

Creative Cauldron Board of Directors with Bios for - July 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OFFICERS)

Ben Jenkins, President, 1 year on board

Address: 315 N Van Buren Falls Church VA 22046

Work: Partner LSG 1307 New York Avenue NW Washington, DC 20005

A veteran Washington communicator, Ben is a partner at LSG, where he founded and oversees the firm's communications practice, providing direct strategic counsel and support on behalf of its largest clients. With 20 years of public affairs experience, Ben helps corporations, trade associations, and coalitions achieve industry and business objectives through national, state, and local public affairs management.

In his role at LSG, Ben designs and executes strategic communications plans for clients in Washington and around the country that have helped lead to major policy successes for clients. Ben also has served as Senior Advisor to the National Governors Association in Washington, DC, and as the organization's interim head of Government Relations in 2019.

Prior to joining LSG, Ben was Vice President of Communications at America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) where he provided senior leadership to the trade's dynamic communications operation. Ben joined AHIP from the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS), the national trade association representing distilled spirits products sold in America. In his role as Vice President of State Government Communications, Ben managed high-profile public affairs campaigns to defeat tax threats and improve market access for the spirits industry, working closely with political stakeholders and state capital media around the country, as well as regulatory contacts in Washington.

Coming off Capitol Hill, Ben developed deep political experience as spokesperson for the Republican Governors Association (RGA), a national political organization based in Washington, DC. He served a 4-year cycle for the RGA, securing campaign and media experience in all 50 states.

Ben holds an M.B.A. from Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, an M.A. in Communications from Johns Hopkins University, and a dual B.A. from the College of William & Mary in Virginia where he ran Track and Cross Country. A Memphis native, Ben lives with his family in Falls Church City, VA.

Becky Manicone, Vice President, 7 years on board

Home Address: 2234 Carmichael, Vienna, VA 22181

Work Address: Baker Hosteller 1050 Connecticut Ave NW Ste 1100 Washington DC 20036

Rebecca Manicone's private wealth practice is dedicated to creating tax-efficient, values-based legacy plans for high net worth families and business owners, and aiding families upon the

passing of their loved ones. From corporate executives and entrepreneurs, to nontraditional couples and families with complex dynamics (including children with special needs), Becky strives for practical solutions to the tax and on-tax problems associated with the transmission of wealth. Her diverse planning techniques include traditional estate planning tools such as wills, revocable trusts, grantor retained annuity trusts and irrevocable life insurance trusts, as well as more complex planning techniques, such as sales to intentionally defective grantor trusts structure as dynasty trusts for the benefit of future generations, family limited partnerships, buy-sell arrangements and private family foundations.

Mark Werblood, Secretary, 8 years on board

Address: 5128 Knapp Place, Alexandria VA 22304

Work address: Tesler and Werblood 113 Rowell Court Falls Church VA 22046

A member of the bars of Virginia, the District of Columbia, Maryland and New York, Mark F. Werblood has been in private practice since 1978 concentrating in civil litigation with an emphasis on commercial litigation, debt collection, personal injury, insurance subrogation, estate planning and tax representation. A graduate of New York University Law School (J.D. LL.M.) and the City College of New York, Mark served for many years as a board member, Secretary and Vice President/Legal of the Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce and has been a recipient of its Pillar of the Community Award. He has been a Board Member of PRS, a non-profit which trains and supports individuals with severe mental illness in obtaining and maintaining employment.

