

Dear Minnesota

LETTER-WRITING & STORY-SHARING PROJECT

Audience-Created Content Sharing Across Online Platforms Workshops and Events

Dear Minnesota is a statewide, multimedia letter-writing project designed for sharing stories of origin and immigration. Minnesotans are invited to write and submit letters, along with pictures, audio and video about their experiences and those of their families and ancestors as they moved through or to Minnesota.

We hope original letters, along with along with pictures, audio and video will evoke memories, emotion and deep reflection. Through letter-writing and story-sharing, more voices will contribute to shaping our history and who we are as Minnesotans.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Submit a letter

[Click Submission Form](#) to share introductory information, write and submit a letter and other files like a picture, a short video, audio, etc.

[Click Letter Template](#) and handwrite a letter. Mail it with a completed submission form to:

Dear Minnesota
Kevin Yang
Twin Cities PBS
172 East 4th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Like and share posted Dear Minnesota letters and content on our social media and other Moving Lives Minnesota platforms

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE I SUBMIT MY LETTER?

We will curate submissions and share them on digital platforms for Minnesotans to engage with online:

- [@movinglivesmn](#) on Instagram & Facebook  
- movinglivesmn.org
- Additional platforms managed by the PBS stations of Minnesota

movinglivesmn.org

L E T T E R E X A M P L E

Dear Minnesota,

My parents were born in Laos and lived in refugee camps in Thailand before moving to the United States. I was born in Minnesota. As a second-generation immigrant, I've always wanted to learn more about how our Hmong communities are doing around the world. In 2019, I had the opportunity to return to Thailand as a digital storytelling teacher where I joined a team of artists that facilitated activities for Hmong youth in Chiang Mai, Thailand. It was a transformational experience. Our Hmong communities that had been separated geographically by the ocean and historically by the war were reconnecting, sharing, and learning with each other.

For two weeks, our group learned how to use cameras and audio equipment, but also spent lots of time learning about stories; what makes a good story, but more importantly what stories did we have to tell the world. One story we shared and one of my biggest surprises I learned was our common struggle around finding ways to keep our language and culture alive. I had assumed that because this was part of the world where my parents were born, this would also be the place where our culture would live forever. I learned that we were both eager to learn more about how to connect to our Hmong identities.

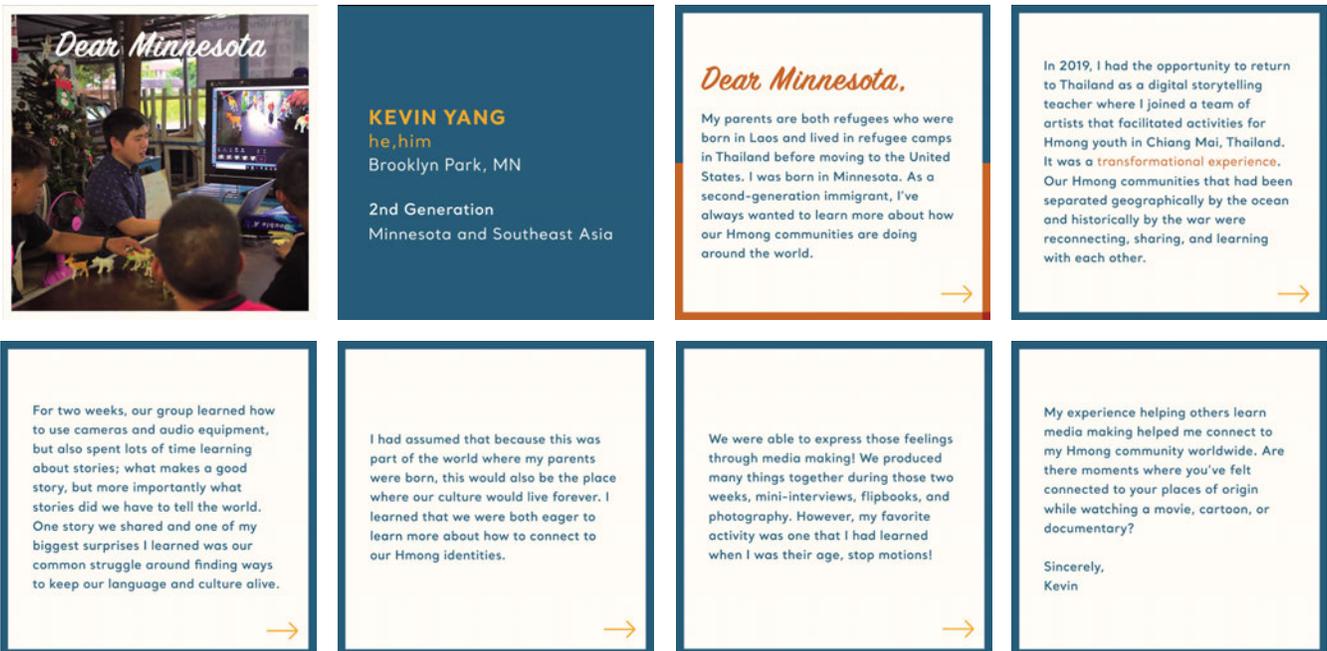
We were able to express those feelings through media making! We produced many things together during those two weeks, mini-interviews, flipbooks, and photography. However, my favorite activity was one that I had learned when I was their age, stop motions! My experience helping others learn media making helped me connect to my Hmong community worldwide. Are there moments where you've felt connected to your places of origin while watching a movie, cartoon, or documentary?

