to New York to pursue her studies at Vassar College, majoring in Art History. In 1955, she wed Henry Sweatt, grandson

of William R. Sweatt, co-founder of Honeywell. After spending time abroad and building up their careers and family, the duo eventually returned to Minnesota to deepen their roots in the state and raise their three children: Catherine, Margaret, and William. Ginny and Henry have been pioneers, philanthropists, and Minnesotans who have been major players in shaping the robust philanthropic and charitable giving community in the state.

Ginny's background in art history undoubtedly played a role in her efforts to support historic preservation, where she has shown tremendous leadership and vision, leaving a legacy as a well-known force in Minnesota's historic preservation movement. As such, Ginny also has deep roots with Rethos, passionately laboring alongside the board during the formative years of the development of the organization, forging a path for its continued growth through leadership. Ginny was instrumental in contacting the National Trust for Historic Preservation to secure a loan with them to hire a director to lead the organization into the future.

In 2007, Ginny and Henry established the Virginia Sweatt Preservation Fund for Minnesota, available through the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Over the years, the fund has supported dozens of Minnesota preservation projects throughout the state such as theatres, museums, sawmills, and landscapes.

Photo: Rethos Archives

Lighthouse updates

It has been about one year since Rethos learned it had been selected as the new steward of the Duluth Harbor North Pier Lighthouse, one of the most iconic landmarks in the city, state, and region.

"This is the perfect spot to tell the story of Duluth," commented Dr. Heidi Swank, Rethos' Executive Director. "It's that meeting point where the water and the land meet, where you can tell the story of Lake Superior and look back and see the development of the city of Duluth."

One year later, here is an update on lighthouse happenings.

In February 2023, Rethos learned about their selection via a letter from Deb Haaland, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, after applying in 2022 through the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act (NHLPA). Administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard, General Services Administration, and State Historic Preservation Officers, the NHLPA transfers stewardship of federally owned historic light stations to other entities, providing an opportunity for their preservation.

Though additional "red tape" is still coming along with the lighthouse, Rethos has not taken its new role lightly.

"As we navigate the NHLPA processes, it has been rewarding to work with several government agencies on properly rehabilitating the lighthouse to standards. We understand that it can take time to ensure that we are following the steps in accordance with each entity," commented Leighton Sundberg, Rethos' Public Engagement Coordinator who works with the Real Estate division and the Heritage Tourism program, and the organization's volunteer needs.

In the summer of 2023, Rethos learned of an unfortunate "tagging" incident to the lighthouse. Tagging refers to the unauthorized marking of public spaces with symbols or words usually applied with spray paint. It is more commonly known as graffiti, and is linked to thrill seeking, vandalism, gang-related activity, or an expressive art form. Concerns about the tagging made their way to Rethos via emails, voicemails, and social media posts from locals and even out of state visitors. The incident even made local headlines.

"This morning, I got a call that restored my faith in humans. A guy called from Florida. He used to work on ships on Lake Superior. He was on a chat room about lighthouses, and someone mentioned the tagging on our lighthouse. He called to make sure that we knew. He was so nice about it. I love it when people reach out to us! It really felt like he had our backs," commented Swank.

In October 2023, Swank went to Duluth joined by local Rethos' Minnesota Main Steets Manager Shannon Laing to connect with members of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades who remedied the situation and continue to monitor and provide exterior lighthouse upkeep. Rethos also established a lighthouse phone hotline (218-481-0155) for people to call and report incidents.

Rethos' Heidi Swank (far left) and Shannon Laing (penultimate far right in glasses) and members of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades stand in front of the freshly painted Duluth Harbor North Pier Lighthouse.



Photos: Heidi Swank

Welcome Amy!

Amy Thomas joined the Rethos team as Director of Real Estate in late December 2023. A native of Utah, Amy relocated to Minnesota in April 2023, but grew up surrounded by Utah's majestic mountains and nature, fostering an appreciation for the natural environment.

Amy's professional background spans over a decade in fields such as program management, technology, real estate, marketing, and banking. With a BS in Digital Media and an MBA from the University of Utah, Amy has also proudly served in the US Air Force Reserves for over 16 years, and also lent her time and talents volunteering at other various organizations, including serving as the president of a Utah historic society nonprofit.

Amy fiercely believes in the transformative power of historic preservation through community involvement, strategic partnerships, and education. Growing up in Utah and seeing the effects of expanding development and its impacts to the heritage, history, and environment and to local landmarks fostered a deep connection to historic preservation. Amy furthered her exploration of the built environment when she purchased a 1920 Craftsman bungalow, which she restored, learning many of the techniques on her own.



Amy is excited to join the Rethos team and looks forward to Rethos' Real Estate division's upcoming work with emerging practitioners, supporting BIPOC and women developers in the field. A passionate animal lover, LGBTQ+ activist, and outdoor enthusiast, Amy hopes to explore all that Minnesota nature has to offer by bike one day. Amy is married, and her four cats and 2 parrots round out the family who call Minneapolis home now.

