



**Marshall MN  
Community Visit Report  
September 20, 2011**

On Tuesday September 20, 2011, CLAC held a community forum at the Western Community Action. The purpose was to capture the voice of the Latino community on education and economic development. We were honored by the participation of representatives of the city, community college, universities, nonprofit organizations, community members and others. We had great support from local leaders, good promotion of the event and a productive and engaging session.

**Meeting Agenda:**

- I. Introductions and Networking
- II. Review of CLAC's mission and goals
- III. Forum objectives
- IV. Education : Achievement Gap
- V. Economic Development
- VI. General discussion
- VII. Video – Latino Artists: A Community Vision
- VIII. Civic Engagement
- IX. Adjournment

**Presenters:**

Hector Garcia, *Executive Director, CLAC*  
Astrid Ollerenshaw, *Community Relations Manager, CLAC*

**Host:**

Angela M. Larson, Community and Family Support Director, Western Community Action  
Gustavo Estrada, Minority Advocate, Marshall Middle School  
Tobias "Toby" Spanier, Educator, Leadership & Civic Engagement, University of Minnesota Extension

**Participants:**

1. Al Kruse, Marshall-Lyon County Library Foundation
2. Amanda Grinager, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Marshall Public Schools
3. Angela Larson, Director Family Services, WCA
4. Ben Martig, City Administrator, City of Marshall

5. Cameron Hauge, Personal Banker
6. Christy Lundberg, Assurance 16 Advocate, WCA
7. Claudia Gonzalez, Teacher
8. Ellayne Conyers, Board Member, MCS Advisory Board
9. Gustavo Estrada, Minority Advocate, Marshall Public Schools
10. Harry Weilage, Marshall County Service
11. Holly Martin Huffma, Director, Marshall-Lyon County Library Foundation
12. Jeff Kolnik, SMSU
13. John Fitzgerald, Executive Director, Western Community Action
14. Josi Lamas, CPA, UMN
15. Judith Conway, U of M Extension, Center for Youth Development
16. Kathleen Klos, Staff Attorney, Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
17. Klint Willert, Superintendent, Marshall Public Schools
18. Lacey Louwagie, Teen Services Librarian, Marshall Lyon County Library
19. Laura Mahlum, Community Health Worker, Countryside Public Health
20. Mandy Mattke, Southwest/West Central Service Co-op, Montevideo Schools
21. Marcia Padilla, WCA/Head Start
22. Marta Faulkner, Translator ,Western Community Action
23. Melissa Fransen, Eap Certifier, Western Community Action
24. Rachel Bagley, Energy Programs Manager, Western Community Action
25. Shirley Anderson-Porisch, Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension
26. Susan Marcinkowski, Montevideo School Social Worke, Montevideo School District
27. Tim Olson, CEO, Marshall Area YMCA
28. Tobias Spanier, U of M Extension

### **Minutes:**

The meeting took place at the meeting room of the Western Community Action.

Astrid presented meeting agenda, introduced and thanks hosts, and Executive Director of Western Community Action. Astrid also introduced CLAC's executive director, Hector Garcia, who in turn presented an overview of CLAC's mission and goals.

Astrid made a presentation of statistics on the Latino education achievement gap. She pointed out that Minnesota's high-school graduation disparity between Latino and European American students is one of the worst in the U.S. but the MN Latino graduation rate is near the national Latino median rate. The situation in Marshall and surrounding area is similar as in the rest of the state, although the state does not document Latino high school graduation rates in Lyon County for lack of a measurable population.

Hector presented data and comments on economic development in Minnesota and the need for an educated workforce in the state. He referred to a published study from Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018." This study indicates that Minnesota will be the second state in terms of the need for a well-educated workforce, meaning that some higher education will be required by 70% of the jobs.

## **Community Participation:**

- What would happen if we allowed the Latino culture to come out? What if we placed Latino images in the schools that the young Latino can connect with school and education? Look for images that are culture calling for others cultures.
- The idea of new fusion for cuisine food from a mix of understanding could help.
- In other places, you can see how there is a lot more openness to other cultures. In a place where about 10% of people have passports or have visited other places, it is not hard to see how that dominant ethnic group is.
- Our system is not working now, we are not getting the results we want, it is not sustainable and we need to approach these issues.
- One of the things that we have seen is the economic situation, unemployment rate is low and that is why the community is not so mobile. The challenges for students that are moving and becoming new citizens, they become very American and maybe moving away from their culture of origin. We had young families and students that had some mentors that came from Mexico.
- Some legislators may have thoughts of making English the mandatory language.
- Go to the families, visit, and getting them to participate as a slow process, which invites them to be part of the community down the road.
- What is CLAC doing with the voter identification and the integration systems? Give testimony and work with community.
- Pilot program at Worthington, St. James, and Madelia and in other places that are promoting the higher education with parents and youth are good examples.
- Lived here for 26 years and graduated from here. Schools have done a lot, but we need to work more with the families and let them know that there are resources available and the way the system works is important. Nobody explains what the steps are to get into higher education and it works against the student and the family. What options they have and opportunities.
- Kids speak English, not parents. Get translators for parents. Invite the parents and tell them about the school.
- We should use the term “culture group” more than minority.
- The importance of community life and adaptation to take the best of each culture. Our leaders need to learn more about culture and become competent cultural leaders.
- Prepare students to be confident in the new world and globalization. We have worked on that for the last 15 years, it is important for agriculture and food making and economic development. We are ready now more than in the last 30 years. Infuse this into the young people.
- I have been working with families. How can we bring them in to schools? It is very difficult for the parents to come to school. Our system is different here.
- We cannot lose the money.

**Next Action Steps:**

- Plan a follow up meeting with more community leaders
- Define a strategy to integrate and better help immigrant communities
- Define a strategy to promote Latinos and Latino culture in Marshall and present these videos
- Participants would like to help determine and analyze how to reduce the education achievement gap. When a strategy is developed to reduce education achievement gap, they would like us to include this area and city and help them with their issues in education.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm