

# FOREVER

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## SAINT PAUL

# CHALLENGE

### For Immediate Release

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## The Saint Paul Foundation Announces the Winning Idea in the \$1 Million Forever Saint Paul Challenge

*Urban Oasis will receive \$1 million grant for implementation*

SAINT PAUL, Minn., September 9, 2013 – The Saint Paul Foundation and Minnesota Idea Open announce the winning \$1 million idea in the Forever Saint Paul Challenge. The Urban Oasis, which connects food, nature and culture to transform existing space at the Bruce Vento Sanctuary, will receive \$1 million for implementation.

"We are excited to support the winning idea and help it become a reality for Saint Paul," said Carleen Rhodes, president and CEO of The Saint Paul Foundation. "Minnesotans cast their votes and told us which idea they think is the best investment in the future of our capital city."

Launched in February 2013, the Forever Saint Paul Challenge received nearly 1,000 ideas that answered the question: What would you do with \$1 million to make Saint Paul great? More than 16,000 votes were cast for the winning idea between August and September.

Tracy Sides of Saint Paul, and founder of Bravely Be, an effort to promote community health, submitted the winning idea, which received more than 50 percent of the total votes. She envisions a one-of-a-kind food hub that will make Saint Paul a national destination and model for local food systems done right.

"I'm so excited about seeing this idea become a reality because everybody wins – with our Urban Oasis food hub and event center we'll create jobs, improve health, and foster a sense of community among people and this uniquely Saint Paul place," Sides said. "And the city wins because bringing the Urban Oasis to life will showcase Saint Paul not only as a creative, equitable, thriving and sustainable city, but also as a national leader in local food system development."

Read more about her idea and all of the other great ideas for Saint Paul at [MNIdeaOpen.org/foreversaintpaul](http://MNIdeaOpen.org/foreversaintpaul).

The selection process for the Forever Saint Paul Challenge relied on community volunteers and experts to narrow the pool of nearly 1,000 ideas. Thirty semifinalists were selected by dozens of community volunteers. An independent panel of nine judges then narrowed those 30 ideas to three finalists. In August and September, the public was invited to vote for the winning idea among the three finalists.

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“As a community foundation, we found the Forever Saint Paul Challenge to be a fun and different way to connect with the communities we serve,” Rhodes said. “It was inspiring to see individuals and organizations get excited about their ideas, and come together to share that enthusiasm and dream big for Saint Paul.”

This year marks the fourth annual statewide ideas competition through the Idea Open. Previous Challenges have addressed issues of obesity, water stewardship and working together across cultures and faiths. To date, the Idea Open has engaged thousands of Minnesotans in solving critical issues facing Minnesota.

The Saint Paul Foundation's Forever Saint Paul Challenge supporters also include the Bush Foundation, F. R. Bigelow Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation, 3M, Travelers, the Katherine B. Andersen Fund, Securian, McNeely Foundation and the Multicultural Endowment. The water bar featured at the Forever Saint Paul State Fair booth where people were able to vote and fill up on chilled and filtered water was made possible by Pentair.

### **Challenge Overview: By the Numbers**

- 946 ideas entered in The Saint Paul Foundation's \$1 million Forever Saint Paul Challenge
- 16,000+ total public votes to decide the winning idea (more than 50 percent of the total votes were secured by the winning idea)
- 40+ total volunteers (reviewers and judges) read all 946 ideas and narrowed them to three finalists
- 5,000+ individuals attended our kick-off event in February at the Union Depot, featuring a Guinness World Record-breaking Lite-Brite mural
- 580 volunteers dedicated 800 total hours to insert 596,897 Lite-Brite pegs into the Forever Saint Paul-themed Lite-Brite picture
- 7 Idea Open House events brought together 350+ individuals in neighborhoods across Saint Paul (and one Idea Open House took place in Minneapolis)
- 2 Idea Open Labs brought together 30 semifinalists and 70+ local experts to share, discuss and refine million-dollar ideas for Saint Paul
- 41 active organizations helped spread the word to their networks

### **Timeline Recap**

- February 16: Forever Saint Paul Challenge launched with special event at Union Depot
- April 3: Deadline for idea submissions
- May 9: Semifinalists announced at Great River Gathering event
- May-June: Semifinalists refined their ideas
- June-August: Judges selected three finalist ideas
- August 13: Finalists announced and public voting started
- August 22-September 2: Forever Saint Paul Challenge voting booth at State Fair
- September 2: Voting closed

**About The Saint Paul Foundation**

Since 1940, thousands of generous individuals committed to the Saint Paul area have made charitable gifts to The Saint Paul Foundation. Today, the Foundation is the state's largest community foundation. Guided by the legacy of its earliest donors, the Foundation helps donors achieve their charitable giving goals and have long-lasting impact in the community. The Foundation is an affiliate of Minnesota Philanthropy Partners. Learn more at [saintpaulfoundation.org](http://saintpaulfoundation.org) and [mnpartners.org](http://mnpartners.org).

**About Minnesota Idea Open**

The Minnesota Idea Open is a venture of Minnesota Community Foundation, an affiliate of Minnesota Philanthropy Partners. Through statewide idea Challenges, the Idea Open invites individuals to help solve critical issues and inspire communities to action. Launched in 2010, the Idea Open has operated four marquee Challenges to date. The platform was made possible by a generous grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The Idea Open website is powered by Ashoka Changemakers, which provides tools and resources that enable everyone to contribute to a better world. Learn more at [MNideaOpen.org](http://MNideaOpen.org).

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