

**Opus (Latin):** Work

**Opus: (def.):** Any artistic work, especially on a large scale.

Combine the two meanings, and that's what Opus Creative Industries is all about: *Connect people to passion and purpose while developing prosperity through creative workforce projects, innovative programs, and events.*

Under the umbrella of the Colorado Springs Community Cultural Collective (CSCCC), Opus connects the creative community and workforce programs for individuals in culinary arts, theatre tech, media arts, and early childhood education to create a nonprofit unlike any other city.

Opus Creative Industries grew from successful programs created by CSCCC during the past 36 months: culinary arts, media, theater arts, and early childhood education training.

The CSCCC is now putting all its energies behind workforce development and creative industries.

**The goal is people, passion, purpose, and prosperity. And it's a proven model.**

## **Mission**

*Our mission is to create a true city center of education, arts, culture and business, affording access to all citizens for the purpose of relevant, inspired and thoughtful works of the human spirit.*

## **Vision**

*To ignite creativity in people of all ages, affording all who step courageously forward to realize their creative essence and unique gift to the world.*

## **Goal**

*To be Colorado's foremost creative sector incubator lab by providing real-time, earn, and learn educational experiences while serving the greater human community through personal acts of passion and productivity.*

---

## **PROGRAMS**

---

### **CULINARY ARTS**

Once known as Shovel Ready, the culinary arts project is now called Opus Creative Kitchen. The eight-week program teaches aspiring chefs and restaurant owners the ins and outs of working in a kitchen – while creating award-worthy culinary works of art.

With six cohorts graduating from the program and a partnership with the Pikes Peak Workforce Center, the culinary arts program is a proven success. Their work is done at 1 S. Nevada Ave., with a second location at the El Paso County Citizen Service Center. Each graduate has gone on to more education, and work at local restaurants as chefs or sous chefs.

### **MEDIA/THEATER ARTS**

Opus Creative Industries' newest program, the Media and Theater Arts workforce development project, creates a series of classroom education combined with real-life work experience through apprenticeships or internships.

The program is expected to launch with its first cohort in February 2024.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Simple Gifts is where it all started. With one Simple Gift to share with the world:

The gift of music as a key to unlocking childhood potential. The project started during the pandemic to connect children who had to take classes remotely with each other and with music. It moved on to a television series aired on several PBS stations nationwide and then to a program to train early childhood educators on incorporating music and the arts into their classrooms. Studies have shown the benefits of music education in conjunction with math and science classroom work. Simple Gifts also has a twice-monthly playgroup at 1 S. Nevada Ave.

More than 100 children routinely come to dance, play, learn about animals, draw, and paint.

## FAQ

### 1. Is this a new nonprofit?

No, this nonprofit stemmed from the Colorado Springs Community Cultural Collective. The nonprofit at the time had a dual focus: workforce programs combined with fundraising to save the City Auditorium by renovating the space for modern audiences, programs, and events. When donor funding fell short, the organization regrouped and focused on successful workforce development programs.

### 2. Is Opus still part of the City Auditorium?

No, the nonprofit relinquished its MOU with the City of Colorado Springs in favor of the workforce development programs that connect people to jobs in short-staffed industries. Those programs have received donor and grant funding and are proliferating.

### 3. How can people get involved?

Go to the website [communityculturalcollective.org](https://communityculturalcollective.org) and look up the creative industry programs where applications and mentoring opportunities are listed. Each program runs for a period of time from eight weeks to three months and are offered ongoing through 2024.

Companies seeking interns, employees, or apprentices from any of the programs can contact CEO Linda Weise.

### 4. How can people donate?

Companies and individuals interested in donating to the workforce development programs can speak to Linda Weise, CEO.

Companies interested in setting up workforce development programs can also contact Linda.

### 5. Who's involved now?

The CSCCC is led by an incredibly accomplished Board of Directors; Linda Weise remains the CEO. The location has changed, but the purpose and mission remain the same.



## WHO IS OPUS CREATIVE INDUSTRIES?

---



### CEO

#### Linda Weise

Linda Weise is the president and CEO of Opus Creative Industries, a 501(c)3 dedicated to workforce development in the creative industries.

She has dedicated her life to providing access to quality arts and cultural experiences and learning for people of all ages.

