

DREAMING AND ACTING TOGETHER: BUILDING REAL COMMUNITY SAFETY IN MINNEAPOLIS



The NP team prepares to facilitate safety at the second People's Movement Assembly, September 26th, 2021.

Reimagining community safety and security is no small task. That's why the NPUS teams up with local organizations and community members who are deep in this work and modeling real alternatives that are already underway.

When we dream and act together, a new world that does not rely on violent responses to conflict is closer than we think.

NP was honored to facilitate safety for the People's Movement Assemblies (PMAs) hosted by two local organizations: Black Visions Collective and Reclaim the Block. People's assemblies are an important part of movements around the world, bringing communities together to share concerns, make decisions, and implement strategies that work for them. In Minnesota, the PMAs have been a powerful space for **communities across Minneapolis to gather and share stories and concerns about community**

safety, as well as come up with collective solutions and move towards action together.

The event organizers invited NP teams to facilitate holistic safety support to ensure that the conversations could take place free from violence and intimidation.

The bulk of NP's work is proactive, so the process started with conversations to understand the needs of the event and organizers, and then careful planning including threat mapping, risk assessments and scenario planning.

Cassie Macedo, People's Assembly Coordinator with Black Visions and Reclaim the Block, shared that NP, "provided thoughtful consultation prior to our events **that made me feel confident and secure for the safety for my team, the volunteers, and the community that we were hosting the event for.**"

The NP team asked the event organizers how they would want to respond to various situations and established clear communication for the day of the event.

And then, while participants shared and dreamed about what real safety looks like and feels like, NP teams modeled community safety alternatives that don't rely on anti-Blackness or use of force. Real safety does not look like surveillance, but relationships.

“Safety is much more than monitoring and reacting.” Sam Taitel, NP Program Specialist shared. “I am proud of our team for being as helpful as possible throughout the events and centering the PMA participants. Folks jumped in to meet needs when and before they arose. We ensured that walking in our team of staff and volunteers were as prepared as possible in knowledge, resources, and inter-personal connection. **A front-loading of preventative care promotes a healthier community.”**

At the third and final virtual People’s Assembly, NPUS’ Community Trainer Sam Taitel guided participants through holistic safety practices and tactics. Participants moved through visualizations, check-ins, and other exercises to reconnect with their awareness, agency, ancestors, and one another. **As we build new structures of community safety together, it is important that we’re equipping communities with skills to navigate the current ones.**

And the space **modeled the form of holistic safety we are moving towards.** Sam reflected, “we learned so much from the organizers in cultivating a nourishing virtual space. There was a communal energy present that I felt honored to share.”

Thanks to organizers and participants for surfacing some big questions: What is the foundation for real safety? What does everyone need to feel safe and secure, whether in their homes, in their neighborhoods or out in the

streets? And most importantly, what alternatives can we build together?

Cassie reflected, “I feel so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with leaders within my community to provide real safety that uplifts experiences to be the change we need.”



Neighbors gather at the South Minneapolis People's Movement Assembly, September 21st, 2021.