Rich Meade, Treasurer, 8 years on board

Address: 700 Berry Street, Falls Church VA 22042

Work : Prime Policy Group 1801 K St NW Suite 900 Washington DC 20006

Chairman at Prime Policy Group and Chair of the firm's Healthcare Practice has over 25 years of experience in legislative, regulatory, political and public relations strategy. Prior to joining Prime Policy Group's predecessor firm, BKSH, Rich served for 14 years with House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle (R- IA). As Chief of Staff to the House Budget Committee, Rich was the Committee's principal liaison to the House Leadership, the Administration, and all committees of the House of Representatives. Rich helped his clients navigate many complex regulatory and legislative landscapes to achieve many public policy successes including transitioning to a new Medicare payment and quality system, and developing, with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS and Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), a health information exchange (HIE) on the Nationwide Health Information Network (NwHIN). Most recently, Rich worked as Chief of Staff and Chief Operating Officer of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), a role in which he served as the association's second-ranking executive and principal advisor to the President and CEO. Rich helped guide CUNA's legislative and regulatory advocacy while at CUNA. Rich also helped launch a "proof of concept" research project to explore the blockchain technology and create a permissioned credit union shared ledger known as CULedger. Rich has been a guest on CSPAN public affairs programs and a featured speaker at numerous industry conferences and events, including

addresses at the National Press Club. He has been involved in six presidential campaigns, including service as an advisor on economic matters to the re-election campaign of President George W. Bush in 2004. In addition, he has aided two U.S. Senate campaigns and countless campaigns for the House of Representatives. In 2019, Rich served on the steering committees of a candidate for Governor and three incumbent Members of the House of Representatives.

Nicholas F. Benton, Director, 18 years on board

Home: 400 James Court, Falls Church, VA 22046

Work: Falls Church News Press 105 N Virginia Ave Suite 310 Falls Church VA 22046

Nick is the founder, owner and Editor of the Falls Church News Press (www.fcnp.com), a weekly newspaper that circulates inside the Washington, D.C., beltway in Northern Virginia. Benton found the News Press in 1991. In addition to local news, it has an array of columns and commentaries focused on national and global issues, and uses the slogan, "Local News, Global Perspective." Since 1991, Mr. Benton served two terms as President of the Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce, and has twice been awarded the prestigious "Pillar of the Community" award by the Chamber. His paper has twice been named "Business of the Year" by the Falls Church City Council. He is the author of the best selling book, "Extraordinary Hearts" (Lethe Press), serves on the board of the LGBT Democrats of Virginia and was named an "OUTstanding Virginian" by Equality Virginia.

Janice Crawford, 3 years on board

Home: 200 N. Picket Street, Apt # 1105, Alexandria, VA 22304

Work: retired

40-year professional career as a civil servant with the federal government mainly focused on national security issues and is summarized below:

- Federal investigator for the then Defense Investigative Service and conducted government background investigations on military, civilians and contractors.
- Became deputy director and then director of what was then the Department of the Navy's central clearance adjudication facility. We had sole responsibility for determining who could and who could not have a security clearance and thus access to classified information within the Department of the Navy.
- An assistant deputy secretary of defense for installations. At the time, we were focused on improving the DoD's competitive sourcing policies.
- After retirement in 2004, started my own company conducting government background investigations in and around the Washington, DC metro area and around the country, if required by my customers.
- Master's degrees in National Security and Strategic Studies from the US Naval War College and in Public Administration from American University.

Andrea Robles and Solon Simmons, Directors, 4 years on board

Home: 6361 Lyric Lane, Falls Church, VA 22044

Andrea Robles Work: Americorps 250 E St SW Washington DC 20004

Solon Simmons Work: George Mason University 4400 University Drive Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Andrea Robles

Dr. Andrea Robles is a sociologist and has conducted research on an array of community and economic development issues locally, nationally, and globally. She is particularly interested in understanding how to tackle the social challenges that prevent marginalized groups – people subjected to multiple discrimination - from equally participating in all aspects of society.

Dr. Robles works for the Office of Research and Evaluation at AmeriCorps and manages the Volunteering and Civic Infrastructure Portfolio that builds research on civic engagement, volunteering, and civic health. More specifically, the studies under her portfolio measure formal and informal volunteering and the outcomes of volunteering to both participants and the organizations and communities they serve and seek to understand how increasing civic engagement of all individuals strengthens civil society. Dr. Robles specializes in participatory research and has worked with a variety of community stakeholders to identify community concerns, build community capacity and contribute to positive social change in rural, suburban, and urban areas.

