



Thank you to everyone who made this project possible: St. Louis Park Friends of the Arts, the Walker Lake Placemaking Committee, city staff, teachers, students, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Hennepin County, business owners, countless individuals, and of course the artists at Goodspace Murals.

I'm a big believer in the arts as powerful community builder. I worked for Friends of the Arts myself years ago, creating little projects that built and nurtured community, but nothing on the scale of what Jamie has done, not even close. I'm so grateful for Jamie's work in and with our community. Thank you, Jamie.

As I reflect on the contents of this mural, I see a recurring theme: *our actions make a difference*.

- I see how Phyllis's picking up and carrying the baton for light rail transit in SLP was critical to LRT becoming a reality so many years after she passed the baton to others.
- I see how B. Robert Lewis' work on the school board and with students created a foundation for the welcoming and inclusive school district we're so proud of today.
- I see how T.B. Walker's plans resulted in industrial activity that, more than 125 years later, continues to lend diversity to our local economy and make important contributions to our local tax base.
- And I see how the racism that Woodfin Lewis experienced here in 1952 is tied to today's reality that only 1% of owner-occupied homes in St. Louis Park belong to Black residents.

Like all history, ours is complicated, and I appreciate how this mural gives us a peek into some of the complicated stories and feelings that make up our collective past.

This mural is a great reminder that our actions matter, and that we're always making history, whether we think about it or not. It's a reminder to me, as an elected official, that for the brief window of time I hold this position in this great community, I can make a difference too. I can direct my efforts toward healing and repair.

- I can work to create a foundation for affordable homeownership in our community, which changes the trajectory for future generations by allowing families to build wealth.
- I can work on anti-racism initiatives that ensure students like Jae and Yusuf have fewer barriers and more opportunities to achieve their dreams.
- I can work with others to elevate awareness of the indigenous people who lived here long before white people arrived so that this history also becomes part of our community story.

And you don't have to be an elected official to do any of this, to make a difference – everyone has a part to play in creating our community story going forward.

Again, I want to thank everyone involved in creating this highly inspirational work. Once we're gathering again in the ways we used to, I'm so looking forward to seeing what happens in the Historic Walker Lake district that has been made so much better by the presence of this mural.