

 The Minnesota Star Tribune

# Impact Report

2025

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# Letter From Our Publisher



**Your support matters, now more than ever.**

Throughout much of this year and in 2025, Minnesota has become a focal point for national attention. These are unprecedented times, and the responsibility to document what's happening here with clarity, accuracy, and humanity has never been greater.

And the world is watching.

Our journalists are on the ground every day, capturing the realities unfolding in our neighborhoods and streets. Across the country, readers are pointing to the work being done at the Minnesota Star Tribune as another example of why local news is so indispensable.

Unfortunately, we live in a world where it's getting increasingly harder to separate fact from fiction. AI-generated imagery and online bots are flooding coverage of major stories with misinformation. And young people are especially vulnerable to this environment.

That's why we've recently launched our News Literacy Initiative focused on helping high school students sharpen their news-reading habits and better navigate today's information landscape.

We've set an ambitious goal: to put a free Minnesota Star Tribune subscription in the hands of every high school student in Minnesota, and to support news literacy training in every high school across the state.

Reaching that goal will require the help of partners and donors. In total, we need to raise more than \$1 million to support outreach efforts and launch the free subscription program.

Of course, there's so much more to do — and the headwinds facing local news businesses, like ours, are strong. As we transform into a modern digital media company, we really need your help to keep going. If we want to have a strong regional newsroom in Minnesota with amazing journalists, we need your support.

Thank you for your interest in learning about our progress and for your generous support in preserving local news.

Let's keep building a stronger Minnesota together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Grove". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Steve Grove**  
Publisher & CEO  
The Minnesota Star Tribune



# Stories That Mattered

2025 tested us in profound ways, but it also revealed the remarkable resilience of our newsroom and the communities we serve.

Many of the stories we covered were heavy — rooted in crisis, conflict, and uncertainty — but each one underscored why strong journalism matters. In moments when Minnesotans needed clarity, accountability, and connection, our reporters stepped forward with courage and compassion.

What follows is a look at the major stories that defined the year — stories that demonstrate not only the challenges we faced, but the steadfast commitment of our journalists to bring truth to light and help our communities heal, understand, and move forward together.

# The heroes of Annunciation

A horrific shooting on the third day of school devastated a Minneapolis community and put its resilience and faith on full display. Minnesota Star Tribune reporters responded with urgency and care, centering the voices of students, educators, families, and first responders who rushed toward help and bore the weight of loss.



Richard Tsong-Taatarii captured this haunting image of a barefoot mother running towards the school.



**Devin O'Brien**

Devin O'Brien's uncle ran toward danger on Flight 93. When bullets started flying at Mass, O'Brien ran toward the danger.

Portrait Renée Jones Schneider/The Minnesota Star Tribune



**Matt DeBoer**

Principal Matt DeBoer guarded the church from the shooter, then held a grievously injured student's hand as they waited for paramedics.

Portrait Alex Kormann/The Minnesota Star Tribune



**Chad Howard**

911 dispatcher Chad Howard guided first responders as he took calls from witnesses.

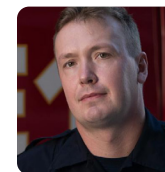
Portrait Renée Jones Schneider/The Minnesota Star Tribune



**Chief Colm Black**

Deputy Fire Chief Colm Black gathered class rosters to make sure each child was accounted for.

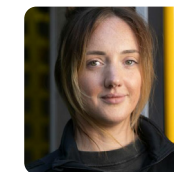
Portrait Renée Jones Schneider/The Minnesota Star Tribune



**Seamus Black**

Firefighter Seamus Black was at a nearby fire station when tones chimed about an emergency at Annunciation, his former school.

Portrait Renée Jones Schneider/The Minnesota Star Tribune



**B. Gregory**

Paramedic B. Gregory tended to an injured boy and heard a little girl ask, "Why would they wanna hurt us?"