Dr. Robles has a B.A. from New York University; a M.A. in International Development from The American University; and a M.S. and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Solon Simmons

Solon Simmons is an Associate Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University with a Ph.D. in sociology. He is the author of [The Eclipse of Equality: Arguing America on Meet the Press](#) (Stanford University Press, 2013) and [Professors and their Politics](#) with Neil Gross (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014). His current work on peace and conflict resolution combines Weberian institutional theory, with critical social philosophy, bringing in insights from semiotics and narrative analysis. His most recent book is entitled, *Root Narrative Theory and Conflict Resolution; Power, Justice and Values*, which provides researchers and practitioners tool grounded in cutting edge approaches to narrative and conflict. Root Narrative Theory is useful for capturing the moral and intellectual bases of radical disagreement, fostering a sense of radical curiosity, and helping parties to pursue deeper mutual understandings. Solon served as interim dean for the Carter School in 2013, and Vice President for Global Strategy for George Mason from 2014-2017, and he teaches classes on conflict theory, narrative, media, discourse and conflict, human rights, quantitative and qualitative methodology, global conflict, and critical theory.

Andres Jordan, Director, 18 years on board

Home Address: 6455 Woodridge Road, Alexandria, VA 22312

Work address: Factor 6 LLC Consulting 6455 Woodridge Road, Alexandria, VA 22312

Andres has extensive experience in technology and telecommunications, in marketing, sales, business development, strategy and international business. He served as Vice President of Innovation at Deutsche Telekom North America, and was at the leading edge of innovation

methodologies, creativity management, new and future technologies, and inventive market development plans and revenue models. Andres' global vision was forged from his upbringing in multiple countries and cultures. He is a thought leader; a life-learner and serves on various profit and non-profit boards. He is also a dynamic and passionate public speaker on subjects related to innovation, growth, creativity and all things international. Andres has a BS in Finance and a Masters in International Business from George Mason University.

Ellen Selby, Director, 3 years on board

833 Villa Ridge Road

Falls Church, VA 22046

Ellen Selby served an administrator and teaching artist at Creative Cauldron and was with the organization in some capacity since 2012. Ellen brings ten years of non-profit administrative, project management, and direct service in classrooms, primarily in Title 1 middle school support services to Creative Cauldron. In addition to her time at Creative Cauldron, Ellen is a mentor at Higher Achievement in 6th grade math and a consultant for Riverland Collective. Ellen is an MBA student at Mary Baldwin University where she received her undergraduate degree and studied Shakespeare's tragedies at Oxford University. Her writing credits at Creative Cauldron's Learning Theater program include: *The Wind in the Willows* (2016), *The Little Princess* (2017), *The Snow Queen* (2018), *The Jungle Book* (2019), *Cinderella's Dream* (2020), and *The Princess and the Pea* (2021).

Juan Cayrampoma, Director 2 years on board

Home: 7324 Beverly Park Drive

Springfield, VA 22150

Work: J&J Painting

Juan Cayrampoma leads the band RAYMI which brings the haunting sounds and mystic power from The Andes to the rest of the Americas and the world. RAYMI uses traditional instruments such as Zampoñas and Quenas while also exploring the possibilities that the bass, guitars and drums can have together with the Andes tradition. Juan serves as a teaching artist under Creative Cauldron's Artes Para Todos initiative. He owns J&J Painting and Contracting.

Ken Avis and Lynn Veronneau, Directors 1 year on board

Home: 3800 N Dickerson

Arlington, VA 22207

Work: same

Lynn Veronneau grew up near Montreal, completing her voice studies in France where her classical training helped her develop a seemingly effortless technique. Lynn moved beyond classical to sing folk, blues and funk before settling on her jazz and pop repertoire. Performing in France as a member of the Cernettes – an all-female vocal group – Lynn made headlines around the world as the band featured on the first ever photograph to be circulated on the web.

With her husband, band mate, Ken Avis, Lynn created and co-hosts two weekly radio shows on WERA FM in the Washington DC area. They also curate the annual Passport to the World music festival and other events in the DC area. They also collaborated to produce and perform a full-length dance and live music performance with award-winning contemporary dance group *Company Danzante* (2016) for Atlas Performing Arts.

Sometimes compared to Stacy Kent, Astrud Gilberto and Gretchen Parlato, Lynn Veronneau can be serene or commanding. She brings a warmth and elegance to the band's recordings and an engaging presence to stage performance

Ken Avis (guitar and vocals) met Lynn Veronneau while the two were performing at a festival in Switzerland. Ken explored a wide range of roots music and performed as vocalists with WC Handy Award winning Otis Grand Blues Band.

Ken is a published music journalist and co-produced the documentary *Bossa Nova – The Brazilian Music That Charmed the World* (2014). He is currently co-producing *Anacostia Delta* (2018) a film which celebrates the legends and the legacy of Washington DC's great guitarists such as Danny Gatton and Roy Buchanan. Ken co-curated the National Endowment for the Arts award-winning *Strathmore Jazz Samba Project Festival*. Atlas Performing Arts commissioned and performed Ken's play *Bossa Fever!* (2015) which featured Veronneau. In 2024 Ken received a Mid Atlantic Songwriting Competition gold award for his composition *Better World*

Sean Makulowich , Director, 1 year on board

Address: 4853 Cordell Ave APT 912 Bethesda, MD, 20814-3024

Work: same

Sean Makulowich is the Founder & CEO of IdeaFire, an award-winning digital marketing and AI consulting and training firm. With nearly 20 years of experience, Sean helps startups and global brands like Volvo, IMF, and Endocrine Society leverage AI technology and advanced marketing strategies to drive sustainable growth and measurable ROI. Sean is a sought-after public speaker and enterprise trainer, delivering thought-provoking, memorable, and engaging presentations, talks, and tactical workshops on topics ranging from AI, growth hacking, and e-commerce to innovation, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Passionate about community and the DMV startup ecosystem, Sean is a Board Member and VP of Information at the Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, and an Advisor, Mentor, and Investor with Founder Institute – the world's largest pre-seed startup accelerator."

Julie Krachman, Director (elected May 2025)

Address: 412 E Columbia Falls Church VA 22046

Work: same

Throughout my career I have turned around problem areas for my employers -- ranging from creating new approaches to portfolio management to imaginative ways of addressing long-standing thorny issues. I have worked in all areas of multifamily real estate from asset management to property

management and have experience with third-party managed properties as well as owner-managed. I have taken LIHTC properties from serious non-compliance to compliance -- provided excellent customer service to third party lenders & asset managers, trained property management staff, prepared budgets and all types of monthly reporting and generally improved portfolios with components ranging from market-rate apartments to ownership associations -- from low-moderate income housing to for-sale housing.

My long-time avocation in the non-profit sector has led me to also look for new challenges in that area and I have enjoyed my Program Coordinator responsibilities at the Virginia Israel Advisory Board, Office of the Governor. Since this office moved to Richmond I am no longer working with VIAB.

Specialties: An excellent problem-solver and team-builder, I have leadership skills which apply to all disciplines. My writing and communication skills are top notch. My VIAB responsibilities included Constant Contact and WIX. I have non-profit experience which includes Board Management, Fund-Raising, Lobbying, and Membership Activation. I also have experience with MRI, REALM, Boston Post, DYNA, NEXUS, WIX, Constant Contact and Raiser's Edge.

Justin and Randi Kieffer, Directors (elected May 2025)

Address: 201 E Jefferson Falls Church, VA 22046

Justin: Senior Communications Specialist at Architect of the Capitol

With a career spanning more than two decades in marketing, communications and event management, Justin Kieffer brings a unique blend of strategic thinking, creativity and public service to every endeavor. He currently serves as a Senior Communications Specialist with the Architect of the Capitol, where he leads communications for some of the nation's most iconic and historic restoration projects, including the U.S. Capitol Dome and the Cannon House Office Building.

