



# HISPANICS

## THRIVING IN ST. LOUIS



Newspapers in Education is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month in partnership with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis. This series highlights local Hispanic Americans who are giving back to others in the St. Louis community.



# ANGEL JIMENEZ

## Helping other Learn from His Experiences

By: **Carlos Restrepo**  
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis

For 13 years, Angel Jimenez was one of the first and few restauranteurs who brought authentic Mexican dishes to the St. Louis area.

“Our restaurant was a success because it became one of the first in the area where you could find authentic Mexican food, such as tacos al pastor, huaraches and molcajetes,” said Jimenez, who, along with his family, owned and operated the restaurant from 2004 to 2017.

His success story may be peculiar because it involves two businesses that are now closed. Each closure, however, represented a different challenge in his life, which ultimately led him to his current career as restaurant consultant.

As an ambitious young man in his 20s, Jimenez was in Mexico City following in his father’s footsteps.

“It was cool to watch him ‘crunch the numbers’ and even cooler to experience his freedom,” Jimenez said. “He had his own accounting firm in Mexico City and it was just about time for me to start my accounting career. In the end, though, I knew that I wanted to have my own business.”

Jimenez started his own firm at the time. A business which he says failed and left him devastated.

“I was 22. I had just closed a business,” Jimenez said. “I felt the need to push myself.”

That opportunity came when a neighbor invited him to go work for him at a restaurant in St. Louis.

“I started at the very beginning,” Jimenez explained. “I started in the kitchen and then was a busser. From there I moved to bar back. Then as a waiter, and then as a bartender.”

A few years later, Jimenez took the plunge to open his own restaurant. The restaurant did well but it was a full-time, entire-family operation.

“We were all working at the restaurant,” Jimenez said. “My wife, my brother, mom, aunts and cousins and everyone in between.”

Although the restaurant was financially sound and recognized, the family decided to focus on other career paths and agreed to close the restaurant.

“You have to have the humility to accept when a chapter ends,” Jimenez recalled.

Jimenez now owns a successful restaurant consulting firm, which he has used to assist many restaurant owners who have faced similar struggles.

“On the consulting side, I have been able to reconnect with the people of Mexico. It has been a great experience,” Jimenez said. “My knowledge and experience has given me the opportunity to share tools with the Hispanic community. It has been such a fulfilling experience to show owners of Mexican restaurants how to maximize their profits and minimize their stress while running their businesses.”





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How did starting and ending a business at such a young age help Angel succeed later in life?

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Angel worked through a variety of positions in the restaurant industry before owning his own. How do you think this experience help him succeed when running his own restaurant?

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Jimenez said that one must have the humility to accept when a chapter ends. What do you think he means by this?

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How did Angel's failures ultimately lead to his success?

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Think of a time when you have been able to help others based on your own experience or knowledge. How were you able to help them accomplish a task or meet a goal?

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