

**2022 Summer Refresh Speaker Bios  
The Park Event Center**



**Brad Gruhot**

President, Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce  
brad.gruhot@marshallmn.org

Brad started his Chamber career as the Membership Director for the newly formed SouthWest Metro Chamber in 2009. From there, he worked for the Bloomington Chamber in Membership from 2011-2014 before deciding to move his family back to his home town of Marshall to be closer to his mom who was having health issues. Brad was the Membership Director from July, 2014 until and then was named the Chamber director of the Marshall Area Chamber in January of 2016. Prior to Chamber work, Brad worked for the Southdale YMCA in Edina for 11 years.

Brad is very active in the community and serves on the Board of Directors for the Marshall Area YMCA, SMSU Booster Club, MACE & MCCE and also sits on various committees throughout the Marshall community.

Brad has been married to Karen for 20 years and has two children, Jonathan-16 and Alayna-13. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, visiting friends and even through all of the heartbreak, he is an avid MN sports fan.



**Julie Lunning**

President, St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce  
jlunning@stcloudareachamber.com

Julie Lunning assumed the role of President of the St Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce in September 2021. She has been employed by the Chamber for nearly twenty-five years and served as the executive director of the Chamber's St. Cloud Area Convention and Visitors Bureau since 1997. Julie has worked in the hospitality and tourism industry for 35+ years, was named Outstanding Individual in MN Tourism in 2017, and was appointed by four Minnesota Governors to the Explore MN Tourism Council and Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission.

Julie is very active in the St. Cloud area and serves on numerous boards and committees. Recently she was appointed to the boards of Career Solutions and the Central Minnesota Community Foundation.

Julie grew up in Milwaukee, WI, and lives in St. Cloud with her husband, Dan, and three children ages 16, 15, and 11. In her spare time, Julie enjoys attending her children's sporting events, traveling, and catering with her husband.



**Lena Scullard**

LMS Productions  
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As a professional speaker, facilitator, program designer, and consultant, Lena Scullard is on a mission to empower people, to help individuals and teams improve their confidence and sense of capability for achieving success. With this in mind, she produces programs focused on unlocking the feelings, motivations, and obstacles of others, and challenging them to take action and be accountable for their results. Lena's programs have lasting impact, because they create memorable and emotional connections, and leave people excited about new ideas and how to apply them in strategic ways.

Lena's expertise includes personal and interpersonal skills development, which she believes are the foundations of effectiveness, for both individuals and teams. She has facilitated programs from Franklin Covey, The Pacific Institute, Achieve Forum, and DiSC, and has been designing and delivering training programs for over a decade. In addition to several facilitation certifications, Lena holds degrees in Theater and English Literature.

Lena grew up in rural Minnesota, surrounded by a supportive family (despite her crazy dreams and pursuits) and a tremendously close community. At the age of 8, Lena was diagnosed with Type 1 Juvenile Diabetes, which brought her strength and steadiness, despite hardships and tough life lessons that she often shares with her audience. She remains active in Community Theater and loves adventure and new experiences. She lives in Minnesota with her husband and spunky dog, Moxie.



**Doug Loon**

President and CEO, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce  
dloon@mnchamber.com

Douglas B. Loon is president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, a position he has held since September 8, 2015. The Minnesota Chamber represents more than 2,300 Minnesota companies, 130 local chambers and 65 business trade associations at the Minnesota Legislature on a variety of issues that impact Minnesota's economy.

Prior to assuming leadership of the Minnesota Chamber, he spent 20 years at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 17 of those in Minnesota. As the vice president for regional affairs and advocacy, he managed the seven regional offices that provide political and grassroots outreach across the nation. He also managed the U.S. Chamber's Midwest Region that includes Minnesota. He was intimately involved in supporting state and local chambers and businesses to move public policy in a direction that helps them be successful.

Loon received his bachelor's degree in government and international affairs from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D. He is a graduate of the Congressional Research Service's Institute for Legislative Staff as well as the Federal Election Commission's program on campaign finance laws for incorporated trade associations and membership organizations. He also graduated from Leadership Minnesota, an exclusive program of the Minnesota Chamber addressing the economic and public policy issues of Minnesota businesses. He is past chair of the Eden Prairie Foundation Board of Directors.



**Sara Krisher**

President and Founder, STAND TALL  
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Sara Krisher is the president and founder of STAND TALL, a company that helps build confidence. She works with leaders at all levels within organizations and runs a highly sought-after CEO peer advisory group in the Twin Cities.

She is an international speaker, narrative coach, and developer of the “Fearless Speaker” program. She is the author of *The Confidence to Speak*, a book about the many fears of speaking and *Captivate Your Audience*, a guide for creating presentations the audience wants to hear. She delivers powerful training programs to business leaders who want to lead from the front of the room with more confidence.

Sara’s passion for speaking her truth is evident in her candid approach to communications. Her clients like her fun, spirited, and encouraging personality. She is a champion of bravery and doesn’t just *talk the talk*. She continually demonstrates confidence building in her work and personal life. She stands tall at 6’1” and looks up to her fifteen-year-old daughter, who is 6’2” tall. You can learn more about her services at STANDTALL-LLC.com



**Donna Houchin**

Marketing Communications Manager, Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce  
donna@brainerdlakeschamber.com

Donna Houchin is the Marketing Communications Manager with the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce. Donna holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Design and Communications from Bemidji State University.

In her current role with the Brainerd Lakes Chamber, Donna leverages her talent in design to promote the mission of the organization. As a strategic thinker, she develops and delivers effective and creative communications to strengthen not only the Chamber, but also Member businesses. Her competitive nature and internal drive push her to strive for excellence on every project.

Donna grew up in Sebeka, Minnesota, and lives in rural Pine River with her husband, Dan, their two dogs, and cat.



**Debbi Rydberg**

Executive Director, Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce  
Debbi@elkriverchamber.org

Debbi Rydberg is the Executive Director for the Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce, a position she has held since 2008. She earned her IOM in 2013. The most important thing in communications is knowing your audience and speaking to them in way they can understand. Prior to coming to Elk River, Debbi was on staff at the Alexandria Area Chamber of Commerce for 10 years. As a non-traditional student, she completed her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Southwest Minnesota State in 2007.



**Jaci Sprague**

Director of Business and Community Relations, Greater Mankato Growth  
jsprague@greatermankato.com

Jaci joined Greater Mankato Growth in February 2019. Previous to her role as the Director of Business and Community Relationships, she was employed by Junior Achievement of Greater Mankato as the Senior District Manager. There she worked with donors, educators and volunteers to support preparing the future workforce to succeed through relevant hands-on programming supporting entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and workforce readiness. Greater Mankato Growth has proven to be a natural fit with her passion for community and making connections. Jaci was born and raised on a family hobby farm in Hastings Minnesota. She attended Minnesota State University, Mankato in 2005 and has been establishing her roots in the Greater Mankato community ever since. Jaci was recently named the 2019 Greater Mankato Growth Young Professional of the year.

Jaci enjoys spending time with her husband, Dan and two children Raegan and Gordy, especially enjoying the lake activities in our community.



**Candace Hoversten, MSW, LGSW (she/her)**

Psychotherapist and Owner, Modern Minds  
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Candace Hoversten, MSW, LGSW is a Psychotherapist and Owner of Modern Minds, providing group and individual clinical services to adults, adolescents, and families. Candace utilizes a variety of regulation and relation-based interventions to address stress, trauma, and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other conditions. Candace also works with organizations, civic, and community groups to actively support authentic conversations around mental health issues, increase compassion for our experiences, and support change to shape.