

His Journey in the QC: Joe Louis Morales – A Legacy of Service, Education, and Community Building



Joe Louis Morales is a two-time retiree—first from the U.S. Army and then from his second career as a high school teacher. Since retiring, Joe has dedicated his time and energy to what he considers his true calling: volunteer work. It’s not just a passion—it’s his purpose.

Joe currently serves as the Education Chair for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Council 10. He is also a

planning committee member and long-time volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Mississippi Valley, where he proudly served as a “Big Brother” for nearly eight years.

The oldest of eight children, Joe grew up in a migrant family and considers Central Michigan home. For over 20 years, however, Joe and his wife Robin have made the Quad Cities (QC) their home—the longest they’ve ever lived in one place. Both Joe and Robin retired from the U.S. Army while stationed at Rock Island Arsenal after nearly 60 years of combined service. Joe then retired from Davenport Central High School, where he taught for 15 years after transitioning from military service. As he tells it, upon retiring from the Army Robin simply said, “You need to go back to work”—and so he did.

Joe remains deeply involved in his church community. He serves as an usher, is active in the Men’s Fellowship, and reads scripture during Sunday services at Saint John Vianney in Bettendorf, IA. His guiding principle: “Blessings should be shared with others.”



Both Joe and Robin are combat veterans. Their dedication to service, both in and out of uniform, reflects their character and shared values. Joe’s mother instilled in him the belief that “education will make the difference,” and he has carried that lesson with him throughout his life. He believes education is a lifelong journey.

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Joe holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources Development from Michigan State University and a Master of Science in General Business Administration from Central Michigan University. His thirst for knowledge continues, Joe is currently taking organ lessons, just one of many examples of how he lives out his commitment to growth and exploration.

Joe and Robin have eight children, 19 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Joe openly shares that, during his teenage years in Michigan he was involved in gangs, but joining the military gave him a new path and ultimately saved his life.

For the past five years, Joe has quietly battled stage four cancer and is currently undergoing chemotherapy. Yet his health challenges haven't slowed him down. He continues to volunteer with organizations like LULAC, the Big Brothers Big Sisters, and his church—because, as he puts it, “Helping others helps me.”



Joe believes that giving back is not a hobby — it's a way of life. He is dedicated to supporting and enhancing the educational mission of LULAC Council 10. His primary efforts are focused on three education initiatives. The initiatives are the Scholarship program, Iowa Latino History Lesson Plans, and the LIDERAMOS Leadership Development program.

As a scholarship committee member, LULAC has awarded 118 scholarships totaling \$88,165 for the last three years. Since its founding, LULAC has awarded over \$800,000 in scholarships to more than 1,200 students from the Quad Cities. The organization also

provides volunteers for after-school and summer programs and has awarded \$20,000 in mini-grants to support activities and supplies at Jefferson, Hayes, and Fillmore Elementary Schools.

In collaboration with the University of Iowa, Davenport Community School District, and LULAC, Joe provided lesson plan development support for the first-ever Iowa Latino History Lesson Plans. The Lesson Plans support the Iowa Common Core Social Studies

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Standards for third-grade students.

Joe provided planning and programming support to establish the Quad Cities Regional LIDERAMOS Leadership Development program (A program of LULAC Council 10). The purpose is to enhance and develop the skills of Latino/a/x/es who are culturally aware, civically engaged, and community-serving.

Joe values his faith, family, and health above all else. Service to others is his life guiding principle. His advice is, “Find your purpose and be passionate about it. And always keep learning.”