Portrait Renée Jones Schneider/The Minnesota Star Tribune



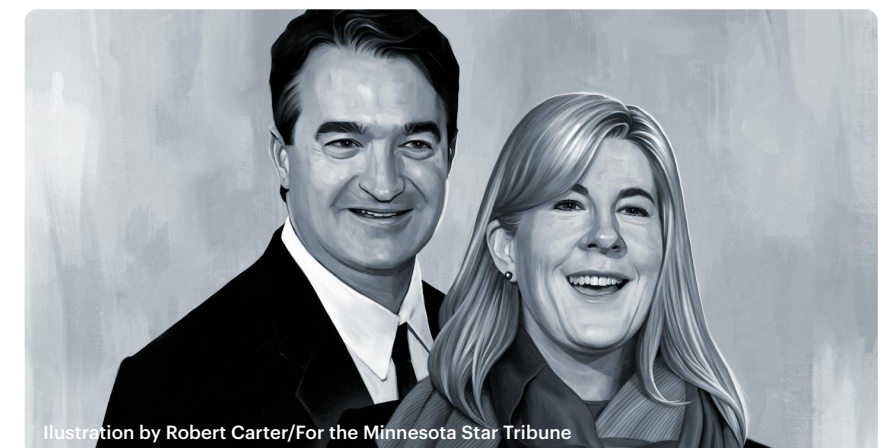
**Lt. Ryan Kelly**

Lt. Ryan Kelly was the first cop to arrive. "I'm going in," he radioed.

Portrait Renée Jones Schneider/The Minnesota Star Tribune

## Minnesota loses a political leader – and a sense of civility

The assassin's bullets would severely injure Sen. John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette, and kill Rep. Melissa Hortman, her husband, Mark and mortally wound their dog Gilbert before kicking off the most extensive manhunt in Minnesota history. The assassin was apprehended in a farm field about 40 hours later. Mourning Minnesotans would wonder what increasingly political violence portends for democracy.



## Aimee Bock, Salim Said found guilty on all counts in Feeding Our Future fraud trial

A federal jury found Feeding Our Future leader Aimee Bock and her alleged accomplice, Minneapolis restaurant owner Salim Said, guilty on all counts Wednesday after only about five hours of deliberation. Jurors had a mountain of evidence to sift through after listening to more than 30 witnesses testify over five weeks in the high-profile case — part of a sprawling \$250 million federal investigation that's charged 70 people, the largest pandemic-related fraud in the country.



Leila Navidi/The Minnesota Star Tribune



Carlos Gonzalez/The Minnesota Star Tribune

## Kaohly Her wins historic election, will be St. Paul's first Hmong mayor

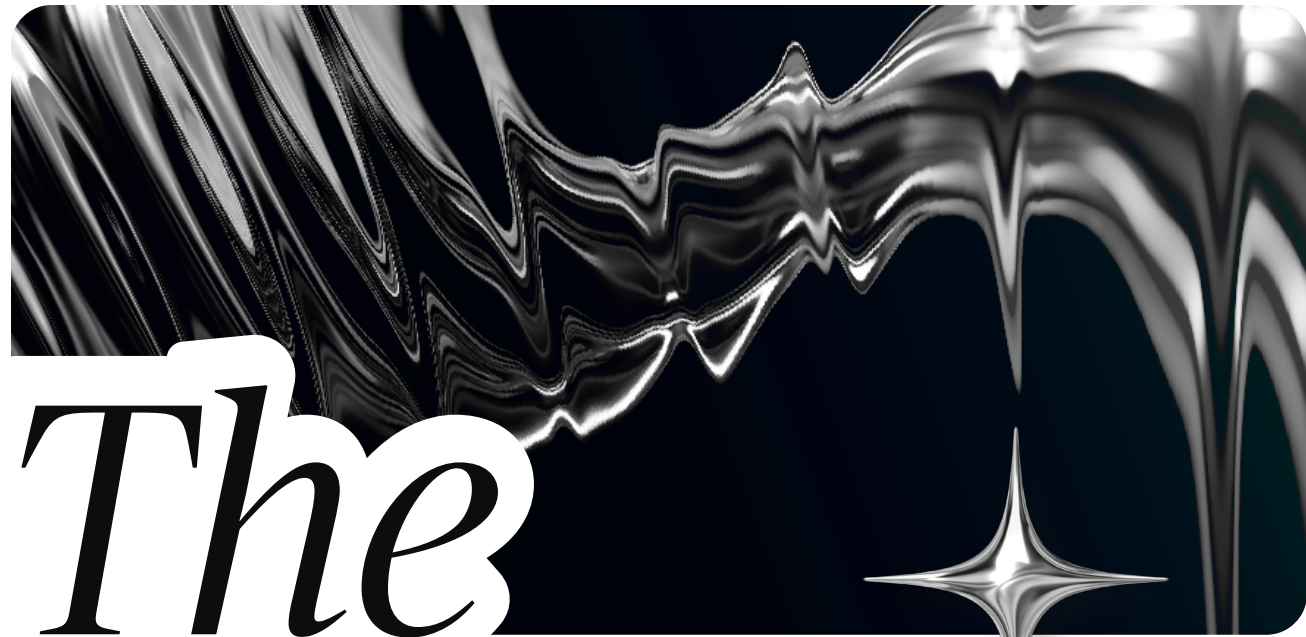
St. Paul voters handed a historic election victory to state Rep. Kaohly Her. Her upset her former boss, two-term Mayor Melvin Carter, to win the election. Coming 50 years after Hmong refugees began arriving in the U.S. fleeing war in southeast Asia, Her's ascent is a political milestone and achievement in the heart of Minnesota's Hmong community. The 52-year-old state lawmaker was born in Laos and arrived in the U.S. as a child, one of tens of thousands who eventually landed in Minnesota after the war to forge a new life.



