



# CITY OF WILLMAR 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



City Attorney  
City Clerk-Treasurer  
Community Ed & Recreation  
**Cultural Liaison**  
Finance  
Fire  
Planning & Development Services  
Police  
Public Works

Mayor Heitke and the Willmar City Council,

As one of our key partners and supporters it is my pleasure to provide you with the Cultural Liaison annual report.

The annual report focuses on our key initiatives, newsworthy achievements, and provides an overall look into WCIC's current financial condition. In addition, the report looks forward as it highlights our mission and our strategic direction as we move into the future.

**WCIC's MISSION: To enhance the quality of life for all community residents by developing multicultural and culturally competent school and community projects that promote inclusiveness, healthy youth development, and economic growth.**

**CORE FUNCTIONS:**

1. To promote culturally integrated learning opportunities for our eight member districts as follows: ACGC (Atwater, Cosmos, Grove City); BOLD (Bird Island, Olivia, Lake Lillian); KMS (Kerkhoven, Murdock, Sunburg); MACCRAY (Maynard, Clara City, Raymond); MONTEVIDEO, NL-S (New London-Spicer); RCW (Renville County West); and WILLMAR.
2. To promote cultural integration in the education, governmental units, health, and business systems for the betterment of the community.
3. To recognize and bring to the attention of appropriate authorities the unmet needs of the community and participate in planning to meet these needs.
4. To partner with the City of Willmar, Kandiyohi County, and other entities in promoting economic growth.

**WCIC ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

Roger Rueckert, ACGC Superintendent  
Mike Funk, BOLD Superintendent  
Martin Heidelberger, KMS Superintendent  
Greg Schmidt, MACCRAY Superintendent  
Dave Baukol, MONTEVIDEO Superintendent  
Paul Carlson, NEW-LONDON, SPICER Superintendent  
Lance Bagstad, RENVILLE COUNTY WEST  
Dr. Jerry Kjergaard, WILLMAR Superintendent  
Audrey Peterson, City of Willmar Representative  
Ann Stehn, Kandiyohi County Public Health Representative  
Antonio Tejada, Attorney at Law and Latino Representative  
Kate Selseth, Area Agency on Agency Representative  
Ifrah Bedel, East African Representative  
Michael Olson, Native American Representative  
Juana Salazar, Youth Representative

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Mayor Heitke and the Willmar City Council,

The West Central Integration Collaborative was born in good times and even then some people even suggested that it would be a difficult road ahead because of future education funding cuts and the loss of students in rural school districts. Being the optimist that I am, I knew that this community would come together to do whatever was needed to make sure our community members had the resources they need to help them succeed. And, this year, we are celebrating our Sixth Year Anniversary.

In the summer of 2001-02, a group of school superintendents and community members met to discuss what the plans would be for the West Central Integration Collaborative and how those plans would impact the community. They wanted opportunities for all students to graduate and pursue higher education, access to culturally competent programs, such as enhancing and growing the Soccer program, promote cultural understanding through a big community celebration (Celebration of Cultures), and partnering with existing agencies to develop economic opportunities such as business development for the betterment of the community.

**Many good things have happen since our inception as we have experience tremendous growth in the number of school districts that have join WCIC. We went from three school districts and six communities to eight school districts and 17 communities. In the beginning, we started with only the Director and a few school staff, now we have 16 full-time and 15 part-time employees serving the 17 communities. We have been part of two major development projects, the Willmar Multicultural Market and RAICES – and, as the overseer of these innovative endeavors, I believe we need to celebrate their accomplishments.**

In 2008, WCIC reviewed the past and we looked into the future as part of our new strategies for 2009, as we work to determine what direction the agency should take in the years to come. Where should our focus be? Should we focus on narrowing the achievement gap for students of color and implement additional professional development for school staff; narrow the health disparities that exist among minority youth; increase economic opportunities for those that are at a disadvantage? As the person in charge with the growth and development of this organization, I want to remind all of us, that we are the ones who hold the answers in making sure this organization has the resources to continue its work in our community.

Again, I thank you for your support, guidance, and hard work on behalf of WCIC. Look for a bigger and better Celebration of Cultures in 2010!

Idalia “Charly” Leuze, Director  
West Central Integration Collaborative

## **West Central Integration Collaborative Report 2008**

In 2008, WCIC was part of successful events and key initiatives, and here is a snapshot of those events:

Willmar Area Multicultural Market becomes a Non-Profit.

WAMM receives \$50K grant through the Northwest Area Foundation to further develop the Latino Service Providers Network and the Community Kitchen concept.

