

February 2025 Issue 448
**Latino
American
Today**
www.latinoamericantoday.com

El Carnaval de Invierno 2025 *en St. Paul, Minnesota*

St. Paul Winter Carnival 2025



Saint Paul Winter Carnival 2025



2025 Saint Paul Winter Carnival Royal Party



2025 King Boreas and the Queen Snows

The Saint Paul Winter Carnival Royal Party was crowned at the Coronation at the RiverCentre in St. Paul on January 24, 2025.

La Fiesta Real del Carnaval de Invierno de Saint Paul fue coronada en la Coronación en el RiverCentre en St. Paul el 24 de enero de 2025.

The 2025 Royal Family

King Boreas LXXXVIII: John Harrington, sponsored by Lights On!

Aurora, Queen of the Snows: Tessa Westlund, sponsored by Ideal Printer

Prime Minister: Brooke Blakey, sponsored by Hamernick's Flooring Solutions

Titan, Prince of the North Wind: Mike Meents, sponsored by Red's Savoy Pizza in Eagan and Blush Salon

North Wind Princess: Shakira Bradshaw, sponsored by Healing Connections

Euros, Prince of the East Wind: Clayton Fox, sponsored by Lisa Boe and Keller Williams Premier Realty

East Wind Princess: Jenny Harris, sponsored by Pauly's Pub and Grill

Zephyrus, Prince of the West Wind: Randy Hatch, sponsored by City, Chamber of Commerce and Tourism of Princeton

West Wind Princess: Samantha Axt, sponsored by NE Moose Bar & Grill

Notos, Prince of the South Wind: Danny Maslowski, sponsored by City County Credit Union

South Wind Princess: Michaela Hingst, sponsored by Landmark Jewelers



On The Cover

El Carnaval de Invierno 2025
St. Paul Winter Carnival 2025

Latino
American
Today

Founded 2013

Member of
Minnesota Multicultural Media Consortium
National Foundation of Hispanic Owned
Newspapers
Minnesota Newspaper Association

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Tener una familia unida es posible.



Por Dr. Saul H. Carranza

La familia unida ofrece estabilidad y seguridad a sus miembros. La unidad de la familia es de vital importancia para el desarrollo integral de los niños y la estabilidad emocional de los adultos. En el libro de Génesis leemos de Dios diciendo “no es bueno que el hombre esté solo, haré ayuda idónea para él”. Fue allí cuando creó a la mujer para que fuera ayuda idónea para Adán.

El primer rol de la mujer fue el ser la pareja perfecta para el hombre. En el trato entre iguales la idoneidad significa complemento perfecto. Aquella o aquél en quién se encuentra plena realización. En el plan original de Dios hay unidad

de propósito, de valor y una buena relación libre de alienación, temor y utilización. La responsabilidad asignada a la primera pareja fue la de señorear juntos sobre la creación, amándose y valorizándose mutuamente.

La paternidad es la consecuencia física normal del “fructificar y multiplicar”. Pero solo en relación al ser “uno solo”. La paternidad debe ser producto del amor intencionado y responsable que entiende el alto privilegio y responsabilidad de traer hijos al mundo. Una pareja que se ama, protege, admira mutuamente y se respeta, transmitirá esos valores y seguridad a sus hijos.

Aunque el anhelo de todos es tener una familia feliz. Vemos que muy frecuentemente ese anhelo se convierte, para muchos, en un sueño irrealizable y, para otros, es una horrible pesadilla. Situaciones como malos tratos, infidelidad, falta de comunicación, egoísmo, insolvencia económica y falta de madurez, entre otros, resultan en divorcio, familias separadas, hijos abandonados, y por supuesto, personas infelices.

Having a united family is possible.

By Dr. Saul H. Carranza

An integrated family offers stability and security to its members. The family unit is of vital importance for the comprehensive development of children and the emotional stability of adults. In the book of Genesis we read of God saying “it is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a help meet for him.” It was there that he created woman to be a suitable help for Adam.

A woman’s first role was to be the perfect partner for a man. In treatment between equals, suitability means perfect complement. That or that in whom full fulfillment is found. In God’s original plan there is unity of purpose, of value and a good relationship free of alienation, fear and use. The responsibility assigned to the first couple was to rule together over creation, loving and appreciating each other.

Parenthood is the normal physical consequence of “be fruitful and multiply.” But only in relation to being “one”. Parenthood should be a product of intentional and responsible love that understands the high privilege and responsibility of bringing children into the world. A couple that mutually loves, protects, admires and respects each other will transmit those values and security to your children.

The unity of the family is not a matter of luck but the result of effort from each of the members. Starting with the couple, it requires a commitment to exclusivity. “Renouncing all others, I will consecrate myself to you as long as we both live.” This commitment is so serious that the Lord Jesus himself said: “For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife, and both of them will be one flesh; so there are no longer two, but one.” This is the basis for the assertion that marriage is the basis of family and society. Over the basis of a solid couple, a united family can be built. Love leaves no room for divisions and hatred. It is in the family where you learn to trust, to feel safe, where each member learns about his or her own value and self-esteem and the desire for improvement and the common good are strengthened. Being a family that communicates and supports is how we learn to overcome the innate selfishness of human beings. It is there where open communication can occur, you learn to listen to others and face life’s challenges.

The Bible’s advice for having a united family is to seek God and then: Be humble, kind and patient, and provide support, out of love, to each other. **Do everything possible to live in peace, so that you do not lose the unity that the Spirit gave you.** Ephesians 4:2-3.

La unidad de la familia no es cuestión de suerte sino de mucho esfuerzo de cada uno de los miembros. Comenzando con la pareja, se requiere un compromiso de exclusividad. “Renunciando a todos los demás me consagraré a ti mientras los dos vivamos” Es tan serio este compromiso que el mismo Señor Jesús dijo: “Por esto dejará el hombre a su padre y a su madre y se unirá a su mujer, y los dos serán una sola carne; así que ya no son más dos, sino uno”. En esto se basa la afirmación de que el matrimonio es la base de la familia y de la sociedad.

Sobre la base de una pareja sólida se puede edificar una familia unida. El amor no deja lugar a las divisiones y odio. Es en la familia donde se aprende a confiar, a sentirse seguro, donde cada miembro aprende sobre su propio valor y se fortalecen la autoestima y el anhelo de superación y del bien común. Siendo una familia que se comunica y apoya es como aprendemos a vencer el egoísmo innato en el ser humano. Es allí donde se puede dar la comunicación abierta, se aprende a escuchar a los demás y a enfrentar los retos de la vida.

Aunque no todas las familias tienen a ambos padres o algunas parejas no tienen hijos el principio igual se aplica. Tener una familia unida y feliz no es fácil, pero es posible. Los ingredientes para ello incluyen: Un compromiso de mantener unida a la familia. Dedicar tiempo a la familia, mejorar la comunicación aprendiendo a escucharse, dar y recibir amor, cultivar la fe, servir los unos a los otros y aprender a resolver los inevitables conflictos. No es fácil, pero tampoco es imposible.

El consejo de la Biblia para tener una familia unida es buscar a Dios y luego: Sean humildes, amables y pacientes, y bríndense apoyo, por amor, los unos a los otros. **Hagan todo lo posible por vivir en paz, para que no pierdan la unidad que el Espíritu les dio.** Efesios 4:2-3. PDT

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Refocus on Your Family



Marcia Malzahn

By Marcia Malzahn

It's still early in the year to add one more goal to your list: refocus on your family. Regardless of what "family" means to you, we can agree that the concept of family has lost its value. But family is the center of a healthy society. Strong families create strong societies. Not belonging to a family is unsustainable, nonproductive, and harmful to human beings. We are meant to have a family. Therefore, this year I encourage you to refocus on your family – both at home and at work.

Business leaders refer to their coworkers as their family. Successful leaders care about their

"work family" with the same passion as their "home family." Having a healthy family at home impacts an individual's behavior at work. Similarly, a healthy family at work impacts a person's behavior, mood, and relationships at home. So how do you refocus on your family?

Let's explore three ways you can refocus your efforts to improve your family relationships at home and at work.

Refocus your time.

Building relations takes time. It involves quality time getting to know each other, being intentional about cultivating trust, and understanding each other's perspectives. You cannot expect to "reap the harvest" of a great relationship with anyone when you have not "sown" into it. Therefore, invest your time now and you will see the fruit later. Once a relationship is broken, it takes even more time to rebuild it.

At home: Let's go back to what America used to consider a "traditional family." What did that mean? It's the concept of one father, one mother, and children (natural and/or adopted). Spending quality time with your spouse and with each child is crucial for healthy relationships to grow. Be intentional in scheduling time with each person and truly give them your attention. Otherwise, you will always be too busy and time flies by. One day you wake up and realize you didn't spend time with your loved one and now it's too late. And when you do spend time together, make it meaningful time and connect. It's amazing what we learn from others when we ask simple questions and show authentic interest in learning about them.

