

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2026

FR: St. Cloud Community Leaders
RE: Statement from St. Cloud Community Leaders

STATEMENT FROM ST. CLOUD COMMUNITY LEADERS: UPHOLDING SAFETY, RESPECT, CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

St. Cloud, MN - We believe in a community where people are safe, dignity is honored, and differences are met with respect rather than fear.

Our shared work, as civic, education, and business leaders, is grounded in the belief that democracy depends not only on laws and institutions, but on how we treat one another. Peaceful dialogue, freedom of expression, and equal protection under the Constitution are essential to a society where everyone belongs and can contribute.

- We affirm that our community is strongest when:
- People can participate in civic life without intimidation or harm
- Disagreements are handled with care, not cruelty
- Rights and responsibilities are upheld together
- Leadership models calm, integrity, and respect
- The rule of law and Constitutional protections are followed and respected by everyone

We reject violence and dehumanization in all forms, and we commit to being voices for peace, understanding, and shared responsibility. Especially for young people who are watching and learning, we strive to model what it means to live our democratic values with courage and compassion.

We move forward together, across roles, perspectives, and experiences, focused on the common good and on a future defined by freedom, dignity, and hope. We invite you to join us in this commitment as we create a safe, prosperous community in Greater St. Cloud.

Jake Anderson, Mayor, St. Cloud

Yasin Alsaidi, Deputy Director, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, St. Cloud and Willmar

Abdi Kadri Bashir, Executive Director, CAIRO

Helga Bauerly, Community Volunteer

Rick Bauerly, Founder and CEO, Granite Partners

NeTia Bauman, CEO & President, Greater St. Cloud

Dick & Erin Bitzan, D.J. Bitzan Jewelers; Mimi Bitzan, Community Volunteer

John Bodette, Retired, Executive Editor and Active Community Volunteer

Gretchen Boulka, Executive Director, Paramount Center for the Arts

Stefanie Brown, Shareholder, Rinke Noonan, Attorneys at Law; Board and Executive Committee Member, Vice Chair, Greater St. Cloud

Brian J. Bruess, President, College of St. Benedict and St. John's University

Whitney Buccicone, Chief Operating Officer, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library

Tarryl Clark, Stearns County Commissioner

Ann Cofell, Retired, Legal Aid Attorney; Active, Community Board Member

Ryan Cross, Owner, BCI Construction; Board and Executive Committee Member, Greater St. Cloud

Leigh Ann Davis, Executive Director, Girl Scouts Lakes and Pines

Patrick Edeburn, Operating Partner and Co-Founder, Granite Partners; Board and Executive Committee Member, Greater St. Cloud

Charlie Eisenreich, President, LEAF Board of Directors

Patti Gartland, Retired, Community and Economic Development Executive
Jeff Gau, Retired, CEO, Marco Technologies; Board and Executive Committee Member, Greater St. Cloud
Melinda Gau, Community Volunteer
Brian Hart, Community Volunteer
Charles Hempeck, Executive Director, Anna Marie's Alliance
Mike Helgeson, Retired, CEO, Gold'n Plump; Active, Community Volunteer
Bob Johnson, Stearns County Commissioner
Jackie Johnson, Executive Director, Big Brothers Big Sisters
Steve Jones, President and CEO, United Way of Central MN
Steve Joul, President and CEO, CommunityGiving
Dave Kleis, Former Mayor of St. Cloud
Lori Kloos, President, St. Cloud Technical & Community College, Board and Executive Committee Member, Greater St. Cloud
Steve Laraway, Former St. Cloud City Council Member; Former Chair, CentraCare Health
Daniel Larson, Community Advocate
Julie Lunning, President, St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce
John Mahowald, Retired, Insurance Agency owner; Active, Community Board Member
Marty Mahowald, Retired, Insurance Agency Partner; Active, Community Board Member
Maryanne Mahowald, Past Chair, Community Giving
Jerry McCarter, CPA retired; Past Chair, Community Giving
Mathew McDowall, President, McDowall Company
Cassandra Miles, CEO, Great River Children's Museum
Muhyadin Mohamed, President, Islamic Center of St Cloud
Mike and Lori Mullin, Small Business Owners
Milo Mumgaard, Executive Director, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid
Brian Myres, Retired, Banking Executive, Community Board Member
James Newman, Director, Wirth Center for the Performing Arts
Reverend Dee Pederson, Retired
Chad Peterson, Lead Pastor, Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Laurie Putnam, Superintendent, St. Cloud Area School District 742
Paul Radeke, Radeke Consulting; Chair, St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce Board, Executive Committee Member, Greater St. Cloud
Tyrone Reynolds, Executive Director, Youthset
Clare Richards, CEO, Impacks; Board and Executive Committee Member, Greater St. Cloud
Jim Schlenner, CPA retired; Active, Community Volunteer
Wayne Schluchter, High School Football Coach, Community Volunteer
Lacey Schirmers and Kendra Norton Dando, Executive Director and Artistic and Education Director, GREAT Theatre
Greta Stark-Kraker, Executive Director, Central Minnesota Community Foundation
St. Cloud Area School District 742 Board of Education
Mary Swingle, Present & CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central MN; Board and Executive Committee Member, Greater St. Cloud
Rachel Thompson, Executive Director, Visit Greater St. Cloud
Gregory Tomso, President, St. Cloud State University
David Tripp, Retired, CEO of Metro Bus and Community Volunteer
Brian Voerding and Amy Trombley, President and VP for Community, Initiative Foundation
Pat Welter, UW Youth Opportunities Advisory Council; Retired, 742 Administrator and Teacher
Tim Wensman, Retired, Gold'n Plump Poultry Executive; Active, Community Board Member
Donella Westphal, Jules' Bistro
Greg & Steve Windfeldt, Co-Owners of Preferred Credit, Inc