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NEWS

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DEAR COMMUNITY

As spring settles in and we welcome the month of May, we're reminded of the power of renewal, not just in nature, but in our community. This is a time to reflect on our roots, celebrate the resilience of our members, and keep building momentum toward justice, equity, and opportunity.

In this issue, we'll share highlights from April and new opportunities for May. There's a lot happening, and we're so glad to have you with us on this journey.

Moments of Reflection: Resistance and Legacy

The passing of Pope Francis – A Global Loss

On April 21, 2025, the world mourned the passing of Pope Francis, the first Latin American and Jesuit pope, who died at the age of 88. His papacy was marked by humility, a commitment to social and economic justice, and a focus on the marginalized. From advocating for migrants and refugees to addressing climate change and economic inequality, Pope Francis's leadership transcended religious boundaries and offered hope to many.

His legacy will continue to inspire communities worldwide to strive for compassion, inclusivity, and justice.

The Battle of Puebla – A tribute to resistance

Every May 5th, we remember the Battle of Puebla, a historic moment when Mexican forces, against all odds, defeated the French army in 1862. It was more than a military victory — it was a declaration of dignity and self-determination. Today, for many immigrants and working-class communities in the U.S., Cinco de Mayo is not just a celebration, but a symbol of resilience. It reminds us that when people unite, no matter how limited the resources, they can overcome even the most powerful forces. That spirit of resistance is alive in our daily struggles and victories — in every class, every legal consultation, every organized action.



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Join us for a night of flavor and solidarity!

COPAL invites you to Cena Entre Panas, on May 28 at 6:00 p.m. at Crasqui in St. Paul. This one-night-only dinner features a special collaboration between Chef Cristian de León and Chef Soleil Ramirez, blending Guatemalan and Venezuelan cuisine — all to support COPAL's mission of uplifting Latine immigrant communities in Minnesota.

[Seats are limited — reserve yours now!](#)

Primero de Mayo Workers' Center

Why "Primero de Mayo"?

The name of our Workers' Center carries a powerful legacy. Primero de Mayo — May 1st — is not just a date; it's a symbol of international worker solidarity. Known globally as International Workers' Day, it honors the struggles, sacrifices, and achievements of workers fighting for dignity, fair wages, and safe working conditions. When we named our center Primero de Mayo, we claimed that history as part of our vision, a place where immigrant and low-wage workers can find support, build skills, and organize for a better future.

April was a vibrant and busy month at the Center. We welcomed 28 participants to our basic computer skills class, a program that continues to grow as more community members seek to build their digital literacy. At our Citizenship Fair, 20 individuals received assistance and are now preparing to begin their naturalization process in the coming months.

We also saw a high number of inquiries for our CNA training program, which will begin accepting enrollments in the first week of May. We're excited to expand our educational offerings, and we're calling for volunteers to support classes in computers, citizenship preparation, and soon, English tutoring for CNA students.



April also marked the end of the tax season, and we're proud to share that 11 youth from our leadership program were trained to assist with tax preparation. Together, they helped over 120 families file their taxes at no cost, securing more than \$436,000 in refunds and supporting the payment of over \$21,000 in taxes. Some of these families have been with us for years, starting out by looking for jobs, then joining our computer classes, and now returning to get help with their taxes. Their gratitude reminds us why we do this work.

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the Primero de Mayo Workers' Center to celebrate four years of building power with our community!

Your presence, whether as a volunteer, student, organizer, partner, or neighbor, is a powerful reminder of why this movement matters. Over the past four years, we've grown stronger, not just in numbers, but in connection, in courage, and in collective vision. We've shared meals, marched side by side, learned new skills, and shown up for each other in moments of joy and struggle. This anniversary is not just a celebration of our past — it's a promise to keep moving forward.



Here's to many more years of organizing, learning, resisting, and thriving together. The best is yet to come. If you've ever thought about getting involved, now is the perfect moment! [join us as a volunteer](#) or **call us at (612) 249-8736** and help us build a stronger, more empowered community.

The Power of Being a Mother & Leading in Community

This month, we honor the strength, love, and leadership of mothers in our community. In a special episode of Radio Jornalera, we share stories that speak to the power of motherhood and community work, the struggles, the victories, and the everyday acts of resilience that shape our collective journey. Join Claudia Láinez, Wendy Zúñiga, and Dulce De La Rosa as they uplift the voices of mothers who organize, lead, and empower our families across every part of society.

[Listen now](#)



ROCHESTER Southeast Initiative

Gloria's Journey

For Gloria, having a driver's license is more than a legal step, it's about safety, independence, and dignity. A long-time member of COPAL MN and part of our **Community Health Leaders team**, Gloria came to our office last December to take the theoretical exam for her driver's license. This spring, she returned to prepare for the practical test, and just one day later, she called us with the news and her joy was contagious. She passed! She thanked COPAL MN for walking alongside her, and we thank her for reminding us why this work matters.

Her story reminds us of what is possible when people have access to the opportunities and support they deserve.

Over the past month, COPAL MN's Southeast Initiative has been actively working to strengthen community health, expand access to resources, and advocate for policy change across Rochester and surrounding areas. As part of these efforts, we hosted a **Vaccination & Resource Fair** at our Rochester office in collaboration with Minnesota Health Fairview. The event offered free vaccines for Influenza, COVID-19, MMR, and Tetanus. In addition to health services, community members received valuable information on legal and financial resources from SMRLS and First Alliance Credit Union.