She created Opus Creative Industries to secure jobs in underserved, creative industries. She developed the PBS early childhood music and literacy program, Simple Gift Series.

Created at the onset of COVID, she and six Colorado Springs Conservatory alumni brought essential and creative learning to young children across Colorado and, in January 2022, the rest of the nation. In 2022, the Conservatory and the Simple Gift Series team were awarded the Edward Ziegler Innovation Award from the National Head Start Association.

In 2023, Linda was acknowledged with the Business Leader of the Year award from the Southern Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson Award from KOAA5 and the Everest Award from the American Advertising Federation.

She is the founder of the Colorado Springs Conservatory (CSC). She established the Conservatory in 1994 to bring world-class performing arts education to the region. A graduate of Oberlin Conservatory in piano and vocal performance, she continued her post-graduate work at the Juilliard School for Opera Studies. Linda and the CSC have been recognized throughout the state and country with numerous awards, including the National Guild of Community Music Schools Milestone Achievement award and the coveted William Funk Award from the Colorado Nonprofit Association. Accolades for providing and making accessible to all interested in outstanding arts immersion studies, the Conservatory has been changing lives for nearly 29 years.

Linda is an active community advocate who serves or has served on these boards of directors: Governor's appointee for the State Board of Colorado Humanities, Vice Chair Colorado Springs Leadership Institute (CSLI), Citizens Soldier Connection, committee for the annual Range Riders Street Breakfast, Regional Advisory Council for Central City Opera, Chamber Orchestra of the Springs, Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the Fountain Fund, PILLAR Institute for Lifelong Learning, and Ars Nova Singers in Boulder. Her civic and artistic partnerships have lasted decades and forged new ways to bring the arts to many who would otherwise go without. She was the inspired founding partner along with Sam and Kathy Guadagnoli of the Mezzanine, a unique multi-genre performance venue. In 2022, Linda was selected to serve as an Honorary Commander at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) for the 2022 - 2024 term.

Linda is a graduate of both Colorado Leadership Institute and Leadership Pikes Peak. Her arts education includes the Aspen Music Festival, Chautauqua Music Festival, Oberlin Conservatory, and the Juilliard School for piano performance and opera. Linda has resided in Colorado Springs since 1992, where she currently lives with her husband, Keith Wells, and daughters, Christina and Kelsy.

## BOARD MEMBERS

---



### **Board Chair**

#### **Deborah Hendrix**

Deborah Hendrix is the executive director of Parents Challenge, an organization that supports parental choice in education.

Deborah served on the Harrison School District 2 board for eight years (six years as president) and served for 12 years as president of the board for Colorado Early Colleges.

She serves on the boards for Goodwill of Colorado, Pikes Peak United Way, the Legacy Institute, and the Youth Transformation Center. She's an advisory member of the Colorado Springs Conservatory..



### **Treasurer**

#### **Paul Deckard**

Paul Deckard is a financial executive who has led businesses through successful turnaround and growth cycles. He has focused on corporate growth and revenue generation for nonprofit and for-profit organizations. He has provided expertise in strategic planning, business transformation, navigating financial crises, and solving complex financial systems and financial reporting issues.

He served as a nonprofit CFO and management consultant, was a nominee for Nonprofit CEO of the Year by Biz Journals, and was awarded a global management fellowship with the DeVos Institute of the Arts at the University of Maryland.

Most recently, he served as managing director, CFO, and COO for Opera Colorado. He is currently the director of corporate finance at the Boulder-based Zayo Group.

He also serves as policy committee chair of the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts and adjunct faculty in financial management at the University of Denver. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Michigan State University, a master's degree in international business from Hult International Business School, and a master's degree in accountancy from the University of Denver.

## MEMBERS AT LARGE

---



### **Leon Kelly, M.D.**

Dr. Leon Kelly is a board-certified forensic pathologist and the coroner/chief medical examiner for El Paso County, where he oversees investigations into sudden, unexpected, or non-natural deaths throughout Southern Colorado. He has performed 5,000 autopsies and is an expert in forensic pathology, toxicology, and strangulation evaluation.

Dr. Kelly co-founded the El Paso County Child Fatality Review Team and the nationally recognized Teen Suicide Prevention Working Group. He's currently the Colorado Springs chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness board chair. He served as the emergency deputy medical director of El Paso County Public Health, helping to lead the COVID response.



