

**B Kyle:** As President and CEO of the St. Paul Area Chamber, B champions our diverse business community to create an economically vibrant, inclusive, and globally competitive region. Now in her fifth year, B is leading the chamber into a new chapter of growth and transition. B graduated from the College of St. Benedict and is a veteran of the U.S. Army. Prior to her work at the Chamber, she spent 11 years at the St. Paul Port Authority, ultimately co-leading its development work in St. Paul on projects such as the Treasure Island Center, CHS Field, the St. Paul Police Department's Public Safety Training Facility, and Major League Soccer. In 2020 she was recognized by the Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal as one of the top 10 Most Admired CEOs.

**Samuel Bevacco** is a Public Affairs Specialist; he oversees the administration of our Chamber's subcommittees that advocate for a better St. Paul and the surrounding metro area. He also assists with the East Metro Voter Guide, which informs the public of candidates seeking elected office. Aside from his work at the Chamber, he is the Social Media Manager and server/bartender for Chianti Grill in Roseville. In 2020, Sam graduated from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with a degree in Strategic Communications and a minor in Business Management. During his college career, he served as an intern for SpartanNash Company, President of Operation Smile-UMN, and was a member of three political organizations. Outside of his work, he has a passion for golfing, going to restaurants, and hopping on an airplane whenever he can.

**Alyssa Binsfeld** is the Member Promotions Manager, working with both the Membership team and Marketing and Communications team to assist members in maximizing their member benefits and identifying growth opportunities. She also serves as the staff lead of the Chamber's Young Professionals Committee. Prior to the Chamber Alyssa was an account manager at Allegra Printing, where she won Rookie of the Year and Top 10 in Sales across all Alliance Franchise locations awards. Alyssa is currently pursuing a Digital Marketing specialization, enjoys hiking, skiing out west, and staying active through CrossFit workouts.

**Beth Breidel** is a Director of Events, where she plans and executes programming to support the mission and vision of the Chamber and our members, while also looking for opportunities to address additional needs through new programming. Prior to the St. Paul Area Chamber, Beth held the role of Director of Events for Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest and the Midway Chamber of Commerce. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She volunteers for the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities; serves as a Community Board Member and Events Chair for the Midway Y; and is the Director of Community Outreach as a board member of the Park Bugle. Beth lives in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood of Saint Paul with her husband and dogs and enjoys adventures with their daughters, time in the kitchen or in their perennial gardens.

**Staci Christensen** currently serves as the St. Paul Area Chamber's Vice President of Operations, handling overall office management, direct supervision of administrative support staff, and coordinates IT, contracts, tenants, vendors, and property management for the Chamber. Staci also is direct support to the CEO and Foundation Director and is the chief administrator for all

Executive Committee, Board and Foundation Board meetings. Prior to joining the Chamber, Staci was an assistant office manager, Senior Paralegal and ran her own freelance Paralegal business. In her spare time, she is living her best life in Stacy, Minnesota where she resides with her husband, three kids, and their English Mastiff, Whiskey.

**Amanda Duerr** is the Vice President of Public Affairs. Prior to joining the Chamber, Amanda served as the Director of Government Affairs for Charter Communications, where she was responsible for state-level lobbying and maintaining positive relationships with the local communities served by the company. In this role, she was also very active in several local chambers, most notably serving as the Public Affairs Committee chair and on the Board of Directors for the Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce. Amanda previously represented the MN Municipal Utilities Association and worked as a contract lobbyist for several municipal clients at Flaherty & Hood, P.A. Before joining the lobbying ranks, she worked as a researcher in the Minnesota Senate. Amanda serves on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Governmental Relations Council (the membership organization for government relations professionals). She lives in Mendota Heights with her husband A.J. In her spare time, Amanda enjoys traveling, running races, and spending time with her niece and nephew.