At work: Even though "work from home" is here to stay, you can still develop meaningful relationships at work. Apply the same concept as in the home. Schedule time with your employees to get to know them, understand their jobs better, and be a resource. Additionally, be there for them when life happens at home. During my working life, I have made life-long friendships. Nowadays workers view work relationships just as that "work only," and are not interested in pursuing a friendship beyond work. I encourage you to sow your time into your work relationships and you will see them flourish. Your work experience will improve and be more pleasant.

Refocus your energy.

I view human beings as having three types of energy: physical, mental, and spiritual. Refocus your physical, mental, and spiritual energy towards your family – at home and at work. How do you accomplish this task when you need to be energized yourself? Let's address first the sources of your energy:

- **Physical:** I get my physical energy from sleeping the number of hours my body needs and from exercising regularly. It's interesting that people think they're too tired to work out. However, those who don't work out regularly don't know that the secret to more energy is precisely to exercise regularly. Exercising restores your energy. It is a fact that with age, your body needs more time to recover. Therefore, you may need to reduce the number of consecutive days you exercise and the intensity of the workout. But never quit!
- **Mental:** My mental sources of energy come from reading leadership books, interacting with clients, and writing blogs such as this one. Keeping your mind busy

and learning is the way to keep your brain active and energized. Choose activities that make you get into "creative mode" to increase your mental energy.

- **Spiritual:** This is my strongest source of energy. I get my spiritual energy from *praying regularly and reading the Bible*. I also write blogs to share what I learn from the Bible and from others who teach the Word of God.

At home: Refocus your energy by doing fun activities with your spouse, friends, and your children. Interestingly, it takes time to refocus your energy on activities. Therefore, you can address these two goals at the same time. For example, you can take time to play a game as a family and put away electronic devices. Or you can go for a hike together while you talk and connect. That takes physical energy, mental energy, and it could even take spiritual energy if you discuss spiritual things

At work: As a team leader, *plan interactive activities with your employees* where there is an opportunity to get to know each other. One idea is to play minigolf while brainstorming on ways to increase revenues. Or play a game for the best idea to improve customer service.

Refocus your treasure.

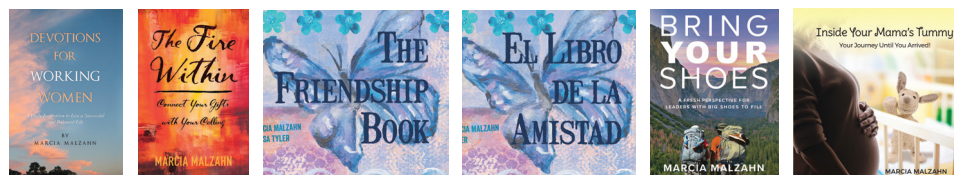
The Bible says in **Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)** "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" This is a true statement for everyone regardless of religious beliefs. Therefore, it is crucially important that we invest our money in activities, ventures, and organizations that align with our beliefs. Support organizations that help families. There are many of them and this includes nonprofits that help single parents or that help children succeed. Sometimes "success" for a child is simply graduating from high school and avoiding getting into drugs or gangs. Success for a single parent can mean obtaining the education needed to get a better job. Similarly, success for parents means they stayed together after suffering a terrible loss of a child.

At home: Refocus your money on memorable activities with your family. Family vacations can be expensive, but you can do it economically. You can find outdoor trips that only require bringing food for a picnic. When our kids were little, I used to take a week off with them and all we did was visit all the pools around the city. We brought picnic food and our swimsuits, and we went off to have fun. I invested in new goggles which made it even more fun! Our kids have great memories of those simple trips.

At work: Refocus the budget and *allocate money for specialized training for your employees*. Give them the time needed to learn more about their job or something new. Again, time is involved also when refocusing your treasure.

As I write this blog, I'm reflecting on my own life and I'm committed to refocusing my time, energy, and treasure in my family. I encourage you to refocus on your family. Refocus your time, energy, and treasure on your immediate family first and then expand to your extended family. Lastly, adopt a family member who may be left behind or lonely.

Happy Friendship month!