Meet Development + Communications Director, Judy Hawkinson



In mid-March 2024, Judy Hawkinson joined the Rethos team as the Development + Communications Director. Throughout Judy's 35-year career in fundraising, she has raised millions of dollars for area nonprofit organizations. She most recently served as the Associate Executive Director of the American Craft Council, a leading arts nonprofit, where in addition to helping lead the organization she also oversaw "performance management" where she helped improve staff culture.

"I care deeply about staff and organizational culture, recognizing that most of our waking hours are spent at work. We should be able to find joy in our work and at the workplace, so I do what I can," commented Judy.

Judy returns to the Landmark Center, where Rethos offices, after having previously worked in the building when she was with the Minnesota Museum of Art. Other previous professional experiences include serving as the Director of Philanthropy for the ACLU, the Director of Outreach and Fundraising at the Saint Paul Public Schools Foundation, the Director of the Capital Campaign at the American Cancer Society, and the Associate Director of Major Gifts at Macalester College. Judy also serves on the Board of the Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, and on an Advisory Committee for the US Global Leadership Coalition.

Judy majored in Art History at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Born and raised in Minneapolis, Judy's father owned Hawkinson's grocery store in the Linden Hills neighborhood of Minneapolis, where she fondly recalls assisting with stocking inventory and other responsibilities. Judy now calls St. Paul home where she lives in an historic home built in 1893. In addition to balancing her time as a proud new grandmother, Judy is also actively involved in two different book clubs. Another interesting fact about Judy: she studied and lived in Krakow, Poland during the last year of communism.

Photos: Viva Yang



Doors Open Minneapolis Returns May 18 - 19, 2024

Rethos announces dates of Doors Open Minneapolis 2024 with release of new videos produced by Comcast.

Doors Open Minneapolis, produced by RETHOS, returns for its third year on Saturday May 18 and Sunday May 19, 2024. Videos—created by the event’s Presenting Sponsor, COMCAST—feature interviews and footage of Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, participating Minneapolis venues, event volunteers, and sponsors. There are versions dubbed in Hmong (by our very own Institutional Giving Officer Viva Yang) and versions subtitled in Spanish.

Doors Open Minneapolis is a free weekend-long event designed to give Minneapolis residents and tourists a behind-the-scenes look at the buildings and spaces that tell our city’s story. Dozens of venues across the city are open all weekend to give tours, talks, demonstrations, and fun activities. 2024 venues will include the Federal Reserve of Minneapolis, Foshay Tower, Lakewood Cemetery, the newly restored Hollywood Theater, and many more!

At Doors Open Minneapolis 2023:

- 87 venues opened their doors to the public
- Over 550 volunteers helped the event run smoothly
- Over 14,000 people came out to explore Minneapolis

Visit www.doorsopenminneapolis.org for a list of participating venues, volunteer opportunities, and registration for special tours and events.



txawm yog tsev ua yeeb yaaj moog rua cov chaw qha
txug peb tej keeb kwm,

Still from a Doors Open Minneapolis video, dubbed and subtitled in Hmong.

Take a look at the Doors Open Minneapolis videos on the Rethos YouTube channel by scanning this QR code!



Nab your Doors Open Minneapolis Coloring Book!

Be sure to visit select venues to pick up your copy of the Doors Open Minneapolis Coloring Book, sponsored by the Crayola Experience! The book includes several participating sites, including the incredible Architectural Antiques, pictured below. Find out where to pick up your book at doorsopenminneapolis.org.

