

Faribault Alliance for Inclusion, Resourcefulness, and Equity

FAIRE

conference

briefing 2013

● St. Cloud

● Willmar



● Faribault

● Owatonna

● Rochester

FAIRE CONFERENCE



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Welcome!

The Faribault Alliance for Inclusion, Resourcefulness and Equity (FAIRE) and students from St. Olaf College’s Political Science Department would like to extend a warm welcome to the 2013 Multicultural Community Fall Mini-Conference, Thursday, October 24 from 9:00 am to Noon. We aim to bring together a diverse array of Faribault residents to talk about local community relations. FAIRE is considering the possibility of opening a multicultural community center. We gather to consider how to best move forward towards a Faribault that welcomes and respects all residents.

St. Olaf students researched other similar communities and compiled a guide for potential plans to implement in Faribault. These included the cities of Owatonna, Rochester, St. Cloud, and Willmar. We came up with the following key action points:

Bridging the gaps

It is important to bridge gaps in community involvement between local ethnic groups. Members of organizations that encourage building relationships within and between ethnic communities should take leadership initiative. Discussions today should identify what organizations best fit this description.

Public education

School districts are important players for youth and education. Successful local organizations connect with schools, especially teachers and administrators, to gauge needs for education and allocate resources accordingly.

Information gathering

Setting up a resource, such as a website or public directory, points people to available services and provides guidance for accessing them.

Self-promotion

Organizations should engage in positive self-advocacy; spreading a positive self-image leads to financial, moral, and public support. This can be achieved through organizations working with publications such as local newspapers and actively promoting their causes.

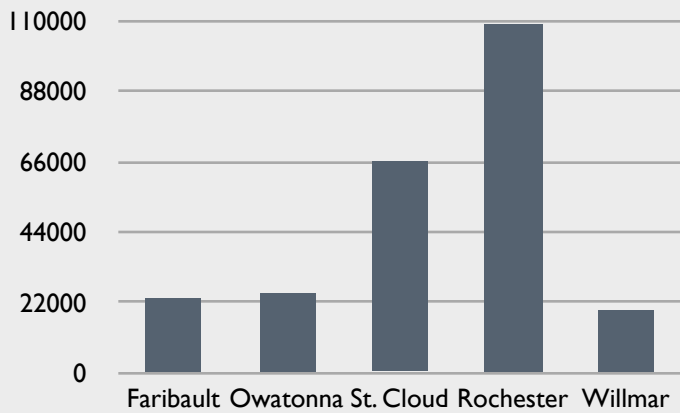
The aim of this conference is to leave attendees thinking about Faribault’s next steps of action. We hope examining other communities will inspire Faribault residents in forming sustainable, unified goals for the future well-being of their city.

Regards,
Kate Fridley, Lauren Hagen, Ian Hamilton, Grace Kane, Hugh Kenety, Will Lutterman, Esme Marie, Kyle Obermann, Rachel Palermo, Norma Romero-Rodriguez, Olivia Slack, Rachael Stets, and Katherine Tegtmeier Pak.