“Cinco de Mayo” Festival grew by 50%. (2008)

\*Start up of Cinco de Mayo Scholarship Fund

RAICES (Grant from the Northwest Area Foundation) to reduce poverty among the Latino population in Willmar.

Expanded the Latino Service Providers Network

Assisted El Colectivo to become more active in the community (a group of minority women applied for a small grant through the NWAFF to purchase catering supplies so that they can provide catering services to community members.

WAMM Coordinator assists the women with gathering the food permits, and legalities of serving food to the public, etc.)

Coalition of African Community Services Coalition: Continues meeting monthly and has an Elders and Women’s group that meets to empower themselves on community issues and develop strategies that will assist the Somali community move forward.

Martin Luther King Event (over 150 persons attended).

RAICES leadership training for Latino community members (20)

RAICES applied and received an \$85K grant through the Northwest Area Foundation to start the Latino Service Center and the Community Kitchen.

### **RAICES PROJECTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

**EL COLECTIVO** members will use the approved kitchen for their catering services therefore, benefiting themselves by staying busy through this form of employment, earning some money, and at the same time acquiring business skills. They will also gain understanding in how the health inspections system works, ordering large amount of supplies, and acquiring leadership skills as they train other groups on how to use the community kitchen. They will also work towards growing the catering options in the community and recruit groups to cook different Latino cuisine such as Guatemalan and Honduran. The group will also learn basic business skills such as how to use banking services that will help them keep track of their financials. El Colectivo members are also partnering with the Local Foods Committee to use fresh grown local foods in their cooking.



**LATINO SERVICE PROVIDERS NETWORK** members will use the community kitchen building to continue informational monthly meetings and conduct workshops that will benefit the well-being of all Latinos in the Willmar area. LSPN is interested in furthering the work and possibly developing a Latino Service Center that will work towards the advancement of Latinos in Willmar, Minnesota. LSPN wants to have a voice in the areas of education, health, and the business sector. LSPN is also partnering with the Cinco de Mayo Festival Committee to offer volunteer services as well as serving as ambassadors and reaching the larger Latino community. LSPN will also feature the work of emerging young Latino leaders in our local newspaper of La Grant America to promote the assets of our Latino youth.

**AVANZANDO YOUTH** will also use the community kitchen building for their regular meetings and working on further developing their leadership skills. They will attend various workshops such as what does it take to open your own business and providing volunteering services by helping out in the kitchen or during meetings allowing them to acquire new skills that they can use in their daily lives. Youth will also be involved in exploring college opportunities through the Minnesota College Access Network. Youth will also be involved in receiving health prevention services by the Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative through the West Central Integration Collaborative where they learn about health issues affecting Latino youth; what services or resources exist in the Willmar community to help them stay healthy.

#### **Projects that Benefit the Community:**

- Partnered with the Housing Redevelopment Authority for submission of grant that would refurbish existing properties in the City of Willmar.
- Assisted the United Way of Kandiyohi County with Needs Assessment and language translations.
- Partnered with PACT 4 to recruit bilingual staff and share cultural staff for GUIA Program.
- Assisted with the implementation of La Gran America Bilingual Newspaper.
- MONTEVIDEO joins WCIC.

#### **Cultural Liaison Recognized:**

- BPW (Business and Professional Women) names Charly Leuze as the 2008 WOMAN OF the YEAR.
- Received 2008 Human Rights Award from Coalition of African Community Services in promoting youth leadership.

### **2008 Cultural Liaison Activities:**

Participated in the initiative of creating a statewide website that focuses on promoting diversity by helping refugees and immigrants succeed:

[www.onevoiceminnesota.webs.com](http://www.onevoiceminnesota.webs.com)

Diversity Training for Bremer Bank Staff (60 trained).

Held High School Graduation Event for minority students (50 attended)

Held Community Forum at the request of MN Department of Human Rights, "The Right Focus on...The Minnesota Human Rights Act and Building Inclusive Communities. (20 persons).

Recruited participants for the Latino Child Care Conference (Held in Spanish) (50 participants)

Assisted and attended the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, Ridgewater College and Southwest Initiative Foundation Forum on: "Immigration and the Economy" with John Keller, Director of Immigrant Law Center and Bill Blazar, Senior Vice President of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. (50 persons).

Presented to Kiwanis Club regarding WCIC (25 persons)

Partner with the Willmar Design Center on items of shared interest, (Holidaze Parade, and Becker Market, and provide language translation).

Partner with Ridgewater College to implement Multicultural Week.

Minnesota Minority Education Partnership presented data on Students of Color.