Marcia is an inspirational keynote speaker and published author of five books: A daily devotional – *Devotions for Working Women*, *The Fire Within* – to help you find your purpose, friendship poems in *The Friendship Book*, also in Spanish *El Libro de la Amistad* (poemas de Amistad), and *Bring YOUR Shoes* to help emerging leaders with tools on how to lead. In her latest grandma baby book, *Inside Your Mama's Tummy*, Marcia inspires grandparents to form a bond with their grandchildren.

Marcia Malzahn is also president and founder of Malzahn Strategic, LLC a management consulting firm for community financial institutions. You can contact Marcia for speaking engagements through her website at [Crowning Achievements International](http://CrowningAchievementsInternational.com) or email her at mmalzahn@crowning-achievements.com.



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NATIONAL NEWS

Latinos celebrated the inauguration of Donald J. Trump as the 47th President of the United States, with two sold out Inaugural Galas. Latino Trump Supporters attended the Galas that were held on Saturday, January 18 and Sunday the 19th in Washington D.C.

Los latinos celebraron la toma de posesión de Donald J. Trump como el 47° presidente de los Estados Unidos, con dos Galas Inaugurales agotadas. Miles de latinos partidarios de Trump asistieron a las Galas que se llevaron a cabo el sábado 18 y domingo 19 de enero en Washington D.C.



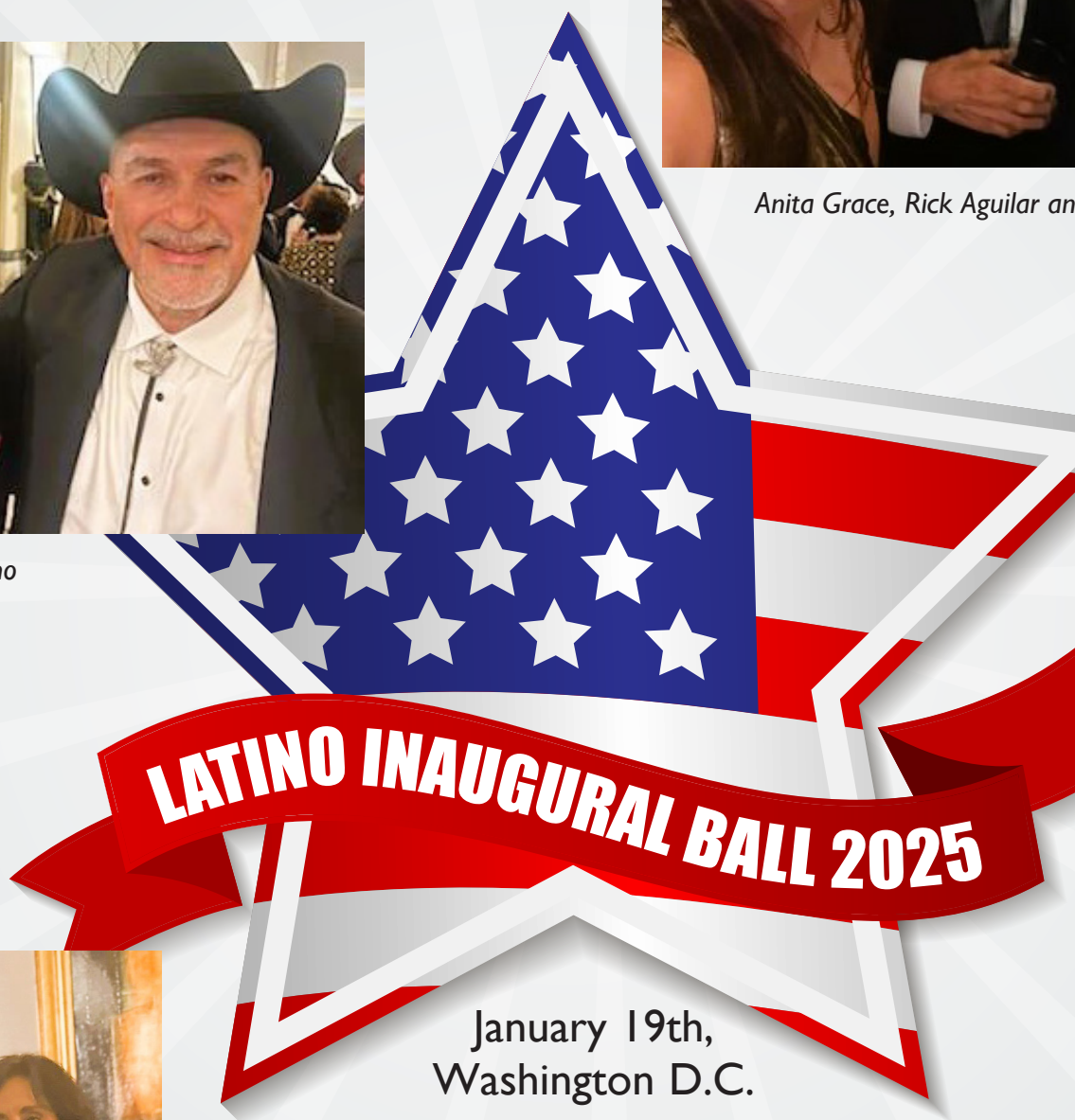
Anita Grace, Rick Aguilar and Robert Unanue, Goya Foods