# Community Involvement

At the Minnesota Star Tribune, we're committed to building a better Minnesota by elevating the people, ideas and stories that strengthen our communities. And the most meaningful way to do that is by showing up — engaging directly with Minnesotans, listening to their experiences, and connecting across every corner of the state.

The following pages showcase just a few ways we bring that mission to life and celebrate alongside the communities we serve.



# The Wrap



## WE REFLECTED. WE CELEBRATED. WE CAME TOGETHER.

Our second annual Year-in-Review event wrapped up another amazing evening at our Heritage printing facility. The special night overflowed with lively conversations and connections, mouthwatering dishes and craft

cocktails from acclaimed local chefs and mixologists, captivating entertainment from top local artists, and heartfelt recognition of award recipients who are making a positive impact on our state.



View the recap video





## The new hub for all things Minnesota high school sports.

This year we proudly launched Strib Varsity, a bold new sub-brand dedicated to delivering the most comprehensive, best-in-class coverage of high school sports across the state of Minnesota. This initiative represented a major growth opportunity aimed at expanding the Minnesota Star Tribune's audience and strengthening our subscription base by uniting fans, families and communities around the state's vibrant prep sports scene.

High school sports hold a special place in the hearts of Minnesotans and Strib Varsity provides a single, authoritative destination that covers more than 500 high schools and over 200,000 student-athletes statewide.

### Key features of Strib Varsity include:

- Comprehensive coverage of high school sports across Minnesota.
- A bold expansion of our popular MN Hub sites with homepages for every high school in Minnesota.
- Enhanced digital experiences, including livestreaming, interactive stats and engaging social media content.
- Strong partnerships and community engagement initiatives to celebrate Minnesota's prep sports culture in arenas, schools and online.



Carlos Gonzalez/The Minnesota Star Tribune



Jeff Wheeler/The Minnesota Star Tribune



Alex Kormann/The Minnesota Star Tribune

# NORTH STAR SUMMIT 2025

## Big ideas. Bold voices. Timely takeaways.

This event, which took place at the Walker Art Center on October 7, 2025, brought together the Midwest's top minds in politics, business, culture, and innovation to discuss the issues, ideas and solutions that shaped the future of our region and America.

Inspired by nationally recognized thought-leadership events such as the New York Times DealBook Summit, the Aspen Ideas Festival and the Texas Tribune Festival, the North Star Summit brought forward the region's most compelling ideas and influential voices. Through substantive conversations, newsmaker interviews and in-depth panel discussions on issues shaping the Midwest, attendees left with meaningful insights and practical takeaways to inform their work, communities and daily lives.



View video sessions

## Influential speakers included:

- Dr. Ronnie Chatterji
- Governor Tim Walz
- Zachary Mannheimer
- Peter Meijer
- Susan Brower
- Houston White
- Danielle Russell
- Ping Yeh
- Peter Leyden
- Myles Shaver
- Dayna Frank
- Andrew Miller