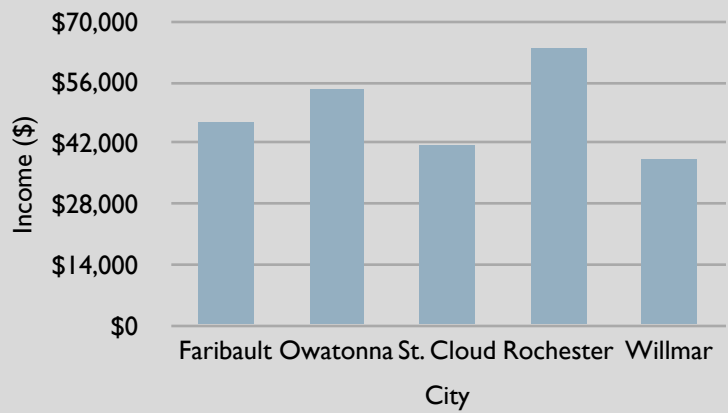


CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

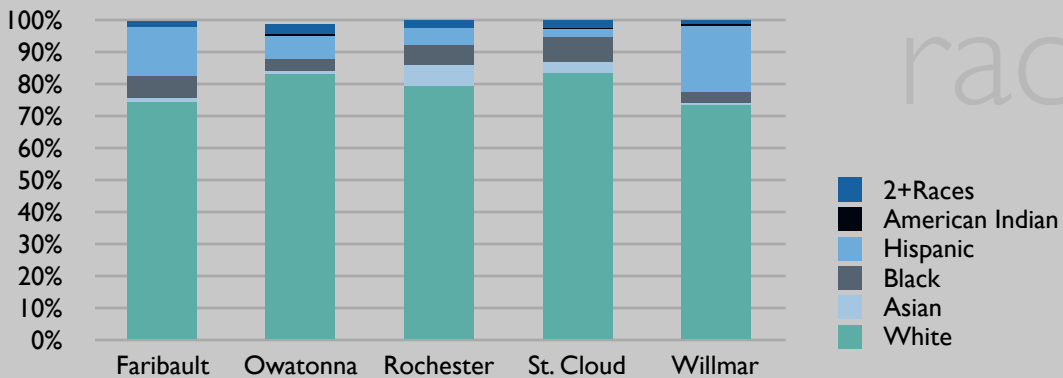
Population

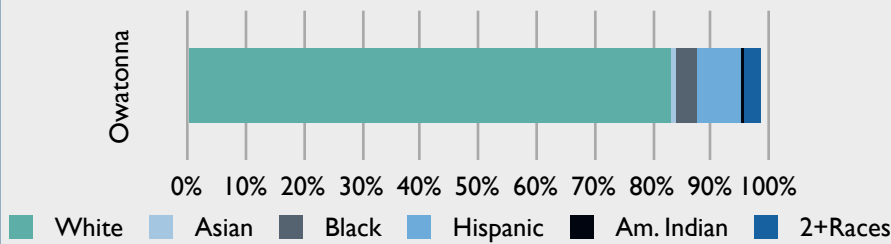


Median Household Income



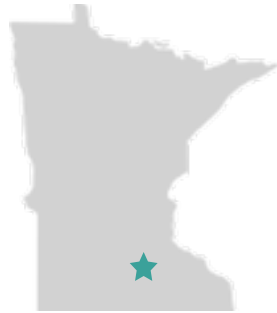
Racial Breakdown (%)



Racial Breakdown

OWATONNA EDUCATIONAL BRIDGES PROVIDE WELCOME CENTER ALTERNATIVE

Owatonna's multicultural community recognizes the need for school district connected educational services, which provides for the entire community, including immigrant needs.



statistics

population **24,958**

median household income **\$54,313**

unemployment **5.9%**

A Model for Cross Cultural Education

SASCO

At a Glance

The Somali American Cultural Society of Owatonna partners with the Owatonna School District and effectively provides youth educational services.

SACSO's director, Ibrahim Hussein, provides strong leadership and organizes youth education. Ibrahim's role as an official school district community liaison connects SACSO to teachers who facilitate student access to classwork and language assistance.

Mission & Services

- SACSO's mission is to give Somali Americans an active role in the Owatonna community and creates successful, participatory citizenship through:
 - Language support
 - Driver's education
 - Citizen education
 - Adult and youth recreation
 - K-12 homework help and tutoring

Effective Structure

SACSO began five years ago with a 5000 dollar grant. They are located in a centralized Owatonna office containing classrooms and workspace. The organization creates meaningful change through its dedicated volunteer-run structure and strong leadership. A small grant funds rent and computer equipment, with no real large outside funding.

Demonstrating Civic Involvement

Central Campesino

At a Glance

Centro Campesino rose out of the growing need for Latino workforce support and education. Its director, Ernesto Vélez, coordinates with political leaders and service providers to advocate for Latino-specific needs, including immigrants and undocumented



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workers. Centro Campesino achieves success through a strong member base and high workshop participation.

