

NEWS AND PROFILES CONNECTING THE LATINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

December 2020 Issue 399
Latino
American
Today
www.latinoamericantoday.com

M E R R Y
Christmas!

FELIZ
NAVIDAD
y Prospero
año nuevo





Thanks to Latino American Today Staff and Contributors!

As we look back at 2020 we want to take time to thank the staff and contributors of Latino American Today for their efforts in producing our publication each month. Thanks to all and we look forward to 2021!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our readers, advertisers, and supporters.

**—Rick Aguilar, Publisher
Latino American Today**

Staff:

Graphic Designer: Gisela Aguilar

Photographer: Wameng Moua

Reporter: Claud Santiago

Contributors:

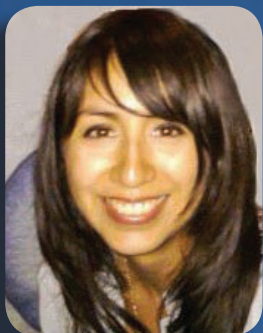
Family Values: Saúl Carranza

Faith and Leadership: Marci Malzahn

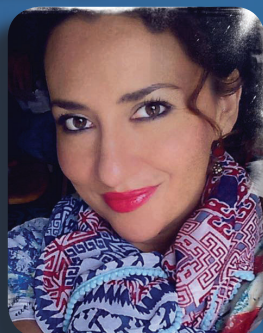
Health and Lifestyle: Amalia Moreno-Damgaard

Lifestyle Reporter: Christy Ana

Outdoors Minnesota: Deborah Locke and Harland Hiemstra



Top row, from left to right: Gisela Aguilar, Wameng Moua, Saúl Carranza, Marci Malzahn



Bottom row, from left to right: Amalia Moreno-Damgaard, Christy Ana, Deborah Locke



On The Cover
¡Feliz Navidad y prospero año!
Merry Christmas!

**Latino
American
Today**

Founded 2013

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

Published by
Aguilar Productions Inc.
Richard Aguilar, President

Contributors
Marci Malzahn,
Banking Executive and Founder of Malzahn Strategic
Saúl Carranza,
Pastor of Church Cristo Para Todas las Naciones
Claud Santiago, Field reporter and journalist
Wameng Moua, Photographer

Print and Online Design
Gisela Aguilar

Latino American Today
204 Emerson Avenue E.
St. Paul, MN 55118

Phone
651-665-0633

Fax
651-665-0129

Email
aguilarproductions@msn.com

Web
www.latinoamericantoday.com

Nota: Editoriales, artículos y anuncios que aparecen en este periódico representan el punto de vista de el (ellos) autor (es) y no necesariamente reflejan la opinión, punto de vista o modo de pensar de LATINO AMERICAN TODAY o de su personal.

Latino American Today distributes our publication throughout the Twin Cities area.

Follow us on facebook.com/Latinoamericantoday

Navidad y año nuevo. Tiempo de Esperanza.

Por Saúl Carranza

“Por tanto, el Señor mismo les dará esta señal: Una virgen concebirá y dará a luz un hijo, y Le pondrá por nombre Emmanuel (Dios con nosotros).”— Isaías 7:14.

Este ha sido un año totalmente inusual. A nivel mundial se han dado terribles catástrofes. La Pandemia que a la fecha ha contagiado a más de 61 millones de personas y ha cobrado la vida de más de un millón cuatrocientos mil personas. El hambre, la pobreza, el calentamiento global y la crisis de los desplazados. Es todo muy triste. Pero no es lo único. En el año del Covid-19 también hemos tenido terremotos, huracanes, la plaga de langostas que comenzó en África y llegó a Sur América. Los terribles incendios en Australia y Norte América y las violentas manifestaciones que a nivel mundial se dieron contra la injusticia racial. Realmente ha sido un año muy duro y esto sin contar las crisis personales, aquello que nos ha tocado sufrir solos. Solo Dios y usted saben cómo pasaron estos meses.

Pero este tiempo de fin de año tenemos la bendición de celebrar el hecho de que Jesús el Hijo de Dios nació y nos trajo esperanza, fe y paz. Todo lo que el mundo de este año necesita. Muchos ponen sus esperanzas en el trabajo, en la economía o en el gobierno. Todo eso no ha evitado los males de este año. Yo quiero invitarte a que confíes en Dios. Para Él nada es imposible y te ama con amor eterno. Que te encamines hacia la época navideña con la confianza plena que Jesús hace nuevas todas las cosas. Y que aún en un año tan difícil no te ha dejado solo(a).

Hemos llegado al periodo de adviento. Este término viene del latín “adventus Redemptoris” que significa la venida del Redentor. Los cristianos recordamos en este tiempo que “Emanuel” ha venido. Y nos preparamos para celebrar su venida. En tiempos muy difíciles el profeta Isaías escribió que la esperanza del mundo se cumpliría cuando una virgen diera a luz un niño a quién llamarían Emanuel. Porque ese niño sería literalmente Dios con nosotros. En este tiempo en el que todas estas situaciones adversas nos han demostrado que no tenemos control sobre el mundo que nos rodea y que cualquier cosa puede alterar el curso normal de la vida. Qué bueno es recordar que no estamos solos. Que Dios no nos ha dejado abandonados en ningún momento. Y que su sombra protectora está cerca de los que le buscan.

