

Speech by Chen Zhou, Chair of MCFGS Chinese Advisory Group, on the occasion of the July 14, 2018, St. Paul-Changsha China Friendship Garden Groundbreaking Ceremony at Phalen Regional Park

So there's no pressure to talk after the best speaker in the city of St Paul, our mayor Melvin Carter. And of course right after the most influential person in our state, Senator Amy Klobuchar.

I'd like to thank everybody for coming to the groundbreaking ceremony.

As I'm looking into the audience, I see Master Lei who built the Martin Luther King Jr memorial sculpture in Washington DC, and who also did the famous Phalen park sculpture, "Meditation," on the left-hand side of me. Thank you for joining us.

I see the dreamer; Joyce Hsiao and Linda Mealey-Lohmann, the reason why we are all here, they started this whole thing. Steve Job once said famously, "stay hungry, stay foolish." Thank you for staying hungry and staying foolish.

I also see the visionaries, Weiming Lu and Mayor Latimer. They are crazy enough to think, and mind you this is 30 years ago, that it is possible to build a friendship across the ocean. We thank you for your vision.

I want to thank the Chinese Advisory Group and so many of my community showing up for this project. Many of us started with a dream to go to the best school in the world and ended up being Americans, and calling this place home. Many of us have donated money, time; we wrote, and took videos and photos; and in keeping with tradition, we feasted, we drank, and we had a party. We also want to help plant flowers and vegetation with our Hmong brothers and sisters and Caucasian brothers and sisters in the China Friendship Garden. And today we celebrate, thank you all for sharing this special time with us... 感谢我们中国社区的花园奠基者，谢谢大家。

There is a Chinese saying 天降大任于斯人也，必先苦其心志，劳其筋骨，饿其体肤. What it means is that if the heavens want you to do great things, it will give you many challenges to build character. And boy has this project faced many, many challenges. But we are Minnesotans, we do have character, we eat challenges for breakfast. Most importantly, we all are children of immigrants, we know how to work together and overcome obstacles, we know dreams do come true in this great land.

So with absolute conviction, we will get this done, we will get this built, it will be beautiful, and it will be magnificent... And I cannot wait.