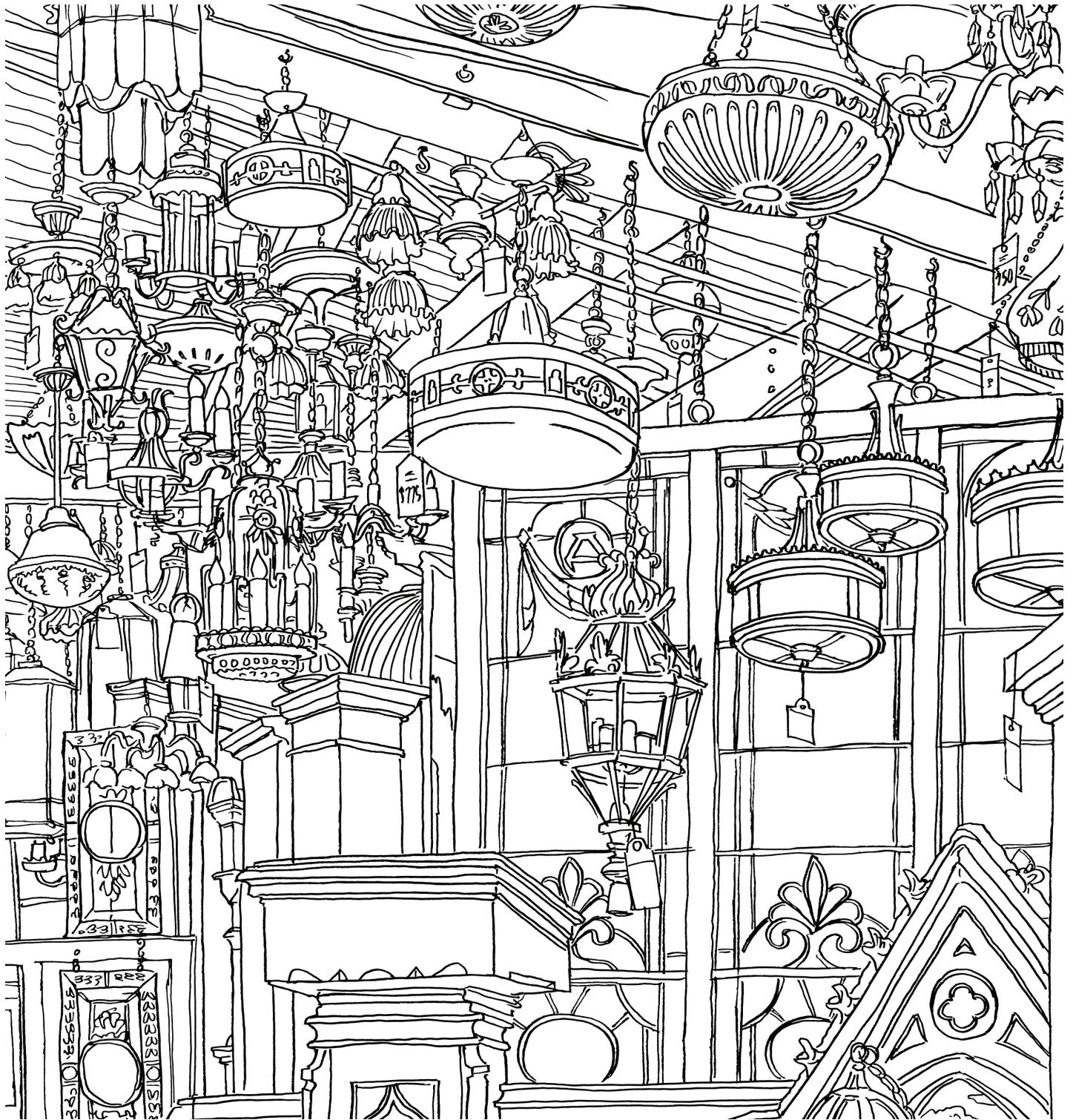


Illustration: Phil Hoch



CLASSES

All class registrations can be made at rethos.org/classes

20
APR

REHAB LAB: HISTORIC FINISHES -VARNISHES, STAINS, DYES, AND WAX - CLASS FULL

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Minneapolis

This class introduces you to wood finishes commonly found in older homes. The instructor will discuss the differences between varnish, stain, dyes, and waxes. They'll describe how to identify these finishes in your home and will demonstrate best practices for application, cleaning, and repair. Come with your questions and curiosities about historic wood finishes! We'll supply all the tools and materials.

Funded in part by the Arts & Cultural Legacy Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.

6
MAY

REHAB LAB: PLUMBING THE DEPTHS OF TOILET REPAIR

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM | Minneapolis Tool Library, 1620 Central Ave NE #126

Need some toilet tips? Join Minnesota Tool Library, Rethos, and other DIYers for a crash course in toilet repair! Learn how to diagnose common toilet issues and determine the best course of action. Longtime plumber and instructor Manny Manzano will demonstrate basic repairs. You'll leave class with the confidence to tackle any flushing frustration that comes your way. Bring your questions, we'll provide the rest!

Manny is familiar with all kinds of plumbing issues, especially those that are common to older Twin Cities homes. He brings nearly two decades of plumbing and engineering expertise to Rethos. He's worked on all shapes and sizes of projects, from hospitals and high rises to residential bathrooms like yours. Teaching is a core part of his work. Manny teaches both colleagues and friends about plumbing repairs, and he is passionate about dispelling myths to support DIYers.

Funded in part by the Arts & Cultural Legacy Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.

8

MAKING THE MOST OF DOORS OPEN MINNEAPOLIS!

MAY

R

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM | Webinar

Doors Open Minneapolis is a free event happening May 18 & 19 that gives you a behind-the-scenes look at dozens of amazing buildings throughout our city. Join the Rethos team as we share some tips and tricks, cool offerings, and unique programming happening during Doors Open weekend!