**Kevion Ellis** is the Vice President of Business & Talent Development. Prior to the Chamber, Kevion worked for Education Minnesota, Goff Public, and U.S. Bank. He brings more than 6 years of experience in the political arena, having worked on issues including education, labor, and healthcare. A native of Paris, Texas, Kevion was involved in advocacy efforts in Colorado where he served as Student Body President at the University of Northern Colorado and interned at the Colorado General Assembly before moving to Minnesota in 2018. In addition to his role at the Chamber, Kevion serves on the Mississippi Park Connection Board of Directors and the Majority in the Middle Board of Directors. He lives in Plymouth with his wife Keturah and enjoys walks along Medicine Lake and playing basketball in his spare time.

**Megan Forgrave** is the Vice President of Programming and Member Experience, leading our events strategy and creating impactful experiences that connect people throughout our community. She came to the Chamber from the Bush Foundation, where as a Communications Program Manager she managed event production, partnerships and grant programs. Previously, Megan served as Communications Director for The World Food Prize Foundation and the Iowa Association of School Boards, and as a Reporter at The Des Moines Register. In the community she serves on the Boards of Sweet Potato Comfort Pie and the Kenny Parent Foundation, and on her local school's parent equity committee. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University, where she also minored in Spanish and studied abroad in Salamanca, Spain. Megan lives with her husband and two kiddos in Minneapolis. They love exploring new places, hosting people in their backyard, reading, cooking and general adventuring.

**Kristie Lazenberry** is the Program Director for the DEI Collaborative at the St. Paul Area Chamber. Prior to the Chamber, Kristie worked at McKinsey & Company for over 25 years, spending the last 10 years working with the Itasca Project as the Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Lead and Operations Manager. Kristie is a Qualified Administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory and has worked extensively with the Minneapolis YWCA as a Racial Justice Facilitator. Kristie is passionate about working in the DEI space and continues to be available as an independent contractor in developing content and facilitating courageous conversations. Kristie was recently honored by the Minneapolis Saint Paul Business Journal as one of the region 200 Black Leaders You Should Know. She was also honored as one of the recipients of the 2023 Celebrating the Sistahs Award. Kristie resides in Coon Rapids, MN, or “Cool Rapids” as she likes to call it. She is an avid biker, walker, and hiker. She has a background in the music business, formerly sang with the band, 94 East, and is a storyteller in the African/African-American tradition.

**Kathleen M. Lohmar Exel** is the Vice President of Community Advancement and the Executive Director the Chamber Charitable Foundation. Prior to the Chamber, she worked as a fundraising consultant for a multitude of nonprofits, running a team of grant writers and event specialists. Kathleen also served in multiple roles for Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, the University of St. Thomas, and the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota. At the Chamber Foundation, Kathleen runs the Leadership St. Paul program, helps with workforce development and equity initiatives, and oversees several Fiscal Sponsor relationships. She holds a B.A. in History from Carleton College; a Law Degree from the University of St. Thomas and she is licensed to practice law in Minnesota. In her spare time Kathleen can be found spending time with her husband, two daughters, two dogs, and one grumpy cat, serving as a Girl Scout Troop Leader, assistant basketball coach, and volunteering for the Westonka District #277 Foundation.

**Hunter Meyer** serves as the Social Media & Content Specialist for the Chamber. He is a recent graduate from Luther College in 2022 graduating with a double major in Art and Visual Communication. Throughout his early career journey, he has honed his skills in a variety of marketing roles, including content creation, social media management, and campaign strategy. He also works as a freelance photographer, videographer, and graphic designer, producing high-quality visuals that capture the essence of his client's brands. When not at work, you can find Hunter singing in a Twin Cities choral ensemble called Magnum Chorum, where he loves to share his love of music with others. In addition, he enjoys attending live music concerts, vinyl shopping, and enjoying a beverage at a local coffee shop or brewery. With a keen interest in culture and community, Hunter is always looking for new ways to connect with others and make a positive impact in his surroundings.