Aunque sabemos que el cambiar el número de año no significa que las cosas necesariamente van a ser diferentes. Si tenemos la esperanza de que va a suceder y nos encomendamos a Dios para que Él bendiga nuestros pasos y nos conceda un buen año nuevo. La fe es el ejercicio de la confianza en quien tiene poder para ayudarte en aquello que tú no puedes cambiar. El redentor ya vino se llama Jesús y dijo “Yo he venido para que todos ustedes tengan vida, y para que la vivan plenamente”. Y confiando en esa promesa te invito a disfrutar en familia esta Navidad y tener confianza que el año próximo será mucho mejor. Le pido a Dios te conceda una feliz Navidad y un muy bendecido año 2021.

El Pastor Saúl Carranza originario de Guatemala es el Coordinador de Ministerios Hispanos de la Iglesia del Nazareno para Minnesota y las Dakotas. pastorcarranza@gmail.com

Christmas and New Year. Time of Hope.

By Saúl Carranza

“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you this sign: A virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (God with us).”— Isaiah 7:14.

This has been a totally unusual year. Terrible catastrophes have occurred worldwide. The Pandemic that to date has infected more than 61 million people and has claimed the lives of more than one million four hundred thousand people. Hunger, poverty, global warming and the crisis of the displaced. It's all very sad. But it is not the only thing. In the year of Covid-19 we have also had earthquakes, hurricanes, the plague of locusts that began in Africa and reached South America. The terrible fires in Australia and North America and the violent worldwide demonstrations against racial injustice. It has really been a very hard year and this without counting the personal crises, what we have to suffer alone. Only God and you know how these months passed.

But this year-end time we are blessed to celebrate the fact that Jesus the Son of God was born and brought us hope, faith and peace. Everything the world needs this year. Many put their hopes in work, in the economy or in government. All that has not prevented the evils of this year. I want to invite you to trust God. For Him nothing is impossible and He loves you with eternal love. May you head towards the Christmas season with the full confidence that Jesus makes all things new. And that even in such a difficult year has not left you alone.

We have reached the Advent period. This term comes from the Latin “adventus Redemptoris” which means the coming of the Redeemer. Christians remember at this time that “Immanuel” has come. And we prepare to celebrate his coming. In very difficult times the prophet Isaiah wrote that the hope of the world would be fulfilled when a virgin gave birth to a child whom they would call Immanuel. Because that child would literally be God with us. In this time in which all these adverse situations have shown us that we have no control over the world around us and that anything can alter the normal course of life. How good it is to remember that we are not alone. That God has not left us abandoned at any time. And that his protective shadow is close to those who seek him.

Although we know that changing the year number does not mean that things will necessarily be different. If we hope that it will happen and we entrust ourselves to God so that He will bless our steps and grant us a good new year. Faith is the exercise of trust in those who have power to help you in what you cannot change. The redeemer has already come his name is Jesus and he said “I have come so that all of you may have life, and so that you may live it fully.” And trusting in that promise, I invite you to enjoy this Christmas as a family and have confidence that next year will be much better. I ask God to grant you a merry Christmas and a very blessed year 2021.

Pastor Saúl Carranza from Guatemala is the Hispanic Ministries Coordinator for the Church of the Nazarene for Minnesota and the Dakotas. Connect via email at: pastorcarranza@gmail.com

IGLESIA CRISTO PARA TODAS LAS NACIONES

6421 45th Av. N Crystal MN Tel 763-321-5181

Y sus Pastores Alex y Tita Castro



Le deseamos una feliz Navidad y Prospero año 2021.

Y le invitamos a que nos acompañe en los servicios regulares de la Iglesia.

Domingos 11:00 de la mañana y 6:00 de la tarde

Miércoles 7:00 pm

Viernes 7:00pm

Y todas las noches a las 7 transmitimos por Facebook live en

<https://www.facebook.com/nazarenosencrystal>

Les esperamos.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! 10 Lessons Learned in 2020



Marci Malzahn

By Marci Malzahn

As we entered the new decade—2020—we were looking forward to new adventures in our lives, new jobs, new places to visit around the world, celebrating big accomplishments and special birthdays with our loved ones. But all our dreams and plans for 2020 were shuttered in a matter of days. We now have a choice to make: We feel sorry for ourselves pondering on everything we lost this year. Or we choose to see the positive experiences and lessons learned throughout this year as we lived through the COVID-19 Pandemic, the riots in many of our cities, and an unforgettable presidential election process.

Let's choose to see the positive and reflect on everything we learned this year. Below are the top 10 lessons we learned together in 2020:

Resiliency. One of the biggest lessons we learned is to be resilient. Businesses had to change the old way of doing things from one day to the next. Employees had to learn to work from home with the pets and children around and without having the proper equipment or office setup. As we continue to live through the Pandemic, we are now more prepared to pivot on a moment's notice. If something doesn't work out, that's ok, we move to the next option. This new or polished skill of resiliency will serve us well for the rest of our lives.

