

NEWS AND PROFILES CONNECTING THE LATINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

Latino American Today

August 2017 Issue 360

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Photo by Wameng Moua

THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE GRAND RE-OPENING EL CAPITOLIO DE LA GENTE GRAN APERTURA

Minnesota State Capitol • 2017 Grand Re-Opening • August 11, 12, 13

Minnesota State Capitol Grand Re-Opening Celebration

The August 11-13 celebration will feature diverse music and entertainment, exclusive tours, family-friendly activities, fireworks, and much more.

Governor Mark Dayton and Lt. Governor Smith invite all Minnesotans to the Capitol Grand Opening Celebration on August 11, 12, and 13 at the fully restored Minnesota State Capitol. The three-day long celebration will reintroduce Minnesotans to the “People’s House,” which recently underwent a four-year restoration project. A diverse schedule of events is designed to bring Minnesotans of all ages, and from all corners of the state, to St. Paul to celebrate one of our state’s most iconic landmarks.

“The Minnesota State Capitol has finally been returned to its original grandeur, with additional public space and improved accessibility that truly make it the People’s House. It is a testament to the talented men and women of the building trades, who devoted three years to this project,” said Governor Mark Dayton. “I encourage all Minnesotans to come view the restored Capitol, and partake in the Grand Opening Celebration festivities August 11-13.”

“The State Capitol has been at the center of Minnesota civic and community life for more than 100 years. With this restoration finally complete, our Capitol is ready to serve as a gathering space for generations of Minnesotans,” said Lt. Governor Tina Smith. “I hope all Minnesotans will mark their calendars and visit their State Capitol this August.

Weekend Highlights

Kid Zone

Join the Science Museum of Minnesota, Minnesota Children’s Museum, Minnesota Zoo, the Minnesota Historical Society, and librarians from across the state in fun and family-friendly events! Every day from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. there will be engaging indoor and outdoor activities for kids to enjoy!

Outstanding Entertainment

Enjoy diverse music and dance performances throughout the weekend with groups of singers and dancers performing a variety of styles celebrating Minnesota’s vibrant culture. Musical performances are on the outdoor stage throughout the each day!

On Friday night, grab a friend and bust a move as we end the day with a Prince Dance Party!

On Saturday afternoon, join the Minnesota Craft Brewers Guild at “Cap Untapped” before a free concert from The Current Presents: Lizzo and Poliça! Be sure to stick around – Fireworks will light up the night sky behind the Capitol immediately following the concert!

On Sunday, Classical MPR and VocalEssence will “Bring the Sing on the Capitol Green” as they lead a sing-along community choral event on the Capitol Lawn.

Yoga and Breakfast on the Capitol Lawn

Grab your yoga mat and join us for some sun salutations on the Capitol Mall! Yoga classes will be led by the St. Paul YWCA. On Saturday, free water bottles are provided to participants while supplies last. A limited supply of free blueberry muffins will be served each day, compliments of General Mills.

Tours

Guides from the Minnesota Historical Society and a host of Capitol tenant volunteers will lead you on a tour of the Minnesota State Capitol building. Grand Opening Tours will include special behind-the-scenes looks at restored spaces including the Loggia and Quadriga, Governor’s Office, the House and Senate Retiring Rooms, and the private Supreme Court Conference Room. Tours run all day, beginning every 30 minutes from the Information Desk. Dusk each day will feature a special viewing, raising, and lighting of the Rotunda Chandelier.



On The Cover
The People’s House
State Capitol Grand Re-Opening
August 11, 12, 13

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GOP Makes Inroads to Multicultural Voters in Minnesota



From left: Rick Aguilar with Dr. Ben Carson, Secretary of HUD, Right: Jennifer Carnahan, MN GOP Chair



Exciting meeting with MN GOP Affiliate groups. L to R: Rick Aguilar, Maria de la Paz, Hispanic Republican Assembly; Pam Mhyra, MN Federation of Republican Women; Abdiaziz Hirsi, Somali American Republicans of MN; and Robert Yang, Asian American Republicans of Minnesota.