Previously, he held leadership roles at the United States Mint, where he managed national advertising campaigns, developed direct marketing strategies, and played a key role in high-profile public outreach initiatives such as the 50 State Quarters® launches and the Presidential \$1 Coin Program. His work consistently drove revenue growth, expanded customer bases, and built meaningful connections between government institutions and the public.

Justin is a graduate of The George Washington University with a degree in Business Administration and Marketing and a Master's in Tourism Management.

Justin is a passionate supporter of the arts and education. He is actively involved with Falls Church City Public Schools and has loved being part of the Creative Cauldron community, where his two children have found inspiration and confidence through its dynamic youth programs. A lover of theater and sports, he values the role the arts and athletics play in enriching lives and building community.

Randi Kiefer

**Managing Vice President, Cyber
Operations & Intelligence**

Information Security Office

Randi Kieffer is the Managing Vice President of Cyber Operations and Intelligence (O&I) and the Information Security Office (ISO) for Capital One Financial Corporation. In this capacity she is responsible for 24x7 operations, technical and insider threat investigations, cyber intelligence, cyber fraud and security testing to include red team, pen test and bug bounty programs as well as providing Cyber oversight, advice and support to our divisional CISOs supporting Capital One's lines of business.

Before transitioning to Cyber, Randi joined Capital One's Corporate Audit Services in June 2017, where she was responsible for cybersecurity within the Technology audit practice. She provided cyber expertise and oversight, and implemented a real-time cyber audit capability aligned with Capital One's forward-thinking technology strategy.

Before joining Capital One, Randi spent 12 years with the Department of Homeland Security in various cyber leadership roles. Most recently, she served as the Deputy Director of the National Cybersecurity Communications & Integration Center, the Federal Government's main cybersecurity center for protection, prevention, incident response and recovery. Previously, Ms. Kieffer served as the Chief Information Security Officer for the Transportation Security Administration working to shift the agency from a compliance emphasis towards a more operationally and cybersecurity focused agency.

Randi holds a M.A. degree in Computer Fraud Investigations and a B.A. Degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Computer Science from The George Washington University. She also possesses a Master's Certificate in Project Management, is a graduate of the Senior Executive Fellowship program from the Harvard Kennedy School for Executive Education, and holds a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) Certification.

Randi serves in various leadership capacities in Cyber and Tech to promote a culture of belonging at Capital One. She lives in Northern Virginia with her husband and two daughters, who provide continual motivation to further belonging in the workplace. Randi also enjoys playtime with her two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, dance class, coaching and playing softball, and attending the theatre as often her schedule allows.

Carol Lee Campbell , Director (elected May 2025)

Address: 11200 James River Court Oakton VA 22124

Work: same

Carol Campbell is an award-winning writer, musician and activist. She is the creator of *Crone Stones*, a widely popular divination oracle that includes thirty-three porcelain stones and an accompanying book, *Return to Wellness: The New Book of Crone Stones. Chicks In Heaven*, her first play with music, premiered in April 2024 at The Creative Cauldron in Virginia. A book launch of her newest fiction, *The Rebel Rose*, debuted in May 2024 by Rebel Satori Press. Carol teaches Women and Gender Studies and Greek Mythology at several Virginia community colleges and travels regionally as a performance artist. Her newest play, *Sappho's Garden*, co-written with Domnica Radelescu, will debut at The Drama Book Shop in NYC in the fall of 2025.

Krista Grimmatt-Adams, Director (elected May 2025)

Address: 945 N Pitt Alexandria VA 22314

Work: same

Krista is a part of the local DMV community theater community. In the 1980s, she attended the HBCU Hampton University where she majored in Speech Communications and Theater Arts. Krista has performed in and worked on numerous theatrical productions here in the US and abroad including Raisin, To Kill a Mockingbird, For Colored Girls, Ain't Misbehavin', A Midsummer Night's Dream, Medea, Into the Woods, Cabaret, Jesus Christ Superstar, Joe Turners Come and Gone, & Dreamgirls. In addition she has recently performed at Creative Cauldron in the 2024 Bold New Works production of Chicks in Heaven as well as the first play presented at Cauldron's new space, Steel Magnolias. As a strong advocate for local art community, she has supported many local causes and volunteered her time to several theaters in the DC area. She lives in Old Town Alexandria with her amazing husband Eric Adams. After over 34 years in the federal government, she retired from my position with the US agency for international development (USAID) in 2023. She served many years as a Deputy Director and specialist in Human Resources in many more agencies including the Department of Defense and the US department of agriculture. She was previously certified in mediation.