### **Traci Marques**

Traci Marques is the executive director/CEO of the Pikes Peak Workforce Center, serving El Paso and Teller counties. Her goal is to connect businesses with work-ready job seekers and to provide employer-driven services to improve the work outcomes for thousands of residents in the Pikes Peak region.

She is responsible for long-range planning, development, direction for the workforce center's programs, as well as implementing and evaluation programs that support regional workforce development.

She previously served as deputy director of the workforce center and as customer service and community outreach director, as well as the business relations group team lead.

She serves as co-chair of the military, veterans, and spouses coalition, which represents more than 40 community organizations with resources focuses on finding meaningful work for transitioning service members, veterans and military spouses.

Labor and Employment for contributions to improvement and modernization of veteran's services.

Marques has a bachelor's degree in telecommunications management from Indiana University at Bloomington and has completed The Grantsmanship Center's Basic Grantsmanship and Social Enterprise Courses, the Center for Creative Leadership's Community Leadership Program, and the Leadership Pikes Peak Signature Program.



## MEMBERS AT LARGE

---



### **Dr. Jim Smith**

Dr. Jim Smith is the assistant superintendent for planning and engagement in Academy District 20 in northern Colorado Springs.

He started his career in New Mexico, and joined Academy District 20 in 2000, where he served as an English teacher, assistant principal, principal, and executive director for learning services before taking on a larger role in administration. He now is responsible for overseeing school accreditation, high school supervision, student enrollment, facilitating board and superintendent committees and leading accountability efforts.

He is a graduate of the University of Kansas, where he received a bachelor's degree in English and American Studies. He then attended the College of Santa Fe to earn a bachelor's degree in secondary education. Smith earned a master's degree and a doctoral degree at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs.



### **Jennifer Hoff**

Jennifer Hoff has worked in public health for more than 27 years. She began her career as an EMT and hospice nurse. She then became the health educator for Fullerton College, supporting more than 21,000 students with curriculum development, grant writing and outreach programs designed to improve academic success and emotional wellbeing.

She started the first public support group, called My Bipolar Child in Orange County, California, for parents and caregivers of children and adolescents who live with severe mental health conditions. She has lobbied for local and national reforms for civil commitment, HIPPA, IMD exclusions, parental rights and competency standards. She is a founding board member for the USC Saks Institute for Mental Health Policy, Law and Ethics, the Avielle Foundation, the Campaign for Youth Justice, the International Bipolar Foundation. Through the Hoff Family Foundation, she has been able to award more than \$500,000 in grants over the past decades to families and organizations who serve those living with severe mental health conditions. She has a bachelor's degree in health science from Cal State Fullerton and lives in Southern California with her two younger sons.

## MEMBERS AT LARGE

---

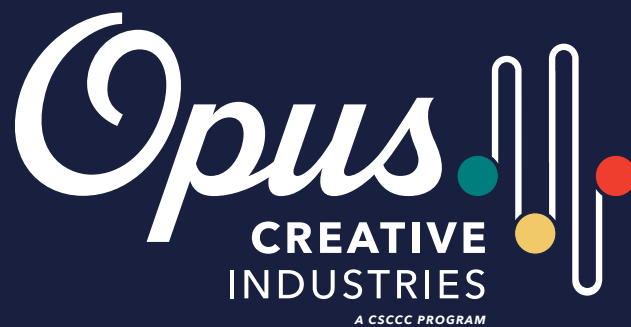


### **Ben Sparks**

Ben is a native of Colorado Springs and a graduate of Palmer High School, Harvard University, and the University of Virginia Law School. He is a practicing attorney, admitted in Colorado and California. He is chairman of Sparks Wilson PC and practices in corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, technology licensing, and securities. He is the former chairman of the Colorado Bar Association Business Law Section and served as editor-in-chief of the Virginia Journal of International Law.

He is currently chairman of the Joseph Henry Edmondson Foundation and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Viola Vestal Coulter Foundation.





Companies seeking interns, employees, or apprentices  
from any of the programs can contact CEO Linda Weise at

**[linda.w@communityculturalcollective.org](mailto:linda.w@communityculturalcollective.org)**

c. 719.200.4463 o.719.424.1000