Creativity. We had to become more creative at everything we do on a daily basis—from how we buy groceries to how we stock food in our houses—especially how to creatively buy more toilet paper! Event planners created new ways to do their conferences using various systems. Speakers had to adapt to whatever system the event planners had to offer and attendees had to learn to “unmute.” Compassion. As we observed how the world changed around us and how much suffering people were facing, most of us felt compassion for strangers. This global Pandemic opened our eyes to see the entire world as one humanity. This virus attacked everyone and is not respecter of persons regardless of background, age, political views, religion, or culture. Yes, there are specific groups of people who are more vulnerable to dying but the virus doesn't know that. It attacked wherever there was an open door to move into.

Empathy. We became more empathetic for people who are more vulnerable to the virus or if they live with a person who is at higher risk. We empathized with parents of young children who had to work while trying to help their children with schoolwork.

Resourceful. Companies took their retired computers from the closets and put them to work again. These systems may not be the fastest, but they worked okay for employees to be able to continue serving customers from home. At the personal level, many people made masks not only for their own families but gave them away to others in need.

Technology. Everyone had to up their game using technology. People who refused to use technology now were forced to do their banking on their phones, call their grandchildren on FaceTime, Google Duo, WhatsApp, or Zoom. Businesses that were waiting on the edges to upgrade systems or use new technologies were forced to invest in technology now or be out of business completely. Digital payments are now the new way of paying each other or purchasing goods. Also, because of technology, several vaccines are coming out in a record time to help humanity fight and end this Pandemic.

Generosity. Even though nonprofit organizations that help people were not able to meet in person to raise funds, they used creativity, technology, and resourcefulness to attract donors to their causes. People became more generous in the effort to help other human beings in need.

Efficiency. Businesses became more efficient in their processes. What before took twenty steps to complete, now may only take ten steps. Unnecessary steps and approvals had to be removed from the process in order to expedite service to customers and simply to survive as a business. Business leaders had to trust their employees and empower them with more authority to complete tasks while still complying with regulations that apply to their industries.

Prioritize. We learned to prioritize our activities based on importance and risk exposure. We chose to continue some commitments and drop the less important ones. What's most important in our lives surfaced to the top of the list. All the other superficial activities went by the wayside.

Faith. Most importantly, this year was a time to seek God—for some people for the first time in their lives. Despite the terrible circumstances we all went through this year, God has always been there waiting for us to ask for help and to invite Him into our lives. Faith is what sustains us through tribulations.

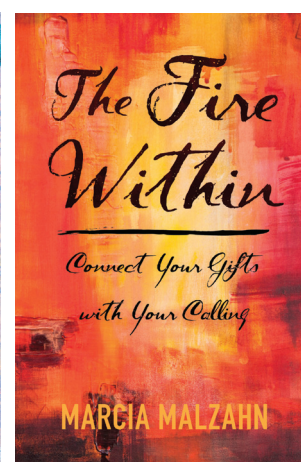
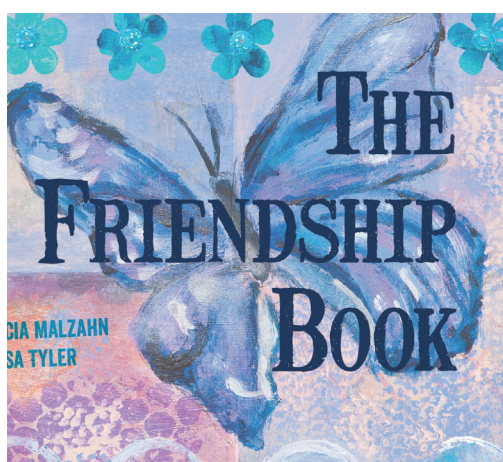
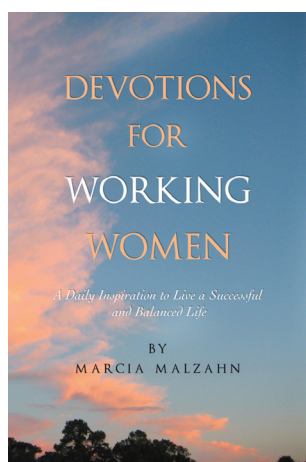
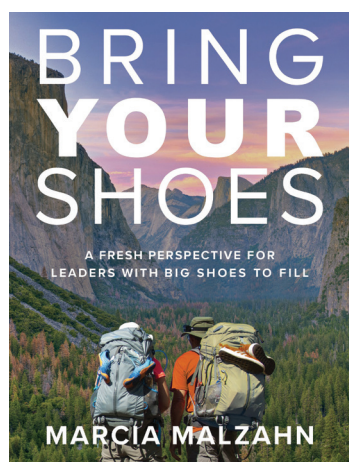
So, you see, in the midst of a global Pandemic we can come out ahead. Yes, we lost a lot and some of us lost loved ones to the disease which is the highest price to pay. Yet we can still move forward and learn lessons that will carry us through the rest of our lives. From all the lessons we learned listed above, the most important to remember is faith. I will leave you with this Scripture that sums it all up:

John 16:33 (KJV)

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Be of Good Cheer. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Marcia Malzahn is president and founder of Malzahn Strategic a community financial institution consultancy focused on strategic planning, enterprise risk management, treasury management, and talent management. Marcia is a professional keynote speaker and published author of four books. You can contact Marcia for speaking engagements through her website at <https://crowning-achievements.com/> or email her at mmalzahn@crowning-achievements.com. You can purchase Marcia's books at Malzahn Publishing or Amazon.