Tracey Schroeder

Chief Communications and External Affairs Officer

Tracey Schroeder leads communications, marketing, physician relations and government affairs for Inova Health, inclusive of brand development, internal communications, physician communications, media relations, social media, and digital strategy.

Inova is the largest private employer in Northern Virginia providing healthcare to over two million unique patients a year across five hospitals and 280 outpatient sites.

Prior to joining Inova in 2021, Tracey served as Vice President, Global Consumer Public Relations at Marriott International leading public relations for Marriott's 30 brands and consumer facing initiatives across customer experience, digital, experiential and global marketing partnerships. She also spent 12 years at marketing and communication agencies leading work for Nestle, Ford and Coca-Cola.

Tracey resides in Falls Church, Virginia.

Tina Ligelis

Tina Ligelis, CPA is a local tax preparer at Tina G. Ligelis, CPA, LLC located in Falls Church VA. Tina Ligelis, CPA and other tax preparers located in Falls Church VA will help you with tax preparation, tax planning, bookkeeping, estate and trust taxes.

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Laura Connors Hull

3152 Anchorway Court. Unit 1

Falls Church, VA 22042

Creative Cauldron Founding Artistic Director

Laura has spent five decades working professionally in the theater, first as an actress and director, then as an administrator and executive, and finally coming full circle to the role of Creative Cauldron Stage Founding Artistic Director. Her strength as both an administrator and an artist has helped her shape Creative Cauldron into a unique and vibrant organization responsive to the needs of its community. Creative Cauldron Stage was launched in 2002, and under Laura's leadership, over a 24-year span, it has grown into a multifaceted professional theater and staff, music presenter and educational arts organization with a 1.2 million budget. It has received 26 Helen Hayes Awards nominations and 5 awards. Creative Cauldron's innovative educational programs have been honored with a Dominion Energy Arts Stars "Rising Star" Award in 2011, and a "Shining Star" in 2019. Laura is committed to bringing the arts to underserved audiences and creating more roles on and offstage for women/women of color through a "Bold New Voices" initiative. Under this initiative, Creative Cauldron has produced six world premieres and/ or regional premieres of works written by women. Through funding from the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia's Ross Roberts Fund for the Arts, she launched "Artes Para Todos," a program that brings free after school drama and art workshops to children in Fairfax County Title One public schools. In 2025, a successful "New Home, New Horizon" Capacity Fundraising Campaign, that included significant government, corporate and individual support, provided Creative Cauldron with its new state of the art black box theater, located in the heart of a designated "Arts and Entertainment District" in the City of Falls Church. Laura holds a B.A. in Communication Arts with a minor in vocal performance from Ursuline College and studied at the British American Acting Academy in London. She served as Artistic Director for the Ashtabula Arts Center's G.B. Repertory Theater for nine years and directed or performed in over 40 productions, then worked in theater administration in various capacities finally serving as the Director of Communications at Arena Stage, where she supervised a staff of 35 and a 6 million dollar earned income budget.

Elizabeth Harkins Meade, Esq.

700 Berry St Falls Church VA 22042

Creative Cauldron Development Director

Elizabeth grew up in Michigan and came to the D.C. area in 1990 to work on Capitol Hill as Legislative Director, Chief of Staff, and Campaign Manager for US Representative Dave Camp. Elizabeth graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctor from Wayne State University Law School. Upon graduation from law school, Elizabeth was Director of Government Affairs and Associate Counsel for a national staffing trade association. When her eldest daughter was born with significant health issues requiring a tracheostomy and various breathing machines, Elizabeth became a full-time caregiver, during which she took on a number of community leadership positions, including President of the Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society, President of the Falls Church Elementary PTA, President of the George Mason High School PTA and President of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School PTA. Elizabeth has served as Creative Cauldron's Development Director since 2017. In 2023 Elizabeth spearheaded a major capital fundraising raising over \$750,000 for Creative Cauldron's new theater in Falls Church.