9

REUSE IN REAL ESTATE: HELPING CLIENTS MAKE SUSTAINABLE CHOICES - 1 CE CREDIT

MAY

R

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM | Webinar

This 1-hour CE class introduces Minnesota real estate agents to climate-conscious resources that they can pass along to their clients. Chances are, your clients want to make sustainable choices and reduce their negative impact on the environment. While many consumers think sustainability requires new “green” products, reused materials are our best option to reduce our carbon emissions and energy usage. This class equips real estate agents with the most up-to-date and localized resources in the Twin Cities’ reuse economy.

You will learn where to find local reuse and repair resources, how to best share information with clients, and why reuse is essential to building a more sustainable future. Your instructors are Emily Barker, Executive Director of Reuse Minnesota, and Natalie Heneghan, Community Outreach Director at Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region. This course is approved for 1 hour of CE credit for real estate agents and tickets are \$20. This class is free to the public. Homeowners planning a renovation project, contractors, and anyone interested in creating a more sustainable future are encouraged to attend.

Funded in part by the Arts & Cultural Legacy Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.

25

REHAB LAB: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF MASONRY

MAY

R

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM | Twin Cities

Masonry expert John Beaty, our partner through the Minnesota Historical Society, will teach a hands-on class about the basics of masonry and mortar repair. Taking place at an old Minneapolis home, participants will learn about historic masonry materials and techniques while restoring this local home to further its preservation and sustainability.

Funded in part by the Arts & Cultural Legacy Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.

For the most up-to-date information on classes, please visit our website. We are always posting new classes and opportunities. rethos.org/classes

Old Home Certified



During two days in early February, over fifty Minnesota real estate professionals gathered for Rethos' annual Old Home Certified (OHC) educational conference. Real estate professionals had myriad opportunities to enrich and leverage their knowledge of old homes, dig deep into their charms and unique characteristics, and assess why old homes matter to their clients, their businesses, and their communities. All of the attendees are now Old Home Certified, a Rethos-exclusive designation.



Instructors engaged attendees on topics such as old home features, building materials, and specific housing style eras, the market for older homes, their environmental aspects, and details on both the local and national significance of older buildings. Attendees also got to step out from behind their desks when they broke out into small groups for an active hands-on identification activity. Rounding out the training was a special presentation on community development with the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute (EPNI), where Community Organizer Joe Vital and Board President Dean Dovolis (and longtime East



Phillips supporter and founder of DJR Architecture) shared information about their efforts and huge historic environmental justice win to convert the neighborhood's Roof Depot warehouse into a community hub and indoor urban farm.

Following the classroom instruction, learners attended a social hour at the nearby Waldmann Brewery & Restaurant. When the Waldmann opened in 2017, Rethos partnered with Tom Schroeder to move a small residential building off the premises. Tom also served on the Rethos board in the early 2000s. Addressing those in attendance at the Twin Cities' oldest surviving saloon building in the Twin Cities, Shroeder shared stories about the building's condition at the start of the rehabilitation, the discovery of onsite treasures found while excavating the grounds, and specific features as they are now.

Old Home Certified brings together a cohort of passionate individuals who will help educate and guide their clients and communities in adaptive building reuse, environmental sustainability in homeownership, and stewardship of historic structures. The Rethos Education Team is incredibly grateful to the instructors and participants of this year's OHC and is excited to see the change they bring about through their informed and impactful work.



Photos: Viva Yang

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Rethos Community Programing encompasses the programs that work with individuals, businesses, and community leaders to make preservation and building reuse possible. Community Programs has three primary areas it works in – Education, Minnesota Main Streets, and Heritage Tourism, introduced in 2022.



Since 2010, Rethos has been the Main Street America™ Coordinating Program in Minnesota and our staff collaborate on a local level to help rural communities maximize the unique cultural and business identity of their downtown business districts. We work with local stakeholders and entrepreneurs to create a space that fits the needs of residents, recognizing that communities are stronger when they have a thriving local economy that is rooted on main street. Our Minnesota Main Streets programs are aimed at fostering community regrowth through various building reuse strategies that support small business entrepreneurship, promote existing cultural assets, and engage local talent.

EDUCATION

Rethos Education works to empower individuals with the tools, skills, and experiences they need to restore and revitalize the places they live in and value. By delivering unparalleled hands-on workshops and classes, Rethos is creating an expanding network of homeowners, craftspeople, and Realtors, who possess the passion and knowledge to care about and care for old buildings and neighborhoods.

HERITAGE TOURISM

Heritage Tourism engages people in the celebration and exploration of places which authentically represent people and stories; past and present. The current focus has been establishing Doors Open Minneapolis, the two-day citywide event as a fixture event in the state. Rethos envisions expansion to provide additional opportunities for people to venture out, connect, and experience the rich history of our state, and our most-loved places.



The Historic Rehabilitation Loan Program helps to reimagine underutilized spaces into vibrant, modernized buildings that generate income, sales, property tax, and new enthusiasm in their communities. We partner with industry leaders in development, finance, construction, and legal fields to provide exceptional service that is cost-effective, fast, and reliable. Historic tax credits encourage investment in historic preservation and building reuse. We help make the most of these credits.



