

BUILDing strong leaders, BUILDing strong communities

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Good things are happening in North Minneapolis.

If one watches the local news one would think there is only bad news about the cities Northside. Yes, there have been many losses to violence, and those losses bring great sadness to the community. While we mourn the losses, we also vow to do better for those left behind.

It is in this spirit of healing and working to improve things for the future that EMERGE, The City of Minneapolis Health Department and the Northside Youthwork Collaborative have launched a new pilot project named the BUILD Leaders Initiative.

With funding from the United Way the group has hired eight 18–24 year olds that were referred to the initiative because of their strong histories of leadership in the community. These young leaders spent a week being trained in the evidence-based, BUILD curriculum, which was named by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as a promising practice to be replicated. BUILD has been very successful in many neighborhoods in Chicago and is an important part of The City of Minneapolis' youth violence prevention efforts. BUILD leaders will now go out to sites in the community to teach these same lessons to –12 year olds, at North Commons Park, Sumner and North Regional libraries, as well at EMERGE's own Villages housing program.

BUILD lessons and activities teach important anti violence and pro health messages that will now be delivered by the some of the young adults that these younger kids look up to and want to emulate. The potential and power of this program design cannot be over looked. While so many images of our beloved Northside look dire and sound hopeless it is important that we also recognize that there are many young people in the neighborhood that truly want to be a part of making things better, if only given the chance to do so.