Rick Aguilar and Jose Nino



Rick Aguilar, Latino American Today



January 19th,
Washington D.C.



Anita Grace, Grace Multicultural, Rick Aguilar, Latino American Today and Cici Rojas, Latino Coalition



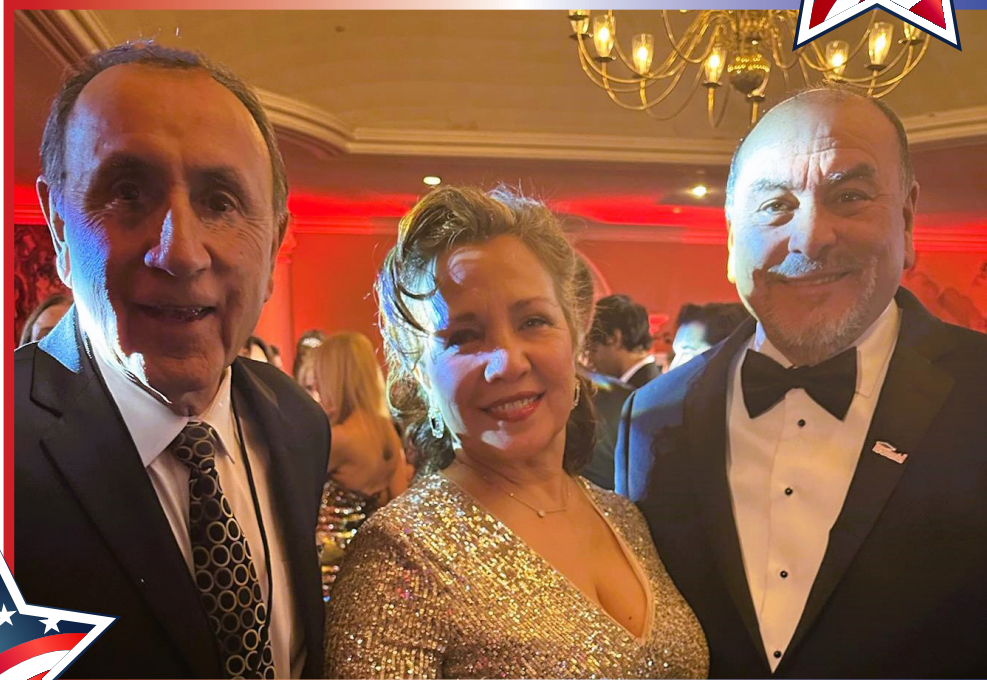
Rick Aguilar and Martha de la Torre and team, El Clasificado

Official Hispanic Inaugural Ball

January 18th, Washington D.C.

*Jerry Pierce, the Interamerica Group, Jeyben Castro,
US House of Rep. and Rick Aguilar*