Creative Cauldron Staff Bios

Laura Connors Hull, Founding Artistic Director

Laura has spent four decades working professionally in the theater, first as an actress and director, then as an administrator and executive, and finally coming full circle to the role of Creative Cauldron Founding Artistic Director. Her strength as both an administrator and an artist has helped her shape Creative Cauldron into a unique and vibrant organization responsive to the needs of its community. Laura is committed to bringing the arts to underserved audiences and creating more roles on and offstage for women/women of color. Laura holds a B.A. in Communication Arts with a minor in vocal performance from Ursuline College. She was Artistic Director for the Ashtabula Arts Center's G.B. Repertory Theater and directed or performed in over 40 productions, then worked in theater administration as the Director of Communications at Arena Stage. In 2002, she returned to her passion for teaching the arts, gathered a coalition of like-minded artists, and launched Creative Cauldron.

Elizabeth Harkins Meade, Esq. Development Director

Elizabeth grew up in Michigan and came to the D.C. area in 1990 to work on Capitol Hill as Legislative Director, Chief of Staff, and Campaign Manager for US Representative Dave Camp. Elizabeth graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctor from Wayne State University Law School. Upon graduation from law school, Elizabeth was Director of Government Affairs and Associate Counsel for a national staffing trade association. When her eldest daughter was born with significant health issues requiring a tracheostomy and various breathing machines, Elizabeth became a full-time caregiver, during which she took on a number of community leadership positions, including President of the Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society, President of the Falls Church Elementary PTA, President of the George Mason High School PTA and President of Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School PTA. Elizabeth has served as Creative Cauldron's Development Director since

2017. In 2023 Elizabeth spearheaded a major capital fundraising raising over \$750,000 for Creative Cauldron's new theater in Falls Church.

Matt Conner, Associate Artistic Director/Resident Composer

Matt Conner has been performing, composing, teaching and music directing in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area for the last 20 years. Conner directed *Women of the Blues*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Mistress Cycle*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, *Nevermore*, *Marry Me a Little*, *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*, *Once on This Island*, *The World Goes 'Round*, *Caroline or Change*, and *Ruthless the Musical!*. He received Helen Hayes nominations for Outstanding Director for *Blues in the Night* and *The Turn of the Screw* and won the award for his direction of *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*. With his partner Stephen Gregory Smith, he composed original musicals: *The Turn of the Screw*, *Monsters of the Villa Diodati*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Witch* and *On Air*. Other critically acclaimed musicals include *Nevermore*, *Crossing*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *Silver Bells*, and *Night of the Living Dead*. He created original music for Creative Cauldron's Learning Theater shows: *Eddie Allan Poe*, *Oliver Twist*, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Arabian Nights*, *The Jungle Book*, *Pinocchio*, *The Dancing Princesses*, *Wind in the Willows*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *Little Princess Sarah Crew*, *The Snow Queen*, *Cinderella's Dream*, *The Brothers Grimm* and *The Princess and the Pea*.

Margie Jervis (Resident Scenic, Costume and Puppet Designer)

Margie has a long and multifaceted career in visual art, from fine art exhibited internationally, to theatrical design. She began her theater work as a Scenic Painter and Sculptor at both the Seattle Repertory Theatre and the Seattle Opera. She was head of the Scenic Art Department for the Seattle Opera in the 1990s and Design Associate from 1996-2000. After moving back to the East Coast, she designed set, costumes, and puppets for the Washington National Opera's Children's Opera Program, the Ashlawn Opera in Charlottesville, and costumes with Keira Hart for Uprooted Dance. She is now in her 10th season as Resident Designer and Visual Arts Educator for Creative Cauldron. In 2010, she received a Strauss Fellowship Award from Arts Fairfax, and again in 2017, in recognition for her work in theatrical design and puppetry.