Founded in 2021, the Rethos' Policy Institute serves as a resource for elected leaders, local and state government officials, active community members, and everyone interested in promoting the best practices in public policy around historic preservation and building reuse.

Minnesota Main Streets

2023 data

Main Street Reinvestment total private dollars
\$34,586,289.50

Main Street Reinvestment total public dollars
\$5,967,007.00

Main Street jobs created
58 Full-time Jobs
77 Part-time Jobs

Main Street buildings rehabbed
150

Main Street New Small Business Expansion
24

Main Street volunteer hours
5,185.5

Value of Main Street volunteer hours
\$164,898.90

Attendees at Main Street Events
107,073

Public Improvement Projects
12

Minnesota Main Street Communities
20

Historic Rehab Loans



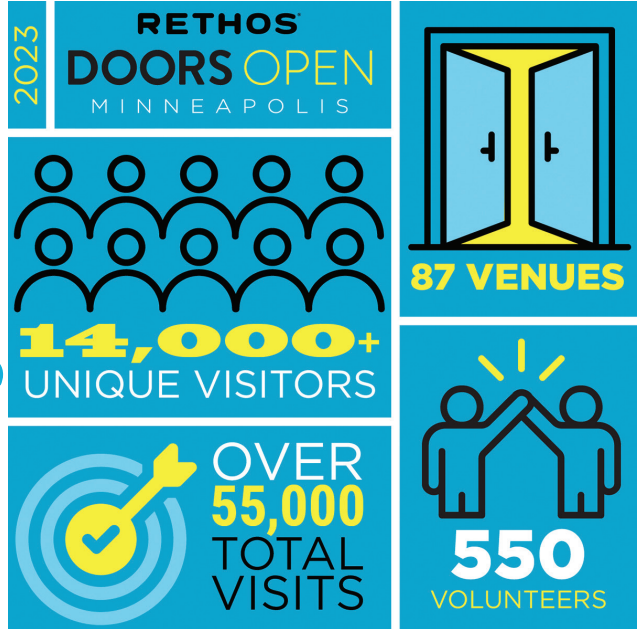
Loans funded in FY23 **5**

Historic Tax Credit
Reinvestments Facilitated
\$8,112,816.00

New Tax Projects Launched **6**

55 Projects in 7 States

Heritage Tourism



Education

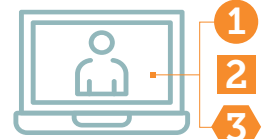
In-Person & Virtual
Classes Hosted

30



Programming Reach
(+online)

3 Regions



Unique Classes

25



Instructors

27



Class Registrations

1,048



Policy Institute

In 2023, the Policy Institute experienced a win with the reinstatement and extension of the state Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC), which passed in the final weekend of the 2023 session. Part of the Minnesota Legislature's Omnibus Taxes bill, it was signed by Governor Walz into law on May 24, making the HTC retroactive to the previous sunset date, extending it until June 20, 2030.



2023 Donors

\$500,000+

National Park Service

\$50,000+

Comcast

Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS)

\$20,000+

Carl and Verna Schmidt
Foundation*

\$10,000+

Bridgewater Bank

Emanuelson-Podas

Minneapolis Foundation

National Window Associates

PCL Construction

Sherman Associates

Weis Builders

Xcel Energy

\$5,000+

Arts Ink

Christopher Blissett

D & M Industries

Guaranty Title

Hempel

Kaas Wilson Architects

Kraus Anderson

Mulcahy Nikolaus

PCL Construction

Schafer Richardson

TractorWorks

W.L. Hall Co. Building Specialists

\$1,000+

Advanced Masonry Restoration

Allegion

Ted Beckman

Fran & Barb Davis

ESG Architecture & Design

The Green Mission

Jeffrey Hall

Steve Knight

Lakewood Cemetery

Loucks

Jessica Marschall

Major Mechanical, Inc.

Miller Bros

Minneapolis Climate Action

Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

Ramsey Companies

Carolyn Sundquist

Wet Paint

\$500+

Keith Acker

Kristen Anderson

Leif T. Eikevik

Thomas Hanson

Marjorie Pearson

\$100+

Anonymous

Howard Ansel

Jill Baum

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Denise E Brewer Bailey

Catherine Calabrese

Gretchen Camp

Anders Christensen

Kathleen Christenson

Rebecca Christensen

Timothy Counts

George Edwards

Mark Gustafson

Hennepin County

Gary Kirt

Laura Kotten

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Schwab Charitable Fund

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Ray Stenglein

Heidi and Scott Swank

Barb Thoman

*In support of production and distribution of the *Places Reimagined* magazine, and the 2024 Doors Open Minneapolis program guide.