Hoy en día, es peligroso salir a la calle sin cobertura de salud. Puede haber ayuda disponible.

Muchas familias en Minnesota están enfrentando dificultades debido a la pandemia por COVID-19. Para muchos de nosotros, sostener los gastos relacionados con la atención y servicios de salud pueden ser muy difíciles de afrontar. Si usted o algún familiar y conocidos están afrontando dificultades económicas debido a no contar con suficiente dinero, o si perdió su empleo, o sus horas de trabajo fueron reducidas; hay opciones para acceder ayuda disponible.

Los programas de salud pública de Minnesota ofrecen cobertura de salud a los residentes de Minnesota con ingresos económicos bajos o sin ingresos económicos. El Departamento de Servicios Humanos (DHS) tiene una página web nueva con información en Español sobre los programas de salud pública en Minnesota mn.gov/dhs/health-care-coverage/spanish. Invitamos a aquellos que necesiten cobertura de salud a preguntar si califican para Asistencia Médica o MinnesotaCare.

La mayoría de los residentes de Minnesota pueden solicitar en línea a través de MNsure.org. Sin embargo, sabemos que navegar los los seguros de salud puede ser complicado y por lo tanto, usted no tiene por qué descifrarlos por su cuenta. Estas son algunas de las opciones para obtener más información sobre nuestros programas de salud.

- Conéctese con un navegador en su comunidad para obtener ayuda para inscribirse. Podrás encontrar un navegador que habla Inglés o Español en mnsure.org/help/find-assister/find-assister.jsp.
- Comuníquese con su oficina local del condado.
- Si tiene alguna discapacidad, llame al Centro de Discapacitados de MN (Disability Hub MN) al 866-333-2466.
- Si tiene 65 años o más, puede llamar a la línea de enlace de la tercera edad (Senior LinkAge Line) al 800-333-2433.

Todos necesitamos ayuda en alguna ocasión

Alimentos | Vivienda | Ingreso
Cuidados de la salud | Cuidado infantil



Everyone needs help sometimes

Food | Housing | Income | Health care | Child care



mn.gov/dhs/LatinoAmericanToday

¿No califica debido a su condición de inmigración?

La Asistencia Médica de Emergencia (Emergency Medical Assistance, EMA) ofrece cobertura para la atención y el tratamiento de afecciones médicas de emergencia a todo residente de Minnesota que no tenga una estatus de inmigración que le permita tener acceso a Asistencia Médica. EMA cubre aquellas afecciones médicas que de no tratarse en un período de 24 a 48 horas podrían:

- Poner su salud en grave riesgo;
- Ocasionar un deterioro grave de las funciones corporales; o
- Ocasionar un colapso grave de alguno de los órganos o partes del cuerpo.

Usted puede solicitar la Asistencia Médica de Emergencia a través de su oficina local del condado.

Prueba gratis de COVID-19 si no tiene seguro

Muchos residentes de Minnesota que no cuentan con un seguro de salud pueden realizarse la prueba de COVID-19 de forma gratuita. Aprende más a mn.gov/dhs/health-care-coverage/spanish.

Todos requerimos ayuda en muchas ocasiones, estamos aquí para ayudarte.
Matt Anderson

Assistant Commissioner and Medicaid Director, Health Care Administration,
Minnesota Department of Human Services



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.latinoamericantoday.com



Comcast Launching More Than 20 WiFi-Connected “Lift Zones” in Twin Cities

Lift Zones Provide Safe Spaces Fully Equipped with Free Internet Access to Help Low-Income Students Participate in Distance Learning

As part of its ongoing commitment to help connect low-income families to the Internet so they can fully participate in educational opportunities and the digital economy, Comcast today announced plans to equip more than 20 different locations in the Twin Cities with WiFi-connected “Lift Zones” before the end of 2020.

Working with its network of nonprofit partners, Comcast is providing robust WiFi hotspots in safe spaces designed to help students get online, participate in distance learning and do their homework. This initiative provides free connectivity inside partner community centers for the next three years.

“Working parents across our community have been wondering how to handle distance learning for their children. In addition, many parents are not able to afford daycare or access to the technology needed for distance learning at home,” said Tony Sanneh, founder and CEO, The Sanneh Foundation. “That’s why we are so grateful Comcast has partnered with us to provide these crucial resources and stepped in to fill an important need.”

“We are proud to partner with community organizations across the Twin Cities and equip them with free internet service and the digital training skills that will provide kids with safe, fast and reliable connectivity to keep up with school and prepare for a brighter future,” said J.D. Keller, regional senior vice president, Comcast Twin Cities. “The

COVID-19 crisis continues to put many low-income students at risk of being left behind, accelerating the need for comprehensive digital equity and internet adoption programs to support them. We hope these Lift Zones will help those students who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to connect to effective distance learning at home.”