Jeff Wheeler/The Minnesota Star Tribune



Elizabeth Flores/The Minnesota Star Tribune



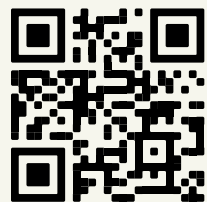
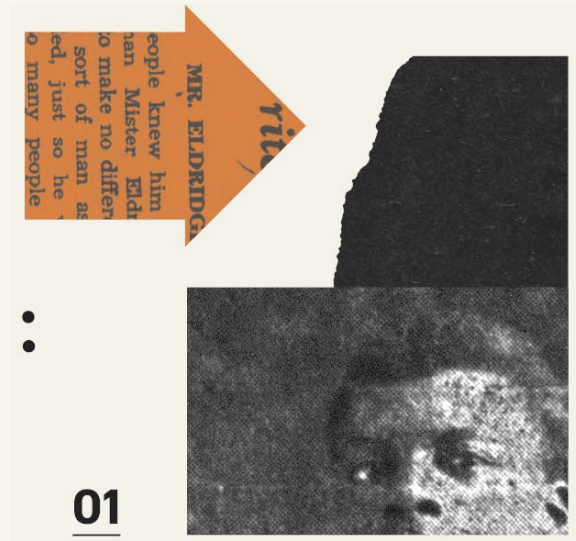
Jeff Wheeler/The Minnesota Star Tribune

# GHOST *of a* CHANCE

In 2025 we launched Ghost a Chance – a project that became last year’s breakout hit podcast, reaching number two on the Apple history podcast chart, and a huge success across Minnesota communities. In this gripping series, reporter Eric Roper delved into the past of his 113-year-old Minneapolis home and uncovered the extraordinary lives of Harry and Clementine Robinson. Their story illuminated the history of race in the Midwest – a narrative that continues to resonate during today’s ongoing racial reckoning.

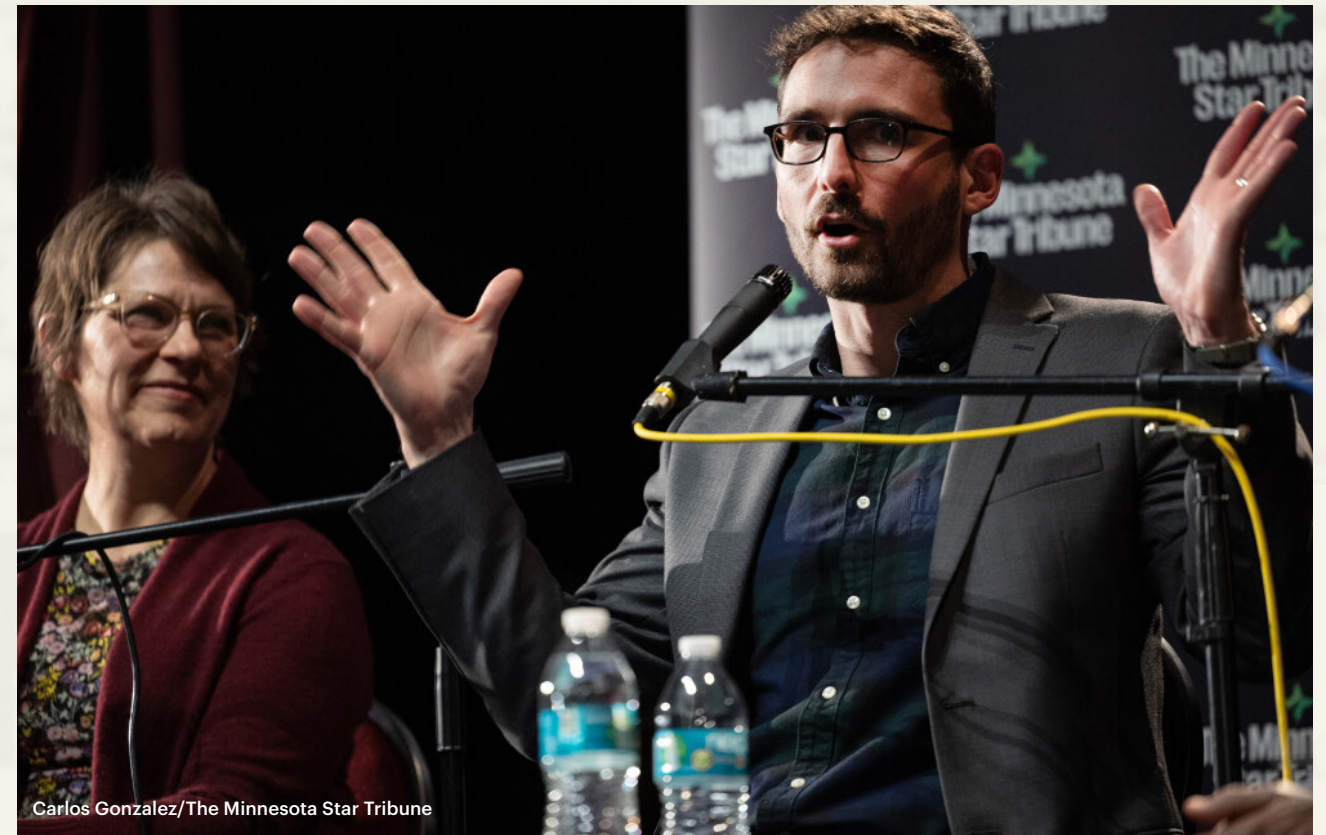
The series has spurred dozens of community gatherings across the Twin Cities metro area to discuss this important local history. We heard from people grappling with their own families’ history of discrimination and teachers who are using the podcast in their classrooms.

The Minnesota Star Tribune hosted a launch event in January, then paired with other organizations to produce an event related to the fifth anniversary of George Floyd’s murder. Later in the year, the Minneapolis Foundation hosted an event about the podcast and efforts to combat present-day housing inequities.



View historical photos, written transcripts and discussion guides.

**The podcast is available on Apple Podcasts or Spotify, and on our website.**



Carlos Gonzalez/The Minnesota Star Tribune



Carlos Gonzalez/The Minnesota Star Tribune



# The Minnesota Star Tribune Local News Fund

**Your investment fuels impact. Every day.**

Community-funded journalism through the Local News Fund invests directly in our communities, giving reporters the time, independence, and trust to dig deep for Minnesota.

In moments of calm, local news helps people understand their neighbors, their government, and their shared future. It strengthens civic life, builds trust, and keeps communities connected. And in moments of crisis (tornado, blizzard, public health emergency) local news becomes a lifeline, delivering timely, trusted information people rely on to stay safe and informed.

Your support of the Local News Fund makes this work possible, in ordinary days and extraordinary ones.

# Together, we made a difference in 2025



**Meet Eleanor**

The first reporter supported through a donor-funded fellowship, Eleanor has covered property taxes, emergency shelters, winter weather, Stillwater schools, and more to help Minnesotans better understand their neighbors and their state.

## Additional impact included:

- Mankato Reporter
- News & Politics Fellowship
- Outdoors Reporter
- Rochester Reporter
- Content Sharing
- AI Lab Fellowship
- Internship Program Growth
- Community Engagement



# Looking ahead to 2026

With your support, we fuel essential journalism across three key impact areas, funding reporter salaries and benefits and covering the costs of special projects that serve our communities. Your continued partnership will help power a vibrant, well-informed Minnesota.

## News Literacy Initiative: Building Media Literacy for the Next Generation

We're expanding access to news and media literacy across Minnesota to help students become informed, engaged citizens — while lighting a path for tomorrow's journalists. Together we can strengthen civic understanding and invest in the future of trusted journalism.

## Investigative Team

We hold power to account. Our investigative reporting drives action, reform, and greater transparency across Minnesota. In 2026, with community support, we will double the size of our investigative team —because Minnesota needs trusted, in-depth journalism that tackles the toughest issues and delivers real impact.

## The Greater Minnesota Initiative: Bridging Divides Across our State through Storytelling

We are growing our Greater Minnesota team to deliver solutions — focused journalism that ensures communities are seen and connected — wherever they are. With your investment, our team reaches under-covered areas and deepens our impact statewide.



Aaron Lavinsky/The Minnesota Star Tribune

# Show Your Support

Help us build a better Minnesota by connecting people with the ideas and stories that strengthen our communities.

# Donate to the Local News Fund

The Local News Fund is a community-powered investment in the future of journalism in the Minnesota. As the fifth-largest newspaper in the country, the Star Tribune is leading the way in building a sustainable model for strong, independent local news — supporting in-depth reporting that holds institutions accountable and serves communities across our state.

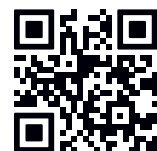
## Questions?



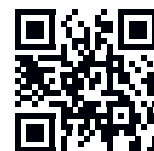
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### Enterprise Subscription Partner

Help keep communities connected. We offer group subscription services to organizations that provide annual digital subscription access at a substantially reduced rate.

**Contact [rose.dennis@startribune.com](mailto:rose.dennis@startribune.com)**

### Shop the Strib Store

Featuring tees, hoodies, totes, mugs, and more, each piece of our Core Collection captures the bold and modern energy of the Minnesota Star Tribune. Shop today to proudly show off your support for local journalism.

**[StribStore.com](http://StribStore.com)**

## Attend and sponsor our events

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Jayne Halbritter/The Minnesota Star Tribune

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