Rethos strives to recognize our generous benefactors accurately. If we have made an error, please let us know. Contact Rethos Director of Development, Judy Hawkinson at judy@rethos.org.

Open Board Meeting

Thanks to all who came out to our Open Board Meeting in January! It was a wonderful opportunity to meet supporters and friends. The meeting included a wrapup of last year and a sneak peak at the coming year's plans. Gratitude to our board for their dedication in 2023 and their enthusiasm for 2024!



Top photo, from left: board member Leif Eikevik, past president Ryan Sailer, board president Kristen Anderson, board member Erik Hansen, board treasurer Nick Place, board member Jen Davel, board member Dan Otto, board member Karmi Mattson, and vice president Collin Kaas.



Rethos at Friday Lunch Forum

At right: On Friday, March 29, Rethos' Executive Director Dr. Heidi Swank, joined former Rethos' board member John Mannillo and members of the Friday Lunch Forum, at the Downtowner Woodfire Grill in St. Paul to present information on Rethos. Mannillo had invited Rethos to speak at the forum, which is comprised of local St. Paul community members who gather for presentations on various topics. Along with John and over 30 members of the forum, Swank was joined by Rethos' Director of Development Judy Hawkinson and Institutional Giving Officer Viva Yang and for a lively conversation about Rethos' programs: Education, Heritage Tourism, Historic Rehab Loans, Minnesota Main Streets, and the Rethos Policy Institute, and happenings.



Do you have a poem or short, nonfiction essay that explores places and the people who bring them to life? We'd love to include it in *Places Reimagined*! We offer a small stipend and can highlight you on our social channels.

Please send the item to magazine@rethos.org. Include how you wish to be credited and any social channels you'd like tagged.

We look forward to reading your work!

Photos: Viva Yang

What's Up Downtown?

We are big fans of our fans! Minnesota Main Streets at Rethos is preservation in action. Reflecting on 2023, we see that Main Street communities illustrate the vibrancy of their unique districts every day. Take a minute to explore some of the happenings from this winter...and don't be surprised if you find yourself planning a weekend trip to a Minnesota Main Street this year.

City Center Partnership Mankato

Mankato Main Street businesses lit it up during the Let It Glow, Kato! Window Display Contest during



the December holiday season. They know that during the darkest days of the year, keeping window displays lit means the 24/7 billboards (aka display windows) are easily viewed by passers-by. Bright idea, Mankato!

www.facebook.com/Mankato.CityCenter

Winona Main Street

Underscoring the historic preservation embedded in our Main Street districts, Winona also received a mention in The Best Historic Districts by World Atlas. Like so many of the Main Street programs, they are busy reflecting upon 2023 and making big plans for 2024. Parade of Trucks, Spring Clean Up, Art in the Street, Window Walks, and the Winter Market were just a few of the events in Winona last year, and we cannot wait to see what's next.

www.facebook.com/WabashaMainStreet

www.instagram.com/wabashamainstreet/



Downtown Northfield

Downtown Northfield had a sell-out with their one-of-a-kind 2023 ornaments featuring Ames Mill at the 25th Annual



Winter Walk. With the Friends of Downtown Northfield holiday lighting grants, they are making sure the holidays in Northfield are always merry and bright.

www.facebook.com/downtownnorthfield

www.instagram.com/downtownnorthfieldmn/



Lincoln Park Duluth

With a parking study and enhanced crosswalk pilot program complete, Main Street Lincoln Park is planning and preparing for a major Main Street makeover. But they don't let winter pass them by.

The Cupid's Quest, a Lincoln Park Scavenger Hunt, brought people out to find the hidden hearts (and some sweet gifts as well).

www.facebook.com/ourlincolnparkduluth

www.instagram.com/ecolibrium3/

Downtown Owatonna

Embracing the brief but beautiful winter wonderland with a winter walk—complete with Brr-ingo(!)—during the Bold & Cold Winter Festival. A mention by the World Atlas as having one of The Best Historic Districts. All of this, and planning for the Main Street State Conference in April, too? Owatonna is making it happen!



www.facebook.com/DowntownOwatonna

www.instagram.com/downtownowatonna/

Olivia Main Street

Knowing that a solid foundation is necessary for a sturdy house, Olivia Main Street kicked off the new year by offering resources of all kinds to their business community. It's a new year with new opportunities for entrepreneurs in Olivia!



www.facebook.com/OliviaMainStreetProgram

www.instagram.com/oliviainmainstreet/

Red Wing Downtown Main Street

Red Wing Downtown Main Street does a bang-up job of recognizing the fantastic businesses in their district and sharing images of their gorgeous downtown. With another stellar Holiday Stroll behind them, they are brainstorming and planning for a fantastic 2024.



