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LA FAMILIA LATINO HERITAGE AWARD 2024 RECIPIENTS!



**Chief of Police Pilar Gimenez Stier**  
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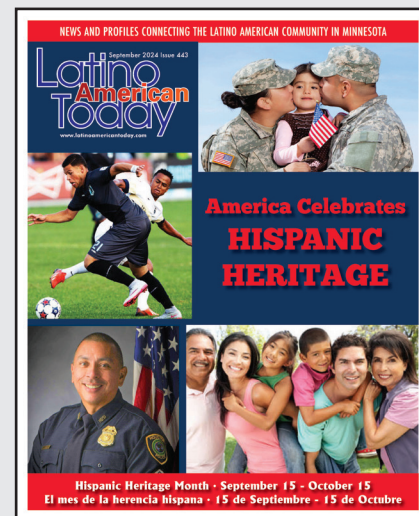
**Stephen Capiz**  
Artist Extraordinaire - Mendota Heights, MN



**AMVETS POST 5**  
Latino - American Veterans - Minnesota



**La Voz Latina**  
Twin Cities Spanish Language  
Monthly News Publication



On The Cover:  
El mes de la herencia hispana  
Hispanic Heritage Month

Latino  
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Today

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## Somos los mayordomos del mundo.



Por Dr. Saúl Carranza

Recientemente en nuestras vacaciones volvimos a nuestro hermoso país, Guatemala. Viviendo en Minnesota los últimos diecisiete años, anhelamos disfrutar de las maravillosas y cálidas playas del pacífico guatemalteco y cada vez que tenemos oportunidad vamos a disfrutar de esos paradisiacos lugares.

Esta vez, sin embargo, algo cambió. Lo que habían sido claras y limpias olas del mar ahora venían con grandes cantidades de basura. Bolsas de plástico, pañales y

muchos otros desechos humanos flotan en las otrora limpias playas. Las manchas de aceite también obscurecen las azules aguas del mar.

La basura en el mar no es algo exclusivo de Guatemala. A nivel mundial la contaminación ambiental es uno de los más grandes problemas. Grandes islas de desechos plásticos se forman en los océanos del mundo. Pero no solo el mar está contaminado. La tierra, el aire y aún el espacio está lleno de basura producida por los seres humanos. Lo contradictorio de esa situación es que cuando Dios creó al hombre le asignó la tarea de cuidar de la creación. En Génesis 2:15 leemos el mandato dado por Dios a la humanidad de hacer producir y cuidar de la tierra. El plan original era el de un mundo perfecto bajo el cuidado de gente buena.

Antes del pecado, el planeta tierra, además de ser hogar, era la provisión de Dios para satisfacer todas las necesidades de los humanos. Pero no lo supimos cuidar. Hoy, como consecuencia del pecado y los errores humanos vivimos en un

planeta sobre explotado, super contaminado y a punto de colapsar. Los esfuerzos mundiales para revertir los efectos de la contaminación parecieran estar llegando demasiado tarde. Pero hay alguna esperanza. Si gobiernos, pueblos y personas individuales trabajamos unidos para salvar el planeta, tal vez podamos aún dejar un planeta habitable a la próxima generación. Pero es un reto para todos el cuidar de la creación que Dios nos da.

No todos hemos aprendido a cuidar del medio ambiente, pero, cada uno puede ayudar. Podemos evitar usar todo lo que daña la creación, no producir contaminantes, manejar adecuadamente los desechos (basura) y de acuerdo con nuestras posibilidades participar en los esfuerzos para limpiar y reforestar este mundo. Dios nos regaló un mundo limpio. No lo ensuciemos. En la medida en la que luchamos por tener un mundo mejor, todos somos beneficiados y bendecidos. Como cuidamos de la casa así también esforcémonos por tener, ciudades, países y un mundo más limpio. Dios nos lo encomendó a nosotros, tomemos la responsabilidad que delante de Dios nos corresponde. Somos los mayordomos de nuestro mundo.



## We are stewards of the world.

By Dr. Saul Carranza

Recently, on our vacation, we went back to our beautiful country, Guatemala. Living in Minnesota for the past seventeen years, we have longed to enjoy the wonderful warm beaches of the Pacific in Guatemalan and every chance we get we go to enjoy these heavenly places.