We also co-hosted the **Leave No One Behind Town Hall** alongside ISAIAH, REA, SEIU, and other partners. With over 500 attendees, we called on legislators from districts 24 and 25 to defend public programs like Medicaid, MinnesotaCare for All, and Paid Family & Medical Leave. COPAL shared a moving testimony from a Latine community member about the harsh realities of living without health coverage.

On **April 30 and May 1**, we participated in **May Day** events. Our Southeast Organizer, David Perdomo, spoke out about the injustices faced by Latine workers, including wage theft, misclassification, unfair dismissals, and violations of labor rights.



Driver's License Exam

Our Rochester office continues to support community members preparing for the Minnesota driver's license exam — available **every Wednesday at 3 PM and Saturday at 5 PM. Call (612) 965-9022 for more information. Congratulations to the 12 people who passed in April!**

Get Involved

We are looking for passionate community members to join our **Southeast Regional Committee.**

Help shape local campaigns and uplift Latine families in the region.

Interested? Call **(612) 965-9022** or [sign up here](#).

MANKATO

South Central Initiative

In April, COPAL MN's South Central Initiative continued its commitment to advancing health equity, labor rights, and community empowerment. Through outreach events and resource tables, our team connected with 45 community members across the region. With the support of local partners, we offered educational materials, discussed immigrant rights, promoted access to health insurance through MNSure, and raised awareness about Long COVID using interactive activities.

At Lincoln Community Center, 18 participants attended a Long COVID presentation. Through a hands-on puzzle activity, community health leaders and volunteers helped deepen understanding of persistent symptoms and available resources.



Organizing work is central to our mission in South Central Minnesota. This month, in collaboration with the ACLU, we hosted a Know Your Rights training at Gustavus College in St. Peter with over 15 students in attendance. Additionally, our South Central Regional Committee gathered with 10 community members to strengthen our collective work and leadership. Being part of the South Central Regional Committee means helping build a stronger, more informed community. Join us by [signing up here](#).

What's coming for us?

We're currently planning two Back-to-School community events for the Latine community in Watonwan County and Greater Mankato. If you're interested in hosting a resource table or donating school supplies, please contact Lourdes at lourdesm@copalmn.org; for more events and updates [please visit here](#).

ORGANIZING



From Rochester to Minneapolis to Mankato, our movement is growing stronger every day. Volunteers from the Immigrant Defense Network have been at the heart of this powerful effort, creating "Worker Defense Baskets" to distribute to 500 businesses across Minnesota. These baskets are filled with essential tools to support and defend immigrant workers, ensuring they have the resources and knowledge to advocate for their rights in the workplace.

Whether it was during the May Day Teach-in sessions in Mankato or the volunteer-driven initiatives in Rochester and Minneapolis, we are changing the narrative and demanding dignity for those who keep our industries running. With each step, we amplify the voices of immigrant workers and push for a future where their contributions are recognized and respected.

Thank you to all the volunteers for your dedication and hard work — together, we are building a more just and inclusive Minnesota.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS



In April, 108 Latines participated in talks with Dr. Francisco about Long COVID at the Primero de Mayo Workers' Center. According to CDC data, one in five adults in the United States who had COVID-19 still experience symptoms of Long COVID, with nearly 9% of Latine adults affected. Many in our community shared that it was the first time they heard about Long COVID. At COPAL, we are committed to providing preventative education to raise awareness about the risks of Long COVID and how to prevent it.

[For more events and updates please visit here.](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

At COPAL, we believe that climate justice is community justice. This month we invite you to take action for both: The **Inflation Reduction Act** offers new resources to help communities address climate challenges, including access to tax credits for cleaner energy solutions like electric cars and sustainable appliances. This is an important step toward reducing costs and fostering environmental sustainability.

Learn more about how to benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act, available resources, and programs that can help you save money while making a positive impact on the environment: [How Can I Benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act?](#)

Seeds and Sol Celebration | June 21 – Medford WMA

Join Great River Greening and COPAL MN for a unique day of culture, community, and conservation! Celebrate Inti Raymi, the Andean Festival of the Sun, with a traditional ceremony, folk dance, and hands-on prairie restoration to protect native habitats—including turtles!

Family-friendly – All ages welcome. No experience needed.

Learn & Restore – Get training on prairie ecosystems and how to care for them.

Snacks & Supplies – Coffee, snacks, water provided. Bring gloves and reusable bottle if you can.

Be Prepared – Wear closed-toe shoes, long sleeves, and dress for the weather. Rain or shine!

Arrive 10–15 mins early for check-in and group assignments.

Questions? Contact Vanessa at vberrueta@greatrivergreening.org | (612) 743-0630
With support from OHF, LSOHC, EDP Trust for Public Land, COPAL & DNR

[Register now](#)



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact the MN Mental Health Crisis Line:

****CRISIS or **274747**

Dial from your cell phone and you will be connected to your county crisis team.

Please see the following summary of mental health, general health and dental services compiled by the Minnesota Department of Health for the lowest cost or at scale. Look at the column that specifies if they have interpreters or people who speak Spanish.



TUNE IN HERE



Radio Jornalera has grown and now has five weekly shows every day of the week and our daily morning show, **El Jornal de la Alegría** with **Mike Castillo** every weekday from 7 to 10am.

DOWNLOAD THE APP

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ALWAYS IN SOLIDARITY

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Established in 2018, COPAL is a member-based organization that leads social impact initiatives to improve the quality of life for Latine families. It does so by building collective power, transforming systems, and creating opportunities for a dignified life.

To create a more inclusive Minnesota, COPAL is advocating for a legislative agenda that advances the issues that impact the lives of Latines in Minnesota, such as health care for all, dignity for workers, environmental justice, popular democracy, immigration and public safety, which includes restoring licenses to all.