

Manos Unidas Learning Center Builds a Team Dedicated to Education, Opportunity and Community Empowerment

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — A new community-focused organization on San Antonio's Southside is bringing together professionals with backgrounds in education, workforce development, psychology, technology and nonprofit services to help individuals and families build brighter futures.

Founded in 2026 by U.S. Army veteran and community leader Joe Alfaro, Manos Unidas Learning Center (MULC) is working to expand access to education, digital skills, financial literacy, career development and essential community resources. The organization's mission is to strengthen families and communities by helping people overcome barriers to opportunity and achieve greater independence.

According to the organization's official website, Manos Unidas Learning Center was established in response to the need for accessible educational resources, technology training and career opportunities in the Southside community. Its approach combines practical instruction with community support, creating opportunities for individuals to develop new skills, explore career pathways and improve their financial stability.

A Leadership Team Rooted in Service

At the helm of Manos Unidas Learning Center is Joe Alfaro, founder and chief executive officer. Alfaro brings years of experience working with nonprofit organizations and workforce development programs. His professional background includes serving as a case manager with the American GI Forum and Endeavors, a career advisor with Workforce Solutions Alamo, a senior career counselor with Mi Casa Resource Center in Denver, Colorado, and a digital skills instructor at Empower House.

Drawing on his military service and professional experience, Alfaro founded MULC to connect community members with the education, resources and support needed to pursue employment, further education and economic self-sufficiency. His vision is to

establish a welcoming learning environment where people of different backgrounds can access opportunities to improve their lives.

Supporting that mission is Katharine Kaye McMillan, Ph.D., assistant director. McMillan brings expertise in stakeholder coordination, program evaluation, communications and organizational support. A cognitive-behavioral psychology coach specializing in human performance optimization, industrial-organizational psychology, mental health and wellness, she also has research experience across military, healthcare, academic and consulting environments. Her academic credentials include a doctorate from Florida Atlantic University and a bachelor's degree from The University of Texas at Austin. She is also a *For Dummies* author, bringing experience in making complex information accessible to a broad audience.

Strengthening Career and Educational Pathways

The center's grant consultant, Mirna Villa Linares, M.A., M.S., CWDP, CCSP, brings more than a decade of experience in education and the nonprofit sector. Her work focuses on career development, workforce preparation, student engagement and partnerships with employers and community organizations.

Through strategic planning, mentoring, training and partnership development, Linares supports MULC's efforts to create educational pathways that help individuals advance professionally. Her experience in connecting students with employers and community resources supports the center's goal of linking learning with meaningful career opportunities.

Expanding the Center's Digital Reach

Technology and communications are also central to the organization's outreach strategy. Tiffany Gaytan serves as webmaster, social media lead and part-time instructor, combining creative expertise with practical technology skills.

A freelancer since 2015 and a published photographer, Gaytan has experience in photography, graphic design, digital communications and web development. Her technical skills include Adobe Photoshop, photo restoration, photo editing, web coding and print development. She also produces communications materials such as newsletters, digital invitations and announcements.

At MULC, Gaytan helps strengthen the organization's online presence while sharing practical knowledge with students. Her work supports the center's commitment to making technology and digital learning more accessible to the community.

Programs Designed to Meet Community Needs

Manos Unidas Learning Center offers a range of programs designed to address educational, employment and financial challenges. These include:

- **Digital Skills and Technology Training:** Practical computer skills and digital literacy to help participants navigate today's technology-driven world.
- **Financial Literacy:** Workshops focused on budgeting, saving, money management and building financial stability.
- **Career Development:** Resources to help individuals prepare for employment, explore career options and pursue professional growth.
- **Small Business Workshops:** Step-by-step guidance for aspiring entrepreneurs interested in starting and sustaining a business.
- **Manufacturing and Trades Training:** Opportunities to explore technical skills and career pathways in industry and skilled trades.
- **Online Learning:** Access to Coursera courses that allow participants to explore professional certifications and additional educational opportunities at no cost through the center's offerings.
- **Veteran and Immigration Services:** Support and connections to resources intended to help individuals navigate education, employment and community opportunities.
- **Food Pantry:** Assistance for families experiencing food insecurity, helping address an essential need while participants pursue learning and personal development.

By bringing these services together, MULC aims to address more than classroom learning. The organization recognizes that access to food, technology, career guidance and financial education can play an important role in helping individuals and families move toward long-term stability.

Building a Stronger Community Through Collaboration

The organization is also developing its board leadership and expanding opportunities for community participation. According to its website, interim board chair Joe Alfaro and

interim secretary Katharine McMillan are serving alongside Amanda Duran in the finance role. The center is seeking additional board members with expertise in veteran affairs, manufacturing, workforce development, technology, legal services and spiritual leadership.

MULC also lists openings for part-time instructors and outreach personnel, a part-time community health worker, and a full-time accountant. These opportunities reflect the organization's interest in expanding its capacity and bringing additional professional knowledge into its programs.

Looking Toward the Future

As Manos Unidas Learning Center develops its programs and community partnerships, its central goal remains clear: to help people gain the knowledge, confidence and resources needed to pursue a more secure future.

For Alfaro and his team, education is not simply about learning a new computer program or attending a workshop. It is about opening doors to employment, strengthening families, supporting veterans, encouraging entrepreneurship and giving community members practical tools to reach their goals.

Through a team that combines experience in nonprofit services, psychology, workforce development, education and technology, Manos Unidas Learning Center is working to create a place where learning and opportunity come together for the benefit of San Antonio's Southside.

Learn more: Visit www.manosunidaslearningcenter.com to explore the organization's mission, programs and team.

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