



## For Immediate Release

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## Minnesota Idea Open Promotes Working Together Across Cultures and Faiths

**SAINT PAUL, Minn. – February 28, 2012** – In a changing state that has become more diverse in cultures and faiths, the Minnesota Idea Open, created by Minnesota Community Foundation, believes that it is increasingly important to find ways to build relationships with people across individual differences.

Starting today, the Minnesota Idea Open invites all Minnesotans to be part of the solution and participate in Challenge III: Working Together Across Cultures and Faiths. The Challenge asks individuals to share their **best idea to build bonds and work together across cultures and faiths** at [MN Idea Open.org](http://MN Idea Open.org).

“One of our admirable traits as Minnesotans is our loyalty to one another, but that also means we sometimes struggle to push ourselves beyond our familiar circles,” says Carleen Rhodes, president and CEO of Minnesota Community Foundation, which created the Idea Open. “As a community foundation, we feel it’s imperative that all communities do a better job of working across our differences so we can thrive in all corners of our state.”

The Idea Open has teamed up with One Nation, a foundation that works with community foundations across the country to create local, civic engagement programs that connect diverse communities.

“Our work has shown us that many misperceptions about cultures and faiths are addressed when we find ways to work together that benefit diverse communities,” says Henry Izumizaki, CEO of One Nation. “We are excited to work with the Idea Open and help make that change happen in Minnesota.”

This year marks the third annual Challenge hosted by the Idea Open. Each Challenge invites individuals to enter their ideas at [MN Idea Open.org](http://MN Idea Open.org), and the public votes for their favorite ideas. The Idea Open funds \$15,000 to each of the three winning ideas to turn them into realities.

The Idea Open is a venture of Minnesota Community Foundation with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Challenge III: Working Together Across Cultures and Faiths is made possible by **One Nation** and three affiliates of **Minnesota Philanthropy Partners: Minnesota Community Foundation, the Multicultural Endowment and Facing Race**. Learn more at [onenationfoundation.org](http://onenationfoundation.org) and [mnpartners.org](http://mnpartners.org).

### Challenge III Key Events

- **Laugh in Peace Tour with Minnesota Idea Open** on March 15, 2012 at the Varsity Theater in Minneapolis. Doors open at 6:00 p.m., and the show begins at 7:00 p.m. Founded by stand-up comedian, Rabbi Bob Alper, this interfaith comedy show is headlined by Alper and fellow comedians, Reverend Susan Sparks and Azhar Usman. Learn more and buy tickets at [http://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/98731?utm\\_medium=bks](http://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/98731?utm_medium=bks).
- **Building Together Across Cultures and Faiths with Minnesota Idea Open and Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity** between February 28 and March 24. Learn more about this unique interfaith build site at <http://blog.tchabitat.org/IdeaOpen>.

### Challenge III Key Dates

- Tuesday, February 28: Idea submissions open at [MN Idea Open.org](http://MN Idea Open.org)
- Friday, March 23: Deadline for idea submissions
- Tuesday, May 15: Public voting for winning ideas begins
- Friday, May 25: Public voting for winning ideas ends
- May 30-June 8: Celebrate the winning ideas

### About Minnesota Idea Open

Minnesota Idea Open is a cutting-edge, community utility that brings people together to learn about critical issues facing the state, work together on creative solutions and inspire individuals to action. Minnesota Community Foundation, an affiliate of Minnesota Philanthropy Partners, partnered with [Ashoka's Changemakers](#) to launch the Idea Open in 2010 with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The Idea Open is able to host multiple challenges simultaneously and has made its platform available to other organizations that want to use the technology to engage their stakeholders on issues of importance. [MN Idea Open.org](http://MN Idea Open.org).