Mission & Services

Centro Campesino aims to improve the lives of Latinos and Latino immigrants regardless of documentation status through community organization, advocacy, and educational activities, including:

- Education workshops on social issues such as labor laws, health care, immigration reform, and higher education access.
- English language support
- Computer classes
- Attorney consultation
- Social service referrals
- Health information sessions

Effective Structure

A well-established organization in Owatonna, Centro Campesino has been working with the Latino population for over ten years. Employees implement a variety of communication methods (phone, email, word of mouth, etc.) to contact members about workshops and events. Ernesto, the executive director, coordinates with volunteers and members to provide services.

Essential Assets

The Department of Health and Human Services and private foundations primarily fund Centro Campesino. They apply for many grants every year and the administration distributes funding across their broad service endeavors.

Redefining community

Grandparents for Education

At a Glance

Grandparents for Education increases student achievement through an effective volunteer network specifically targeting student educational needs. Decreased student success within Owatonna spurred the creation of Grandparents for Education, and it has received awards for its ability to bridge different populations and expand Owatonna educational services.

Mission & Services

Grandparents for Education provides educational services to all Owatonna students in order to achieve high educational achievement. Their activities include:

- Tutors at local high schools
- Provides ELL support
- Coordinates a peer-tutor program
- Provides reading assistance at SACSO
- Hosts multicultural dialogue panels

Effective Structure

Officially recognized in 2009, Grandparents for Education recently established roots in Owatonna. Their volunteers worked closely with the Owatonna School District prior to obtaining nonprofit status, but have since expanded. Ron and Sondra VonArb coordinate volunteers who reach out to the school district and SACSO without a centralized office. The organization does not work solely with immigrants, but the demand for English language services and tutoring has made this their primary endeavor.

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Essential Assets

Volunteers coordinate efforts through Grandparents for Education, but private grants and donations provide partial funding. These donations contribute to their members' and students' ability to attend educational workshops around Minnesota.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Background

[Previous Somali org](#)

[Centro Campesino Grant](#)

[Grandparents for Education](#)

Contact Info

[SASCO](#)

[Centro Campesino](#)

[Grandparents for Education](#)

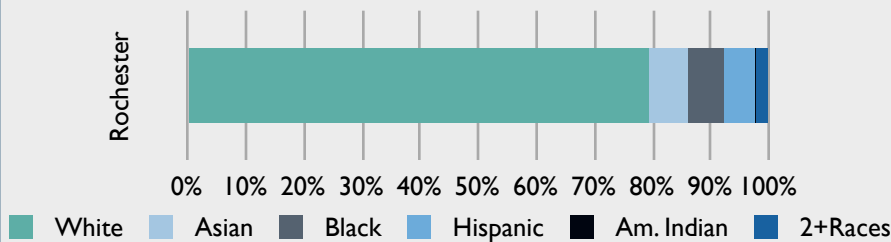
[Steele County United Way](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Ibrahim Hussein, Ernesto Vélez, Sondra VonArb, and their respective organizations for the valuable information they provided.

PREPARED BY:

Lauren Hagen, Will Lutterman, and Kate Fridley

Racial Breakdown**statistics**population **108,992**median household income **\$63,713**unemployment **4.3%****ROCHESTER:
THE POWER OF
COMMUNITY
ORGANIZING**

Rochester exemplifies the power of central organizing in creating effective strategies to best fulfill the needs of the community.

Identify the needs of a community**The RISE project****At a Glance**

The Rochester in Support of Everyone (RISE) community-based research project was organized with the help of the University of Minnesota and the Diversity Council in 2000. Members of seven different ethnic groups were invited to participate in a focus group centered around questions regarding their experience living in Rochester. The focus group led to the findings outlined in the RISE report.

A Need for Change

RISE was designed to increase the Rochester communities' understanding of immigrant and minority groups living in Rochester. The change in demographics led to a demand for a new understanding of the Rochester community. Through a program at the University of Minnesota, the Diversity Council received funding to create the RISE project with the help of three U of M graduate students.

