

Dear Legacy Finance Committee Members,

I want to apologize for not being able to attend the meeting today, but work (in a job in the trades I got due to Northern Bedrock) prevents me from making it.

I'll start off by telling you a story that I think encapsulates what this program meant for me. We were working in an old cemetery on a gravel road nestled amongst the corn fields. It was a wet summer, so everyone was dirty and tired after a hard day of cleaning and repairing broken stones, but we wanted to reset one last toppled stone before we stopped for the day. It was a big one that had fallen over and been stuck in the ground for several years according to the site manager. We gathered around the stone, brainstorming and experimenting, teaching each other what we'd learned, eventually coming together with a plan to right it. The groans and straining of lifting the stone gave way to my favorite moment; the name on the marker being revealed. Here was the person who we were working for. The "loving mother," who had been lived long ago and experienced a world entirely foreign to mine. I don't know them, or anyone who knew them, but as I wiped the dirt from the grooves of their name, my hand running across the dates of their life I felt a connection to who they were, and this land they came from. This person and this place mean something. While their memory lay toppled in the dirt, hidden from the world, a little of that meaning was lost, but now we restored an acknowledgement of the importance of a life.

-Northern Bedrock allowed us all the opportunity to lead on a project. We all knew what it meant to be the one responsible for the decision making, and it made us better service members and supporters even when we weren't in charge.

-We learned a bevy of skills: from carpentry, and masonry, to window restoration and plasterwork. All skills that can be transferred to jobs and to our own houses and communities.

- I was part of a diverse cohort: I met people from across the country who came to Minnesota for the first time just for this program. We came from many economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. We traveled across the state, gaining an appreciation and knowledge of places I'd never gotten to visit before.

Before Northern Bedrock I was a little directionless in life. I was looking for what Fredric Beakner describes as "the place where my soul's great hunger meets the world's great need." I found that with this program. At the end of the summer I had made lifelong friends, learned lifelong skills, and got a job doing historic window restoration that stemmed directly from one of the projects I worked on. I don't know what the future holds for me, but I know that I will always have what Northern Bedrock gave me.

I'll finish the story that I started with- Around the "loving mother's" newly righted monument we stood; a motley and muddy crew comprised of recent immigrants from Laos, some out-of-staters, some cities folk, and some greater Minnesotans, none of whom would have known each other except for this program, but now all gathered together here to this spot in the service of something greater than ourselves.

Thank You

Amos Johnson, Alumni

Northern Bedrock Historic Preservation Corps

Employed with Hayes Window Restoration