

Ed-Ventures, Inc.



Key Personnel

Larry Larsen, Owner and CEO of Ed-Ventures

A former mathematics and German teacher, Larry first traveled with his own students in 1974. In 1977 he helped found a European tour company and there was no turning back. Larry has a B.A. in German from Concordia, Moorhead, Minnesota, and a M.A. in German from Mankato State College. He has guided the growth of Ed-Ventures, reaching out to travelers from most of the 50 states. His spare time activities include church and community leadership. Larry has been married to his wife, Joanne, for 48 years and has 5 children, 14 grandchildren and 1 great grandson.



Paul Larsen, President

Paul brings a German minor from Concordia College along with 20 years of previous financial expertise to the company. He worked as a CPA and in the commercial real estate and transportation industries. He has spent six years with Ed-Ventures traveling and developing relationships in Central Europe, Egypt, Israel, and Central America. Paul currently serves in a variety of leadership roles in his neighborhood, community and church. He specifically enjoys projects that break down walls and bring people together. Music-based tours, service/mission tours and tours that build cross-cultural friendships are some of the ways Paul uses tours to help people experience significance.

Mark Larsen, Vice -President

Mark was originally hired by Ed-Ventures, Inc. in 1992 while he was a computer science major at Winona State University in Winona, MN. Later, he graduated from DeVry University with a B.S. in Technical Management. His knowledge of computers, German language skills, and a lengthy travel history were exactly what the company was looking for. Between his personal travels, deployments with the U.S. Army, and his travels with Ed-Ventures, Mark has been to more than 30 countries. In his spare time, he serves on the local Diversity Council, on the National Tour Association leadership team and enjoys time with his family. His greatest strength is his knowledge of all the Scandinavian countries. His many travels and tenure in the business make him a good person to help you with any tour.



Shannon Larsen, Vice-President

Shannon attended Mankato State University where she graduated with majors in International Business and Marketing along with a minor in Spanish. She is actively involved in the community, including Rochester Water Ski Shows and Vet's Visits on TV, a program dedicated to helping veterans and their families. Shannon additionally had the benefit of growing up in a family steeped in travel and tour tradition. She has served with the U.S. Army in multiple settings, and has traveled extensively. Between the Army, involvement with Ed-Ventures and family experiences, Shannon has traveled to more than 30 countries. Her greatest strength is her knowledge of Britain, Scotland, Ireland and Spain. Shannon's extensive travel to multiple European countries provides helpful resources and insights.

Ginnie Laschkewitsch, Vice-President

Ginnie received her B.S. in Elementary Education. After 18 years of teaching children about places and cultures, Ginnie was anxious to see some of these places first hand. When the opportunity to join the travel industry presented itself 8 years ago, she took it and has been learning ever since. She assists the staff wherever she can. Her work consists mainly of graphics design, organization of travel materials and coordinating projects for the support staff. Ginnie and her husband, Clint, enjoy traveling and spending time with their 3 daughters' families. They have 4 fabulous grandchildren that help keep them active.



Mary Briggs, Regional Sales Manager

Mary brings a wealth of travel industry knowledge to Ed-Ventures with over 30 years of sales experience. Her career started in Des Moines, Iowa working for a Las Vegas tour operator and then a Hawaiian tour company. She accepted a sales position with British Rail in 1980 and moved to Kansas City serving this company for 15 years. Most recently she has held sales positions for an airline and two cruise lines. Mary lives in Kansas City with her husband, Gordon. She has two sons and five grandchildren. Mary is thrilled to be joining the world of Ed-Ventures, Inc.

Amanda Wright, Senior Tour Coordinator

Amanda started working with Ed-Ventures in 2006 after working several years in the hospitality industry. She works primarily on tours traveling to Central Europe with a focus on German-speaking countries. Amanda has had a love for the German language since a young age when her family took a trip to Europe and visited distant relatives living there. She has been to Germany multiple times and has had the privilege of getting to know the people and culture well. She graduated from Dordt College (Iowa), with a double major in German and Communication and a minor in Spanish. She enjoyed her semester abroad in Germany where she studied at the Goethe Institute. Amanda loves to travel and learn about different cultures and languages and likes to help others make their travels a rewarding experience.



Rick Christenson, Airfare Purchaser and Tour Coordinator

Rick is a graduate of the University of Minnesota where he majored in Middle Eastern Studies and completed his degree at the American University in Cairo, Egypt and also traveled to Israel, Lebanon and Syria. He later moved to France where he taught English at a French engineering school for 10 years before returning to the U.S. in 2001. He speaks fluent French and has an insider's knowledge of France and is particularly fond of Strasbourg and the Alsace region.

Marilyn Poppe, Tour Coordinator and Airfare Purchaser

Marilyn has been in the travel business since 1970. She has been a leisure travel agent, assisted with medical meetings, worked on corporate travels accounts and escorted groups. Her travels have taken her to Hawaii, Europe, Asia, and Africa; from igloos of the Arctic Circle to small resorts on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Marilyn is active in her church and enjoys meeting new people and assisting them in their travel needs.





Michael Murche, Tour Coordinator

Michael is our newest member, coming to us from Germany. After earning a degree in Language and Tourism Management, he worked for travel agencies and travel companies in his home country of Germany. Michael also has language skills in English, French, German and Russian. He has traveled to more than 20 countries including almost every country in Europe. Michael is currently a soccer coach for a local boy's team and loves to go fishing "Up North." Michael's favorite saying is: "Our customers get the vacation they deserve."

Merlyn Solberg, Finance

Merlyn handles billing and insurance questions. Before coming to Ed-Ventures, Merlyn was a math teacher in Iowa and Rochester, MN. He also worked for IBM in Rochester for over 20 years as a software developer and as a project and development manager. He has a B.S. degree in math from South Dakota State and an M.S. degree in computer science from Colorado State. When he is not working, Merlyn loves playing golf and sailing. He enjoys travel and being a dad and granddad.



Paul Anderson, Finance

Paul has been the accountant/bookkeeper at Ed-Ventures for the past 8 years. He graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and worked as a bank examiner. Upon retirement, he joined Ed-Ventures putting his vast banking knowledge to good use. Paul is very involved with his church, Community Bible Studies and charity work. He enjoys fishing and loves being Papa to his grandchildren.

Jeannine Buntrock, Graphic Designer

Jeannine grew up in New Zealand and can tell you anything you want to know about the beautiful islands she calls home. After graduating from Ambassador University, she spent several years traveling and teaching English in Sri Lanka, India and China. As her family is descended from the Scottish highland clan Cameron, Scotland is one of her favorite destinations and has brought her back there several times. A stay-at-home-mum to two preschoolers whom she homeschools, Jeannine looks forward to the day they are old enough to travel, experience the world and learn about its many cultures. First on her list are trips to Nepal and Uganda/Tanzania, countries Jeannine has always dreamed of visiting. After a trip home to New Zealand to introduce her kids to the country and her extended family in 2012, that is.