However, this time something had changed. What had been clear, clean ocean waves now came with large amounts of trash. Plastic bags, diapers and so much more waste floated on the once clean beaches; oil stains also obscure the blue waters of the sea.

Garbage in the ocean is not an exclusive issue to Guatemala. Worldwide, environmental pollution is one of the biggest problems. Large islands of plastic waste form in the world's oceans. But not only the ocean is polluted. The land, the air and even the space is full of garbage produced by human beings. The contradiction of this situation is that when God created man, he assigned him the task of taking care of creation. In Genesis 2:15 we read the mandate given by God to mankind to produce and care for the earth. The original plan was for a perfect world under the care of good people.

Before sin, the planet earth, in addition to being our home, was God's provision for all human needs. But we do not know how to take care of this planet. Today, as a consequence of sin and human mistakes, we live on a planet that is overexploited, over polluted and on the verge of collapse. Global efforts to reverse the effects of pollution seem to be coming too late. But there is some hope. If governments, people and individuals work together to save the planet, we may yet be able to leave a habitable planet for the next generation. But it is a challenge for all of us to care for our God-given creation.

Not all of us have learned to take care of the environment, but each one of us can help. We can avoid using everything that harms creation, avoid producing pollutants, properly manage waste (garbage) and, according to our possibilities, participate in efforts to clean and reforest this world. God gave us a clean world. Let us not make it dirty. To the extent that we strive for a better world that we all can benefit from and be blessed by. As we take care of the house, let us also strive to have cleaner cities, countries and a cleaner world. God entrusted it to us, let us take the responsibility before God that corresponds to us. We are the stewards of our world.

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## Four Strategies for Leaders to Increase Employee Engagement



Marcia Malzahn

By Marcia Malzahn

One of the top challenges that companies nationwide currently face is employee retention. And employee engagement is one of the essential ingredients to retaining talent. Companies regardless of industry or size are continually looking for strategies to keep their employees engaged. In this blog, we address four strategies for leaders to increase employee engagement.

### Educate them.

Educate employees on the impact their jobs have on their departments and the overall company's

bottom line. The purpose is to ensure they understand the value of their contribution.

Educate them on the company's industry and what's going on in the country and globally. Employees can become more engaged when they understand their industry better.

Provide education on topics beyond their jobs such as nutrition, health, and fitness. Conduct culture training to ensure everyone buys into the company's culture. Share the company's core values in everyday communication so employees memorize them. They will also feel they are part of the same team regardless of what area they work in.

Part of the education comes from internal communications. Ideally, the senior leadership communicates with the staff *proactively*. There are certain subjects, projects, or trade secrets that cannot be shared with the entire company. However, there are many other topics that can be shared. Examples include general company news, employee benefits changes, organizational changes, new product launches and confidentiality. Ensure to clarify what information should not be shared outside the company and why.

The organizational chart is sometimes kept only in Human Resources. But employees in all areas need to understand where their departments fit within the entire organizational structure. The bigger the organization the more difficult it is to see the big picture unless someone explains it to employees. The Org Chart should be continually updated and shared via the Intranet so anyone can view it at any time.

Education also includes the clarification of roles for everyone with clear accountabilities and boundaries. Besides having updated job descriptions, employees need to be clear on their roles as well as other teammates' roles in the organization.

### Develop your leaders.

Larger organizations may have established leadership development programs. Selected, "high potential," employees get to participate as part of their career paths. They are chosen as the *emerging leaders*. Smaller organizations with fewer resources can implement informal programs. Or simply budget to send their high potential employees to external leadership programs. These programs should focus on pure leadership development. This includes learning how to lead a team of individuals with different backgrounds and opinions. Learning how to think critically and strategically to make executive decisions should also be taught. Lastly, train them how to work with a senior leadership team and even with the Board of Directors.

Educate managers and first-time supervisors on basic supervisory and managerial skills. Notice this is different from developing their leadership talent and ability. This includes basic labor laws, interviewing skills, what to look for when screening resumes, authorizing PTO and vacations, when to promote employees, conducting performance reviews, and other basic managerial functions.

Continue to develop your experienced leaders too. They have different needs from the emerging and new leaders based on where they are in their careers. It is easy to assume that experienced leaders are done learning. However, it is imperative that companies invest in their experienced leaders, so they continue to grow. For example, often managers who have been in leadership positions for years still don't know how to delegate successfully. Others don't know how to coach their staff or handle conflict resolution tactfully.