www.facebook.com/DowntownRedWing

www.instagram.com/downtownredwing/



Downtown Shakopee

Another successful Holiday Fest in the books and it's down to business for 2024 in Shakopee. Already planning for the Rhythm on the Rails concert series, Shakopee's Main Street program is ready for another year of great music and community fun.

www.facebook.com/DowntownShakopee

www.instagram.com/downtownshakopee/



Wabasha Main Street

The highlight of the holidays in Wabasha was the Mayor's Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. Santa and Mrs. Claus were in residence, the cocoa was flowing, and the fire pits made sure everyone was cozy. Wabasha Main Street knows how to put the twinkle on the tree.

www.facebook.com/WabashaMainStreet

www.instagram.com/wabashainmainstreet/

Did you know? The communities featured above are all Accredited or Affiliate Main Street programs, but the Minnesota Main Streets program also includes **Brainerd, Cloquet, Jackson, Lake City, and Litchfield** (wow - another World Atlas historic district mention!), as Associate and Network communities. The size of the community does not matter. The Minnesota Main Streets program is effective, inclusive, and scalable to help all districts grow stronger.

Minnesota Main Streets would also like to give a big "Welcome, friends!" to **Hibbing, Virginia, Eveleth, Gilbert, and Mountain Iron** as they participate in the Equitable Entrepreneurship Ecosystems pilot program through Main Street America. It is through partnerships like these that we build a strong network of communities not only in Minnesota, but across the country. We look forward to working with you!

If you want to find out more about Minnesota Main Streets, contact Emily@rethos.org.

Preserving the Past, Securing the Future: Edina's Century Homes Program

By Paul Sisolak, Guest Writer

Edina, one of the Twin Cities' most noted neighborhoods, last year acknowledged the 135th anniversary of its incorporation, and with that milestone comes the realization that many of its original homes built in the early 20th century and prior have also since passed their 100-year mark.

Standing tall and strong through the passage of time, seasons, world events and generations who have come and gone, these homes hold a rich history with myriad stories to tell within their walls, facets being honored by a new preservation group.

The new initiative, the Century Homes program, was created by the city's Heritage Preservation Commission in collaboration with the Edina Historical Society, and recognizes houses that are at least 100 years old, ultimately helping their homeowners celebrate these historic structures.

A Time-Honored Tribute

The impetus for the Century Homes program was a desire to fulfill three goals in mind: historic awareness, fostering community connections and reducing environmental impacts borne out of the construction of new homes, at the expense of more ecologically sound, historic structures. Plus, it was a chance, according to Jane Lonquist, Heritage Preservation Commission chair, to give homeowners a chance to share their homes' histories with others.

"People who live in 100-year-old homes very likely have an affinity for older structures and an appreciation of the human history they embody," she says. "This program gives them an easy way to share their knowledge of their home's history with the community."

Initial scoping for community interest was high, as 64 percent of respondents to a 2023 survey who live in homes older than 100 years indicated high interest in participating in such an initiative. Since launching, the Century Homes program has already received two applications, with many more expected after informational mailings go out to eligible homeowners in Edina. According to Lonquist, one stipulation is that applicants agree to purchase a \$300 bronze plaque displaying their home's year of construction and mount it on the exterior façade or street-facing window

— akin to signage erected outside National Register of Historic Places structure.

As Century Homes committee member Mark Hassenstab emphasized, these plaques spark curiosity about the history encapsulated in century-old houses. "Whenever I take my boys on a walk, we always stop to read and learn," he says. "Our committee decided it was important that each plaque showed the year the home was built, because they prompt conversations."

The plaques, Hassenstab notes, encourage passersby to look up a home's history online. This becomes one of the program's primary aims: to bridge the past with the future by adding registered homes in Edina more than 100 years old to a burgeoning online database, where visitors can learn more about a given home's entire history through the generations.

"It will prompt people to quickly go to a website and learn more," says Lonquist.

But in addition to online resources, future plans, she says, include self-guided walking tours and events to highlight Edina's century homes. For now, recognized houses will be celebrated during National Preservation Month each May.

Gaining Momentum with Community Support

The program originated when Lonquist attended a 2019 preservation conference and learned about a similar initiative in St. Cloud, Minnesota. She realized Edina, given its long Minnesotan roots, could likewise benefit from celebrating its historic houses in an accessible, community-oriented way. The Heritage Preservation Commission then looked to other successful municipal programs for inspiration.

With support from the Edina City Council, who saw it as a high-reward initiative, the program is poised for growth. Though participation is voluntary, the Century Homes program enables homeowners to easily uncover and share their properties' histories — perhaps even learning new facts about their own homes they didn't know before. At the same time, it promotes a deeper preservation mindset that is better for the environment.



That's one of the targeted aims of the program: to reduce carbon emissions by encouraging the preservation and rehabilitation of existing homes rather than demolition and new construction. According to data provided by Architecture 2030, rehabilitating old homes can result in a 70–85 percent reduction in emissions compared to demolition and rebuilding.