Twin Cities community organizations that have established Lift Zones in their respective facilities include:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities locations
- Al Lenzmeier West Side, St. Paul
- East Side, St. Paul
- Jerry Gamble Center, Minneapolis
- Mount Airy, St. Paul
- Southside Village, South Minneapolis
- Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, St. Paul
- Keystone Community Services, St. Paul
- Neighborhood House, St. Paul
- Perspectives Family Center, St. Louis Park
- Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, Minneapolis
- Pillsbury United Communities, Brian Coyle Center, Minneapolis
- The Real Minneapolis, Allina Commons, Minneapolis
- The Sanneh Foundation, Conway Community Center, St. Paul
- Vietnamese Social Services, St. Paul

In addition, the company is providing free access to all outdoor WiFi hotspots until the end of 2020, plus hundreds of hours of digital skills content to help families and site coordinators navigate online learning. Lift Zone sites complement Comcast’s Internet Essentials program, which has helped connect more than 8 million low-income people to the Internet at home, including more than 172,000 Minnesotans.

Honoring George Costilla



By Orlanda Klinkhammer

George Gonzales Costilla, Jr., age 66 of St. Paul, died unexpectedly at home on November 12, 2020. He is survived by his wife, Oksana Costilla; children and grandchildren.

George was known for his quick wit and dry humor. He was a smart man who valued tradition and his Mexican heritage. He was a public servant, both in his service in the Marine Corps, and in his work assisting minority businesses. George worked for MnDOT for 8 years, as the Office of Civil Rights Business Development Advisor. George was a mentor and advisor to small businesses. He was extremely passionate about the work. George's phone ringer was always on high. No matter the time or day he made himself available. If a small business was in need, George was there. He built many long-lasting relationships in the small business community and highway construction industry.

Rest in peace George Costilla

Hyon Kim, MN Best Inc. President, shared, "George used his expertise as an engineer, small business owner, and veteran to understand the needs of small businesses. He pinpointed what I needed and advised me on how to get there. He listened and genuinely cared. He will be missed."

When George's friend and colleague Thomas Mebrahtu learned of his passing, he reminisced about how George believed in quality not quantity: "George would always say, 'If we can help one small business, that is all that matters.'"

His workmates at the Office of Civil Rights stated, "We are so thankful to have known and worked with George throughout the years. George's passion and dedication for small businesses will continue to live on in the work that we do."

The Need for Change is NOW

We live in a world where divisions and poverty affect everyone.

The COVID-19 pandemic and global civil unrest have forced a reckoning with long-standing systemic racism and oppression that has manifested in deep and predictable disparities in our community.

When we unite as changemakers, we can disrupt systems and address the challenges no one can solve alone.



When we **unite as changemakers**, we can disrupt inequitable systems and address longstanding racism and oppression to create a community where all people thrive.

The need for change is now.



Greater Twin Cities
United Way

GTCUW.ORG

2020 Latin GRAMMY Awards: Winners



JC Vertti, Latin GRAMMY award winning music engineer

The Latin Recording Academy announced all the winners for the 2020 Latin GRAMMY Awards, the preeminent international honor and the only peer-selected award celebrating excellence in Latin music. Winners were revealed Thursday, Nov. 19, at the 21st Latin GRAMMY Awards' Premiere and Telecast ceremonies. See below for the list of winners!

Best Engineered Album

3:33 - WINNER

Daniel Bitrán Arizpe, Daniel Dávila, Justin Moshkevich, George Noriega, Erick Roman, Paul Rubinstein & **JC Vertti**, engineers; Miles Comaskey, Najeeb Jones & Tony Maserati, mixers; Dale Becker, mastering engineer (Debi Nova) [Sony Music Entertainment US Latin LLC]

JC Vertti, pictured left, lives in Mexico City, and attended Berklee College of Music in Boston. After graduation he returned to Mexico City to begin his career in the recording industry!

JC Vertti, has family in the U.S—his first cousins Gisela and Karina Aguilar, who live and work in Los Angeles, and his uncle Richard Aguilar, founder and President of Aguilar Productions, the leading Multicultural marketing conference promoter in the U.S. and Publisher of Latino American Today!

Victor Martinez Launches Run For Minneapolis City Council Ward 5 in 2021

Urges North Siders to demand a safer community for all join his rally on Dec 1st 4pm

Victor Martinez is a champion for every Northside resident, family, and child when he announced his plans to run a grassroots campaign for Ward 5 Councilmember. Victor's campaign is about our youth, our jobs and our safety. Victor urged people to get involved in his campaign saying, "It's time for a safer NorthSide."

Victor announced his exploratory campaign 2 months ago via his personal Facebook account and Youtube from Farview Park. Victor expressed his disappointment that the Northside has asked for jobs and safety for the last 17 years, only to have less business and record growing crime when the new City Council came in.

In the Youtube video, Victor shared about how his pastoral work has given him a deep insight into what struggling folks deal with every day. Victor shares about his work at NRRC, Minneapolis's largest community organization. He invites community folks to connect to Victor to see what we can do together.

Victor is committed to earning voters' trust and vote by personally talking to as many of them as possible. He knows the number one quality folks look for in a Council Member is the ability to listen well and show compassion and understanding. He will seek the DFL endorsement come Spring. Though he will have a D next to his name, he will invite participation from folks across the political spectrum. No one should feel ignored and unvoiced in our community. The launch.



Victor Martinez with his wife and children

Just like a lot of Northsiders are ready for leadership that listens, Victor is preparing his campaign organization to be available to all his residents. He is committed to spending the next 11 months growing his grassroots network as well as interacting directly with voters.