Rick Aguilar, Cindy & Massey Villarreal, PTG



Rick Aguilar and Daniel Garza, Libre Initiative

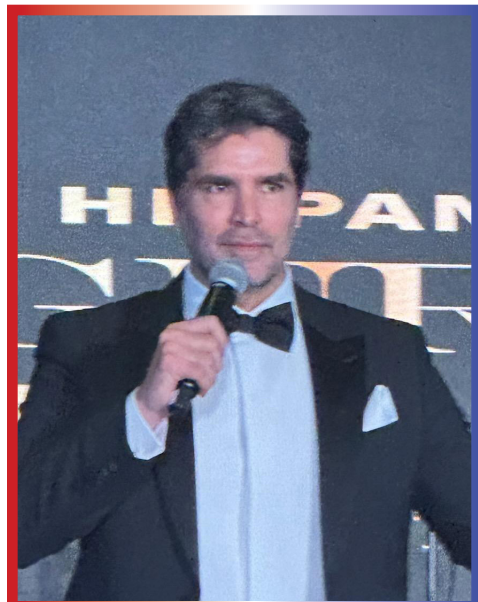


Erika Kennedy and Rick Aguilar

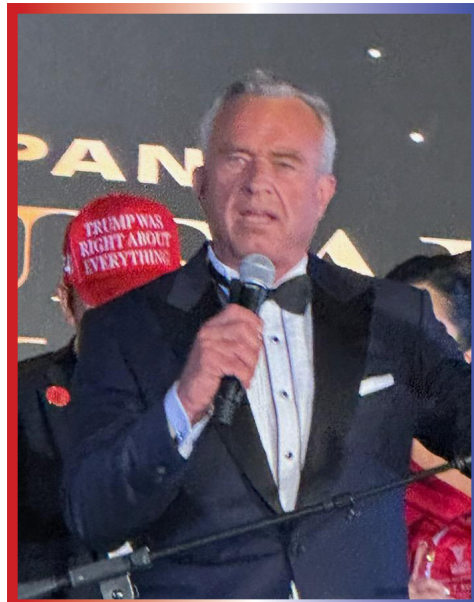


Betty Cardenas, Bienvenido and Rick Aguilar

Speakers included:



Eduardo Verastegui, Actor



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.



Senator Ted Cruz



Donald Trump Jr.

¡Imparables!

Por Rico Paul Vallejos

Hace cosa de un mes brindamos con un ¡SALUD! por un 2025 imparables. ¡Entonces encárgate de los principales temas para que NADA TE PARE (o te siga parando) este año! Aunque no podemos predecir el futuro, hay formas de prevenir o minimizar las consecuencias de una enfermedad o accidente, proteger a tu familia y ahorrar dinero.

SALUD

Algo que puede parar o frenar nuestro avance es una enfermedad o una lesión, nuestra o de un miembro de la familia. Por eso, las medidas preventivas como buena nutrición, actividad física y los exámenes físicos anuales son súper importantes.

¿Pero cuánto cuesta hacerse un chequeo médico, tú y cada miembro de tu familia?

Generalmente NADA o CASI NADA si tienes cobertura médica a través de MinnesotaCare. ¿Y lo mejor de todo? En Minnesota, ahora es más fácil solicitar seguro médico gratis o de más bajo costo.

COBERTURA PARA TI

Si vives en Minnesota, cumples con los límites de ingresos y no tienes otras opciones de seguro de salud a precios accesibles, puedes obtener cobertura a través de MinnesotaCare.

No importa si llegaste ayer o naciste aquí – la salud es lo principal.

DINERO

Cualquier enfermedad podría tener fuertes consecuencias financieras. No te imaginas lo caro que pueden ser los estudios clínicos y análisis de laboratorio, las radiografías y otros diagnósticos por imágenes, y los servicios dentales. Con solo una enfermedad o lesión, ¡el costo puede ser miles de dólares! Y mucho más si hace falta cirugía. Lo bueno es que puedes encontrar seguro médico gratis o de bajo costo con cobertura a través de MinnesotaCare.

NAVEGADORES

Hay navegadores que hablan español (y otros idiomas) en el área de Minnesota donde vives, y están listos para ayudarte con MinnesotaCare y otras opciones para encontrar la cobertura de seguro médico ideal para ti y tu familia. Encuentra la hoja con sus números telefónicos aquí: [tinyURL.com/navegador2025](https://tinyurl.com/navegador2025) (o escanea el código QR).

¡SEGURO!

Obtén más detalles y las opciones para conseguir seguro médico en este sitio web: mn.gov/dhs/minnesotacare-es.

La sección “Solicítelo ahora” incluye tres opciones: Ayuda individual, En línea, y Formulario en papel.

Recuerda que ya estamos en febrero: ¡no esperes! Comunícate con un navegador ahora e insíbete en un plan. ¡Para seguir con un 2025 a todo dar!

Este mensaje cuenta con el apoyo del Departamento de Servicios Humanos de Minnesota.



¿Por qué solicitar seguro médico?

- Mantiene sanos a usted, a su familia y a su comunidad
- Facilita el acceso a la atención médica y la hace más asequible
- Paga las citas médicas y los medicamentos



mn.gov/dhs/minnesotacare



¡IMPARABLES!