Lenny Mendez (Associated Artist-Bilingual)

Lenny Mendez (she/her/ella) she is a Latina actress from the Washington DC area. Lenny earned her BFA in acting and directing from George Mason University and trained at Circle in the Square Theatre School on Broadway in New York City. Some past credits include, Queen Titania in *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (Castaway Repertory) Angelina in *Prom Night* (GALA Hispanic Theatre) Natalie in *The Proposal* (Workhouse Arts Center).

Stephen Gregory Smith (Theater Artist, Resident Lyricist)

Stephen is a veteran DC Helen Hayes Award winning actor, writer and director. He directed *Witch*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Monsters of the Villa Diodati*, *Cole Porter: You're the Top!*, *Thunder Knocking on the Door*, and *Nevermore*. He has been seen on numerous local stages and in 2004, he received the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Jimmy

Curry in *110 in the Shade* at Signature Theatre. Stephen was educated at the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music. Acting credits include: SIGNATURE: *Hairspray* (Corney Collins), *The Boy Detective Fails* (Billy Argo), *Sunset Boulevard*, *Les Miserable* (Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Ensemble), *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*, *Into the Woods*(Jack), *My Fair Lady*, *Assassins* (Balladeer/Lee Harvey Oswald), *Pacific Overtures*, *The Highest Yellow*, *One Red Flower* (Billy), *Allegro*(Charlie), *110 in the Shade*(Jimmy), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Grand Hotel*, *Gypsy*. DCAC: *High Fidelity* (Rob); STUDIO THEATRE: *Adding Machine: A Musical* (SHRDLU); METRO STAGE: *tick, tick...BOOM!* (Jon); FORD'S THEATRE: *The Civil War*, *Meet John Doe*; ARENA STAGE: *Damn Yankees*; KENNEDY CENTER: *Regina*; WOLF TRAP: *Street Scene* (Dick); OLNEY THEATRE CENTER: *The Secret Garden* (Dickon). Writing credits with his partner Matt Conner include: *Monsters of the Villa Diodati*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Witch*, *On Air* (Creative Cauldron); *Nevermore*, *Crossing and Silver Belles* (Signature Theatre) *Night of the Living Dead the musical* (Kensington Arts Theatre); Edgar Allan Poe Academy (Creative Cauldron, Riverside Children's Theater FL) and the Book for *Cole Porter: You're the Top!* (Creative Cauldron) Directing and Choreography credits include: *Cole Porter: You're the Top!*, *Thunder Knocking on the Door*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Madeline's Christmas* (Creative Cauldron); *How I Became a Pirate* (Imagination Stage); *Pacific Overtures*, *My Fair Lady*, *Miss Saigon* (Signature Theatre).

Sarah Snyder, Marketing Manager

Sarah Snyder is a recent graduate of Rider University where she earned her BA in Arts and Entertainment Industries Management. She has been involved with theater for many years both on and off the stage.

Nicholas Goodman, Production Manager

Nicholas is a native of the Finger Lakes region of New York. While there he was a research winemaker for Cornell University. He was also an active member of the local theater community working with several schools and organizations, especially the Geneva Theatre Guild where he served on the working Board of Directors as the Secretary and Publicity Chair. Upon moving to the Washington, DC area, Nicholas worked as a freelance Stage Manager at area theaters, before joining Creative Cauldron as the Production Manager in 2019.

Sheryl Gorsuch, Business Manager

Sheryl Gorsuch is an independent business owner of SKG Bookkeeping Solutions. Sheryl has been providing bookkeeping and office support for independent business and nonprofit organizations for 10 years. She is a Certified Quickbooks ProAdvisor, and helps businesses with Strategic planning and continual improvement with best practices in accounting and operations. Her clients include a wide range of industries including: performing and visual arts organizations, human resource recruiters, architects, home remodeling contractors, real estate, rental property investors, retail shops and independent contractors. Sheryl holds a B.A. in Economics from Pomona College in Claremont, CA.