By Claud Santiago

Rick Aguilar long time political activist in the Minnesota GOP party and national Republican leader is pleased to see the outreach efforts to the multicultural communities in the Twin Cities. "We have been meeting and listening to our Asian American, Somali American, and Hispanic American residents, they want good education for their kids, jobs, less taxes and regulations so they can grow their business and affordable health care." "With the historic election of our first Asian American MN GOP Chair, Jennifer Carnahan, we are on the way to making Minnesota Red in 2018," stated Aguilar. "The multicultural communities in Minnesota are the "swing vote" for the upcoming Governor and Congressional races in 2018 and we intend to get our winning share of those important voting blocs," stated Aguilar.

Keith Downey Announces His Run for Governor in 2018



Keith Downey with Rick Aguilar

By Claud Santiago

Keith Downey announced that he is running for Governor of Minnesota in 2018 and will seek the Republican Party's endorsement in the race.

Downey met with reporters after filing his campaign committee at the Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board, saying he is running to Make Minnesota Work for Everyone, which is the theme of the campaign. Downey was former Chair of the MN GOP Party.

"I am blessed to have been born and raised here in Minnesota, with wonderful opportunities. But I'm worried about the future of our state. Far too many people no longer see their opportunity here, and Minnesota's government is failing us in so many ways. Responsibility for that lies with the politicians in St. Paul," Downey said. "I'm running because we need to make Minnesota work for everyone, not just the elites, career politicians, special interests, and insiders. I'm asking every Minnesotan to join the cause, because only together will we be successful. We must act now."

Downey also stressed the importance of having worked across all of Minnesota in the past four years, saying he will be a statewide candidate who knows the challenges faced by Minnesotans in every corner of the state. Downey said that to serve all of Minnesota and make the changes that are needed, he will focus on the biggest issues facing the state: to grow new and better jobs, reign in government spending and overreach, and fix the education achievement gap. Downey worked with the Hispanic Republican Assembly of MN (HRAMN) to address the Latino high school drop out rate, one of the worst in the country. "Let's face it, public schools in Minnesota's urban areas are failing minority students. No statistics can tell the story better than the parent whose child receives a sub-par education and is stuck in a dead-end, failing school. Republicans believe all children deserve better than that—and that includes Latino children," Downey stated.

Rick Aguilar, Chair of HRAMN is pleased to see Downey enter the race. "We worked with Keith over the years and he understands that the top issues for many Latinos are education, jobs, and affordable healthcare. In nationwide surveys to Latinos, immigration reform is 4 or 5 on the list of important issues for the community. While leading the party Downey worked hard to make sure that the multicultural communities in Minnesota were welcomed to join the Republican party. He was rewarded for his efforts this past Spring when two new affiliates were approved at the GOP State Central meeting, the Somali Republicans of Minnesota and the Asian American Republicans of Minnesota.

Diversity Within Latino Population May Require More Nuanced Public Health Approaches



Not all Latinos face the same health challenges, suggesting that public health approaches may need to be tailored based on needs of the diverse groups within the Latino population, new research from Oregon State University indicates.

Much of the health research today tends to focus on Latinos as a single racial/ethnic group. But in reality, that group includes people from a diverse range of backgrounds, including Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Central American and South American, and the health risks they face may vary from group to group, said lead researcher Daniel López-Cevallos, assistant professor of ethnic studies in OSU's College of Liberal Arts.

“What we found is that it’s important to be careful not to make assumptions that everyone who is considered Hispanic or Latino can be put into the same basket,” he said. “There are differences within the group that are important to take into consideration when it comes to addressing public health issues such as cardiovascular health.”

The study was published this month in the journal *Ethnicity and Health*. The findings underscore the need for further examination of differences within the Hispanic/Latino population, particularly when developing medical treatments or public health interventions, said López-Cevallos, who also is associate director of research for the Center for Latino/a Studies and Engagement at OSU.

“As the Latino population continues to grow, these differences between groups will be more and more important to addressing health needs,” López-Cevallos said.

The Hispanic/Latino population is the largest and one of the fastest-growing racial/ethnic minority groups in the United States. Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of death among Hispanic/Latinos.