Sincerely,

Kevin

S O C I A L M E D I A L E T T E R E X A M P L E

How your letter may appear when we present it on social media



SHARE YOUR STORY

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "LETTER"?

For *Dear Minnesota*, a letter is a multimedia message related to Minnesota stories of origin and immigration history. A letter can be a handwritten or digital document, and include a photograph or image, short video and/or audio recording

Participants are also encouraged to share a letter that may have been previously written or passed down.

Written, either by hand or in a digital document, in 300 words or less with at least one or more of:

- 1-3 images (photographs or artwork)
- Photo essay up to 8 images with captions
- 60 second mobile phone or other video
- 60 second audio clip from mobile phone or other

WHAT DO I WRITE ABOUT?

Minnesotans have the opportunity to share their personal stories of about places of origin and immigration history. Share your truth, think creatively and be descriptive yet concise. Throughout the project, we will provide ideas and themes to inspire your letter-writing. To get you started, here are some ideas to write about:

What do you know about your family's or ancestors' history when they moved through or to Minnesota? What compelled you/them to move?

What did you, your family or your ancestors first experience when moving to or through Minnesota? Where did you find belonging?

What image or object represents your journey or your family's or ancestors' journey through or to Minnesota? Why is it important to you?

Describe a time when you connected with someone who identifies with a place/places of origin different from yours.

What is a cultural practice or activity that connects you to your place(s) of origin?

Is there a significant story that was passed down to you that you would like to pass on?

HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

- Share your truth. Share stories and experiences from your own life and avoid generalizing and assuming perspectives that are not your own. If you are sharing a story about a friend or family member, make sure you have their permission. Letters that contain content that is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise prejudice will not be shared.
- Share courageously. We understand that stories of origin and immigration span a wide range of emotions including trauma, anger, and grief as well as happiness, accomplishment, and pride. Dear Minnesota encourages letters that speak truth to the multitude of emotions of these experiences.
- We invite letters in the form of poems, comics, photo essays and other mediums. Share your story forms that speak your truth.
- Keep letters short. For video and audio, keep recordings to 1 minute maximum. For written materials, keep them to 300 words or less. For images, include up to 3 pictures.
- Include visual multimedia. All posts must include a written and a visual or audio component. Whether it be a photo or video of yourself or the topics of your letter, visual components allow the letters to more widely engage on our social media platforms.
- Proof read. Dear Minnesota will not be editing content for grammar/syntax/spelling or technical quality. Please check content for errors before submitting.

Dear Minnesota is a project of Moving Lives Minnesota: Stories of Origin & Immigration (MLMN), exploring our histories as we moved through and to Minnesota. MLMN brings Minnesotans together to recognize and honor our similar and different backgrounds and experiences. We hope through this statewide initiative by the 6 PBS stations of Minnesota, story-sharing will build empathy and understanding across our communities.

C O N T A C T U S

Kevin Yang

Digital Engagement Specialist

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SHARE YOUR STORY



PHOTO CREDITS

Children of Swedish Immigrant, Minnesota's Governor Adolph Eberhart, Minnesota Historical Society 1911; "View of Mendota" where treaty negotiations began in 1851. Painting by Seth Eastman. Minnesota Historical Society c1848; "Coming to America" Monico S. Ancheta and family departing from Manila Airport, Manila, Philippines. Jocelyn Ancheta 1966

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