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Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
Prior Lake American/Savage Pacer
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Each year on the third Monday of January, our nation observes Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to learn about and reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. King. This year's observance takes on extra special meaning as our district hosts Prior Lake Rotary's first annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Breakfast at Prior Lake High School.

Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools (PLSAS) is teaming up with the Rotary Club of Prior Lake and the cities of Prior Lake, Savage, Credit River and Spring Lake Township to come together as a community to show unity, promote equity and embrace our differences. The event will be at Prior Lake High School from 8:00-10:00 a.m. and will feature a multicultural breakfast, musical performance and dance, remarks from Prior Lake High School Black Student Union President Johnea Rucker, Prior Lake Mayor Kirt Briggs, Savage Mayor Janet Williams, PLSAS School Board member, Director of Equity and Inclusion Sam Ouk, myself, and keynote speaker Gail Lewis Miller, who is a retired principal and equity and inclusion consultant.

We are also continuing our joint collaboration with our city and township partners to host another Community Coffee and Conversations event to discuss race and equity in our communities. Local race equity facilitator, Seema Pathini will again be leading our discussions. The event is January 20th from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center in Savage. Light refreshments will be served.

During last month's Community Coffee and Conversations more than 150 residents came together to work towards achieving our goal of creating a more inclusive community. This was a great start for our communities to listen and learn from one another. We are continuing this positive momentum and encourage residents to attend even if you were not able to attend the first meeting.

As mentioned in my column last month, our strategic plan includes educational equity and excellence goals and stakeholder engagement to strengthen a culture of respect and inclusion. We remain committed to creating a district culture of respect, love and support for each student and staff member, ensuring racism is not tolerated and it is addressed consistently in our schools.

I am proud of the partnerships we have formed in our community and it is my hope that more residents will join us in attending both of these free events. It is important for all of us to work together to ensure the lived experiences of our students, staff and all community members is one where the dignity of each individual is honored, respected and celebrated. We need our entire community to come together to help us achieve our school district mission which is to educate all learners to reach their full potential as contributing and productive members of our ever-changing global community.