López-Cevallos set out to examine the relationship between wealth and

cardiovascular disease risk factors, including obesity and high blood pressure, and wealth among Hispanic/Latinos of diverse backgrounds.

Past research has shown that increased wealth – defined as the accumulation of property such as homes and cars, savings and more – has been linked to better cardiovascular health across various racial and ethnic groups. But among Hispanic/Latinos, the association between wealth and heart health has been inconsistent.

An analysis of health data for nearly 5,000 Hispanic/Latino people ages 18 to 74, collected for the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos and the Sociocultural Ancillary Study, showed that on whole there was no strong association between wealth and cardiovascular health among Hispanic/Latinos.

More than a third of the participants, about 37 percent, had low wealth, while 45 percent were in the middle wealth category and 18 percent were in the high wealth category. Among Hispanic/Latinos with high wealth, Mexicans were the largest group represented, with 55 percent, and Central Americans had the lowest share of high wealth, at 4 percent.

As researchers began to examine the links between health and wealth among subgroups of the Latino population, they found that health and wealth were closely associated for some groups but not others. For example, wealthier Central Americans were less likely to be obese, while wealthier Puerto Ricans were more likely to be obese.

“Within this group, there is a diversity of experiences,” he said. “What is it about the experience of wealthy Puerto Ricans that is different from the experience of wealthy Central Americans? Unless we explore those differences further, we won’t be able to understand and address health risk factors appropriately.”

Further research is needed to understand and tailor public health messaging and health interventions for sub-groups within the Hispanic/Latino population, López-Cevallos said.

“As the Latino population continues to grow, these differences within groups will become more and more important,” he said. “We really need to amp up our study of these deeper differences.”

About the OSU College of Liberal Arts: The College of Liberal Arts includes the fine and performing arts, humanities and social sciences, making it one of the largest and most diverse colleges at OSU. The college’s research and instructional faculty members contribute to the education of all university students and provide national and international leadership, creativity.

Education—A Crucial Key to Succeed in Any Country

By Marci Malzahn



Marci Malzahn,
Founder of Malzahn Strategic

When I went to Nicaragua (my country of origin) in 2013 with Opportunity International (OI), I was amazed to learn that what mothers wanted most for their children, after food, was education. OI, a nonprofit organization that provides micro loans to the poor in 28 countries, works with entrepreneurs who want to become self-sufficient. They co-invest in their communities with the “clients” and, together, create real progress in the countries they work with, one of them being Nicaragua. 85% of their clients globally are women entrepreneurs who are bakers, hammock makers, farmers, artisans of clay or wood artifacts, own a retail store in their homes, or raise

pigs, among other businesses. OI forms what they call “trust groups” where about twenty five entrepreneurs get together to receive business training from OI, to support each other, and to improve themselves along with their communities. The loans average \$150 to \$200 and are paid back within four months. Once the entire group pays off the loan, then they can obtain the next set of loans. If one of the trust group members is unable to make her or his weekly payment, the rest of the group has to pay for them. Therefore, the level of accountability is very high and the payback ratio is about 98%! They are committed to succeed.

One of the women who operated a little retail store from her house (typically the stores are in the front of the house and the families live in the back) shared with our group how proud she was to send her daughter to college. With the loans she received from OI she continued to grow her store and she was able to provide for her daughter to not only finish high school but to pursue her college degree. She was, of course, the first one to attend college in generations.

Last year I was fortunate to go to Kigali, Rwanda, Africa as part of a mission’s team. My part was to teach at a women’s leadership conference and at a pastors’ conference. As I talked with the women who attended, they too shared that the most important goal for them was to feed their children first and then to make sure they went to school. I was pleasantly surprised to meet a lot of educated people from Rwanda. Some of those people were our translators. The young woman who was my translator for the women’s conference was only 23 years old and she spoke Kinyarwanda, English, and French. She did a wonderful job and at the end of the trip she asked me to become her mentor, which I gladly accepted to do. Her fiancée was in China pursuing his MBA. Wow! They truly appreciate and value education. They have discovered it is the way out of poverty in any country.