## **West Central Integration Collaborative**

### **Report 2008**

#### **EDUCATION TRACK- 2008 Special Events**

The West Central Integration Collaborative's programs and activities evolve to meet the needs and promote culturally integrated learning opportunities for the community of ACGC (Atwater, Cosmos, and Grove City); BOLD (Bird Island, Olivia, and Lake Lillian); KMS (Kerkhoven, Murdock, and Sunburg); MACCRAY (Maynard, Clara City, and Raymond); NL-S (New London-Spicer); RCW (Renville County West); and Willmar

Data is described in next two pages:



**WCIC HEALTH TRACK:** The focus is healthy youth development by helping Latino and East African youth develop long term healthy lifestyle choices. Our main focus is exposing youth to health services in the community; and provide “For the Health of It” Summer Camp to minority youth in Willmar.

**2008 Activities Report**

For the Health of It Summer Camp Youth Program Attendance: 45  
School Year Round Health Program Attendance: 360  
Received \$150K funding from Minnesota Department of Health for Eliminating Health Disparities among minority youth in Kandiyohi County.  
Assisted MDE in Latino Health Committee – St. Paul, MN  
St. Cloud Nursing Students conducting project with WCIC High School Youth.

**WCIC Worked closely with:**

United Way Community Needs Survey (provided translation services).  
Ridgewater Summer Camp (WCIC provided volunteers).  
Minnesota Department of Health (Office of Minority and Multicultural Health)  
Kandiyohi County Food Policy Council  
Heartland Community Action Agency/Community Ed. Poverty Conference  
STEPS Community Consortia (WCIC staff)  
PACT 4 – partnered to apply for Chemical Health Grant to help Latino youth with chemical dependency issues.  
CHAS Teen Pregnancy Coalition in Kandiyohi County



## CULTURAL LIAISON

The City of Willmar Cultural Liaison department provides access to city services to those who speak limited English. The Cultural Liaison Department has Spanish, Somali, Chinese, and Norwegian language interpreters who are available to assist city staff and the public.

Cultural Liaison Department through the West Central Integration Collaborative  
611 5<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Willmar, MN 56201  
320-231-8546

Spanish:                    Laura - 320-894-7808  
                                  Jill - 320-905-4467  
                                  Charly 320-894-1604  
                                  Roberto – 320-905-3966

Somali:                    Mohamud - 612-598-3617  
                                  Bashar - 320-212-1774

Chinese:                    Todd - 320-235-9736

Hours:                     8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



### **Free language services in Spanish, Somali, and Chinese include:**

- In-person or telephone interpretation in a city office or in the field (e.g., an inspections visit)
- A primary point of contact for City of Willmar services for Spanish, Somali, and Chinese speaking residents
- Follow-up with city customers as needed (e.g. to schedule an appointment with Spanish, Somali, and Chinese speaking residents)
- Outreach and education related to city services (e.g. provide translation services at community events, city cable, speaking to community groups, etc.)
- Work on cultural issues that benefit the City of Willmar
- Willmar Area Multicultural Market – assist ethnic businesses with ordinance enforcement.

**In addition, Cultural Liaisons can provide departments with the following services for all immigrant and refugee groups free of charge:**

- Phone-based or in person interpretation and written translation for nearly all languages through external vendors
- Lists of media contacts for local ethnic newspapers, radio stations, television, etc.
- Information about contracted interpretation and translation services
- Statistics and research on immigrant and refugee groups in Willmar
- Assistance with making city services more accessible to non-English speakers

### **Multicultural Resources**

- WCIC – Professional Development resources, books, library resources.
- WAMM provides business start up services for ethnic entrepreneurs.
- Adult Basic Education/English Language Learning
- City of Willmar Community Education

### **Goals for 2009:**

1. **WCIC will continue to serve as the Human Rights Commission on behalf of the City of Willmar.**
2. **Increase our interpreting services to the Willmar Police Department.**
3. **Assist the City of Willmar with Regency East/West issues.**
4. **Recruit minority representatives to serve on boards, commissions, etc.**
5. **Increase economic opportunities through the Community Kitchen and assist minority businesses.**
6. **Assist with the Community Resource Fair in August 2009.**
7. **Celebration of Cultures 2010 (February).**

# West Central Integration Collaborative 2008-2009

- Fiscal Management (NWAf and GUIA grant)
- Kandiyohi County
- LEDC Staff Salaries (WAMM Salaries)
- FLAP Grant (Chinese Foreign Language program)
- NWAf Staff WAMM Salaries
- PACT 4 (GUIA Staff Salaries)
- RAICES/ACCION
- City of Willmar (2 part time Cultural Liaisons and Clerical)
- NWAf Community Kitchen (WAMM Project)
- MN Dept of Health (EHDI)
- MDE Integration Revenue