Effective Structure

Participants were asked several questions that gave a better understanding about their experience in Rochester, which ranged from topics such as:

1. First impressions of Rochester
2. Obtaining information upon arrival
3. Home culture and traditions
4. Biggest challenges faced in Rochester
5. Areas for improvement

Seven areas of community focus were created that included suggestions on improving the community. The area with the most suggestions was education. RISE advised that the community work to build relationships between the schools and the parents and to help strengthen the family structure.

Essential Assets

- The Diversity Council, U of M students and funds
- Stipends for 77 focus group participants
- Support and cooperation of the entire Rochester community



rochester

Change perceptions

Spark! programs

At a Glance

The Spark! curriculum was designed by the school system of Rochester, MN to focus on “increasing knowledge, building empathy and self esteem, and developing critical thinking skills for K-12 students.” The program uses a racially diverse group of trained facilitators from the community to teach a designed curriculum to the students once a year towards completing Spark!’s goals.

A Need for Change

The Spark! workshops were created in 1989 by school leadership in response to rising levels of conflict between racial groups in public schools. With the input of community focus groups, outside funding from sources such as IBM, and a contracted specialist to carry out research and write curriculum, Spark! has become a program garnering national media attention.

Effective Structure

Facilitators:

- Community members trained for 30 hours. Facilitator training is offered twice each summer.

K-Middle School:

- 40-60 minute lesson plans taught by facilitators in pairs of two.

High School:

- Customizable series of workshops for student and school needs to focus on 5 key areas: race, gender & sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, and religion.

Evaluation:

- Yearly evaluation of teachers’ and facilitators’ assessment of program’s success in meeting goals.
- Assessment addresses the efficacy of the Spark! program in enhancing knowledge, changing attitudes, increasing positive and empathic interactions between students, and long term impact.
- Select group of students also tested each year for retention.

Essential Assets

- Funding to purchase curriculum
- Spark! workshop materials and tech (e.g., DVDs, books)
- Personnel:
 - Diversity Council staff and board
 - Facilitators
 - District and school leaders
 - Classroom teachers

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RISE project

[RISE report](#)

[Diversity Council-RISE](#)

Spark! program

[Program Overview](#)

[Facilitator Requirements](#)

[Outline of Spark](#)

[Curriculum](#)

[Further Diversity](#)

[Curriculum Examples](#)

[Purchasing Spark](#)

Contact Information:

[Diversity Council-](#)

[Community Contacts](#)

[Diversity Council-Board](#)

[Staff](#)

[Intercultural Mutual](#)

[Assistance Association](#)

[\(IMAA\)](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

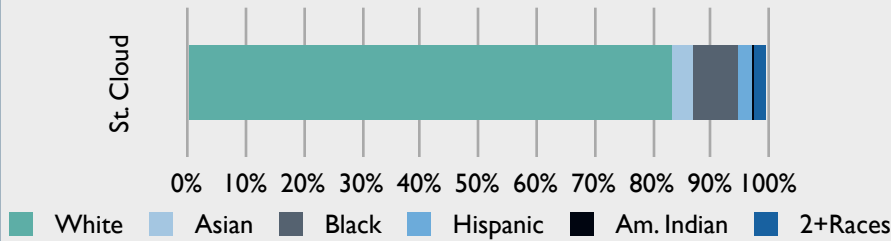
We would like to thank Kami Jordan, George Thompson, and the Diversity Council for providing resources for our research regarding these Rochester programs.

PREPARED BY:

Rachael Stets, Kyle

Obermann, and Norma

Romero

Racial Breakdown**statistics**population **65,986**median household income **\$41,497**unemployment **5.6%****ST. CLOUD
THE POWER OF
COMMUNITY
BUILDING AND
INVOLVEMENT**

St. Cloud shows that the most effective organizations focus on community building, have immigrant and refugee leaders, and aim for eventual civic engagement across demographics.

A Multicultural Community**City Background**

The city of St. Cloud has grown into a diverse community within the last two decades. The influx of Somali refugees has increased racial tensions within the community, leading to the formation of various immigrant and refugee organizations. The city received media attention from a series of civil rights violations within public schools that warranted investigation by the U.S. Department of Education. Additionally, various racially-charged and slanderous blogs have gained traction, fueling anti-immigrant sentiments.

multi-step process, beginning with team-building and English courses, and working towards economic stability and civic engagement.