Comunícate ya con un navegador e insíbete en un plan médico.
¡Para seguir con un 2025 imparables!
[tinyURL.com/navegador2025](https://tinyurl.com/navegador2025)

O bien escanea este código:



29th ANNUAL **HISPANIC MARKETING** CONFERENCE & AWARDS
 May 15, 2025 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Premier Marketers Sharing their Case Studies and Strategies That Work!

“U.S. Hispanics are projected to have a buying power of **\$3.4 trillion in 2025**, which is larger than Canada’s economy. This cohort currently accounts for 19% of the U.S. population and has seen the size of the population quadruple in the past 40 years. With a median age of 30 and an average household size of 3.8, compared to the total U.S. at 3.2, this consumer segment should not be overlooked.”



Rick Aguilar
Founder and President of Aguilar Productions

Proven Ways To Build Your Brand In The “U.S. Hispanic Economy”

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Conference Location: St. Paul Neighborhood Network - SPNN, 550 Vandalia Street, Suite #170, Saint Paul, MN 55114

Latino Coalition - Inaugural Brunch Celebration

January 20, 2025, Washington D.C.



Coalición Latina Celebración del brunch inaugural

20 de enero de 2025 Washington D.C

Attendees enjoyed a wonderful brunch, awesome networking while watching the Inauguration festivities. Thanks to Cici Rojas and all the Sponsors.

Los asistentes disfrutaron de un maravilloso brunch y de un increíble networking mientras observaban la ceremonia de inauguración desde el Capitolio del Estado. Gracias a todos los patrocinadores.



Inka Cola time



Watch Party Latinas



Trump Watch Party

Watch Party attendees



NAHP Watch Party

Más de 27,000 Eventos Celebrarán la 15.ª Semana Nacional de Opciones Escolares

Más de 9.1 millones de estudiantes, familias y educadores se unirán a la celebración anual

MIAMI - Más de 9.1 millones de estudiantes, familias y educadores participarán en la 15.ª Semana Nacional de Opciones Escolares, que se llevará a cabo del domingo 26 de enero al sábado 1 de febrero de 2025.

Durante siete días, se celebrarán **27,607 eventos y actividades** organizadas de manera independiente en los 50 estados y el Distrito de Columbia. Estas actividades destacan las diversas opciones educativas disponibles para las familias, como escuelas públicas tradicionales, charter, magnet, privadas, en línea, educación en el hogar y otros modelos innovadores.

La edición 2025 de la Semana Nacional de Opciones Escolares llega en un momento de apoyo récord para ampliar las opciones educativas, así como una fuerte demanda de alternativas por parte de las familias.

En los últimos tres años, 24 estados han expandido la diversidad de opciones educativas, permitiendo a las familias elegir cómo y dónde aprenden sus hijos. Estos avances incluyen la inscripción abierta en escuelas públicas, cuentas de ahorro educativo, escuelas charter y magnet, aprendizaje en línea, educación en el hogar y opciones como las microschoools. Según una encuesta reciente, más del 60% de los padres en

Estados Unidos consideraron cambiar a sus hijos de escuela durante el último año.

Además, 27,541 escuelas de todo el país participarán en la celebración, mientras que organizaciones sin fines de lucro a nivel estatal organizarán 66 eventos principales en 38 estados, como ferias escolares, manifestaciones en capitolios estatales y exhibiciones de talentos estudiantiles.

“Conoce tus Opciones Escolares es una herramienta invaluable para las familias hispanas que buscan información clara sobre las alternativas educativas disponibles para sus hijos”, señaló Krissia Campos Spivey, directora senior de Conoce tus Opciones Escolares. “Durante la Semana Nacional de Opciones Escolares, queremos asegurarnos de que más familias descubran estas opciones y se sientan capacitadas para elegir la educación que mejor satisfaga las necesidades de sus hijos para el ciclo escolar 2025-2026.”

NSCAF ofrece recursos gratuitos y accesibles a través de sus programas Navigate School Choice (myschoolchoice.com) y Conoce tus Opciones Escolares (opcionese Escolares.com), disponibles en inglés y español.

Desde su primera edición en 2012, con solo 150 eventos, la Semana Nacional de Opciones Escolares ha crecido de manera exponencial gracias a su enfoque inclusivo y positivo.