**Kim O'Brien** is the Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and leads the WorkStream professional services division. Within her role Kim also serves as the Executive Director of the Rice and Larpenteur Alliance, in addition to supporting other nonprofit and public clients. Prior to the Chamber, Kim served as Legislative Aide to St. Paul City Council President Amy Brendmoen for 7 years, the Community Relations Manager at a St. Paul-based nonprofit, and as an Account Executive for two advertising agencies. She has a master's in Public Policy from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of MN, and bachelor's Degrees in Communications and Sociology from the University of Colorado. She currently serves as a Trustee for the Friends

of the St. Paul Public Library. Kim lives in the Battle Creek neighborhood of St. Paul with her husband and two sons who all enjoy exploring local, state, and national parks.

**John Perlich** currently serves as the St. Paul Area Chamber's Director of Public Affairs, advocating for member businesses and organizations. John brings a wealth of public, private, and nonprofit sector experience to the Chamber, including stints at the Steve Rummeler HOPE Network, Ainsley Shea Communications, and various capacities with the Wisconsin GOP, the Wisconsin State Senate, and the Committee to Reelect a Republican Senate. John has a BA in History and Political Science. In his spare time, you can find John extolling the virtues of his adoptive city (St. Paul) and home state (Wisconsin), on the Board of the Domestic Policy Caucus, enjoying the great outdoors during pheasant season, and reading multiple books (non-fiction, of course). John and his dachshund, Winston, reside in the Highwood area of St. Paul.

**Madisen Rogers** serves as the Strategic Initiatives Specialist for the Workstream professional services division. Through her position, Madisen supports the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce, Grand Avenue Business Association, Rice & Larpenteur Alliance, and the St. Paul Parks Conservancy. Madisen graduated from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities with a degree in Political Science in 2022. Madisen leads with empathy and has always had an innate yearning to address systemic barriers and help individuals overcome them. In her free time, Madisen enjoys spending time with friends and family, trying new restaurants, and volunteering.

**Megan Ryan** is the Vice President of Marketing and Communications for the Chamber. Since joining the Chamber, she spearheaded a rebrand to reflect the growing energy and momentum of the organization. She has also grown internal and external communication efforts to create a more strategic and targeted marketing approach to further engage members and the community. Megan previously served three administrations as the Communications Director for Minnesota Housing, and as Marketing and Public Relations Manager for the Twin Cities Marathon. As the Director of Marketing and Promotions for the City of St. Paul, she created the most successful public art project in the city's history, "Peanuts on Parade." Megan is University of St. Thomas alumni and in her free time, you can find her in her hometown of Cable, WI, skiing the Birkie, biking the Chequamegon Fat Tire, and spending time in the woods with her husband and two sons.

**Tong Thao** is the Relationship Manager at the St. Paul Area Chamber, "matchmaking" members to help them find connection points to improve and grow, as well as getting the best return on their membership investment. Tong came to the Chamber with experience as a community organizer, small business owner, and then as a business advisor at the Asian Economic Development Association, helping immigrant entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses. A life-long St. Paul resident, Tong graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College with a degree in Geography. He currently serves as a member of the Neighborhood STAR Program board with the City of St. Paul, and was recently awarded the Immigrant Champion Award by the National Immigrant Entrepreneur Summit.

**Sherryln Thompson** is a Manager of Strategic Initiatives, serving as the administrator for the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce and other Chamber WorkStream clients. Sherryln has more than a decade of events experience as the Owner and Chief Events Officer of Highly Favored Events, serving numerous and diverse clients - from the NFL to 3M to the Graves Foundation, to name just a few. Her baby and brainchild, the Shades of Beauty Expo, has been a multi-state annual event since 2015. Sherryln also spent almost 15 years at General Mills, working in IT and leading an international procurement team. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma. In her spare time, she serves as a youth step team coach and dance instructor.

**Yao Yaj** is a Manager of Strategic Initiatives for the St. Paul Area Chamber, while also serving as the Executive Director of the Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce. Yao serves chamber members by administering Business Retention, Expansion, & Attraction efforts, and BizRecycling and Workplace Wellness projects. Prior to the Chamber, Yao was an organizer, manager, and food hub director for Hmong American Farmers Association. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of St. Benedict, an honoree of Finance & Commerce 2020 Rising Young Professionals and was included on the 2021 TCB100 People to Know list. Yao and her husband welcomed their first child in March 2021, a daughter named Gana.