Victor invites residents to his Drive-In style Campaign Launch Rally December 1st at 4pm. Listen from the safety of your car at 1801 James Ave N Minneapolis, MN 55411, Station 106.7 FM.

About Victor:

Victor Martinez graduated from Patrick Henry High school with leadership honors. He has been pastoring in North for over a decade. He is a block captain for 8 years and Community Financial Ambassador for 3 years. Victor came from a life of poverty and brokenness growing up. He knows what it is to have a lack of opportunity and chronic homelessness. Victor has served in NRRC for 6 years. He worked hand in hand as vice-chair with chair John Jamison to not only bring stability to NRRC but to usher in a new season of healthy and growing leadership. NRRC was able to build its first-ever headquarters in its 45 years of history.

Holiday Lights Drive-Thru Events in Minnesota 2020



*Originally published on
TwinCitiesFrugalMom.com*

Christmas Lights Drive-Thru – Bloomington and Excelsior (FREE)

December 4 – 5 and December 11- 12

5:30 – 8:30pm each of those nights

Christmas Lights Drive-Thru is a free, family event outside the Westwood Chanhassen Campus. It features lighted displays, live animals, treats, and more! Come experience the Christmas story in a brand-new way! Visit www.westwoodcc.org/lights/ for more information.

Christmas Together (Live Nativity Drive-Thru) – Bloomington (FREE) at St. Michael's Lutheran Church

December 4 -5 only

6:00pm – 8:00pm

Come and experience this live Christmas production from the comfort of your own vehicle. We invite you to kick off the holiday season with an outdoor program of the Christmas story. Take your family and friends on a drive-thru experience and enjoy an evening of music, lights, kids giveaways, treats, and live animals as we take you through the story of Christmas. For more information, please visit:

www.facebook.com/stmichaelsbloomington

Holiday Lights on York Avenue – St. Paul (FREE)

November 27 – December 31

5:00pm – 10:00pm each night

This is a big light display on a residential block that you can drive through in St. Paul. Their lights start on Friday, November 27th!

Valley Lights – Lake Elmo (FREE)

Rockpoint Church

November 25th – December 31st, 2020

5:30pm – 10:00pm

100,000 LED lights choreographed to music you can listen to from your car.

Come out and enjoy this spectacular Christmas display! Valley Lights is open to all and is an awesome opportunity for you to invite your family, friends, and neighbors. Who doesn't love a great light show during Christmas time? The best part is: it's totally free! Visit www.facebook.com/rockpointchurchmn for more information!

Christmas in Color Drive-Thru – Shakopee

November 27th, 2020 – January 3rd, 2021

Sun to Thurs 5:30pm – 10:00pm, Fri to Sat 5:30pm – 10:30pm

A NEW holiday attraction has come to Valleyfair, and you can enjoy it from the safety of your car! It's called Christmas in Color, and it's a mile-long, drive-through light and music display. It will be in Valleyfair's massive parking lot, and tickets are on sale now at christmasincolor.net/valleyfair

GLOW Holiday Festival Drive Thru Light Experience – St. Paul Minnesota State Fairgrounds

November 19, 2020 – January 3, 2021

Entry times are between 4:30pm and 10:00pm each night (every 15 min)

An all-new experience, the GLOW Holiday Festival is at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds for 46 consecutive nights from November 19th, 2020 to January 3rd, 2021! Visit GLOWholiday.com to purchase tickets.

Nature Illuminated – Apple Valley Minnesota Zoo

Open most dates from December 3 – January 17

Sun to Thurs 5:00pm – 9:00pm, Fri to Sat 5:00pm – 11:00pm

The Minnesota Zoo has created a magical world to drive through this holiday season. It's called Nature Illuminated, and it features stunning light work and larger-than-life animal art installations you can enjoy in your car. Not exactly a holiday event, but a lights drive-thru nonetheless that sounds like it will be a hit. Not cheap though – tickets are \$50 – \$60 for nonmembers, depending on the day of the week (rates are \$25 – \$35 for members). Still, you're supporting a good cause – the nonprofit Minnesota Zoo. For more information visit:

mnzoo.org/natureilluminated/

The Spirit of Winter – Waconia The Winery at Sovereign Estate

November 17 – January 2

Times start at 4:30pm each night

A drive-thru light show at a WINERY? Yes, please! The cost is \$7.50 per person (Ages 5 and under are free). Each vehicle gets a \$5 off a wine purchase coupon. So yes – you can buy wine and gifts from your car! Admission must be purchased in advance online at sovereignstatewine.com/festivals/spirit-of-winter/

Lights at Bluff Valley – Zumbro Falls

November 6 – December 20

5:00pm – 10:00pm

Zumbro Falls is about 1 hour southeast of the Twin Cities and just north of Rochester. This 1.5-mile drive-through light tour features themed areas with over 450 light displays and over 200 animated displays, plus a walk through Light Maze. Cost is \$20 per car! Go to www.facebook.com/lightsbluffvalley/ for more updates and possible specials.

Twins' New Giving Charter Aimed at Youth



By Do-Hyoung Park for MLB.com

The Twins have long worked to be an active catalyst of positive social change in the lives of young people across the Twin Cities, and in the last two years, team owner Jim Pohlad and his family issued a challenge to the Twins and their other companies to engage more strategically within the community and use their platforms in a focused long-term effort to drive the greatest impact.

