



2020 Letter from the President

Maira Rosas-Lee

April 22, 2020

Dear MNEA Friends,

As I begin my year as MNEA's President, I want to show appreciation to our 2018 and 2019 board of directors and its volunteer members. MNEA began ramping up programming in 2018 for MNEA membership and began preparing for the AEA Conference in Minneapolis for 2019. Minnesota is so fortunate to have dedicated MNEA members and passionate volunteers that created such a connected and engaged community of evaluators at the AEA 2019 Conference. During 2019, MNEA experienced exceptional growth with membership increasing to 372 members. With a significant growth in membership and success of MNEA's involvement in AEA's conference, my aspiration is for MNEA to build off of that momentum and excitement from the conference and bring it to local programming and training for members across Minnesota for 2020.

We begin 2020 with a very busy and successful year behind us and we have been thrust into unprecedented events in starting this new decade. With [COVID-19](#) and various [Executive Orders](#) from our Governor, MNEA has had to quickly adapt to and implement virtual programming for membership. This was one of our major goals for 2020, because we had many [MNEA-AEA Scholarship recipients](#) who are out of-state and several members from greater Minnesota that cannot always make a trip down to the Twin Cities for a short MNEA event. While this was our goal for 2020, the emergency executive orders were a major catalyst to begin web-based implementation of programming. Because we are navigating through uncertain times, all MNEA events will be free for members. For the next 6 months, MNEA is providing [free membership](#) to anyone who signs up.

As MNEA is improving our practice in this area, we have adjusted our planned in-person events to be virtual. We started out 2020 with information about the [benefits of being an MNEA member](#) and announced a pilot launch of our MNEA Mentorship Program starting in June 2020. We have three exciting webinars to offer you over the next four weeks, which are:

- April 29: [Journey Mapping conducted by Somongkol Teng and Amanda Petersen.](#)
- May 5: [Deep Dive with Michael Quinn Patton: Evaluation Implications of the Coronavirus Global Health Pandemic Emergency](#)
- May 14: [Evaluation and Learning in Philanthropy: The Center for Evaluation Innovation's latest benchmarking report](#)

We are tentatively planning for things to look up by summer 2020 and we're looking forward to a panel presentation from evaluators in government agencies, a half-day journey mapping workshop, and a family-friendly MNEA membership drive.

MNEA is really excited about the variety of topics and formats of events that we host each year. Because we are a 100% volunteer board, we are often limited to just what we know and are familiar with. I challenge and invite **all** of our members to volunteer to lead an event this year! If you or your organization has an idea, presentation, space or resources to share with other evaluators, please consider volunteering to host an event. If you volunteer, you and your organization will be highlighted on our [home page!](#) If you are interested, please send an email to info@mneval.org. We'd love the opportunity to connect and work with you.

MNEA is a 100% volunteer organization with [10 incredible evaluators](#) serving on the board of directors. I want to thank MNEA's 2019 President – Nicole MartinRogers – for an incredibly successful 2019. Please read the [2019 Annual Report](#) here to learn more about our accomplishments! I want to acknowledge and honor each of our newly elected and returning board members as they all work so hard to maintain this amazing community of Minnesota Evaluators. As a board, we have built an amazing partnership; I hope that translates out in our programming for members to help serve our communities better.

We need you. Please consider volunteering to host an event, be an MNEA mentor, and participate in our virtual events. When I first joined MNEA in 2012, I was a timid student hoping to learn more about my new field of practice. Over the years, I found more than I expected: new friends, amazing mentors, opportunities to grow personally and professionally, and now as a board member enhancing and using my leadership skills. I hope you will consider getting more involved with MNEA in 2020.

Maira Rosas-Lee
MNEA President 2020

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