Services

- STEM & ESL Early and Adult Education
- Basic childcare training
- One-on-one tutoring
- After school programs
- Citizenship classes
- Job training

Community Building and Communication**Hands Across the World****At a Glance**

Hands Across the World (HAW) strives to provide a safe place for immigrant and refugee families to gather, share stories, and discuss concerns as they settle in St. Cloud. HAW has a

Effective Structure

HAW deliberately unites immigrants of different ethno-linguistic backgrounds, encouraging them to speak English in order to break down social barriers. The organization has 180 volunteers, 283 adult students, and 90 children students. Former participants return as volunteers to continue learning and to assist others. The program accommodates adult immigrant participants who often work



st. cloud

entry level night-shift jobs by offering classes in the morning.

Essential Assets

HAW is funded by local, state, and federal contributions and private donors. They receive help from the Boys and Girls Club, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, and other churches in St. Cloud.

Immigrant/Refugee Led Outreach

St. Cloud Area Somali Salvation Organization

At a Glance

St. Cloud Area Somali Salvation Organization (SASSO) works toward economic and social integration of refugees and immigrants by offering a wide variety of programs.

Services

- Assistance in English, Somali, Swahili, and Amharic
- After school programs
- Housing assistance
- Youth crime prevention programs
- Employment assistance
- Somali community advocacy and civic engagement information

Effective Structure

SASSO was founded and is led by Somali refugees living in St. Cloud. Its staff consists of two full-time and two part-time employees. Their newest campaign encourages voting and seeks to combat racism, prejudice, and misconceptions about Somali

groups through coordination with the mayor and other community leaders.

Orange Oaks

At a Glance

Orange Oaks, a local business, designs accessible welcome videos about living in the United States and St. Cloud.

Services

Videos are provided in Somali, Spanish, and Oromo and address the following issues:

- Expectations in public schools
- Infant health
- Local traffic laws
- Supportive role of police officers

Recognition

Orange Oaks won the 2013 Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation (GSDC) Innovation Award Grant for fostering and promoting innovative thinking among the area businesses. They collaborate with CentraCare, St. KVSC Radio, and the St. Cloud Area School District.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Hands Across the World](#)

[SASSO](#)

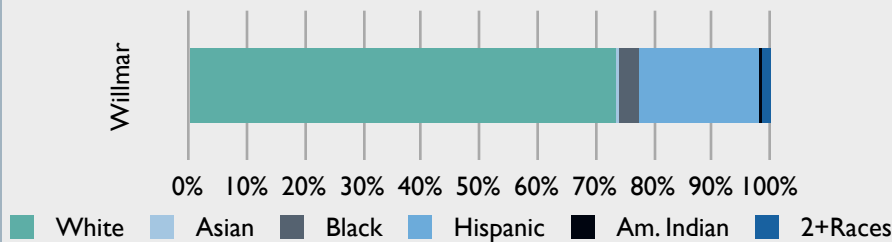
[Orange Oaks](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Professor Stephen Phillion, Brianda Cediel, and Haji Adu for the phone interviews and for providing us with further contact information of community leaders and organizations.

PREPARED BY:

Rachel Palermo, Grace Kane, and Hugh Kenety.

Racial Breakdown**WILLMAR****THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION IN RECOGNIZING POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

Willmar's experience illustrates the power of the media in acknowledging positive strides toward a more integrated community.

**statistics**

population **19,674**

median household income **\$38,074**

unemployment **4.3%**

Connecting Public ESL to Holistic Community Needs**ESL programming****Similarities between Faribault and Willmar**

- Offered by school districts
- Managed enrollment structure (limited absences, set start/end times and dates, consistent testing)
- Serve primarily adult populations
- Reach out to community partners and organizations (MN DEED, local colleges, immigrant organizations)

Potential Improvements for Faribault

- Willmar offers ESL/ABE under the umbrella of community education, intentionally located in the same building as early childhood education so parents and children can take courses at the same time.
- Willmar integrates community understanding, awareness, and skills into its ESL/ABE programs so students learn about American culture and society as they learn English.