When I lived in the Dominican Republic as a refugee after fleeing Nicaragua due to the revolution in 1979, I saw the result of a country with uneducated people, which was the same as in Nicaragua and most of the Latin American countries, unfortunately. This result is poverty. The poor are born into poor families and cannot get out of the cycle of poverty unless they become educated. And there are little to no opportunities for them to get educated beyond high school—if they even achieve getting through the

sixth grade. When I returned to Dominican Republic in 2007 and then in 2015, I witnessed how the country’s population became more educated and as a result they now have a growing middle working class. The higher class in this country are almost all highly educated with not only undergraduate degrees but some even have two master’s degrees and even PhD’s. Those parents who can, send their children to study abroad to both Europe and the U.S. and then they return to their countries with the best education possible.

Education opens the doors to knowledge and with knowledge comes opportunity. You need first formal education and then informal education throughout your working life. Continually learning will help you with promotions, grow in your job, start your own business, and ultimately help others in your community. Therefore, align and associate yourself with learners and with organizations that help others get educated. Help young people and adults to obtain their education and become “educated people.” That’s how cities and countries progress.

Those of us who are Latinos and live here in America are very fortunate to be in the one country where pursuing education is definitely possible—if you want to. In the United States, there are plenty of opportunities and grants available for Latinos to not only graduate from good schools but also to pursue their undergraduate degree and even go beyond to obtain a master’s and PhD. In this country, precisely because you are a Latino, considered a “minority,” you can become educated. There are not only government grants and special programs but also private programs that are looking for qualified people to apply. When I Googled “Educational grants for Latinos” 22,200,000 results came back! I’m sure you can find at least one that may be able to help you.

Regardless of your situation, as a Latino or Latina in America, I encourage you to pursue your education as it will open brand new doors of opportunity for you and your future generations. Being an educated person is a crucial key to succeeding in any country in the world. You’re in the country that offers you the best opportunities and the greatest chance to obtain your education. Don’t waste this gift!

Marci Malzahn is a banking executive and founder of Malzahn Strategic (www.malzahnstrategic.com), a community bank consultancy focused on strategic planning, enterprise risk management and talent management. Marci is also an author and motivational/ inspirational speaker. You can contact Marci for speaking engagements through her website at www.marciamalzahn.com or email her at marcia@marciamalzahn.com. You can purchase Marci’s books at www.Amazon.com.

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Rick Aguilar
Publisher
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Need A Happier Frame of Mind? Check Out Your Nearest State Park



By Deborah Locke

Imagine that you pack up the kids and your spouse and your abuela and drive to a nearby state park. After the picnic the family goes for a long walk. The air is warm and seems to envelope you like a blanket. Problems are forgotten. You are living in that exact moment, and it feels good.

Why? What is it about the great outdoors that feels so good, improves moods, just seems to take your cares away? Research has shown in multiple studies that parks and forests have a positive impact on the mental and physical health of humans. A story in Time magazine a year ago cited a study that found that if a person walked in a cedar forest for 40 minutes, their stress hormone cortisol lowered. That outcome didn't occur if they spent 40 minutes walking on a treadmill in a lab.

Now consider this. Minnesota has 255,000 acres of land divided into 75 state parks and recreation areas, all teeming with ways to cut your stress level and make you feel better. Minnesota's extensive system of state trails, state water trails and state forests can help, too. You need trees? We got trees. You want water? Your parks and trails have water, gorgeous scenery, and programs for children and adults. Just about every community in the state has a park, trail or forest within 30 minutes of home.

So the environment clearly contains the requisite trees and water and sun, but how does all that tie into better health? The Tokyo researchers mentioned in Time magazine learned that trees and plants give off a compound that if inhaled, spurs healthy changes. For example, if someone walked through the woods or camped overnight in the woods, changes in their blood occurred that protected against cancer by increasing the number of white blood cells that support the immune

system. That's because in a forest, you inhale phytoncides, which help combat infections and curb inflammation.