Chas Anderson, Executive Director, Park Street Public

Evento Nacional de Elección de Escuela.

27 de enero de 2025 Museo de los Niños en St. Paul, MN “Este evento tiene como objetivo celebrar los éxitos de nuestros estudiantes y resaltar la importancia de la elección de escuela para las familias en todo Minnesota”, dijo Chas Anderson, director ejecutivo de Park Street Public. “Al reunir a estudiantes, familias y educadores, estamos arrojando luz sobre las oportunidades que crea la elección de escuela y el increíble potencial que abre para cada niño.

Adventures at Fort Snelling State Park A Quest for Wintering Birds

By Deborah Locke, DNR Communications Specialist

Photos courtesy of DNR Staff and USFW

A pretty interesting thing about birds is this. They are everywhere, in the city, suburbs, small towns, countryside. Whether you see them at your bird feeder in the back yard, on an office building windowsill, or whether you visit a state park or trail with your kids, you are highly likely to see and hear birds.

Maybe you want to do more than just see and hear them – you’d like to know and better understand them. Kao Thao, an interpretive naturalist at Fort Snelling State Park, teaches beginning birding programs. On a cold January day, we sat before a crackling fire at the park visitor center where he explained the equipment a beginning bird watcher needs (binocular and a field guide), and how to start this popular sport.

Why would anyone start?

“It’s relaxing and good exercise and because people are outdoors in nature, it helps stimulate good health,” Kao said. “Some people are avid bird watchers and grow to love it. They recognize the bird calls, the variety of colors, and even the interaction between birds and other species.”

That different bird species communicate makes sense, but I did not know that other animals could interpret a few of each other’s sounds and behavior. It turns out that some animals hang around together as a form of protection, like wild turkey and deer. “The more eyes that are watching for predators, the better,” Kao said.

Humans recognize the meaning of another species’ calls, signals, and behavior, also. For example, when your dog barks a certain way, you know that it’s upset. Highly experienced birders can tell from a distant birdcall whether the bird is distressed and signaling danger, or if it is seeking a mate, or if it is just signaling that it is there.

Experts at that level glean their knowledge through years of practice. It is easy to spot these bird aficionados: they carry a bird field guide, wear binoculars around their neck and often use a camera for photos, rather than a cell phone. Kao said that many will travel a long distance to see a particular bird species, and after seeing it, check it off their bird list.

So how does a person start to gain mastery of this sport? Look no further than your own household and your own children. Field guides for children are available in libraries and for purchase online. Let the kids see bird photos from a book or website so they know what to look for outdoors.

Many state parks throughout Minnesota have bird kits that you can borrow free of charge. The kits contain binoculars, a field guide, and a bird list of the bird species at that park. For information on parks with bird kits and much more, go to mndnr.gov/park-birding. If you start bird watching now, be sure to wear appropriately warm clothing, and cleats on your boots. Kao added that it is important to keep a close eye on the trail in the winter so you don’t slip on ice or snow. It is easy to focus only on tree tops when bird watching, rather than the path before you.

You could venture into the fascinating world of birding now with winter bird sightings, as a practice for spring when migrating birds return. When temperatures are extremely cold, however, birds are mostly inactive. On that brisk January morning following warmth from the fire, we set out for the park with our eyes trained on the trees and sky while decked out with binoculars and note pads and expectation. A woman walked toward us from the river and said she just saw an eagle.

We pressed onward, and heard chickadee chirps, a trill, and a faint squawk. Soon it became clear. The birds that overwinter at Fort Snelling State Park near the MSP airport remained elusive. Kao was dumfounded. He said that he had never walked down to the river at Fort Snelling State Park without seeing at least one bird.

Still, the quest itself was good. The cold air wakened every cell, the search turned into a kind of game, and I learned enough to know I want to learn more. Kao said that bird watching is an excellent introduction to nature for whole families. You can start now and get accustomed to the equipment and process or wait until spring when the migrating birds return. Meanwhile, learn to identify birds from a field guide or website. There’s much to be gained from a walk at a state park or trail. Even when the birds play hide and seek.



Cardinal in winter by USFW



Eagle in winter by DNR



Kao Thao taking photo near river at Ft Snelling St Park

For a listing of state park and trail programs led by interpretive naturalists, go to mndnr.gov/ptcalendar. Sometimes registration is required to attend but many programs are free. You will need a \$7 vehicle day pass on your vehicle dashboard that can be bought online or at the park ranger station as you enter.

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