

SAINT PAUL & MINNESOTA FOUNDATION HONORS ANTI-RACISM ACTIVISTS WITH 15TH ANNUAL FACING RACE AWARDS

*Honorees include Victoria McWane-Creek, Valerie Shirley,
KingDemetrius Pendleton and Wokie Weah*

*A program celebrating the honorees will be broadcast on the Minnesota channel of TPT Twin Cities PBS
featuring special contributor and author Kao Kalia Yang*

St. Paul, Minn. – Oct. 4, 2021 – The [Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation](#) (the Foundation) today announced the recipients of its [Facing Race Awards](#). The awards, now in their fifteenth year, honor individuals and organizations working to eliminate racism and its effects in Minnesota. Honorees are nominated by the community and receive grants to benefit Minnesota nonprofits of their choice.

This year's Facing Race honorees will be celebrated during a thirty-minute presentation to air at 7 p.m., Sunday, October 24, on the Minnesota Channel of TPT Twin Cities PBS. The program will be hosted by the Foundation's Senior Vice President of Operations & Learning Nadege Souvenir and Senior Vice President of Community Impact, Pahoua Hoffman, along with a special appearance by Eric J. Jolly, Ph.D., president and chief executive officer of the Foundation. The Facing Race honorees will share stories of their community activism and anti-racism work in Minnesota.

"Minnesota's Black, Indigenous and communities of color are often called upon to lead solutions to problems they did not create," said Jolly. "This year's Facing Race honorees – Victoria McWane-Creek, Valerie Shirley, KingDemetrius Pendleton and Wokie Weah – are all uniquely powerful proponents and catalysts for needed and positive change. Collectively, they model commitment, compassion and creativity that we all can learn from as we strive to find solutions that unite us in combating racism and closing the harmful race-based disparities that unfortunately are still prevalent in Minnesota."

"The work of facing race in America is one that many of us do each and every day, but not always with so much grit, wisdom, and grace," said [Kao Kalia Yang](#). "This year's honorees set an example of how to take the hardest parts of our history and circumstances as Native peoples and people of color and turn them into inspiring acts of courage, resistance, and love. I am thrilled to be part of a celebration dedicated to overcoming the longest struggle of the land: the search for equitability and a more just pursuit of society."

The October 24 Facing Race broadcast will also feature original music from Ujamaa Music Group. The artists met through their involvement in Ujamaa Place, a St. Paul-based nonprofit providing a holistic transformation for young African-American men experiencing inequity at the intersection of race and poverty.

Following the broadcast, viewers are invited to join a post-show conversation with honorees during a Zoom event hosted by Souvenir. Participation is free of charge, but registration is required at: https://spmcf.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gf0nBAzKT-Kb4iC1T_9T6w

Established in 2007, the Foundation's Facing Race Awards honor Minnesota's anti-racism activists who work tirelessly to change the narrative on race and create communities where everyone feels safe, valued, and respected.

About the 2021 Facing Race Honorees

- **Victoria McWane-Creek** is a Fergus Falls resident who is a performance improvement specialist, guiding individuals, teams, organizations, and communities toward their ideal performance by designing and executing strategic interventions that close knowledge, performance, and skills gaps. McWane-Creek is also a facilitator with the Minnesota Campus Compact Communities of Practice, serves as a member of the Minnesota Council of Churches Respectful Conversations Project, the Human Rights Commission of Fergus Falls, Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership Board and Youth Advisory Council of Workforce Area Board. She has been recognized as a changemaker working to create a more equitable community in Fergus Falls and Otter Tail County.
- **KingDemetrius Pendleton** is an independent photojournalist who uses imagery to tell stories of injustice and unrest. His photographs of protests, memorials, and community events related to incidents of racial injustice have been featured in newspapers and social media. Through his company, [ListenMedia](#), he strives to be a "voice of the voiceless." Pendleton became an activist to honor his daughter, who was killed by a drunk driver in November 2013.
- **Valerie Shirley** is a St. Paul resident who has devoted her life to empowering those who are underrepresented or invisible. She is the founder of the [Minnesota Deaf Muslim Community](#), a nonprofit working to ensure access to effective communication for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. She began her career in deaf education as a way to communicate with her deaf son. Since then, she has taught others to sign and has made it her mission to ensure mosques in Minnesota include American Sign Language interpreters at prayer services.
- **Wokie Weah** is the first and current President of [Youthprise](#), a nonprofit dedicated to increasing equity for Minnesota's Indigenous, low-income and racially diverse youth. Under her leadership, Youthprise has granted more than \$30 million to youth initiatives and provided training and technical assistance to more than 100 youth-serving organizations. Youthprise has also successfully lobbied for more than \$3.1 million in direct appropriations to support key youth-development initiatives.

Editor's note: Find a Facing Race program description and honoree photos in the Foundation's pressroom: <https://www.spmcf.org/who-we-are/newsroom/media-center>.

About the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation believes in the best of Minnesota and the power of its communities. With roots in Saint Paul and partners across the state, it is Minnesota's largest community foundation and the partner of choice for thousands of donors, nonprofits and community organizations. The Foundation aspires to create an equitable, just and vibrant Minnesota where all communities and people thrive by inspiring generosity, advocating for equity, and investing in community-led solutions. Visit: spmcf.org

About Twin Cities PBS

Twin Cities PBS (TPT)'s mission is to enrich lives and strengthen our community through the power of

media. Established 63 years ago, TPT now operates as a public service media organization that harnesses a range of media tools to serve citizens in new ways — with multiple broadcast channels, online teaching resources, educational outreach and community engagement activities reaching more than 2 million people each month. Over its history, TPT has been recognized for its innovation and creativity with numerous awards, including Peabody and national and regional Emmy® Awards. Visit: www.tpt.org

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