Know also that it's more than your muscles that benefit from that 40-minute walk through a beautiful outdoor environment. Studies also show that when you go out and walk through a park or forest, you are less likely to ruminate. Rumination is a hallmark of depression and anxiety, according to the July 2016 Time story. If you walk down a city street, you won't lessen your depression and anxiety the way it will lessen in a natural environment. Exposure to a 90-minute nature blast improves moods because parks and forests are often near moving water and moving water contains high levels of negative ions!

Why should a person get all happy about something that's innately negative? It's because those charged air particles, created by water, air, sunlight, and the Earth's natural radiation, are especially concentrated during the summer. Scientists do not agree on why the negative ions impact the human body, but they do agree that negative ions help increase energy and improve mood.

Now consider this. Your 255,000 acres of Minnesota park land contain a lot of water, air and sunlight. This has all been a long way of saying, do check out a state park or trail near you! If you're from the metro area and crave 40 minutes of a walk through quiet beauty, go to Afton State Park near Hastings or William O'Brien State Park near Stillwater. Drive a bit further north to Wild River State Park in Center City or Interstate State Park in Taylors Falls. Of course, Fort Snelling State Park near the MSP International Airport is practically in your back yard.

You'll need a \$7 day pass to get into the state parks and after that, nearly everything is free, from naturalist programs to equipment (fishing rods and tackle, GPS units, etc.) The state trails, state forests and state water trails are free.

Use ParkFinder, the events calendar and other trip-planning tools on the DNR website (www.mndnr.gov) to plan a day of outdoor recreation. You're sure to find your own share of phytoncides and negative ions, learn new stuff, see amazing sites, and leave with an improved outlook.



4th Annual Latino Education Achievement Gap Summit Saturday, August 5, 2017 - 7 a.m. - 11 a.m. Neighborhood House, St. Paul, MN



7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.: Registration and Breakfast served

8:00 am: 8:05 a.m.: Welcome and Opening Comments, Rick Aguilar, *Latino American Today*

8:05 a.m. – 8:50 a.m.: Discussion with Latino Students & Latino Youth Education Leaders – Leadership is needed from the top! Survey results from Latino student dropouts.

Introductions & Remarks, Robert Hanson, ALMAS at Henry Sibley H.S.

Panelists:

Carmen Robles - President of Jovenes de Salud

Carissa Ontiveros - Jovenes de Salud
Manny Hernandez - Jovenes de Salud
Latino Students - Members of ALMAS
8:50 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.: Networking Break

9:00 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.: WHAT'S WORKING!

Discussion with School Leadership in the Twin Cities.
Expectations from schools, engaging parents, Charters, Private Schools.

Panelists:

Liz Ramsey - Risen Christ Catholic School
Sean Elder - Hiawatha Academies
Joe Nathan - Center for School Change
Jeb Myers - Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
Brian Lynch - DeLaSalle High School

9:55 a.m. – 10:05 am: Networking Break

10:05 – 10:55 am: POLICY LEADERS PANEL

Solutions: Engaging the Business Community, School Choice, Legislation, Grants, Foundations

Moderator: Hector Garcia

Panelists :

Rep. Sondra Erickson - MN House
Zuki Ellis - St. Paul School Board
Sen. Mary Kiffmeyer - MN Senate
Catrin Thorman - American Experiment
Sen. Chuck Wiger - MN Senate
Elia Bruggeman - MN Dept. of Education

10:55 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Closing Remarks - Rick Aguilar, *Latino American Today*

Latino American Today

4th Annual
**LATINO EDUCATION
ACHIEVEMENT GAP SUMMIT**
Presented by Latino American Today

Saturday, August 5, 2017 – 8 am to 11 am
Neighborhood House at Wellstone Center
The Ferber Community Dining Room

The 2017 Latino Achievement Gap Summit, will focus on education issues in the Latino community. Minnesota has the largest Latino achievement gap in the country. Only 51 percent of Latinos graduated from high school in our 2016-2017 school year.

This is a crisis that needs to be addressed. This Summit will bring together education , political and faith leaders along with Latino youth leadership, community, business and civic leaders. Join us as we present and discuss ideas, solutions, case studies and plans of action for Minnesota and the Latino community. Plan to attend. NO COST TO ATTEND, BREAKFAST WILL BE SERVED.