Successful leaders want to be empowered and have autonomy in their jobs. They need to work independently and be trusted to make decisions that are within their realm of authority.

### Provide the right tools and meaningful goals.

Provide employees and their managers with the tools to do their jobs. It is discouraging to employees to be asked to do a task without the right tools to accomplish it. The tool can be a variety of things such as a software solution, one more employee, additional funds, or training.

Leaders also need to participate in the goal setting process. Setting meaningful goals that they can accomplish and make customers happy is critical to their success and thus engagement in the company. Unachievable goals are discouraging for the entire team. When "corporate" sets the goals with a *top-down approach*, employees don't buy in because they didn't have the opportunity to provide their input.

Once employees and teams meet their goals, a well-established Employee Reward Program is the next step. Rewarding employees for their accomplishments is crucial to keep them engaged. Additionally, employees who are top contributors to the company's success should be rewarded regardless of the company's overall success.

### Work/life balance or Life/work balance?

The term of work/life balance is now being reversed to "life/work" balance. Taking care of life comes first. Work is now perceived as secondary and for many, only necessary to pay the bills. Full-time working parents of young children have the biggest need for flexibility during working hours to handle family issues. Many employees are also taking care of elderly parents and that requires flexibility as well. When companies allow flexibility then employees (ideally) can then be fully present while at work.

Establish a "fun committee" and "innovation committee." A Fun Committee with the purpose of planning fun events and team building activities will unite the team. It can also bring joy to the workplace – even in a virtual office environment. An Innovation Committee can bring a lot of new ideas and increase efficiencies across the organization. These are great opportunities for employees to share their opinions and ideas. When senior leadership implements some of these ideas, employees will be more engaged.

I hope these four strategies for leaders to increase employee engagement inspire you to implement them in your organization. Even though engagement starts at the top, for employees to become engaged, they need to feel empowered, trusted, heard, and valued. Having employee engagement is the result of a variety of activities, core values, and company culture.



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 or email her at [mmalzahn@crowning-achievements.com](mailto:mmalzahn@crowning-achievements.com).



## Colonel Eduardo Suárez to head new directorate at Minnesota National Guard

Colonel Eduardo Suárez has been a member of the Minnesota National Guard's General Staff for nearly three years serving as its Director of Strategic Communications. In that role he focused his efforts on ensuring the organization's priorities were clearly communicated across Minnesota. According to Colonel Suárez, "it's imperative that the communities in which we serve understand who we are, what we bring to our communities, and the value proposition of serving our state and nation."

### Why did Minnesota National Guard leadership decide to form a new directorate?

"We have always had programs, resources and processes that strive to create a safe, inclusive and resilient organization where its members are able to reach full their potential. In recent years additional resources have helped bolster existing programs and created new programs that focus on holistic health, and prevention versus only response. Leadership saw an opportunity to better synchronize those efforts. I was selected as the J9: Director of Culture, Resiliency, and Community Engagement to do exactly that."

### What is the mission and vision for the J9 Director?

"The director will lead the organization's efforts to create a safe, inclusive, and resilient workplace, while also fostering strong community relationships and engaging in effective outreach. This role combines internal initiatives with external engagement to ensure a holistic approach

to equity and well-being. The concept really makes sense from a recruiting and retention perspective. I spoke about some of this at the last Hispanic Marketing Conference in May. Creating and sustaining an organizational culture that values its service members is an absolute necessity today."

### What are some of your goals as the new J9 Director?

"My first goal is to better understand the various divisions that are doing the work now and through their input, begin devising the cross-functional collaboration needed to harness their collective capabilities and resources. I'm really excited to see where this effort will go. As I mentioned, the teams have and continue to do great work. We just need channel that effort towards the same objectives. This will include policy development and enforcement, training and education, community engagement with our stakeholders, and data collection and reporting. There is a lot of work a head of us, but I know together we are stronger. We owe it to our Soldiers, Airmen and their families."



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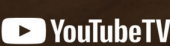
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STATE PARKS AND TRAILS



It's all about the asters

## State park staff explain the art and science of predicting fall color

By Deborah Locke, Communications Specialist, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Photos courtesy of DNR

Once again, the Parks and Trails Division of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will offer its Fall Color Finder at [mndnr.gov/fallcolor](https://mndnr.gov/fallcolor). The website's primary purpose is to report the status of leaf color change across the state so people can finalize their travel plans to get outdoors and enjoy the fall colors season. In addition to the fall colors map of Minnesota, the website offers photos of state parks from park staff and visitors, and shares information on the science of fall color changes.

