

Vision/Visión

We envision a culture of inclusion where all individuals feel respected and valued, are treated fairly, and have equal opportunity and responsibility to excel in community and life.

Concebimos una cultura de inclusión en donde todas las personas se sientan respetadas y valoradas, sean tratadas justamente, y tengan las mismas oportunidades y responsabilidades de éxito en la comunidad y en la vida.



Mission/Mission

Creamos espacios para crecer como individuos y comunidad al compartir, aprender, colaborar y actuar uniendo a la gente y eliminando las barreras que nos impiden tener las mismas oportunidades y responsabilidades en la comunidad y en la vida.

We create spaces to grow as individuals and community through sharing, learning, collaboration and action to unite people and to remove barriers to equal opportunity and responsibility in community and life.

Contact Information

Uniting Cultures/Uniendo Culturas

Website: [facebook.com/Saintjamesunited/](https://www.facebook.com/Saintjamesunited/)

Email:

Fiscal Host: St. James Community Education

P.O. Box 509, St. James, MN 56081

507-875-4517

"It's not going to be the answer for everything, but with it has come an intentional space for people to work together, and work on themselves, for a better community." – Julio Zelaya

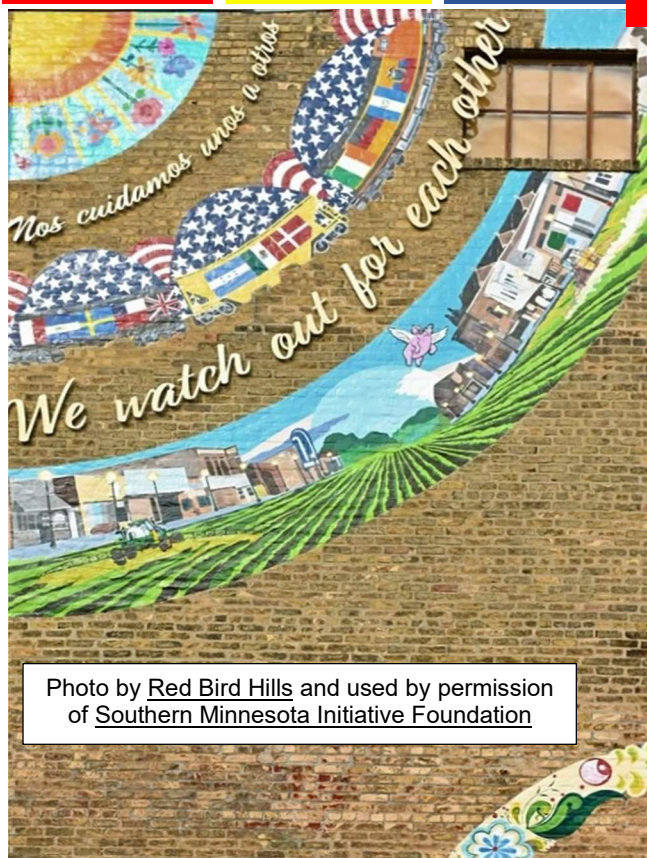


Photo by [Red Bird Hills](#) and used by permission of [Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation](#)



Uniting Cultures Uniendo Culturas

St. James, Minnesota



Photo: Red Bird Hills / Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

A Brief History

St. James is a small rural community with more than 6,000 residents in its school district. Over the past twenty-five years a major shift in demographics has occurred due to the prevalence of food processing and packaging as the major industry.

Labor shortages in the food industry have attracted immigrant populations to the area, thereby changing the community from one of predominantly northern European ancestry to a diverse community with 38% of the residents and more than 51% of school students of primarily Latinx heritage.

This change in demographics has presented the community with new challenges while also bringing unexpected gifts.

Getting Started

The Region 9 Development Commission, along with other regional partners, facilitated “*It’s Time to Talk: Forums on Race*” in St. James in May 2017. An outcome of that community meeting, attended by more than 80 people, was a decision to continue discussion and work towards cultural unity within the St. James community. In the summer of 2017, several residents in the community, including some members of the local Latinx community service group, **Convivencia Hispana - Watonwan**, organized more formally as **Uniting Cultures / Uniendo Culturas** and developed its first mission statement.



Work in the Community

Projects initiated by **Uniting Cultures / Uniendo Culturas** include the annual Multicultural Fiesta, public forums highlighting immigration and DACA stories, Culture through Cuisine events sharing food and learning about one another’s culture, and the book *Your Story, My Story, Our Story* – a compilation of immigration stories of local residents. In addition, the group supports **Convivencia Hispana’s** cultural activities and service projects, as well as the equity and inclusion initiatives of the City of St. James and the St. James Public Schools.

Project support from Region 9 Development Commission, U of M Extension, Southern MN Initiative Foundation, Greater Mankato Area Diversity Council, MN Humanities Center, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, as well as local businesses, institutions, community service organizations and individuals.