TO ATTEND PLEASE RSVP TO:

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Parents Like School Choice Program in Wisconsin



By Aaron Rodriguez

When state legislators say they oppose expanding the school choice program, they're sending a message to Hispanic parents that they're not smart enough to decide which schools are best for their children. Allow me to explain.

Numerous surveys published recently have indicated an overwhelming support for the school choice program among Hispanic voters. According to a 2012 report published by the American Federation for Children—a pro-school choice advocacy group—91% of Hispanics in Florida, Arizona, New Mexico, New Jersey and Nevada support school voucher and scholarship programs. In Texas, a survey published earlier this year by Braun Research showed that 80% of registered Hispanic voters support school choice.

If you're not a fan of surveys, let's try some different numbers.

St. Anthony School in Milwaukee is now the largest private school to participate in a school choice program across the country. It wasn't always this way. From 2002 to 2011, the school's annual student enrollment ballooned from 400 to 1,700 students. The rate of growth is impressive; but underscoring that growth is the statistic that 99% of St. Anthony's student body is Latino. St. Anthony's expansion and demographics corroborate what surveys

have been telling us: There is a strong demand for school choice among Hispanics.

The state Legislature should keep two things in mind when considering the expansion of school choice. First, the Hispanic community is the fastest-growing ethnic group in the country, quickly becoming an important voting bloc in American elections. Second, many of the areas targeted this year in Wisconsin for expanding school choice have growing Hispanic communities. Let's briefly look at three of the nine areas in Wisconsin targeted for school choice expansion: Green Bay, Kenosha and Beloit.

Green Bay's Hispanic population density is twice the state average. Hispanic population growth there has doubled the past 10 years and quadrupled in the past 15 years. Kenosha's Hispanic population is now approaching three times the state average and has grown 79% in the past 10 years. Beloit's Hispanic population is almost three times the state average and has grown 94% the past 10 years. Opposing the expansion of the school choice program in cities where Hispanics are quickly growing is playing political chicken with an increasingly important voting bloc.

A recent op-end submitted by a group of public school teachers argued that voucher schools are not accountable to taxpayers and have not increased student achievement beyond public schools. I won't get into the weeds on some of the particulars, but I will point out something that seems to be ignored by the anti-school choice crowd. A five-year longitudinal study published by Patrick Wolf of the University of Arkansas showed that students in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program were 7% more likely to graduate high school and 4% more likely to enroll in college than their Milwaukee Public Schools peers.

Nationally, Hispanic students are three times more likely to drop out of high school. Knowing that the choice schools excel precisely in the areas where Hispanics have the greatest academic deficit strengthens the argument to expand school choice into Hispanic communities.

Over the last decade, St. Anthony School in Milwaukee accepted on average more than 100 additional low-income, low-performing Hispanic students a year. For any school to expand that quickly is a risk because first-year, low-performing students will inevitably drop the schools' average test scores.

St. Anthony accepted the risk and met the community demand. As a result, it is graduating 93% of its first senior class with a 96% college enrollment rate. St. Anthony is a good test case showing that a school consisting of 99% Latino students from low-income homes can buck the national trend, exceed the state's high school graduation and college enrollment rates and corroborate peer-reviewed studies of the program with real results.

Like public schools, the school choice program is not without its flaws. Just saying that a school participates in the school choice program doesn't make it a good school. We should advocate closing any school that continues to perform poorly because our kids deserve it; however, we also should balance the interest of accountability with the growing demand for school choice in populations of need.

It's nearly impossible for good private schools in the voucher program to expand when they continue to receive a fraction of the per-pupil funding as public schools. St. Anthony was able to expand because it scraped together the resources; but not all schools in the program have the resources. Per-pupil funding for the school choice program must increase, especially for schools offering a secondary education.

Legislators should be encouraged by the Hispanic community's desire for education reform. Hispanics like the school choice program and want it in their community. To deny them a choice among a broader marketplace of schools is no different than telling them they don't know what's best for their children.

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