The urgency and importance of such efforts were only accentuated by the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent public outcry amid the greater context of the COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the Upper Midwest particularly hard, all upending lives and disproportionately impacting traditionally underserved and underrepresented communities in the area as part of their wide-ranging human toll.

The Twins believe that their best avenue to drive positive impact and social equity in that context is by investing in local youth, with a particular focus on addressing the opportunity gaps prevalent among socioeconomic and racial lines in Minnesota. They took a significant and targeted step with their work on Wednesday, when they announced a new giving charter that will direct enduring community efforts toward youth development, starting with a \$380,000 allocation of funds to 26 regional nonprofit partners.

“It really kept coming back to kids and helping them develop educationally and the whole self-development, it makes sense,” said Nancy O’Brien, the Twins’ vice president of community engagement. “It’s a space that we’ve been in and where work is already being done, particularly with the Twins Community Fund, and so we really feel that is a space that we can drive the greatest impact.”

The summary of the Twins’ charter was announced as follows:

“The Minnesota Twins will advance social equity by leveraging our resources to ensure every child has the same opportunity for success. We believe equity in access to educational and developmental opportunities is essential in eliminating socioeconomic disparities. Building upon our longstanding community foundations, we will work to remove the barriers to access traditionally faced by underserved children, especially Black, indigenous and people of color; along with other wrongfully marginalized individuals or groups. We are committed to shaping a society for children in which racism or inequality has no place. Our work, along with our partners’, will focus on creating meaningful and inclusive changes that empower every child to reach their full potential.”

This area is all the more significant to the Twins’ organization in light of an October 2019 report from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, which concluded that Minnesota’s academic achievement gaps remained among the largest in the nation, driven in large part by racial and socioeconomic factors.

The Twins, of course, understand that this is a complex and multifaceted issue with no simple, short-term answer that can be addressed solely within the education sphere. The initial work with the 26 local organizations, most of which are historic partners of the club, has revolved around identifying the breadth of those needs, O’Brien said. Work with those partners will initially focus on literacy and STEM education, along with a focus on overall youth development, extracurricular and athletic activities.

As the work continues, the Twins will continue their evaluation of how to integrate existing youth programs and develop further efforts from staff and players to support the efforts.

“Education isn’t just about making sure that they have the books and the notebooks and pencils; there’s other factors that go into it,” O’Brien said. “Part of the opportunity gap, we’ve learned, is a gap in socioeconomic and racial disparity of resources. It’s more than just a direct connection to education. It’s other factors. Anything that might inhibit a child’s ability to come in and just be able to focus on learning is a challenge.

“When you look at the list, you’ll see some things that might not be specifically education-related, but it does play a role in a child’s ability to learn.”

The Twins’ new giving charter is in alignment with the Pohlad Family Foundation’s mission in its \$25 million commitment to social justice efforts in the Twin Cities, as announced earlier this year. Though many other Pohlad companies are also engaged in this drive towards focused giving, the Twins also do have the emotional connection and visible history within their community via their brand that carries weight in such public efforts.

“We wanted to make sure that they understood strategic philanthropy and that they should find their best role, if you will, in community, and then focus on that,” said Susan Bass Roberts, vice president and executive director of the Pohlad Family Foundation. “The Twins have been such an amazing partner to youth organizations in the Twin Cities for so long. I’m sure that they used that as a basis for their strategic planning and kind of deciding where they wanted to focus their efforts.”

Though the announcement of the charter comes at a time of reckoning in Minneapolis, the conversations and challenge began long before the challenges of 2020. O’Brien and Twins president Dave St. Peter noted that these efforts have been a point of emphasis and pride for many of their employees throughout the process, with the hope from many that the club could take a more vocal role in the efforts for social justice as it became clear that the organization could continue to expand the reach of the messaging via its growing platform.

An effort that initially included prominent messaging in support of social justice around Target Field and increased efforts to diversify the pool of candidates applying for front-office jobs around baseball has now expanded to this financial commitment with the strength of a plan and community partnerships. They expect to continue playing a role in highlighting these issues to the public.

“The more games we win, and hopefully competing for a world championship over time, that stimulates community,” St. Peter said. “But I also think that along with that comes an expectation and frankly, an obligation that the Twins are utilizing that brand and our resources to give back to the community that supports us in so many ways.

“Charitable giving is obviously a really important way, and we felt that there’s an opportunity here for us to be a bit more focused in terms of trying to better address our giving around social equity with the hope that we can play a small role in ensuring that every kid around Twins Territory has access to the same opportunities.”

The Twins’ nonprofit partners are as follows: ACES (Athletes Committed to Educating Students), Achieve Minneapolis, BestPrep, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities, Channel One Regional Food Bank, Every Meal, Generation Next, Genesys Works, Hunger Solutions Minnesota, Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest, MIGIZI, Neighborhood House, Northside Achievement Zone, Partnership for a ConnectedMN, Pillsbury United Communities, Playworks Minnesota, Project for Pride in Living, Project Success, Reading Partners Twin Cities, Roots for the Home Team, TeamSmile, Urban League Twin Cities, Urban Ventures, YouthLink, Youthprise and YWCA Minneapolis.