"We really wanted to lean into the environmental piece of celebrating older houses," says Lonquist. "The city challenges every commission to have some climate-oriented work line item; for us, it's a chance to share the information that rehabilitating and maintaining homes can result in a stronger reduction in carbon emissions."

Today, Edina has 237 homes at least a century old, with 35 more that turn 100 in 2024, according to records in the Edina Assessing Division. Noting this, Lonquist hopes the strong community interest indicated in surveys will drive participation.

Celebrating History, Building Connections

In an era where the new often overshadows the old, the Century Homes program stands as a testament to Edina's commitment to honoring its past while embracing a more sustainable future — a celebration of the homes that have stood the test of time and the stories they hold within their century-old walls. By highlighting Edina's historic homes, the program is already gaining momentum in its first year and bringing the past to life for future generations.

To learn more about the Century Homes program and the stories behind the homes that built Edina, visit EdinaMN.gov/CenturyHome. Here, homeowners can apply for the program, access research resources about an historic home, and ultimately become a part of Edina's living history.

Photo: Cheryl Dulas

Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?

The Rethos Education team brought building preservation, restoration, and deconstruction out of the office and into the classroom of third, fourth, and fifth graders. Rethos staff Emily Noyes and Josh Hauf participated in the SparkPath CreativeCon/ Creativity Festival on January 9th and



10th, hosting a session titled "Building History." Each 50 minute session began with a ten minute presentation on historic building preservation basics and highlighting three elements of historic architecture: gargoyles, spires, and columns.

The students were then set loose to build historic structures of their own, keeping in mind the three elements of historic architecture. They had twenty five minutes to work in small groups to create their structures using popsicle stick frames, decorative paper, bottle caps, play-doh, markers, crayons, magazine clippings, and other various arts and crafts supplies.

Once the structures were built, the classroom voted on which building was deemed the most historic. The winner of the vote was added to the city in the front of the room and designated as historically significant under two-day classroom historic preservation laws.

While some students were ready to demolish their popsicle stick buildings, the clean-up portion of the activity was the full unbuild of all structures not added to the historic city. The students learned about deconstruction and building material reuse as they tore paper from popsicle sticks and play-doh from sea shells. While not all of the supplies were salvageable, a majority were returned to the material table and available for the next group. This activity proved to be an incredibly fun way to present preservation and sustainability topics to young audiences.

In two days, "Building History" engaged over 120 students. Here is what they had to say:

- I got to learn more about architecture
- It was fun!
- We got to build and work together
- You get to build and after that you know next time that will work
- I liked to build the castles
- I really liked working with someone on building stuff from the past
- I got to build a cool structure
- There was a ton of very unique things and I was taught stuff
- We got to learn about old buildings and got to build
- It was fun and I made a mouse



The Last Word

2023 was quite a year!

As we start a new year, it always seems to be the right pivot point for looking both back to the previous year and into the future. At Rethos, 2023 was the year in which many firsts happened.

We held our first Doors Open Minneapolis with 14,000 attendees, 87 venues, and over 500 volunteers. And we were gifted the Duluth lighthouse by the Secretary of Interior and are hoping to open it to the public next year. We also brought back our Historic Preservation Awards at our annual fundraising gala. It was a great year here at Rethos. And now we are looking forward to what we have planned for 2024.

There are many people to thank for the breadth of work that we are able to take on. Many of these volunteers – like those for Doors Open Minneapolis venues – are a visible part of the work that we do. However, we also have two groups of volunteers who work behind the scenes to support Rethos staff and mission.

I would like to start with a huge thank you to our Board of Directors, especially our Board President, Kristen Anderson. Our Board is comprised of fourteen volunteers who live across Minnesota and the country. Their expertise spans the banking industry, tourism, finance, architecture, and the legal field. With their guidance, the staff is empowered to be creative in how we can best accomplish our mission knowing that we can rely on our Board for that second eye on ideas and expansions. We appreciate the time and attention they put into their volunteer service at Rethos.

In addition to our Board of Directors, we also have our Advisory Members to thank for their work. Advisory members serve on a committee that reports to the full Board. These committees range from subcommittees of our Board of Directors to independent committees that assist with one of our programs. Currently, we have advisory members on our Board's Program Committee. In addition, there are advisory committees for Doors Open Minneapolis, our Preservation Easements, and our Annual Gala. These committees are an excellent way to be introduced to Rethos' work or to participate in a way that requires less time than a position on our Board of Directors.

If you have been thinking about getting involved with Rethos, we would love to talk to you about our open Board of Directors positions or any of our Advisory positions. We currently have three positions open on our Board of Directors, our Governance Committee would love to add a few advisory members, and if you love to throw a party there is our Gala Committee! **Please reach out to me at Heidi@Rethos.org**. I would love to talk to you about these opportunities!



Executive Director
Heidi Swank

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