

Dreams Come True With First Hmong Public School

BY EMMITT PETERSON

ST. PAUL HAS RECENTLY become the home of what is thought to be the first Hmong public middle school in the country. Although they are off to a slow start, Principal Veu Thor has high hopes for St. Paul's new Hmong and Culture Middle School. The school believes that it will help retain the culture of Asian Americans while also providing excellent education to students. The school is dual-immersion, which means students will have more challenging courses and will be required to learn a second language. Emphasizing on Hmong language and culture, this school will be extremely unique compared to other schools in St. Paul. This school brings comfort to children of Hmong heritage. One student described to the Sahan Journal how comfortable she felt speaking her native language at the new school.

Currently, the Hmong Language and Culture Middle school only has sixty students (all of which are in sixth grade) and six teachers, but plans for expansion are certainly in the works. The main issue that the school deals with is low enrollment, which is

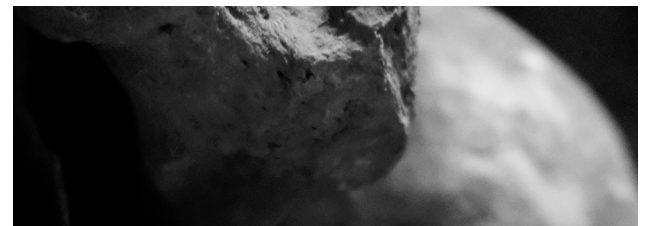
caused by the simple fact that so few people know about the school and its existence. Many families are currently sending their children to charter schools, but Thor hopes to have these students attend his middle school. He also hopes to include all grades K-12 instead of just 6th.

This school has been a dream come true for many people of Hmong heritage. Principal Thor is filled with pride when he walks the halls of his school because of the amount of Hmong culture that fills the place. Principal Thor told Sahan Journal that it is important for children of the Hmong school to see themselves as more than students, and they are encouraged to dream big. The school is breaking down barriers and stigmas about how cultural and language programs are viewed in public schools. Although it is a Hmong public school, students will not be required to know the language to attend, as Hmong is as an official class.

Although there are many tasks that still need to be accomplished, things are looking bright for the school district. The district is dreaming big, and they hope to one day be able to establish a public Hmong

high school to go along with their middle school, elementary school, and preschool. The faculty of Hmong Language and Culture Middle school reflect on how little representation they had when they were young kids in school, but with this school, they hope to give students mentors to whom they can relate from a cultural standpoint.

This middle school, given enough time, will break down barriers when it comes to the cultural and language stigma in America. The school is a dream come true for many people in the Hmong community due to the lack of Hmong teachers there were in the past, but now Hmong students can have mentors who they can relate on a cultural level.



Swedish Scientist Svante Pääbo Wins Nobel Prize in Medicine

BY KALI FOLLAND

THE NOBEL PRICE was created in the will of the Swedish inventor of dynamite and businessman, Alfred Nobel. The prizes for achievements in science, literature, and peace have been awarded since 1901, with the prize of economics added later. Last year, the prize went to a pair from the United States: David Julius and Ardem Papapoutain for their discoveries on receptors for temperature and touch, which were used to develop treatments for a wide range of diseases and conditions, including chronic pain. The COVID-19 pandemic had taken medical research to center stage, with many expecting that the development of vaccines would win a Nobel Prize. However, it takes several years for research to be honored, with the committees charged with picking winners looking to determine the full value amongst a packed field of contenders.

Other past winners include a long line of famous researchers, such as Alexander Fleming, who shared the 1945 discovery of penicillin. Another excellent example would be Robert Koch, who won in 1905 for his discovery of tuberculosis.

Swedish Scientist Svante Pääbo won the 2022 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discoveries that concern the “genomes of extinct hominins and human evolution,” according to the awarding body.

Pääbo, now 67 years old, has spent decades pioneering and perfecting new methods of extracting neanderthal DNA, an extremely challenging process. Over time, very old DNA degrades and can become

polluted with the DNA of bacteria, and modern scientists can also easily contaminate it with their genetic material.

Pääbo achieved the seemingly impossible through his pioneering research, which was sequencing the genome of the neanderthal, an extinct relative of present-day humans. He had also made the discovery of an unknown hominin, Denisova. The Jury, as well as the director of the department of genetics at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, had discovered that the gene transfer occurred from these extinct hominins to homosapiens following the migration of Africa 70,000 years ago. The Jury says, “This ancient flow of genes to present-day humans has physiological relevance today, for example, affecting how our immune system reacts to infections.” Moreover, COVID-19 patients with a snippet of Neanderthal DNA run a higher risk of severe complications from the disease, according to Pääbo’s 2020 study. Juleen Zierath, from the Nobel Committee, told Al Jazeera in Stockholm that “Humankind has been interested in our origins forever, and Svante Pääbo was able to solve that part of the puzzle for us by sequencing the genome of some of our closest relatives—neanderthals and Denisova.”

The prize awarded by the Nobel Assembly of Sweden’s Karolinska Institute, is one of the most prestigious in the scientific world, and is worth 10 million Swedish Crowns, which equates to roughly 900,357 US Dollars.



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