- Willmar conducts on-site ESL courses at the local Jennie-O plant and seems to excel in reaching out to immigrant organizations through a variety of means, both formal and informal.

Analysis and Recommendations

In both towns, the recently adopted managed enrollment structure seems more effective than more loosely structured open-enrollment models. Limiting the number of excused absences, repeatedly testing at set times, and offering opportunities for students at all levels of English language learning significantly enhances ESL programs. According to Jim Nicholson (director of Adult Basic Education in Willmar): "For the serious student, it's more structured, and there's not as much time spent in review." It also benefits teachers, as they are able to develop more significant relationships with their students through regular, scheduled interaction.



willmar

Celebrating positive media and communication

City Comparison

Willmar

- MPR News: features immigrant voices and celebrates their entrepreneurship
- MPR News: hails Willmar as a rising star in development of more effective ESL instruction strategies in rural Minnesotan schools.
- African Development Center: details the life of Somali man Abdi Duh and his influential work in the Willmar community.
- West Central Tribune: emphasizes how well linking ESL/ABE classes to the Jefferson Learning Center works.

This selection of articles points to the wealth of encouragement and positivity surrounding Willmar's immigration experience. The power of these articles lies not only in their celebration of immigrants, but also in their acknowledgement and discussion of past and present struggles. In 2010, 600 people attended an educational event hosted in Willmar by Somali immigrants to learn about Somali customs, dress, and religious practices, further speaking to the willingness of native residents to engage with the immigrant population.

Faribault

- Faribault Daily News: relates the story of two naturalized Somali women who inadvertently voted twice in the 2012 election.
- Faribault Daily News: letter to the editor complains of young Somali men disrupting her morning walk.

- Reports on message boards about Somalis "loitering" on the sidewalks of downtown
- Despite searching, we found few articles responding positively to the immigrant community's presence in Faribault.

Why Willmar has gained statewide and even national recognition (see this clip from NBC) while Faribault has not despite similar approaches in working with immigrants, remains unsettled. What we do know is that there is a clear disconnect between the two communities in terms of how they measure the successes of their efforts:

- While both communities' ESL/ABE programs are structured in such a way that promote maximum efficiency and effectiveness, their workings are much more widely appreciated and celebrated in Willmar.

Analysis and Recommendations

The conclusion we draw from this experience is one that several community leaders in Faribault have already pointed to: Faribault's lack of emphasis on celebrating (even partial) successes! From our study of ESL/ABE programs in Willmar and Faribault, and of media reports on the state of each town's immigrant communities, we see stark differences in how successes, especially with ESL and education, are reported despite the inherent similarities between the two communities. There are hardly any news outlets lauding Faribault for its successes, including letters written by Faribault residents themselves, while there are multiple statewide and national reports on the efficacy of Willmar's programs. Positivity can go a long way towards improving relationships between communities and some of that



positivity can be broadcast through local and eventually statewide media. While there are always improvements to be made, it is necessary to celebrate the small successes and the partial gains along the way to an integrated, engaged, and connected community. By focusing on the negative, Faribault is missing out on a powerful opportunity to educate each other and celebrate everything the community is doing right.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Willmar ESL Programs

[Jefferson Learning Center](#)

[Willmar ABE](#)

PREPARED BY:

Olivia Slack, Esme Marie, and Ian Hamilton

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We'd like to thank the following people for phone conversations:

- Jim Nicholson, Director of Adult Basic Education at the Jefferson Learning Center in Willmar, Minnesota
- Kymn Anderson, President of the Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
- Anna Olson, Faribault's Adult Education Secretary.

DOCUMENT SOURCES

Demographics: City Data

[Faribault](#)

[Owatonna](#)

[Rochester](#)

[St. Cloud](#)

[Willmar](#)

All other sources can be found in the 'additional resources' section of each city profile in this document.

City Logos

All images were taken from city websites, but this does not imply city endorsement of this document or the thoughts contained herein.

[Owatonna](#)

[Rochester](#)

[St. Cloud](#)

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