A Dual Role

State Parks as Playgrounds and Important Research Laboratories



Itasca State Park

By Deborah Locke, Information Officer, Department of Natural Resources

Most people arrive at a state park and see ways to recreate, like skiing or bird watching. A scientist arrives at a state park and sees a living laboratory, rich with potential. Each year as many as 100 research projects are approved by staff with Minnesota state parks and trails, in addition to the basic university courses offered at park field stations like the Itasca Biological Station and Laboratories at Itasca State Park.

This blend of a pristine environment with research opportunities instructs the next generation of researchers in field biology. Starting in 1909, thousands of students have attended field biology classes at the University of Minnesota's Itasca Biological Station. The Itasca Station may be the oldest continuously operating field station in the U.S., according to Dr. Jonathan Schilling, Director of the Itasca Biological Station.

work, like the mating capacity of birds, how fish find refuge in areas of a lake and how lakes are disrupted by agricultural runoff," he said. The 50-square mile park setting contains three ecosystems, coniferous forest, eastern deciduous forest and tall grass prairie, and offers an ideal environment for study.

"I like to say that at Itasca, you can see all three biomes in a day and be home in time for dinner," Schilling said. (A biome is a major ecological community type, such as a tropical rain forest, grassland, or desert.) Biological station students have the luxury of seeing their professors doing hands-on fieldwork, followed by a casual meal together in the cafeteria. That is where modeling behavior begins, he said, when student-teacher connections evolve outside the classroom walls. The passion to learn is contagious in this picture-perfect environment.

Research is conducted in other state parks, as well. So far in 2020, 84 research permits have been approved. Permission to do field work research is usually granted, said Cindy Lueth, a parks and trails resource specialist. Research findings are shared with DNR park staff, and that increases the park division's database and informs staff about research management at a particular site. For example, you may be an undergraduate student at Moorhead who is fascinated by tree rings or climate change or a certain fish or bird. "The parks become a classroom," Lueth said.

Researchers observe, report their findings, and that increases the park division's database and informs staff on resource management. Students count salamanders or measure alkaline levels in weeds, acting like extra sets of eyes to the park staff, noting changes that might require a new conservation approach by park staff.

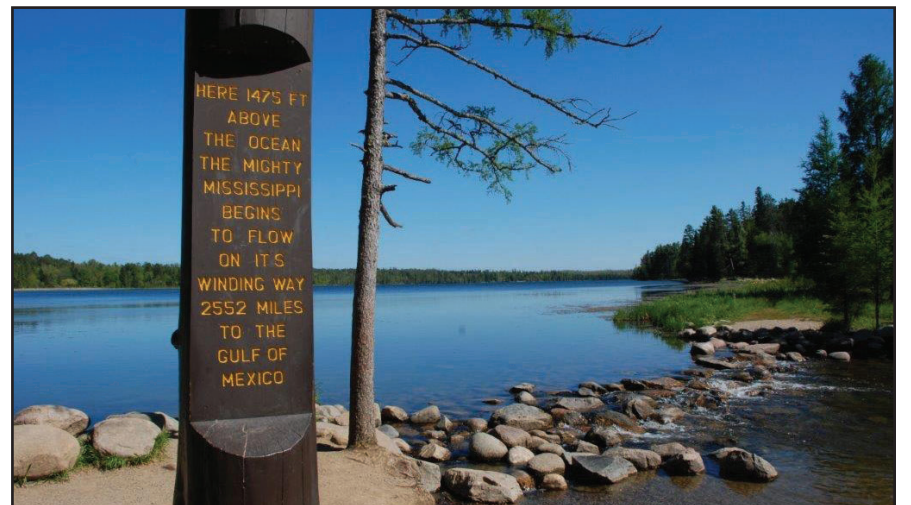
Meanwhile, the parks offer amenities like toilets and trails not found in most forests, prairies or wetlands. Those amenities make research easier, and researchers are expected to adhere to park rules similar to other park visitors. The park's role as park takes precedent over research: no sign of research should ever be evident to members of the public who visit a park. That means nothing may be left behind, no equipment or markers.

"We want visitors to experience the pristine nature of the site, and if they're instead following lines of ribbons through the woods, that's not an image we want them to remember," Lueth said. "Visitors want to see trees and flowers, not ribbons flapping in the wind."

Lueth grew up with a keen interest in the outdoors, and studied biology as an older returning college student. One of her professors spoke about his childhood years spent outside where he raced around, completely at ease. The plants and animals felt like friends, he said. Later as an adult doing research, outdoor work felt like a chance to meet up with those old friends, the animals and plants of childhood.

"That story resonates with me," Lueth said. "I'm so lucky to work in an outdoor setting. State parks pay me to do what I would do anyway."

She added that nature inspires curiosity, appreciation, wonder and awe, whether you're deep in a state forest or at St. Paul's Como Park. If you're a high school senior, a two year college will offer an introduction to biology class that could be your first step toward understanding, preserving and protecting one of Minnesota's most precious assets: its remarkable outdoors.



NEWS AND PROFILES CONNECTING THE LATINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

January 2021 Issue 400

Latino
American
Today

www.latinoamericantoday.com

HAPPY
New Year!

2021

¡PRÓSPERO AÑO NUEVO!