Ty Gangelhoff, an assistant supervisor at Jay Cooke State Park, has reported on fall color change for 20 years, starting at Rice Lake State Park. Early in September Ty's daily patrols through and near the park include noting leaf color change. He said that the changes are staggered. Not all tree species go through the process of losing their leaves at the same time. Peak color usually arrives at Jay Cooke State Park around the first weekend in October.

Contrast that process with the prairie's tall grass at Blue Mounds State Park in the southwest corner of Minnesota. There the peak prairie grass color occurs by the last week of August or maybe the first week of September said Tiffany Muellner, interpretive naturalist. Species of fall blooming flowers also take their turns reaching their peak throughout the season.

What these differences show is the remarkable variety of geographical regions in our state, each with its own vegetation based on soil makeup, wildlife, and climate. Add to those variables the weather, which impacts fall color peak. That said, state park fall color reporters like Ty and Tiffany pretty much know what to expect each year as leaves transition, and they know to expect heavy visitation during peak color weekends.

"I do my best but it's not a scientific process," Ty said. "I come up with an average, and then a percentage range like zero to 25 percent color, while anticipating what it will be on the weekend when most visitors come through." At Jay Cooke State Park, ash leaves change color first, followed by maple and oak leaves – and then aspen leaves. It all depends on the species.

Park staff reporting from the state's prairies watch for color changes in the tallgrass species like big bluestem, which looks blue to purplish through August before turning brown.

"When determining percentages for the report, I look at how many flowers are still blooming," Tiffany said. For the tall sea of rippling grasses, she waits to see how many have seeded out. Trees aren't plentiful at Blue Mounds State Park, but the bur oak, cottonwood, and maple trees offer fall hues of brown to bright yellow.

In fall, however, beautiful floral blooms take center stage.

"It's all about the asters," Tiffany said. "We get a ton of goldenrods, sunflowers, and aster species. In the fall, we get stunning prairie views of the clouds, tall grasses, and flower blooms."

As with every corner of the state, however, nature, may step in and cramp the style of park visitors eager to see fall splendor. Ty heard about a powerful rainstorm that blew through on a peak color weekend which drastically changed the appearance of the trees. "In a day or two the leaves blew off which did not match the photos we had posted on the website," he said. "Guests were disappointed. The weather dictates where the leaves are at."

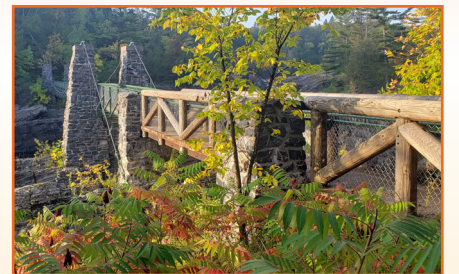
Proximity also dictates what is reported on the website. Ty and other park staff consider color trends at neighboring parks. If Banning State Park (about 45 minutes south) posts that a peak weekend is coming up, staff at Jay Cooke may take that prediction into consideration as they report on an upcoming weekend. The map would appear puzzling if, for example, one state park was at 50 percent full color and an adjacent park was reported at 100 percent.

Another concern: sometimes a visitor will take a photo of a tree with brilliant color and post it, long before other trees reach that peak. Visitors may flock to the park anticipating that all trees are bright red when, in fact, that's far from true. "When we report, we try to give a balanced perspective and show a broad landscape of trees down a trail or road," Ty said.

Visitor patterns during fall color season may depend on the park amenities. "Here visitation centers around the park's swinging bridge and maybe a walk near the river," Ty said. "A large number of guests come for a picnic, the river and the bridge."

Visitation numbers peaked during the pandemic years of 2020-21. Parking lots were full, and visitors parked vehicles on the highway up to a half mile from the entrance. But a full parking lot is just one concern. Extra staff may be needed to direct incoming traffic. Bathrooms need to be cleaned more often and trash cans need to be emptied.

Consequently, weekends produce intense workdays with so much going on. "At the end of the day, you can be mentally exhausted," Ty said. "At the same time, it's nice to have visitors who enjoy coming to park."





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